



The Revd. Julie Conalty

Vicar of Christ Church Erith
Area Dean of Erith
and Bishop's Advisor for the Ministry of Ordained Women

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I write to ask you to give me your first preference vote, or your high preference vote, in the coming election to the House of Clergy of the General Synod. I have served for the last two years as one of your clergy representatives at General Synod and am standing again because I am keen to make use of what I have learned about how Synodical processes can be used to influence key decisions and debates. I believe I have much to contribute.

First a little about me - I experienced a call to ordained ministry in my teens and so I studied for a degree in Biblical Studies at Sheffield University, but as women could not become priests I found a ministry through work with the homeless and with offenders. Eventually, I trained for ordination with SEITE and was ordained deacon in 1999 and priest in 2000. I was initially self-supporting in the Diocese of Southwark while continuing my secular work – by then a management role in the Probation Service. Subsequently, I worked for the Youth Justice Board before becoming manager of a resettlement project for young offenders, then a Local Authority Manager for Specialist Youth Services and finally an advisor on young people Not in Education Training or Employment (NEETs) and a Performance Improvement Consultant. In the middle of all that I did an MA in Applied Theology. I eventually transferred to Stipendiary Ministry, and took up a post in a newly formed United Benefice in Plumstead. For the last three years I have been vicar of Christ Church, Erith (at the north of the diocese). I am also Area Dean of Erith and Bishop's Advisor for the Ministry of Ordained Women.

I believe it is my experience of living and ministering the Gospel at ground level and on the margins of our society that best equips me to help the General Synod focus on those real issues that are central to effective engagement in Christian mission. I am committed to tackling poverty and exclusion in society and I am also passionate about inclusion in the church itself – I minister in one of the most culturally diverse parishes in Rochester Diocese and Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns are also my concerns. I also believe that, if we are to have a credible voice for 'proclaiming the faith afresh in each generation' then the Church of England needs to act with much greater integrity in relation to issues of human sexuality. I welcome the facilitated conversations on human sexuality that are currently taking place and look forward to taking part in the ensuing debates.

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There are, however, other pressing matters for General Synod in the next few years. The challenges set out in the Reform and Renewal programme should not be underestimated. We do have to invest in order to grow (both spiritually and numerically) and not simply plan to manage decline. On the other hand, we should not be afraid to question proposals and to seek to revise them if they seem flawed or insufficiently theologically or evidence based. I am proud to have taken part in some of that questioning and discussion at General Synod.

Finally – I remain committed to observing the Five Guiding Principles and have throughout my life worshipped and worked alongside both Christians who are traditional catholics and those who are conservative evangelicals. I value the breadth of the Church of England and it is an honour to be standing again in this election. Please support me with your first preference or your high preference vote.

Julie