

# Liz Dudley

Standing for the House of Clergy of General Synod

Nominated by Revd Jo Stobart (Ilminster & General Synod)

Seconded by Revd Claire Towns (Wells St Thomas)



I am the Vicar of Christ Church and St Mary's Frome, and I am standing for General Synod to represent the clergy of Bath & Wells. I am married to Rob and between us we have 7 children – thankfully all grown up and flown the nest.

I have lived, worshipped and ministered in the diocese for approximately 36 years in a diverse range of settings. I first moved to Somerset in 1989 to train as a nurse at the RUH in Bath, eventually specialising in elderly care. In 2000 I moved with my family to Wells, becoming part of the Cathedral community. It was during this time that I was encouraged to explore a sense of calling which had been there since childhood, leading to two years at Cuddesdon followed by a curacy in Minehead. After curacy, the next ten years were spent as Priest in Charge of Castle Cary and Ansford. I was also Area Dean of Bruton and Cary for four years. In 2020 I moved to my current post as Vicar of Christ Church and St Mary's in Frome, where I find myself as Area Dean once again. Growing up in the Church of England and having lived in Somerset for a long time, (and being privileged to exercise both a lay and ordained ministry), I feel that I have a sound understanding and wide experience of the breadth and diversity of our diocese. I believe that I am well placed to represent the clergy of Bath and Wells in their differing contexts and landscapes

It goes without saying that ordained ministry is a mixture of joy and sorrow, hope and fear. I have a deep love for the Church of England, but one that is rooted in reality, and I am convinced that the simplicity of a priestly presence in a community is something precious that should be cherished and celebrated. However, the reality is that we are living in a rapidly changing world (even in Somerset) and the ways that have served us well in the past are not necessarily those that will equip and sustain us for the future. The challenge of holding the increasingly complex nature of ministry among many people whose own lives are under pressure, in a society that is becoming more fragmented and polarised, is one that needs to be faced with courage and grace.

I believe that the wellbeing and flourishing of clergy needs to be a national priority. The recent safeguarding situation requires us all to interrogate the institution with compassion, but also with clear heads and hearts such that the Church of England enables all its priests to live out their vocations with joy.

I have shared in the work of the Diocesan Peacebuilding Team, seeking to bring restoration to fractured relationships in parishes. This has given me real insight into the complexities and challenges within church communities and the fragility of peace. Through this I have learnt the profound value of dialogue, faithful accompaniment, generosity of spirit that leads to a peace focused culture. These are gifts that I would share with General Synod should I be elected.

I have also shared in the work of the Diocesan Vocations Team over a number of years. This has given me the delightful privilege of witnessing and discerning the way that God calls each of us to minister in God's Church and the richness that is to be found in diversity and difference.

**Please use your vote! Votes must be in by 12 noon, Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January**

I feel called to serve on General Synod, as the Church of England faces important decisions about its future direction.

### **Supporting Clergy**

I am passionate about supporting clergy and ensuring that clergy wellbeing is always a priority, not just when there is crisis. This needs to be a national conversation and properly resourced. I want to see a church, locally and nationally, that is joyful, creative and generous in all that it does.

### **Healthy Communities**

Covid and years of austerity, as well as the global existential problems impact our local communities in many ways. I long for a church that can speak the hope, joy and peace of God with integrity into these many and varied situations. In Frome we are developing a new monastic community grown around dialogue, contemplative prayer, caring for creation and studying scriptures. I long for a church that takes its prophetic role seriously even if that challenges the institutional habits, expectations and structures of the present Church of England.

### **An Inclusive Church**

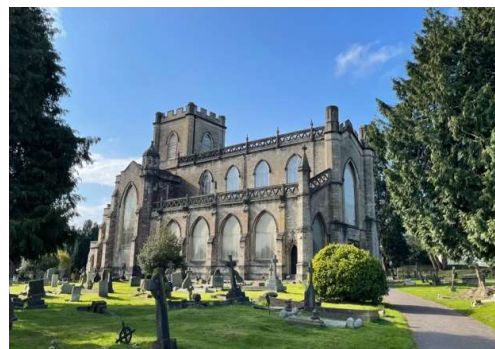
I believe in a church for everyone regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic, education, mental health or sexuality. I want to see a church where everyone can belong and be who God created them to be and where they can share the gifts that God has given them to build up God's people.

I have served several terms on Diocesan Synod and through my experience as a parish priest and as Area Dean I seek to step up and take a place in the national conversations. It would be an absolute privilege to represent the fantastic clergy of this Diocese and to support you in what has been, what is, and what is to come.

Thank you for reading my electoral statement, I hope you will give me your first preference vote. If you want to contact me about anything I would be very happy to hear from you.

### **Working Together**

I love that the Church of England is a broad and diverse church rooted in local communities. In Frome, we have decided to work together as clergy, crossing parish boundaries and working across congregations to build teams, share resources, equip, support and complement each ministry whether lay or ordained and most importantly, to care for the people in our town. At times, like these, our different traditions, theologies, and preferences become a source of strength and wisdom.



### **Environment**

Somerset is the most beautiful county, and across the diocese many people are caring for their corner of God's creation. Yet if we, as a church, are serious about issues of righteousness, justice, unfailing love and truth, this needs to be reflected in how we care for God's creation. I would be supporting General Synod in being prophetic in word and deed on environmental issues and supporting the good things it is already doing.