

A broad Church needs broad experience

The Revd Dr Belinda Stanley • House of Clergy • Diocese of Hereford

Email: pastor@herefordcathedral.org.uk

Mobile: 07795 458058

*Nomination proposed by The Revd Canon James Pacey,
Chancellor, Hereford Cathedral*

*Nomination seconded by The Revd Rosie Roberts, Rector of the
benefice of Cradley with Mathon and Storrige*

I am standing for General Synod because I love the Church of England: not an idealised Church of England, but the real one which is prayerful, faithful, complicated, sometimes frustrating, often surprising, theologically diverse, and still, wonderfully, the Body of Christ.



The breadth of the Church is a gift

I have worshipped and studied across a wide variety of Christian traditions. My theological training at Queen's Birmingham brought me alongside people preparing for ministry in Black Pentecostal, Methodist and Church of England traditions, as well as independent students. That experience has deepened rather than weakened my commitment to the breadth of the Church of England.

That breadth is not always comfortable. Difference brings genuine tension, and sometimes disagreement about questions that matter profoundly. But I believe those whose opinions differ from our own are still loved by God - and that we need one another as parts of the same Body of Christ. I want to contribute to a Synod where disagreement can be honest without becoming hostile, and where listening is as important as speaking.

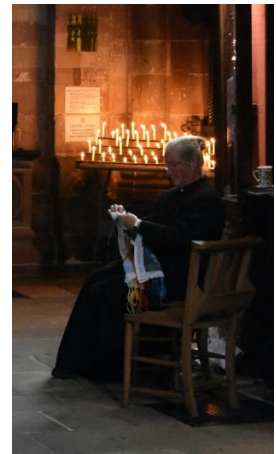
Why me?



I have known the Church from many different perspectives. I grew up with the Church through my father's ministry as an army chaplain and my mother's remarkable faith. At university I explored my faith independently through Anglican, Methodist and evangelical communities, as well as the Navigators and university chaplaincy.

For many years I was part of a rural parish church in Cumbria, serving as churchwarden and in a variety of lay ministries. I have also valued the gifts of ecumenical life, particularly through relationships with the United Reformed Church and the Society of Friends.

I have previously served as a lay member of General Synod. I remember that experience with real gratitude: the opportunity to debate, listen, learn and pray with Christians who were committed to the life and governance of the Church. I was on Synod during the 1990-95 group of sessions, including the debates around the ordination of women.



A different kind of experience

Before ordination I spent many years as a physician, including in national roles in the Royal College of Physicians, the British Medical Association, NHS research ethics and in professional regulation with the General Medical Council. I worked as a doctor with refugees in the organisation 'Freedom from Torture'. My experience has taught me about ethical decision-making, organisational change, speaking up when something is wrong, and the importance of fair and transparent processes.

I am a volunteer practitioner with 'A Place for Hope' an organization which supports faith-based communities to develop practical skills for navigating conflict and helping people and communities to become better peacemakers.

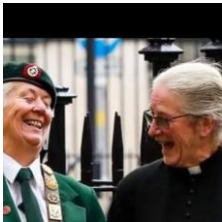
What would I bring to General Synod?

A Church that listens and cares

My present ministry as Cathedral Pastor at Hereford Cathedral has strengthened my commitment to pastoral care, chaplaincy and the people who make the Church's life possible. I want Synod to take seriously the pressures on clergy and lay ministers, and to recognise the many forms of ministry through which the Church serves its communities.

A healthy mix of stipendiary, self-supporting and other forms of ministry is important to enable people to offer their different gifts as valued parts of the life of the Church. We also need to ensure that our growing reliance on ministry that does not require a stipend does not inadvertently narrow the range of those who are able to offer themselves for ordained ministry. We need to support clergy well, to value lay ministry, and to ensure that our structures and expectations enable people to flourish rather than simply creating more work.

Inclusion, safeguarding and justice



I want the Church of England to be a place where people can genuinely belong. Inclusion means more than good intentions: people need to be welcomed, heard, represented and able to flourish. My own growing awareness of privilege, and my work with people who have experienced profound marginalisation, have strengthened my commitment to being an ally to those who may find themselves excluded or ignored.

I am supportive of people using the Prayers of Love and Faith as currently commended and respect the right of those who do not choose to use them.

Good safeguarding is fundamental to that welcome. So is the courage to listen when people tell us that something is wrong, and to have systems that respond fairly and transparently.



Faithful change

The Church faces financial pressures, changing patterns of ministry, difficult decisions about buildings and structures, and the continuing challenge of engaging with a changing society. My experience of reconfiguring services during periods of financial pressure has given me some understanding of the pressures behind institutional change.

We need courage to change, but also wisdom about what must not be lost. I want our decisions to be rooted in prayer, theology and the Church's vocation - worshipping God, proclaiming the Gospel, serving our communities and caring for creation.

I bring the perspectives of a lay person, churchwarden, previous member of General Synod, doctor, theologian and priest.

I bring a passion for pastoral ministry and mission.

I bring a long commitment to the Church of England and a delight in its breadth.

I would be honoured to serve the Diocese of Hereford on General Synod.

I would be very grateful for your prayers and, if possible, for your first preference vote.

Please contact me if you'd like to discuss any aspect of my election address.

Thank you.

CONTACT pastor@herefordcathedral.org • phone 07795 458058

Proposed by The Revd Canon James Pacey • Seconded by The Revd Rosie Roberts