PLEASE VOTE!

I'm a 36-years-old writer living in London. I've enjoyed going to evangelical churches with Sue Breen, although my home is St Anne’s in Soho.

i. Inclusion – particularly of young LGBT people.
As someone who was bullied at school because of my sexual orientation, I particularly enjoy speaking in school assemblies about my own coming out experiences as a gay man and my Christianity. I think it’s wrong that anyone should have to choose between their faith and their sexual orientation or gender identity. I strongly believe that the Church of England can be an affirming and supportive place for everyone. My journey with Christianity did not begin until 2010, following my HIV diagnosis. I was 24-years-old at the time. Although busy working as a lawyer, I felt isolated and struggled with my mental health. I found inclusive churches in London. I turn to Jesus when situations appear overwhelming and with Christianity in my life I feel more empowered than ever before.

ii. Social justice, including asylum.
My HIV diagnosis taught me what it feels like to be an outsider. In 2010, I went from being a confident young man to suddenly living with the stigma of HIV. With this life changing diagnosis I began to understand what it means to be disenfranchised. I campaign for social justice and equality for all, having committed myself fully to human rights campaigning and writing in 2015, from HIV, LGBT rights, asylum, homelessness, to global human rights and faith inclusion. My faith underpins my life. I would like to see the Church of England taking a lead on more human rights issues globally. Is not everyone a child of God, made in his image?

iii. Reaching the unreached.
I’ve come to faith relatively recently, and I know there are lots more, especially LGBT people. For most of my teens and the first half of my twenties I would have described myself as an agnostic. I visited churches over my lunch break from work, initially to savour the sense of calm and admire the architecture. I began “trying out” different church services, mostly Church of England, working my way along Fleet Street and the Strand. One weekend, in 2014, I stumbled across St John’s in Waterloo. St John’s was very welcoming and I became involved in the activities of the church, from helping the homeless to altar service, nourishing my faith. On 21 May 2015, the day before my thirtieth birthday, I was confirmed at Southwark Cathedral. Southwark Cathedral has the UK’s only HIV/AIDS chapel, so this beautifully brought together two aspects of my identity, my HIV and my faith.

Continued...
From 2016, I increasingly began to worship at St Anne’s in Soho, becoming a member of the PCC. This growing church supports a diverse range of people, embracing different backgrounds, ages and theologies and not just LGBT people. We help homeless people in central London and during the pandemic opened up to local organisations, including the school and 24 addiction recovery programmes.

I worked as a lawyer from 2009 to 2015 and am willing to involve myself in the Synod’s broad agenda, from clergy pensions and building regulations to issues raised by Living in Love and Faith.

Sue Breen has kindly said the following:

“Philip combines a genuine curiosity and concern for the wider church with a lawyer’s incisive mind and attention to detail. His diverse life experience and knowledge is just what is needed for this upcoming Synod.”
Sue Breen, General Synod member for London 2015-21

Thank you for reading my election statement. Please give me your first preference vote. I undertake to serve the interests of the diocese if elected. In any event, please exercise your vote prayerfully and give me the highest preference vote you feel able.

If you would like to speak to me, or raise any issues, please contact me on 07379489968 or email info@philipchristopherbaldwin.com.