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Evangelism + Mission + Inclusion & Participation

General Synod Member 2018-2021

Proposed by the **Revd Sandra Schloss**, Vicar of St Luke's, Peckham, Area Dean of Camberwell, Woolwich Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns Committee Secretary

Seconded by the **Revd Canon Anna Eltringham**, Team Rector, Oxted Team of Churches and Dean of Women's Ministry



'You are precious in my sight and honoured, and I love you.' (Isaiah 43:4)

God's amazing love for everyone is what I am most passionate about sharing.

I want more and more people to know God's love. I want more people to come to a joyful faith in Jesus Christ so that together we can worship God and change our world.

If you do too, please place me as number ONE on your voting paper! (or as high a number as possible!)

Who am I? - Ten things you should know about me:

1. parish priest of a growing, diverse, inner-city estate church, with a large proportion of children and young people who play a full and active part in church life
2. in the modern catholic tradition, and equally likely to choose hymns and songs by Graham Kendrick, Matt Maher, Gregory Dix, or a west African chorus –happy to dance and clap and play my sax in church!
3. passionate about parish ministry, focussed on the church family and parish community
4. committed to both traditional church and to new ways of sharing the Gospel with people outside Church
5. passionate about outward mission and evangelism in our community
6. served as an Area Dean in Southwark for five years, also a long-serving BAP Adviser and Examining Chaplain, and honorary Priest Vicar at Westminster Abbey
7. Jamaican born, Lincolnshire bred, Southwark by choice!
8. proud Dad to three amazing teenaged girls who were in the public gallery at General Synod for my Private Members Motion on the Windrush Generation, which was voted for unanimously across Synod
9. passionate Blood and Plasma donor, just like my Grandad taught me!
10. runner, photographer, saxophonist, and lockdown houseplant lover!

My time on Synod so far (2018-2021) I have enjoyed my time at General Synod since being elected in a by-election in January 2018 and feel that I have managed to make a positive contribution both in the public sessions, but also behind the scenes and in between Synod meetings. So thank you for voting for me then! I hope you will consider electing me again as a Southwark Clergy member, as I would really like to serve on Synod again, and to have the chance to serve from the beginning of a new five-year period. I want to make a real difference! And I am committed to helping make Synod as effective and positive as possible.

During my time on Synod I have:

- 1) learnt a lot about how Synod works, including securing a **Private Members Motion on Racial Justice** (Windrush Legacy and Commitment, Feb 2018 – passed unanimously by Synod and covered positively in the national press)
- 2) stood and been **elected to serve on the Appointments Committee** of General Synod which plays a significant role in appointments on Synod and in the wider Church from chairs and members of groups, to delegates to ecumenical gatherings, to members of commissions like Faith and Order and Liturgical Commissions – always working for diversity of church tradition and people's protected characteristics
- 3) **listened carefully** to the views of people who have contacted me about issues coming up at Synod, and spoken up for **clergy wellbeing** around stipends and retirement issues for clergy who don't own property
- 4) **worked to increase my own capacity** and to form relationships with other people committed to racial justice in the Church, both people of global majority heritage and those of UK majority heritage
- 5) **encouraged other clergy and lay people** to consider standing for General Synod, as I truly believe Synod needs more representative and new voices and perspectives
- 6) become convinced that General Synod can play a part in the real flourishing of Christ's Church in our mission and ministry, but needs to be **more representative** of the whole Body of Christ

The new five-year Synod period: 2021-2026 We are all reflecting on what life in Church and in the world will look like in the short and medium term (and, eventually, beyond that). I believe that we need to ask ourselves what's changed for our priorities, and how do we emerge well as a Church from the last 18 months in the light of:

1. The trauma and loss of **covid-19** itself, but also the awful health and other **inequalities** it exposed which had been an ordinary part of life for many people in our nation, our Church and our world.
2. The brutal, public murder of Mr George Floyd which brought sudden and global awareness of, and attention to the terrible **racial violence and racial injustice** which has been experienced by global majority people for hundreds of years.
3. The **climate crisis** which is still to be treated with the urgency it really demands.
4. The questions of **gender- and sexuality-based violence and discrimination** which we have seen at home and around the world perpetrated by individuals, groups and even governments.

The covid-19 pandemic showed that our world and our Church can act urgently and change our way of life drastically and almost instantly when we feel under immediate threat. I believe that the General Synod must listen to the whole Church, as well as wider society, and ask ourselves: How can we as a Church speak prophetically to call for a 'new normal' as we emerge from lockdown – one which doesn't tolerate injustice to people and planet? And crucially, what should that 'new normal' actually look like in practice for ordinary people in our churches, chaplaincies and parish communities. I believe our nation needs **a confident Christian voice speaking boldly and plainly for justice for everyone**, and especially people who are poor, disadvantaged, and discriminated against.

I believe the voice of parishes like St Peter's – flourishing and diverse, but in many ways deprived – are under-represented at General Synod. I believe I have brought a useful perspective as a Clergy representative for the Diocese of Southwark, and would like to continue doing so. My main passions and priorities for the Church are;

1. **Evangelism:** God's perfect love is something I want to share. At St Peter's we use as many possible ways to share the Christian faith and invite people in: personal friendships, forming missionary disciples, a culture of invitation, flyers, posters, social media, street evangelism, Ashes to Go, and more. To me, the Church exists by *evangelism* as a fire exists by burning: the biggest difference a parish church can make is helping people to know Jesus Christ and to see the world through a Christian lens. I believe the Church of England needs to be more confident in our evangelism, and also more varied, without a one-size-fits-all approach. As a parish church, we believe that our worship and church life must be attractive and accessible to as many people as possible!
2. **Mission:** At St Peter's we see our worship on Sundays as the place where we're gathered, nourished, challenged and blessed to be sent out in mission and service as individuals and as a community. We take part in the Robes Project Winter Night Shelter, run small and large-scale events for the flourishing of our community, operate an informal food and clothing bank, and work with our school, the charity in our crypt, our local councillors and other local groups and charities to serve the many needs of our community.
3. **Inclusion & Participation:** I'm passionately driven to work for a more inclusive church where every single person, made in the image and likeness of God, is able to follow God's call on their life, especially those who are currently under-represented or excluded. This is a question of God's justice, a kingdom issue: it's about fullness of life for everyone in the Body of Christ! I want every single person to know, and to see that they are welcome in Christ's Church. To see that there are people, clergy, and bishops who look and sound like them. When I first went to church as a young adult, I saw a black woman presiding as the vicar in my parish church and knew that I was welcome too. Today, too many people of UKME heritage, women, LGBTQ+ people, poor people, and others outside of the Church do not feel fully welcome. They do not see people like themselves in the pews, the pulpits and the purple shirts of the Church of England. For me that is both a kingdom issue of justice, and also has huge implications for our pastoral, missionary and evangelistic work. I long for change before anyone else feels they are not welcome in Christ's Church.

I believe every person is made in the glorious image of God, that everyone who is baptized into Christ is clothed with Christ, that we're one in Christ in our wonderful diversity and that we each belong to Christ. This inspires me to work for that day when every person who is baptized can be treated equally in Christ's Church and fulfil their individual vocation to engage in the life and evangelistic and missionary work of the Church as they are called by God. I'm ambitious for the Church of England to grow in faith and numbers, in mission and service, to the glory of God and for the good of our nation and world!

If you vote for me, I will work hard with others for that vision!

I want to keep Evangelism, Mission, Inclusion & Participation on the Church's agenda.

Please give me your 1st vote! Or as high as possible!