



Rebecca (Bex) Chapman

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About me

I came to faith as a teenager at an Anglican church in Bristol, then studied theology at university. I came to the Diocese of Southwark in 2006 when my husband, Mark, and I joined **St Mark's, Kennington** where I was on PCC & deanery synod for 12 years. We were also blessed to be part of the church family at **St John the Divine, Kennington** for a number of years, where our three sons grew up singing in the choir & took first communion from Fr Mark.

I've been more **involved in the life of our diocese** since 2010 when I joined Lambeth North Deanery Synod. In 2018 I was elected to **Diocesan Synod**, then to the **Diocesan Council of Trustees**. I spent several years as Lambeth North deanery lay chair, and since 2024 I have had the privilege of serving as Chair of the House of Laity of our Diocesan Synod. I'm deeply committed to listening to and speaking up for laity, especially volunteers.

Last year my family moved south to Croydon, and we have been getting to know our new deanery and new parish. We live in the parish of **Emmanuel, Croydon** where our sons have joined various youth groups, and my youngest son has just joined the choir of **Croydon Minster**. Attending and supporting our local parish church is important to us, and we enjoy a range of worship styles, and friendships across church styles and theologies.

In addition to running our home, I work part time in communications, for the Ecclesiastical Law Society, and write about culture and theology for various print and online publications. I volunteer as a trustee at four charities including as Vice-Chair of Christians in Media, so I have experience in **governance and scrutiny**.

What do I bring to Synod?

I attended many General Synods as a staff member from 2008-2018, and have been grateful for the privilege of representing Southwark as a member over the last 7 years. I understand how the national church, the diocese and our parishes can work together, **how Synod itself works** and how we can achieve change through it. I'm keen to help all our elected Southwark reps work for change together on issues we agree on.

My **theology degree and previous experience** working for two Archbishops means I can engage with Synod debates fluently, and I'm willing and able to speak truth to those in power at any level. My **counselling training** and practice provided me with invaluable skills in listening, and pastoral care. My time as a **speechwriter in the civil service** is useful training, but also helps me support others on synod. I'm always keen to contribute to debates where I've something relevant to say, but not speaking for the sake of it.

As a **communications** professional with a passion for our diocese and General Synod, I'll strive to ensure that Synod's work is communicated clearly and simply, providing updates to deanery and diocesan synods and continuing to share [live from Synod on social media](#). I'm keen to ensure the voices of our **young people** are heard at every level in our church governance, including in our Southwark synods, and to advocate for them wherever I can. They are the church of today, not just tomorrow.



Mum with school-age sons,
working part time in
communications

20 years in the
Diocese of Southwark

16 years serving on
Deanery Synods and PCC

Member of
Diocesan Synod since 2018

Seven years
General Synod experience

3 years working
for a parish church

Worked for two Archbishops
of Canterbury

Theology graduate &
Trained counsellor

I'm passionate about:

- resourcing our **parishes in Southwark** and supporting the **parish system**
- increasing our resourcing for **churches supporting adult and child mental health** & inclusion for **disabilities** (visible and invisible) & youth ministry
- **improving General Synod** and our church governance
- **teamwork** and supporting other Southwark Synod members

My Synod priorities

I've diligently attended every General Synod meeting in person since my election 5 years ago. I've spoken in a range of debates and served on a number of national Committees behind the scenes. This has included being on the Synod's Appointments Committee, and the Mission and Public Affairs Council as well as contributing to several legislative Revision Committee meetings, seeking to share ideas, learn, and highlight what works for us in Southwark.

For my family, church has sometimes been challenging as a result of our son's autism; **inclusion** is very important to me. In 2021 I promised to encourage our churches to welcome and support those **with visible and invisible disabilities** – since then I've been a part of the national Neurodiversity Working Group, and we brought a successful motion on neurodiversity to Synod this July. My sons watched from the Synod public gallery, which was emotional.

Supporting those who provide care for others in all sorts of capacities is important to me. I've successfully amended a motion on mental health, to include support for children and young people who live with those with mental health challenges. My (very personal) short speech can be watched [here](#). I also long for our church to resource **ministry to younger people** - only 1% of 18-24 year olds identify as part of our churches so more must be done to fulfil the Great Commission, as well as helping our young people develop their values & their confidence, so needed at present.

Justice is important to me. I've amended a synod motion on work to encourage all Church of England organisations to implement **the living wage** ([speech here](#)). I've also been part of a core group bringing a synod motion calling for the restoration of **clergy pensions** to previous levels, which brought about a review into clergy pensions.



I want to continue to work within Synod to improve how it functions and allow a more **diverse range of people** – ages, genders, ethnicities, those with disabilities – to take part in **synodical governance** & legislation. I will encourage mentoring & peer support for new members of Synod, & I'd like to help provide **support for all our new Southwark reps**, so we can work to the best of our abilities as a team, despite our differences.

What do I think about some of the upcoming Synod agenda?

The last five years have been full of debates about governance, many of which I've contributed to. Now focus is moving to future finance and funding for our mission and ministry. I'm currently part of the Synod Reference Group on **National Funding for Diocesan Ministry**. I'd love to be re-elected to continue this work, speaking up for transparency, accountability and good governance in the distribution of national church funds. In Southwark, we face cuts to our level of stipendiary priests, and I want to fight for finances from the national church institutions to minimise the need for further cuts, and ensure that lay voices are a part of any cuts process.

Safeguarding will continue to be an important for Synod– including holding leaders accountable for promised changes. I will continue to listen to the voices of survivors, and read widely and prayerfully on the subject.

I believe that our **parish system is the centre of our common life** and should be strengthened and supported so it serves modern needs without losing our valued traditions. I want to support valuing and **caring for clergy**, including the Save the Parish proposal of a Charter of Care. I want priority given to funding **stipendiary parish ministry** wherever possible, and more funding to be released for this from the National Church Institutions. At a time when clergy numbers are falling, I want to encourage **theological education which is ordinand-centred**. As a trustee of a theological college, I can see how important this training is for our church's future.

Most importantly, I want to support **our work as a diocese**. Our **Southwark Vision** is clear that we want growing churches, prayerful and informed Christians, justice and peace built up, violence challenged, and a church for all which reflects our diverse community in membership and leadership. I want to continue to share with the wider church the great things happening in Southwark - and to help us learn from other dioceses and the national church.

Please **get in touch** with me if you'd like to learn more or ask questions - by phone, email or to arrange a coffee. We all have different interests & passions and I'd love to hear more about yours so I can best represent you if re-elected.

Thank you for serving as a deanery synod member, and for reading this election address.

Please **re-elect** me as one of your representatives, by putting me as your **first preference**, or as high up as you can.

Do **use your vote** in this election, whatever your views – I think it's vital that we all have a say in our governance.

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