

James Cary - General Synod Election 2021 Address

House of Laity, Diocese of Bath & Wells

Candidate: James Cary

Proposed by Katherine Cannell

Seconded by Kate Scorer

Who is James Cary?

Aged 45. Married to Melissa.

We have two daughters (13 & 11).

I live in Yeovil. I'm a member of St John's Church where I help with the Pathfinders group (11-14s) and run various evangelistic events.



I was born in Frome and raised on a dairy farm near Beckington. After university in Durham, I lived in London while I established myself as a BBC sitcom writer. I have since worked on *Miranda*, *My Family*, Milton Jones' radio shows and numerous comedies on BBC Radio 4 (*Hut 33*), CBBC (*Almost Never*) and CBeebies (*Swashbuckle*). I've also written two books on comedy and religion, *The Sacred Art of Joking* and *The Gospel According To A Sitcom Writer* (SPCK).

The Local Church

My wife and I moved back to Somerset because we are passionate about the mission of the Church of England in the diocese of Bath and Wells, to both adults and children. Parish churches are beacons of hope at the heart of communities, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. These parishes must be the main place where ministry and mission happen.

This is why, in the last five years, I've toured numerous churches in the UK with theatrical comedy shows, telling stories and explaining the gospel as part of Church history and heritage, including shows about the Reformation in 2017 (*A Monk's Tale*) and the murder of Thomas Becket in 2019 (*A Turbulent Priest*).

General Synod & Archbishops' Council

I was elected to represent Bath & Wells in the House of Laity at General Synod in 2015. I've spent six years learning how things work, playing my part on various committees and listening to Christians from across the traditions, which is where the vitality of the church comes from. This is why I remain committed to the Five Guiding Principles, developed when the women bishops' legislation was passed. I was pleased to see these reaffirmed in the last session of Synod.

I would love a chance to continue my work in General Synod which I currently represent on the **Archbishops' Council**. There I have tried to be a voice of the laity, of long-suffering church wardens and volunteers, of children, young people, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders.

Please vote for 'James Cary' for General Synod. Thank you.

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Children & Young People

Children and young people are not just the future of the church, but members of the church *now*. This is why I work with 11-14s at my church's Pathfinders group. I also use my media skills to work with **Faith in Kids**, producing podcasts and YouTube videos that help families grow together in their faith in Jesus Christ.

The church needs to be a place where children learn about Jesus Christ from God's Word. It must also be safe. I've been serving for a couple of years on the **National Safeguarding Steering Group**, overseeing all kinds of initiatives designed to protect the young and vulnerable. I would appreciate a chance to continue working to ensure the measures proposed are thorough, as well as workable, sensible and proportionate.

Digital Media & the Local Church

Since being elected, I've kept a close eye on how the Church of England's digital team have been making use of social media, and equipping and resourcing local churches to get a visible, user-friendly website up and running as quickly as possible. I am keen to ensure this team is given further resources, and that they continue to point people to local churches and communities. This is where we hear God's Word and celebrate the Lord's Supper together.

Listening & Welcoming

Even though serving on Synod – diocesan and deanery as well as general - can be tiring and challenging, I've relished the chance to be a part of the conversation, listening as well as contributing. It is vital we continue to do that during the *Living in Love and Faith* process. I remain in favour of the historic church teaching on human sexuality, but realise that there is so much work to be done. The Church of England must be a place where all can be welcomed, and where we all encounter Jesus Christ and all are challenged to live for Him, wherever He has placed us.

I would really value a first or high preference for me, **James Cary**, in this election. Thank you.

For more information:

If you have any questions for me at all, please email me at jamesedwardcary@gmail.com

You could also watch some of my videos on my YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/user/jamesedwardcary/videos

Or read my weekly column on SubStack: jamescary.substack.com

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