

**The Rev'd Kate Harrison**  
**Vicar of St Mark's Hamilton Terrace in the Two Cities Area**



Having served my title in Windsor in the Diocese of Oxford, I have been a London vicar since 2018. I have served as a member of Diocesan Synod and the Bishop's Council, and am Assistant Director of Ordinands in the Two Cities area.

The next few years of General Synod have an opportunity to make positive change in the life, presence and work of the Church. Society is seen as increasingly secular and materialist, while searching aimlessly for its lost sense of purpose and meaning. Our opportunity and responsibility as a church, is to re-form, in order to better draw society toward the knowledge of the love of God. That re-formation must include a bolstering and re-invigoration of the *parish system*, not its undermining or starvation of resources.

A parish is not a mere administrative boundary, and it certainly isn't a membership club. At its heart is a dedicated priest, responsible and accountable for the care of *all* in the parish, irrespective of merit, belief or belonging. The role of a priest as carer, pastor, advocate, spiritual guide, and moral leader is crucial to thriving communities. It cannot be de-skilled, outsourced, or re-defined as some sort of religious manager.

It is tragically clear from recent events that *clergy wellbeing* is increasingly under strain. While the failings of the current CDM system are at last under some scrutiny, more needs to be done. An urgent and extensive overhaul is required before it can be fit for purpose. At present it fails to either support high professional standards or to give fair protection from vexatious or unfounded complaints.

Our priests are charged with the pastoral care of all, and yet receive scant or inconsistent pastoral care themselves. This needs to change. The mental wellbeing of clergy and lay ministers needs to be paramount, with a formalised and consistently implemented support structure. Unless we are pastored by loving shepherds, we cannot be healthy enough to pastor others.

Working as an ADO has given me an increased awareness of the richness of the variety of *vocations* that God calls us to. We need to celebrate and affirm lay, self-supporting and diaconal vocations with as much energy and resource as we affirm stipendiary priestly vocations. We are each called to minister in a unique and distinctive way. When lay, self-supporting and diaconal vocations are treated as lesser, we denigrate the God-given nature of vocation itself and squander resources and talent.

As a member of Inclusive Church, I am passionate about *inclusion* and the God-given diversity we find and celebrate within our shared humanity. I believe that marriage should be available to all as a blessing of a committed, faithful and lifelong relationship. I support the Living in Love and Faith process and hope that it will lead to a better understanding of varying theological positions. I pray the process will eventually make room for a position which allows priests to act under their own conscience, much as we now treat the remarriage of those whose previous marriage has been dissolved.

I actively welcome your questions. Please feel free to contact me on [vicar@stmarks.london](mailto:vicar@stmarks.london)  
I will be very grateful if you would consider me for your first or second preference vote.