

Revd. Canon Amanda Barraclough.

I am standing for General Synod because I long to see parish ministry reflecting the rich diversity and inclusivity of the communities we serve, and I am passionate about clergy wellbeing.

Proposer: Revd Canon Eleanor Robertshaw (General Synod)

Seconder: Revd Canon Phil Batchford



I would welcome your first preference vote.

Who am I?

My love for the Church of England began soon after coming to faith in my early teens, worshipping in the only church I could reach, in the rural hamlet where we then lived. Later engagement with a variety of congregations has led me to treasure the rich diversity and breadth of tradition which makes up the Church.

After completing an undergraduate degree in Religious Studies, and living, newly married, in a northern mining community, I worked for a building society and, whilst my three children were young, worked to assist students who needed additional support in mainstream education. This, alongside a growing lay ministry, taught me the value of building bridges of connection to enable fruitful learning. It is a skill I have sought to develop in ministry since my ordination 25 years ago.

Ministry contexts for me have varied from large estate ministry with significant levels of deprivation, to suburban contexts where wealth and need are often closely intertwined. I've ministered in a congregation and community where the impact of long term abuse by clergy has led to damage and dysfunction. As a result, I'm passionate about the centrality of **Safeguarding** to the life of God's church. For many years a trustee of ReSource (formerly Anglican Renewal Ministries), I take delight in the grassroots ministry of 'little, local, ordinary' parishes, looking for signs of the Spirit's renewing activity, and believe in investing in relationships as the heart of mission. From school assemblies, story-time at the local pre-school nursery, Care Home Communion ministry, and occasional offices, nurturing faith and developing gifts in others, there really is nothing equal to the glory, mess and variety of parish ministry!

- Longstanding **Diocesan Synod** member
- **Experience as Area Dean.** I appreciate the strategic dynamics of Diocesan life.
- **Dean of Women's Ministry for last 7 years.** I have a respected voice to speak for gender justice in the Diocese. As a member of NADAWM I have served at national level on Transformations Steering Group, and understand how to work for strategic change.
- As a full **member of the Bishop's Senior Staff Team**, I have gained a mature appreciation of the development, articulation and implementation of strategic change.
- Strong commitment to **clergy well-being**. I have researched into experience of ordained women taking maternity leave; and also clergy whose ministry has been adversely impacted by bullying and harassment. I am active in policy development and culture change to embody best practice.
- As a **Bishop's Advisor**, I am heartened by the breadth of diversity of those now discerning a vocation, and celebrate being part of a church where such diversity is increasingly normal, more fully reflecting the radical inclusivity of the Gospel.

What is important to me?

Grassroots parish ministry, in all its rich diversity, which is rooted in and responsive to the community it serves, is the bedrock of Anglican life and ministry. The rapidly changing face of the church in community, and what is possible with scarcity of resources, is a driver to creativity and innovation. This keeps the church vision-focussed. It enables us to be responsive to the Spirit's activity in the church and in the world. We are at a moment of huge opportunity and challenge, calling us out to be people of imaginative faith, able to step into uncertain times with a conviction that God is at work far beyond our limited spheres of influence. Developing lay leadership and normalising discipleship patterns are key to realising this. So too is nurturing undefended leaders who will release others into surprising fields of ministry.

A passionate commitment to clergy well-being. The demands on ordained ministers are changing rapidly. We face the challenges of reducing availability of volunteers, aging congregations and buildings which are costly to maintain and difficult to adapt to new patterns of ministry. This can lead to burnout and exhaustion. Accountability and healthy support structures are more vital than ever. Congregational anxieties about scarcity of resources and long-term viability can generate conflict. This, if unaddressed, can lead to bullying behaviours which jeopardise the ability of churches to be a safe space for all. Developing secure structures, codes of conduct for PCCs and churches which are confident to address conflict in healthy ways are vital. I welcome the CCM as a more appropriate mechanism for handling complaints against clergy. I would support action taken to ensure clergy are able to plan for retirement well.

A church which is generous in its inclusivity. Churches able to recognise and celebrate the likeness of God and the activity of the Spirit in all, and in particular those who have often been marginalised in the church. This includes women, the disabled, those who identify as LGBTQI+, those who have been discriminated against on the grounds of race, or socio-economic background, and those who are neuro-diverse. I believe that the rich diversity and breadth of the church should have room for those who would welcome the use of Prayers of Love and Faith, whilst honouring the integrity of those who on the grounds of conscience are unable to do so. Generous inclusivity should include a commitment to support, financially and otherwise, those within the Church whom we disagree. Disagreement should retain a humble commitment to dialogue and journeying alongside the other. The world, fractured and divided, needs to see a church which can live with difference and behave with grace and generosity.

A church which fully inhabits and displays the Five Marks of Mission, and in particular working to transform inequitable societal structures, offering a prophetic voice in contexts where often the church is the only advocate on the ground to speak up for those who experience injustice. To press forward in a commitment to Net Zero as an ambition, as an expression of our responsibility to cherish the finite resources of the planet we are called to steward.

'Amanda's experience across a diverse range of parishes, her roles in advocating for female clergy and her commitment to inclusivity mean that she has a whole range of skills to bring to the General Synod. I know that, if elected, she would be a fantastic addition to the 'Sheffield team'. (Revd. Canon Eleanor Robertshaw)

'Amanda is passionate for the renewal of the church and committed to listening to the voices of the marginalised. Her breadth of experience across the life of our diocese ensures she is ideally suited to represent the life of our diocese in General Synod' (Revd. Canon Phil Batchford)

I would be grateful if you would consider me for your first preference vote.