

Revd Dr Joel Love

Vicar of Rochester St Peter & St Margaret
Priest in Charge of Borstal St Matthew

I grew up in an independent Evangelical Church. My first experiences of leadership were at Christian youth camps and holiday bible clubs. I became an Anglican in 2001, attracted by the theology, worship, and community engagement of my parish Church. I have found the Church of England to be a safe place for me as a gay man. My hope is that the Church will continue to welcome LGBT+ people and help them grow as followers of Jesus.



My previous career was in higher education and modern languages. My postgraduate research focussed on the literature and theology of the Swiss and German Reformations. I have published chapters in edited collections on preaching, vows, conversation, and liturgy. I am an uncle to six nephews and two nieces, a godparent, a brother, and a friend to many. I have never married.

Ordained in 2011, I have been in Rochester since 2015. I am licensed to two parishes in the Rochester Mission Cluster, both of which have new housing alongside existing areas of urban deprivation. Our response to these challenges has always been collaborative. I am also involved in the discernment and formation of people for lay and ordained ministry. I offer spiritual direction and occasionally lead quiet days. I am part of the diocesan team that delivers training to address different forms of bias. I help to lead A Seat at the Table at Rochester Cathedral, and I serve as chaplain to the Living in Love and Faith process and the LLF consultative group for the diocese.

My experience in Church representation includes two terms on diocesan synods; chairing deanery meetings when I was acting area dean; being a lay member of PCC long before I became ex officio.

The reason I am standing for General Synod is to continue the work I have begun with Living in Love and Faith. If elected, I will bring to synod my experience of listening and pastoral supporting for people from all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, and theological traditions. I believe that the Holy Spirit will guide this synod to discern a way forward that is Christ-centred, loving, and mutually respectful. I am standing as an Inclusive Church candidate because I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.

My priorities on synod will be:

- Mission and evangelism for the twenty-first century
- Sacramental worship and a Christian presence in every community
- Urgent responses to climate change
- Flexible and collaborative structures in the service of mission
- Lay leadership and discipleship
- Clergy wellbeing