



To train as a General Practitioner, I completed posts in Psychiatry, Paediatrics, Accident and Emergency, General Medicine and Obstetrics. Like my colleagues, I became a 'specialist generalist'. We learned how to treat a wide range of conditions and recognise when to refer. We learned to hold the whole person in view.

My 26 years of ordained ministry have similarly trained me as a 'specialist generalist' priest. I have served in both **stipendiary** and **self-supporting ministry**, in **urban, suburban, city** and **rural** parishes, and in **larger churches** and **cathedrals**. I have been a Bishop's Chaplain and lived on community at Lee Abbey in Devon. Finally I have experience of the wider Anglican communion through short and mid-term **locum chaplaincy** in Europe and the USA, and surveyed non-stipendiary ministry in the Diocese of Wellington, New Zealand during my 2025 Study Leave.

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The Revd Dr Sarah Archer

Specialist generalist

Edmonton Area Director of Ministry

Portfolio lead for Continuing Ministerial Development

Why I am standing

I am standing for General Synod because I believe the Church of England needs people who can hold together **parish commitment, theological breadth, pastoral realism** and **Gospel hope**. My wide experience means I truly value the local parish as the place where people are welcomed and included, faith is found and formed, communities are served and the national Church becomes visible in ordinary lives.

A Wider Perspective

Working as a **Training Incumbent** and **Area Director of Ordinands** while serving as a suburban Vicar also taught me about the pressures of carrying extra-parochial responsibilities alongside parish ministry. My **current role** in the **ecclesiastically and ethnically diverse** Edmonton Area has further widened my perspective on the Church of England and deepened my respect for the gifts, challenges and faithfulness of its local churches. My **responsibility for CMD** in the diocese has also helped me to grasp the challenges faced by both clergy and dioceses when they seek to implement necessary change.

A Time of Crisis

The Church of England is facing crises in **vocations**, in **funding for theological training and parish ministry** and in clergy **morale** and **retention**; all set within the wider context of national and global challenges such as the rise of extreme ideologies and the impact of global warming.

Causes for Celebration

However, there is also much to celebrate and it is not hard to find signs of God's work in people and parishes across the land including:

- **growing numbers of young people** turning to Christ,
- **burgeoning vocations** in some dioceses across all kinds of churches, but particularly those from deprived areas,
- **confirmation** and **ordination candidates** who have journeyed to the church **from all over the world** and from many **different faiths**,
- the growth of **new monastic communities** like The Nazareth Community,
- **imaginative** and sacrificial **approaches to poverty** and the cost-of-living crisis in so many churches including debt counselling, night shelters and foodbanks.

That is why I would bring to Synod a **strong commitment to renewing and resourcing parish ministry**. I place great value on the local church, and would support efforts to protect pastoral provision and resist approaches which treat parish life as expendable. For me, this is not nostalgia. It is a conviction that the parish remains one of the Church of England's greatest gifts to the nation: **local, accessible, incarnational** and capable of serving people who may never otherwise cross the threshold of church life.

I am also clear that **parish clergy need greater support** and encouragement to be able **to prioritise evangelism and growth** over the ever-increasing demands of governance and maintenance.

My own formation has made me **instinctively ecumenical** and **committed to the full breadth of Anglican life**. I grew up in my local middle-of-the-road Anglican church where I now serve most months, but my faith was nurtured through the Roman Catholic chaplaincy at university and later kindled at a charismatic evangelical Methodist church. Before ordination training I was part of an ecumenical healing team and ran an ecumenical Alpha course. Today, while I prefer more formal and sacramental worship, I treasure the friendships made through the New Wine network and would describe myself, only half-jokingly, as a committed **anglo-catholic charismatic evangelical**.

If elected, I would want to speak and vote for:

- **encouraging church growth** through **parish evangelism** and **mission**;
- **growth in lay discipleship** including an **emphasis on stewardship**;
- **sustainable support for parish ministry** including **simplification of governance** and **safeguarding** and practical **help with HR** and **policies and procedures**;
- good **theological formation** for clergy and lay ministers;

and would pay keen attention to matters of **morale, retention** and **ongoing clergy training**.

I feel a genuine sense of call to General Synod and would be grateful for your vote to enable me to fulfil my desire to serve the Church in this way.