

Olabanji (Banji) Olanipekun

Nominated by Jay Norris and David Evans

My family and I joined Holy Trinity when we moved to Cheltenham in 2023. I am married to Enumovie, and we have three children – Tolu, Tosin and Tofunmi. This year marks our 20th wedding anniversary.

I grew up in a Christian home, but it was during my teenage years that God gave me a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and, by His grace, a new heart. As Ezekiel 36:26 says, “He will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” He filled me with unspeakable joy and set my heart at peace. Since then, I have continued to grow in my faith, particularly through friendships formed in our Church Life Group and through completing the FORM mentoring programme at Trinity.

I have a deep passion for seeing people come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I have loved serving on the Alpha team and on Street Teams, part of Trinity’s Transform ministry that supports vulnerable and homeless individuals in the local community. Occasionally, you might find me on the High Street witnessing and giving out New Testaments as part of the outreach for Good News For Everyone (formerly The Gideons). I am passionate about the mission of the Church because I believe, as Daniel 12:3 reminds us, that “those who are wise shall shine ... and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”

Why I am standing

It is this passion for Christ and His Church that motivates me to stand for General Synod. I want to see a **strong and vibrant Church of England** that is confident in proclaiming Jesus Christ and committed to carrying out the mission God has entrusted to us.

I want to bring a voice that is:

- **Constructive and prayerful**, willing to listen to others, engage with different perspectives and make difficult decisions with courage, humility and discernment; always leaning on the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- **Passionate about mission and evangelism**, with a desire to see the Church grow through proclaiming the gospel, making disciples and reaching those who do not yet know Christ – giving hope to a hurting world.
- **Focused on the health of local churches**, recognising that Synod's decisions should ultimately serve and strengthen the ministry of churches, clergy and lay people across the country by helping the local church to flourish and equipping it to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ.
- **Committed to good stewardship and governance**, ensuring that the resources God has entrusted to the Church are used wisely and effectively in support of its mission.

What I would bring

Before moving to Cheltenham, I served our local church in Reading for over 15 years in a variety of roles, including Youth Leader, Worship Team Lead, Treasurer and, latterly, Trustee.

These experiences have given me a broad understanding of church life, ministry and the responsibilities involved in leading and supporting a charitable organisation.

Professionally, I qualified as a Chartered Certified Accountant with PwC London in 2012. Over the years, I have seen first-hand the impact that good leadership can have on the success of an organisation. I hope to bring to Synod my experience of:

- accounting and tax;
- leading teams;
- delivering complex projects;
- analytical and strategic thinking; and
- charity governance and financial stewardship.

I believe these experiences would enable me to make a practical contribution to the work of General Synod, particularly when considering the Church's resources, structures, governance and priorities. I would want us to be good stewards, accountable, and always making wise decisions with the resources that God has entrusted to us.

I do not underestimate the responsibility of serving on General Synod. It requires humility, courage, careful listening and a willingness to engage with people who may hold different views. I would seek to represent not simply my own views, but the wider Church, seeking to contribute with integrity and wisdom. Above all, I would want to approach the role prayerfully, seeking God's wisdom and relying on the Holy Spirit, rather than on my own understanding.

Daniel 11:32 says, "the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits." I believe that, with courage and by leaning on God's discernment, God can use us as His Church to do amazing things.

We are at a critical moment, but we are in for special times ahead. I would be honoured to serve on General Synod and to play my part in seeing a strong, vibrant and faithful Church of England proclaim Christ, make disciples, and reaching many more people with the good news of Jesus Christ.

See video – https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z1It92fxEy84vFJjElaxlpnPysRodm_i/view?usp=sharing

LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/in/olabanji-olanipekun-banji/>

