

General Council Elections 2023

Theology & Resources Portfolio Nomination Form

Name: Anika Goddard



Why are you standing for election to GC?

On my second day of uni, I was invited along to the Cambridge branch of SCM by a very kind person I met in chapel. Throughout my first year, SCM was a place of loving and inclusive Christian community which I'd never experienced before. Having left the conservative church I grew up in, I can honestly say that if it weren't for SCM I probably wouldn't have ended up involved in faith much at uni. This academic year, I've loved co-presiding Cambridge SCM and getting to know SCM more on a national level. A large part of why I'd like to stand for General Council is that I met several of the current General Council whilst volunteering at Greenbelt last year. First and foremost, I had such a wonderful time with everyone. Seeing the way in which General Council members were doing very different things across the board to serve their skill sets and the wider movement has encouraged me to see General Council as a way for members of SCM to contribute what they can to helping out with the Movement as a whole.

What portfolio are you standing for?

I'd like to stand for Theology & Resources. I'd love to work with SCM learning more about theology and helping to distribute that through the blog and other resources. I've really enjoyed learning more about Dietrich Bonhoeffer in particular as a theologian - I'm not sure how much General Council has to do with the prominence his thinking has had within the Movement, but I'd love to help continue that.

Tell us a bit about yourself:

I'm a second-year undergraduate studying English at Cambridge, so a bit too much of my time is just taken up with work! I recently completed a dissertation I've loved, on George Herbert, who was a 17th-century devotional poet and who wrote some of the most spiritually moving poetry I've ever encountered. Other uni societies I'm involved in include Birdsoc (yes, birdwatching!); LGBTQ+ soc; poetry society; and acting as a chapel secretary. When I'm not in Cambridge, I set aside time to write creatively, walk the southwest coastal path and practise watercolour painting. Next on my non-degree-related to-read list is Hanya Yanagihara's "A Little Life", although I've been told to wait until I'm in a really happy mood to read it!

What skills would you bring to General Council?

I love getting to know new people, especially within faith where knowing a new person means getting to encounter God in a new way. Chatting theology with people is one of my favourite things to do, and something I've noticed is that my evangelical church background helps me as a queer progressive Christian to understand, if not endorse, Church perspectives that are less inclusive or are on their slow way to being more inclusive (think a "3" on the honest church scale!) I can't pretend to be overly knowledgeable about theology already, but enjoy reading and learning. I enjoy coming up with and seeing through new ideas - it seems kind of silly, but last term in Cambridge SCM we had our first communal soup night and it was so well received.

How have you been involved in SCM as a member?

I've been a member of SCM Cambridge (not quite the same) since October 2021. I signed up to SCM national after the Berlin trip and volunteering at Greenbelt last year. It's been so valuable to have the national contact with SCM this year as co-president of the Cambridge branch, especially as we've grown and sought advice on where to go from here.

What would you like to achieve if you are elected?

I'd like to do a series of blog posts by student members of SCM around the country about how their SCM branches meet together (perhaps in the form of interviews). On the theology side of things, it would be great to continue working with the Bonhoeffer trust, and to maybe create some theological resources around theological and spiritual poems - theology shouldn't just be something to read about, but something to feel deeply as truth. I'd love to focus on mysticism (and the mystics of our times, like Simone Weil), as well as ecological theology and how we interact spiritually with the planet around us.