



## Rev'd Carol Backhouse Election Statement

I'm currently Vicar of Christ Church in Lancaster - a varied parish on the east of the city, serving areas of significant deprivation as well as rural communities and a lot of new-build housing.

Christ Church has been a member of Inclusive Church since 2019, and has held Silver Eco-Church Award since 2018 - two (of many!) things which make my heart sing about this parish.

I grew up in Ilford, east London, and started going to church parade when I joined the Brownies. I soon felt part of the family in an Anglo-Catholic parish with a very diverse congregation, and I was baptised on 2000 aged 14. I moved to York to begin training as a nurse, and was very involved in the university Chaplaincy; helping with the York Mystery Plays and sharing in the local Make Poverty History campaign. I served nearly ten years in the NHS (including time in A&E) and loved the teamwork and sense of fulfilment this vocation brought.

In 2012, I suffered a lot of bereavements, which led me to wrestle with my own faith and sense of purpose. It was the Transcendence community within York Minster who held me through this time, and encouraged me to take the first steps on a calling to ministry. I completed my ministerial training at Westcott House, where a particular highlight was keeping Holy Week in Jerusalem. I served my curacy in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, during which time I also spent 6 weeks on placement in churches in our link dioceses in South Africa. In 2020, I answered a call to serve in Lancaster - and was licensed the night lockdown started!

Christ Church has become a growing community in the modern catholic tradition; and the variety of parish life amongst our local schools, nursing homes, chaplaincies and occasional offices is a source of joy for me. The sacraments are central to my faith and the ministry I hold. As a spiritual director I firmly believe in the holiness of deeply listening to one another, and creating space where the love of God is manifest in honesty and dignity.

Like many parishes, I've experienced the challenges of leading a community amidst issues of finance and the care of our Victorian building. Yet through prayer, our presence in the community, and our proclamation of the Gospel; Christ Church bears witness to Christ's compassion for the poor, His inclusive welcome to all, and the Scriptural imperative to care for creation.

Beyond the parish, I serve as a tutor in the ALM training programme, and as a member of the diocesan Net-Carbon Zero Working Group; and have I been a member of the Diocesan Synod and Mission and Pastoral Committee since 2021. I'm a member of the Young Priest Theologians Network, and have been a volunteer at the Greenbelt Christian arts festival for twelve years. In my spare time, I love taking my dog up the Lakeland fells, or watching a good film with sewing or knitting in hand.

I'm standing for Synod because I believe it is important that the Diocese of Blackburn is represented by a breadth of voices, especially as no ordained women stood for election last time. I hope to offer ears that will listen with compassion to the challenges faced by the communities the Church of England serves, and a prayerful voice that speaks for humility, justice and inclusion - both locally and internationally.

Having prayed and worked amongst parishes, cathedrals, chaplaincies and Fresh Expressions, I believe that the diversity of the Church of England is one of its strengths, especially in our worship, ministry and mission. I strongly believe that General Synod is a place where the Church can discern the promptings of the Spirit to live well together; and respond with united prayer and action to the work of justice, mercy, and healing where God is already leading.

During a cost of living crisis where many in our communities are suffering; at a time where many are burdened with overwhelming mental health issues; and at a point where our planet is facing a climate and biodiversity emergency, I believe that the Gospel offers hope, strength and comfort. By serving as a member of General Synod, I pray that the discussions and decisions Synod takes in coming years will enable all the people of God to find fullness of life in the kingdom that Christ has inaugurated.

Please consider me as your first preference vote, and if you have further questions, please contact me on [revcarolbackhouse@gmail.com](mailto:revcarolbackhouse@gmail.com)