Deans of the Convocation of Canterbury

Nominations

The following candidates have been nominated for election to General Synod by the Deans of the Convocation of Canterbury:

The Very Revd Dr Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol

Nominated by the Very Revd Dr David Monteith, Dean of Canterbury and the Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St Albans

The Very Revd Dr Jessica Martin, Dean of Chelmsford

Nominated by the Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St Albans and the Very Revd Joe Hawes, Dean of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

The Very Revd Nick Papadopulos, Dean of Salisbury

Nominated by the Very Revd Joe Hawes, Dean of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and the Very Revd Toby Wright, Dean of Wells

The Very Revd Dr Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol

It has been my privilege to represent the Deans constituency in General Synod for the past five years. During that time I have been actively involved in advocating for Cathedrals, in particular as a member of the Programme Board for the Church of England Governance Measure. I have built up good relationships with key individuals, including the Church Commissioners and staff of the NCI's. I have a strong profile within Synod as one of the Synod chairs, but also because I am committed to participating and speaking regularly.

I hope that my track record will encourage you to vote for me in the General Synod election for the next Quinquennium.

Looking forward, as a Dean of one of the smaller urban cathedrals sharing the financial challenges facing many of us, I am committed to ensuring that the profile of cathedrals and their importance to the life of the Church of England are recognised, strengthened and supported financially.

We anticipate that the Governance Measure will return to Synod during this Quinquennium and it is vital that cathedrals are properly represented and supported by the proposed new structures. I would do this building on my previous experience with the Measure and its Revision Committee.

I am a passionate believer in the breadth of the Church of England and value of church where different views can be expressed. I recognise that Cathedrals belong to the whole of the church, their bishops and dioceses, and as such they should be places of welcome to all. For this reason, I will continue to advocate for greater inclusion and recognition for LGBTI+ people, and particularly LGBTI+ clergy, as the next phase of work begins to enable stand alone blessings for gay couples and to stop discrimination against clergy entering same sex marriages.

Please do vote for me, and please use the many opportunities that we have to meet collegially to ensure that I know what you want to be heard in General Synod in the next five years.

Thank you for your support.

The Very Revd Dr Jessica Martin

I offer myself to serve on the General Synod of the Church of England for the quinquennium beginning in November 2026, as one of the decanal representatives for the Province of Canterbury.

I would bring to the office particular experience and skills which it is my desire to use for the service of the whole Church - its mission, its ministry and, crucially, its unity. This is a time of crisis both in the world and in the nation - in its response to climate crisis, in its domestic and international politics, in its understanding of mutual care and interpersonal relationships; and in its understanding of what nation and community is (and is not). The Church is called to respond in faith and hope to the signs of the times, and its governance is crucial to that response.

Since January 2025 I have been Dean of a small Cathedral serving Essex and East London. It has a vibrant and growing congregation with a significant ministry to children and families and another to refugees and asylum seekers. Resourcing these very distinctive ministries has been a priority within the Cathedral's emerging vision; and the challenges of faithful service to *every* person within a diverse area also shaken by anti-immigrant sentiment is a kind of cameo of the Church's national challenges in the current political climate. It is something I deal with directly on an everyday basis; and it is a preoccupation of the Bishop's Leadership Team within the large and extraordinarily various diocese of Chelmsford.

At the same time the Cathedral's emerging vision seeks to build upon its longstanding commitment to environmental sustainability (it was the second Cathedral to achieve Gold eco-status with A Rocha) and to commit to working for the good of creation at a time of climate crisis, again within a context where climate denial is a prominent local political theme. The challenges of speaking into so fraught an area with calm faith are continually present in the decisions we make as a Cathedral about the nature of our ministry, teaching and action.

Before becoming Dean of Chelmsford, I served in Ely Cathedral for eight years as Residentiary Canon for Learning and Outreach. Consequently my Cathedral experience has encountered the challenges both of the 'historic' Cathedral where visitor experience and Christian ministry seek to find a common voice; and of the 'working' parish Cathedral where there are few tourists but a growing mission to new Christians alongside pressing and often clashing forms of community need - and a constant struggle to resource the work to which we are called. I am deeply convinced of the unique mission of Cathedrals and can bring experience of very different but equally valuable models to the conversation about what Cathedral are called to be within the whole Church of England.

During 2024 I worked on secondment to the NCIs, as one of two interim theological advisers to the House of Bishops, during the fraught and difficult conversations in the last formal stages of Living in Love and Faith. This period as a church 'civil servant' gave me valuable insight into the delicate balances and relational complexities of speaking for and with faithful Christians in deep disagreement. I can bring a long experience of the difficult road the Church has walked in its response to sexuality, commitment, faithfulness and the honouring of difference, having begun that road as one of the three non-episcopal advisers to the 'Pilling report' of 2012. I wrote the Prologue to that Report. My own position is clear, and was articulated in my 2020 book *Holiness and Desire* (long listed for the Michael Ramsey prize),

which is that permanent, faithful and stable relationships between those of the same sex can and should be hallowed; I also believe that *every* relationship calls for sacrifice, self-discipline and self-giving for all who are called to follow Christ. The internal divisions the Church suffers are wounds we can ill afford at a time when the world is in such need of Christian hope.

I have been a parish priest in a multi-parish benefice, at one point serving five churches and covering two further churches of a different denomination within an LEP. This deeply fulfilling ministry also gave me a realistic understanding of the major challenges facing the parish system, but I continue to believe that parish ministry, properly resourced, is the necessary bedrock of what the Church of England can offer its people. The Body of Christ is called to be as various in its local communities as the communities themselves, and should be wary of affinity marketing, especially at a time when divisiveness and conflict are exacerbated through the overweening marketing decisions of big tech.

I spent six years in SSM ministry, combining a full-time academic post at the University of Cambridge (where I taught and researched on the border between literature, Church history and theology in the period 1530-1700) with ministry in local parish churches, eventually heeding a call to bring my whole self to that ministry and leaving the academy. What I learnt within the academic disciplines - refined and changed by the immersive experience of priestly service - is now at the service of the Church. I write, and hope to write more: not only *Holiness and Desire* but also *The Eucharist in Four Dimensions* (2023), an examination of the contested place of communion in contemporary culture, and (in progress), *In the Body*, a book about the metaphors by which the Church understands itself and the effect on our behaviour in a time of heightened anxiety about risk.

My hope and prayer is that as a Dean of a small, vibrant Cathedral in a diocese where the nation's dilemmas are held in microcosm, with the background and knowledge I can bring, I may be freed to serve as God wills within the wider governance of the Church. I would offer my time, care and skill in continuing hope of the emerging unity of Christ's Church and its call to serve a world in crisis.

Elections to the General Synod
Deans of the Southern Province 2026

Nicholas Papadopulos
Dean of Salisbury

***Proposed by*: The Very Revd Joe Hawes, Dean of St Edmundsbury**

***Seconded by:* The Very Revd Toby Wright, Dean of Wells**

I have served as Dean of Salisbury since 2018, having spent five years as Residentiary Canon and Treasurer of Canterbury.

I led Salisbury Cathedral through the aftermath of the Novichok attack on the city, and through the Covid pandemic. I oversaw our implementation of the Cathedrals Measure and am a member of both the AEC Executive and the College of Deans' Executive.

I have previously held posts in parish ministry and as a bishop's chaplain (and before ordination I worked for seven years as a barrister specialising in criminal law).

I have been ordained for twenty-seven years and have never stood for election to the General Synod before. I do so now because **I believe I have sufficient experience of the Cathedral sector to represent us well in the next quinquennium**, and because I care deeply about some of the issues that are likely to be on the next Synod's agenda.

I often suggest to ordinands and curates that they consider Cathedral ministry. This is for the simple reason that I have found it both exhilarating and deeply satisfying. Cathedrals occupy a unique and precious place in the ecosystem of the Church of England: extraordinary buildings to which in the third decade of the twenty first century many still come - as worshippers and tourists, pilgrims and event-goers. The research presented to us at this year's National Cathedrals Conference confirmed our role as **places of community celebration and community cohesion, as key economic contributors as well as priceless heritage assets**.

Cathedrals are not ornamental islands of privilege. **They are at the forefront of the Church's mission** - places which nurture the faith of Christians but which also, crucially, offer the charism of the brief encounter: the chance exposure to beauty and wonder which prompts a more profound exploration.

Yet this vital space in the Church of England's landscape has for too long been ignored or taken for granted. With colleagues I worked to arrange the meeting in June 2026 between fellow Deans and our MPs - the beginning of a determined initiative to establish an endowment for the historic fabric of Cathedrals. This work must continue - engagement with the Church Commissioners and through the General Synod is the next step.

If I am elected I will make it my priority to be **a good advocate for the Cathedrals** for which we have responsibility and in which we believe.

In addition…some of you know that I spent a sabbatical in 2024 volunteering in occupied East Jerusalem as a human rights monitor. I retain a deep affection for **Palestine** and its people, and for our sister Diocese of Jerusalem. At its last meeting, the General Synod voted (at last) to receive the Kairos document and committed our Church to its study. I will take a keen interest in this process, supporting and challenging its development as necessary.

Lastly, I was bitterly disappointed at the failure of the LLF journey twelve months ago. I believe in **the full inclusion of our LGBTQ+** sisters and brothers in the liturgical and sacramental life of our Church and will use every opportunity to argue for it.

I hope you will give me your first preference vote – but if you cannot, I hope that you might give me your second.

Nick Papadopulos,

Salisbury,

September 2026.