

Sarah Packman

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Candidate for House of Laity 2026

Proposer: Dr Caroline Mason

Portishead deanery synod

Seconder: Captain Chris Hughes

Portishead deanery synod

Who am I?

My name is **Sarah Packman**, I'm 47yrs old and I live in Nailsea. I am married to James who is Rector of Holy Trinity, we have two teenage children Lydia (18) and Silas (14), and I would love the opportunity to serve the wider church through the ministry of General Synod.

I treasure spending time with my family and friends, I enjoy jigsaws and mini-craft projects and always have chocolate in the cupboard!

I had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, a clergy home and came to know Jesus for myself at age 10. Having moved as a child and now being married to a clergyman, I have experienced the blessings of a variety of churches over the years. Alongside personal Bible reading, prayer and Sunday services, my own spiritual growth has been hugely helped through Bible study groups. I've always enjoyed studying scripture, and for me it's important that the Bible is accessible to all.

I have confidence in the Gospel, the truth that Jesus can and does change lives and bring new life today. I firmly believe that church is a place where all people, all ages and stages of faith, should be valued, encouraged and enabled to grow.

I'm well aware that what is decided on a national level significantly affects churches on a local level. I would want to value and protect the ministry of churches in our diocese. so that all may have the opportunity, no matter where they live, to connect with churches made up of



ordinary people who are seeking to live and tell the story of Jesus through their words and actions.

Love local

I'm passionate about the ministry of the local church! The Church of England provides an amazing opportunity to be beacons of Jesus's love, light, hope and peace in the communities and different situations in which our churches are located. Rural parishes, town churches and churches in urban communities face different challenges and also have different opportunities for mission and outreach. None being 'better' than the other, but all able to be part of the fulfilment of Jesus's commission to make disciples of all nations.

In villages, the church is often at the heart of the community along with the local school and pub! Numbers may be smaller, but the closeness of relationships within villages and the wider feelings of 'ownership' of the local church give many opportunities for sharing the gospel, especially around festivals. I have had the privilege of being part of different styles of church and seeing congregations grow both in villages and larger towns.

I am supportive of Save The Parish and the Parish system, which means that gospel ministry can continue to bless all the local communities in this area.

The Secret Service

Local churches have more in common with MI5 than many realize! Both organisations rely heavily on those involved in “secret service”. These valuable volunteers are the backbones of many congregations especially as Clergy and finances are often stretched. I am well aware that it is not just clergy who are at risk of burnout but also lay volunteers who are often juggling various roles.

I would love the opportunity to represent the ordinary volunteer, see laity equipped and empowered in their roles so that the ministries in their churches continue to flourish.

Why now?

I have two teenage children, who are now old enough for me to be able to make time for the demands that being on general synod would bring, but still young enough to keep me informed and relevant to the needs and pressures on Christian young people today!

Young people need to meet Jesus. They are constantly bombarded with information, often anxious and can lack self-esteem. We, as God’s people, need to ensure that our churches are safe and accessible places for young people to hear the truth of the gospel and experience God’s love for them.

God is at work in our nation! There is a growing interest in God and faith from young people in our country. The Church needs to be prepared for this on a national level in order to equip



churches on a local level to follow where God is leading on this and I’d love to be a part of that.

We must encourage the young people in our churches to be actively involved in church life. I personally love the fact that once a month as part of the music group, my daughter sings, my son plays bass, and I play my flute – not quite the Von Trapps but a lot of fun as we worship God together!

What could I offer?

- Theology graduate from Durham University, with experience in education and Religious Studies teaching.
- Eighteen years’ experience serving family, church, and community life.
- Practical involvement in toddler groups, music groups, children’s ministry, Bible studies, wedding preparation, young adults’ ministry, welcome teams, and house groups.
- Trained Lay Worship Assistant, with current experience in leading services.
- A grassroots understanding of local church ministry and the joys and challenges of serving faithfully.
- A particular interest in Church schools and Religious Studies, shaped by teaching experience and parenting children at a Church Primary School.

If elected I would be prayerful in this role, seeking to be faithful to the God I serve, conscientious, recognising it’s not just a job to be done but a call to be involved in God’s mission to this nation. Seeking to keep in mind Paul’s words, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Colossians 3v17)

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would love to serve the wider Church in this way and I would be so grateful if you would consider giving me your first, or highest possible preference vote.