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Proposer: Revd. Sally Baily
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Background

I was brought up in an inter-church family (my dad was a curate in Sunbury-on-Thames and my mum is a Roman Catholic), and spent my childhood in a mix of Roman Catholic, Anglo Catholic, Evangelical and more Central churches. I've settled as an evangelical but I have found my experience helpful in building personal links across the divisions that have played out in Synod. I have been in London Diocese since ordination 18 years ago. I served with a café-based church for those commuting to work near Covent Garden, and in training and leading Christianity Explored courses at St. Helen's Bishopsgate for those looking into Christian faith. For ten years I was curate with responsibility for student ministry at St. Helen's, and was also involved in Euston Church (a BMO in South Camden Deanery.) Most recently I was Associate Rector to the long-term church family congregation at St. Helen's, and also Priest in Charge of St. Michael's Cornhill, a Prayer Book Society parish with a strong choral tradition. In April I moved to start as Rector at All Souls Langham Place.

Other Diocesan Experience

Diocesan Synod since 2006, and I've been involved in London Open House for City Deanery, in the 2012 Ambassadors project, in Pray For 7 as part of Capital Vision, and on the planning group for the London Shared Conversations on Human Sexuality. I have always been excited by the chance to work together to do things none of us could do alone in our parishes. For me, that's also the reason to be involved in General Synod.

I was an ADDO for Two Cities from 2016-2021. It has been a huge privilege helping a wide range of women and men explore their vocation, and such an antidote to Covid misery to be with some of them in person at St. Paul's for their ordinations this summer.

General Synod Experience

I was elected in 2015 and have loved getting to know all the people involved from across the country, and the ways in which Synod operates. I have given particular attention to vocations, and to ministry with young people.

Vocations: During the last Synod very major changes were made to the funding of ordination training at TEIs, and the consequences of those changes are only now being felt across the country. Those changes have worked very well in London due to the large number of candidates and the flexible attitude of the Diocesan team. I had serious concerns for the national picture when the changes were introduced, in particular that it would lead to restricted national diversity and to financial challenges for residential training. I want to be present at Synod as we continue to review the consequences, and to hold to account those who made promises at the time.

There has also been a huge, and largely successful, push for more vocations. In the context of newspaper headlines about dioceses making clergy redundant, however, there is real uncertainty about whether that growth can be sustained. It seems likely that clergy retirements will be more significant than any redundancies that do come, and that there remains an urgent need for new, and more diverse, vocations. There are serious challenges, however, around how the money for training and curacies can be found without restricting training opportunities to those ordinands, parishes, or dioceses with financial advantages. I want to be able to push for more central funding, as has been promised, in order to make it possible for the next generation of clergy to be trained in the most suitable TEI for them, and in the best curacy for the needs of the national church.

Ministry with young people: I have become increasingly concerned by the decline in attendance of children and young people, and at the lack of understanding of the national picture. Not only are there far fewer children in church, but they are increasingly concentrated in very few places. I was able to insist on the publication of some of this data, and to push for further work. I am currently part of a steering group at Church House working on some more in depth research.

I was elected to the committee of the Evangelical Group of the General Synod, and also to the Church of England Evangelical Council as one of the representatives from General Synod. I also helped complete the passage of a piece of work that began as a private members motion from London Diocese, including serving on the revision committee, which led to the new, less prescriptive canon on vestments in 2016/2017.

I am a complementarian who is thoroughly committed to the Five Guiding Principles, and was invited by Bishop Sarah to form part of the London Diocese group responding to the national review into their implementation, which was then debated in Synod. I have been particularly keen to build relational bridges across differences of conviction on this and other issues.

Aims & hopes for this Synod

Finances: Covid has accelerated the financial challenge facing the Church of England. There is a real risk that decisions will be taken negatively and in haste that will make our problems worse. I think we need to maintain a prayerful confidence in God for the future, along with a conviction that churches can grow, people will come to faith, and young people can be drawn into whole-hearted service of God's mission in the world.

I am particularly keen to push back at tendencies to centralisation as any changes are made. I was deeply concerned, for example, at the attempt to ban clergy from their churches during the first lockdown. I have acted as a Patron's representative in small rural parishes since the mid-90s and have seen the dangers of central over-reach against the rights of PCCs and incumbents.

LLF: the only hope for any kind of resolution between those of very different convictions in the church following the end of the LLF process is for everyone to engage graciously, honestly, and without fear. I support the church's current affirmation of the biblical pattern of chastity and marriage; my background is in involvement with CPAS, Renew and Church Society. On Synod I have sought to build bridges with those on every side of the debate who want to avoid the disastrous litigious splits seen in the Episcopal Church in the USA. I have also been personally and actively involved in challenging homophobia and misunderstanding in my own evangelical circles.

Thank you for reading this; I hope it has given you a sense of where I'm coming from. Please be in touch if you'd like to know more.