

Charlotte Gauthier

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About Me

Born in the US, I have considered the UK my home since I was a small child, and am glad to now live here permanently. I was raised Presbyterian, and after a period of teenage atheism fell in love with the Church of England – its great intellectual tradition, the beauty of its music and liturgy, and most importantly its mission to provide a Christian presence in every community.



I was confirmed in the Church of England as an adult several years ago, and regularly volunteer in my parish of Great St Bartholomew as sidesman, altar server, doorwarden, and lately as the editor of a forthcoming book on the 900-year history of our parish. I also co-run a bi-weekly Bible study and participate in several regular theology and church history discussion groups.

My academic background is in church history, and I am presently writing a PhD on the political and social history of the English Church just prior to the Reformation. I have lectured in church history and the history of theology at university level, and am especially interested in making these topics accessible to interested laypeople and clergy outside of a formal academic setting – for example by facilitating their study in parishes as part of adult formation.

In my working life, I have held managerial positions at the intersection of business, technology, and design for major magazines and newspapers in the US, Germany, and the UK. Whilst working for The Guardian, I led a team researching how people understand and respond to what they read online. My understanding of digital outreach techniques will, I hope, prove useful to a Church whose mission field has increasingly spread to the digital world.

As an experienced and empathetic manager, I am equally comfortable reading a balance sheet and providing pastoral care and support to those who may be struggling in roles that can sometimes feel all-consuming – two areas in which the Church of England has not always acquitted itself well of late, and in which we must do better. My experience in both the business and academic worlds has convinced me that managerialism has no place in the Church of England, though prudent and faithful stewardship of our goodly heritage – guided by the Holy Spirit – certainly does.

I believe in a Church of England that:

+ Cherishes the parish as the centre of its common life

Our parishes represent God's people in all their glorious diversity, and are one of the few places where people of every age group, social class, political belief, and ethnic background can come together to serve the God who transcends their differences. The parish church is also an 'engine of mission' to help us reach those

who might never yet have set foot inside; our service in the wider community and the presence of committed local clergy and laypeople spreads the powerful message of God's love far beyond the four walls of the church.

The parish is where the real work of the Church of England is done, and no centralised mission initiative can replace it. We must therefore support measures which will strengthen the parochial system, return money from the centre to the parish, and resource parishes, laity, and clergy across England in their mission to serve Christ in our communities.

Cherishing the parish also means not paving the way for parish churches to be shuttered and church communities dispossessed without being consulted. A proposed revision to the Mission & Pastoral Measure 2011 would deny local churches and communities the ability to contest plans to close their churches or make their clergy redundant and throw them out of their homes. Robbing communities of the dignity of being heard when their parish church is under threat is a wrong we simply cannot commit.

+ **Consciously and effectively reaches out to children, young people, the unchurched, and other underrepresented groups**

Christ commands us to go out and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Now more than ever, we need to take the Great Commission seriously. This means reaching out not only to those who have fallen away, but especially to those who have grown up without being taught even the basic tenets of the Christian faith.

To do this, we must be willing to embrace new ways of reaching out to people and to learn from the successes of Church communities of all traditions. This does not mean pursuing novelty for its own sake or uncritically embracing secular culture to appear 'relevant'. We are called not to be conformed to this world, but to challenge the culture with a coherent and authentic presentation of the Gospel. Let us do so with confidence in Christ and his saving message.

+ **Seeks to preserve and to share its unique patrimony of beauty and culture**

The Book of Common Prayer and the English choral tradition are things to be celebrated, preserved, and – most importantly – invested in so that they can be shared with a new generation of churchgoers. Research shows that attendance at cathedral services grew by 13% in the decade ending in 2019, due at least in part to their investment in music and other forms of local outreach. Parish churches can learn from this successful model of mission, and we as a Church should consider how we can resource parishes to offer more music outreach and other pathways to faith in their communities, including by allowing SDF funds to be used for parochial ministry and mission.

I would be honoured to receive your high-preference vote so that together we can save the parish and share the beauty of holiness with the next generation of churchgoers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss these or other matters.