



The Revd. Mark Tariq Vicar of Bishop Ridley Church

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In the coming election to the House of clergy of the General Synod, I write to ask you to give me your first preference vote or your high preference vote. I am standing because I believe that Rochester Diocese clergy representatives should include clergy with a breadth of experience from an ethnically diverse background.

I am married to Helene, and we have five children.

My single mother and grandparents raised me in Germany. I attended my local Roman Catholic Church and Roman Catholic primary school in Germany.

My childhood took an unexpected turn of events when I moved to my Pakistani Father and his family when I was 11 years old, who was also living in Germany at the time. Soon after I moved, I attended the local mosque and learned parts of the Koran.

At 17 I left home and started an apprenticeship in wholesale and foreign trade. By the time I was 22, I regularly attended a young adult's church group, which had a lasting impact on my Christian faith.

I first experienced a call to ordained ministry after my wife and I decided to move to London in 2006 after working for my Father in law's business situated in Ukraine. The initial plan was to study in London and, after completion travelling around south-east Asia.

Well, we made it as far as central London when I took up a position as a lay assistant at a local Church. When the call to ordained ministry became stronger, I started a two-year apprenticeship at All Souls Clubhouse to test my calling.

From looking after the elderly in the morning to running afternoon school clubs for the local church primary school and youth groups in the evenings. I also was very much involved with helping the homeless in the West End.

Eventually, the Diocese of London sent me for ordination training to Wycliffe Hall Oxford. In June 2012, I started my curacy in the diocese of Portsmouth at St. Mary's Liss, where I learned to appreciate the breadth of the Anglican tradition. Alongside being the Curate at St. Mary's, I organised and ran the local 'Liss Foodbank'.

I am now the Vicar of Bishop Ridley Church Falconwood since January 2016.

I have always been close to those who are on the fringes of church life and society. May it be the homeless, elderly, or single mothers and their children, which will always be the case.

My varied life experiences have given me a deep insight into the topics of religious and political extremism.

I was raised predominantly by my grandparents in a German right-wing environment. Later, when I was living with my Father, I gained a deep insight into Islam when he and I travelled to Pakistan. My time in Ukraine, when I worked for my Father-in-law, showed me what separatist nationalism can do to a country.

All those experiences have served me well over the years in my ministry in dealing with fundamentalist religious or extreme secular viewpoints. Since 2015 I have been invited to give talks and lectures on extremism in the UK and Germany. Currently, I am in the late stages of finishing an MA in Holocaust and Genocide.

I value and treasure the breadth of the Anglican Communion. I believe that we Anglicans have everything we need to listen to and respect each other despite our theological differences to cement a unified Christian witness.

It is an honour to be standing in this election as a clergy representative. Please support me with your first or your high preference vote, and I will be pleased to tackle especially issues including Race and Housing and Ethical Investments as one of your clergy representatives at the General Synod.

Mark