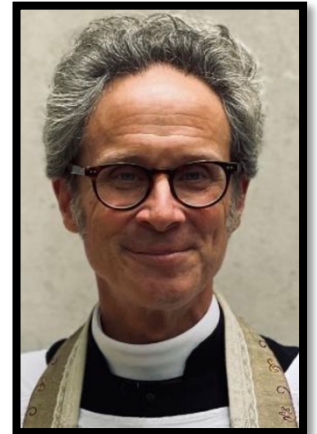


THE REV'D JONATHAN BESWICK

Rector of St Peter's, London Docks with St John of Wapping

Who am I? I live in Wapping, in St Peter's Clergy House, with my family. I was baptised when a few days old in my local parish church in Wiltshire and the Church of England has been my home ever since. I have served in full-time parish ministry for 31 years and believe that being a parish priest is the best job in the world. I have a deep commitment to the parish system and have been fortunate to witness it flourishing in the places in which I have served. I love the rich variety of our parish life and the way in which it makes it possible for us to proclaim the Gospel with confidence and enthusiasm to all people. I have been an active School Governor for 24 years and was previously a member of General Synod from 2011-2018 (Oxford). I treasure the place of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the life of our Church and am joint-editor of the Prayer Book Society's journal *Faith and Worship*, whilst also serving as chaplain to the annual conference. I am a member of the London Library, the Velocette Owners Club and the British Bee-Keeping Association.



Why am I standing? I am standing in support of the *Save the Parish* movement. I believe that the parish system, properly resourced, remains not only the right way but the **best** way for the Church of England to proclaim the love of God in every community in this country. The work of *Save the Parish* has been impressive over the last five years and I was greatly enthused by the passionate and realistic spirit of the conference that was held in Smithfield this summer. *Save the Parish* is working to restore **our** historic endowments (held by the Church Commissioners and currently valued at £11.6 billion) to their rightful purpose, which is to support parish ministry **at the point of delivery**.

What will you get for your vote? You will get an enthusiastic and experienced priest who 'knows what it's like' on the front-line and who goes in to bat, with confidence and determination, on **your** behalf, with **your** interests and concerns at heart. I am proud to be a priest of the Church of England. *Save the Parish* is determined to improve the conditions in which the clergy serve: we are working on a 'Charter of Care' for the clergy and also on the renewal of a system of well-resourced and rigorous theological training and formation.

It doesn't have to be like this! For too long there has seemed to be no remedy to the sad march of decline in the Church of England: no remedy, that is, until *Save the Parish* came along, analysed the annual accounts of every diocese, and began to address the root causes of our difficulties. The wearisome formula of fewer clergy (often feeling isolated and anxious) serving ever-larger parishes with less support and a rapidly growing central bureaucracy has been our direction of travel for far too long: it doesn't have to be like this!

More clergy? Yes please! There need not be a shortage of clergy: it is a wonderful vocation and one into which we have a duty to encourage the next generation of youngsters **and the money is there to pay for it**. Parochial clergy (both stipendiary and self-supporting equally) must be set free to live the life to which they have been called rather than struggling with the ever-increasing demands of compliance and common fund and the burden that this places on us and on our people. I will be resolute in working towards our endowment being used **primarily for parish ministry**. We would then be working towards a **reduction** in common fund levels because a proportion of the cost of the ministry of a parish would be met from these endowments-as was always intended. This will allow more of our small parishes and our parishes in poor areas to continue to be served without immediate threat of suspension, amalgamation or closure: so often these are the parishes in which the Gospel is most keenly lived and experienced.

What about all the other issues that are being debated by General Synod? I believe that the campaign to secure the future of our parish ministry now transcends all other issues because, without a parish system, everything else falls away. If a parish church is closed and sold off for redevelopment there will be no opportunity for us to do anything else, however fervent our beliefs! I have always done my best, for the sake of the Gospel, to work across the traditions and discover what we have in common rather than what separates us. This is reflected in my personal friendships.

Things new and old: I am a fairly traditional soul, usually described as a Prayer-Book Catholic, with all that goes with that in terms of sacrament, order and the sacredness of the gift of human life. I am also passionate that a parish church should be a place with a great warmth of welcome to all who choose to come and be part of her life. Mindful of my own frailties, I strive to uphold the traditional teachings of the church on scripture, sacrament and discipleship and to do so in a manner that is invitational and encouraging. I uphold the *Five Guiding Principles* and encourage others to do likewise. I have been nurtured in the world of choral Anglican worship, having undergone conversion as a teenager at a Billy Graham rally. After leaving school, I spent five years as a member of an Anglican religious community.



All sorts and conditions: I delight in the fact that the Church of England is both catholic and reformed. I believe this gives us a unique power to minister to the needs of a wide range of people, and rightly so: because we are the Established Church, for the people of this country, regardless of the extent of their personal Christian convictions. We specialise in not being too specialised, except in declaring God's love to all of his people.

What else do I do? I keep bees in our roof-garden; I am currently learning how to restore clocks (now on clock no.4); I am a life-long motorcyclist, loving the freedom of the open road; I am passionate about England cricket (not always an easy path...); I play traditional bluegrass/folk fiddle and delight in spending time with my family whenever possible. And we share our home and life with a fantastic dog called Alfie: a wire-haired dachshund of character.



Questions: I will always do my best to answer your questions promptly and clearly. Please don't hesitate to make contact:

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Thank you: I am honoured to be nominated by two dear friends and colleagues: Prebendary Taemin Oh and the Rev'd Richard Bray. Taemin is Vicar of All Saints', Highgate (Edmonton Area) and was, many years ago, a placement student with me for two years in Oxford, whilst training for ministry. Richard is a near neighbour to us in the East End and Rector of St Anne's, Limehouse. Thank you, both.

My prayer is for a Church of England that is an attractive and flourishing presence in every community, served by an enthusiastic and confident clergy, who are rightly proud of the dignity and importance of their calling. If what I have said resonates with you then please consider giving me either your first or a high-preference vote. Thank you.