



Rev'd Vanessa Thornborough

Why am I standing for General Synod?

I am standing for General Synod because I love the Church and believe passionately in its mission. I want to help shape a Church that is rooted in Christ and Scripture, confident in sharing the gospel, and genuinely welcoming and accessible to all.

I want to bring the voice and perspective of a disabled woman of colour, while representing the whole Diocese. I believe it is important that those whose voices are not always heard have a place at the table, and that national decisions reflect the reality of life in our local churches.

Who am I?

I am a priest, pastor and community-minded person who is passionate about Jesus, people and making a difference. I enjoy working with people, listening to their stories and helping them discover their gifts and their place within the Church.

I am practical and positive, and I am not afraid to ask difficult questions. I like to turn ideas into action, while recognising that every parish is different and that what works in one place may not work in another.

What is important to me

For me, inclusion is about belonging. It is about making sure that everyone is seen, heard and valued, and that the things that make us different are not barriers to participation, leadership or belonging.

I want to be a voice for those who are sometimes overlooked or not always heard including women, disabled people, people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, those from less advantaged backgrounds, and LGBTQI+ people.

I believe the Church should be a place where people know they are welcome, where we listen to one another with respect, and where we can have honest and sometimes difficult conversations while continuing to walk together. The Living in Love and Faith

journey has reminded us of the importance of listening deeply to one another, particularly where our experiences and convictions differ, and of seeking to remain together in Christ.

I want to bring my own experience and perspective to General Synod, while listening carefully to the experiences of others. For me, being inclusive is not about putting people into categories; it is about recognising the dignity of every person, removing barriers and helping everyone to know that they have a place within the family of God.

Experience

I trained at St Mellitus College and was ordained in 2021. Since then, I have served in different churches and communities and experienced a variety of church traditions. My ministry has included parish leadership, PCCs, safeguarding, pastoral care, mission and outreach. I have organised community fairs, children's holiday clubs and family activities, worked with schools, and developed partnerships with food banks and other local organisations.

I have also been involved in communications, fundraising and practical parish projects. These experiences have given me a good understanding of both the opportunities and pressures facing local churches and the importance of making national decisions at parish level.

Looking forward

I see General Synod as an opportunity to listen, learn, contribute and serve.

I would bring a practical parish perspective, my experience of ministry and community engagement, and my own lived experience. I would seek to be a warm, thoughtful and constructive voice, willing to listen to different views and speak up when something needs to be challenged.

Above all, I look forward with hope. I believe the Church has an important part to play in our communities and in sharing the love of Christ, and I would be honoured to play my part in helping shape its future.