

Jonathan Frais LLB, BA, Dip. Theol
Rector of St Mark's Church (Bexhill-on-Sea)
Rural Dean of Battle and Bexhill

Proposer: the Revd Matthew Foy,
Rural Dean of Hastings
(and Acting Archdeacon of Hastings)

Seconder: the Revd Marc Lloyd,
Rural Dean of Dallington
(and also Acting Archdeacon of Hastings)



Contact me on 01424 843 733 or Rector@stmarkslittlecommon.co.uk

Dear fellow clergy in the Diocese of Chichester,

Who I am

I am 60 years old (born in 1965) and was married to Ruth in 1999.

We have four children. The oldest lives in London, the middle two are at university, and one is entering Year 11 at St Catherine's College (a Church of England Academy) in Eastbourne.

I have been at St Mark's, Little Common for twenty years. I am Chair of Churches Together in Bexhill (overseeing the work of Bexhill Foodbank and Advice Centre) and convenor of the ecumenical clergy group. I am also Chaplain to the Royal British Legion (village branch).

Prior to that, I was Anglican Chaplain in Kyiv (Ukraine), 1999-2005, and Assistant Chaplain at St Andrew's, Moscow, 1996-99 (supported by Intercontinental Church Society).

For several years I was a board member for a mission society operating in Central Asia which supported churches in Islamic regions of the Former Soviet Union, and Iran and Afghanistan.

My hobbies are reading, sea swimming, and walking with my family along the coast.

I am a member of the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and Church Society.

The parish system is important to me; and I thank God that St Mark's is growing.

What I believe

God has made himself known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the gospel of Jesus answers our deepest questions. The Ten Commandments are our guide for holiness and the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds summarise and proclaim the bigger story which we inhabit. The Lord's Prayer is the framework for our prayers and I acknowledge the reality of the spiritual battle.

How I have served

2010-2015 General Synod, for the Diocese of Chichester (attending all sessions)

2000-2005, General Synod, for the Diocese in Europe (attending all sessions)

It is a privilege to contribute through questions, speeches, amendments and letters to revision committees. It is also a rich learning experience as you listen to what matters to other people and reflect on your own views. I remember arguing (unsuccessfully!) for a reference to Noah in the Common Worship baptism liturgy (as we have in the BCP). Currently, I sit on Diocesan Synod. May those who represent this Diocese bring it credit.

The challenges ahead

Vision and Strategy. At a time of spiritual searching, clergy need to be encouraged to maintain the integrity of the Anglican tradition which is both Catholic and Reformed. The Church of England is liturgical and pastoral with a mission of presence and engagement.

Marriage and Children. Family deterioration has assisted the youth mental health crisis. Let the Church of England be known for its support for marriage and the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood.

Vocations and CDMs. Clergy work long hours for little pay and receive much criticism while feeling isolated. They proclaim good news but the threat of legal challenge is intimidating. Systems and structures must be just and fair so that they operate with integrity and care.

LLF (Living in Love and Faith). How on earth have we let such confusion reign in our church? Jesus spoke on sex and told us where it belongs (Matthew 19:5 quoting “one flesh” from Genesis 2:24) and he is the King of Love. If change is sought to the doctrine of the C of E, then it should reach at least a two-thirds majority (under Canon B2).

Women and Men in Ministry. After lengthy, heated and divisive debate, Synod came to a clear decision with Five Guiding Principles to support mutual flourishing. It makes sense.

Issues around the start and end of life. Peers in the House of Lords are debating the ‘Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life)’ Bill (passed by MPs on 20 June) and the Crime and Policing Bill (amended by MPs on 17 June so that the life of an unborn child may be taken up to birth without sanction). May the Church defend the vulnerable and stand for the voiceless.

Global challenges. We need to stand against violent aggressors such as Russia and Iran. Let us continue to seek accurate information on climate change and appreciate renewable energy sources. And may we identify with the persecuted church in North Korea, China, Afghanistan, northern Nigeria and elsewhere.

Thank you, Jonathan

“We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world
by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory”
– A General Thanksgiving, BCP

Please give me your Number One preference vote.