

Dr. Laura Oliver

Nominated by:

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I have had the joy and privilege of serving the Diocese of Blackburn as a **member of the House of Laity on General Synod** for the last 5 years. I write this to you, the electorate of the General Synod, to ask you to prayerfully consider making me your first preference vote in the upcoming election and allow me to continue serving you in this way.

Below, I will describe a little about me and my time on General Synod so far, and why I hope I can continue to serve in this way. Please feel free to get in touch if you would like to get to know me better or ask me any questions.



General Synod Quinquennium 2021 – 2026

In the last five years I have sought to fulfil my 2021 manifesto to you by engaging in any area of General Synod wherever my experience or expertise has given me an opportunity to do so.

To that end, I have been able to take part in several debates including on:

- **end of life care**, speaking against the government's proposed Assisted Suicide Bill
- **mental health training for clergy**, supporting a proposal to better equip clergy to support those in their congregations struggling
- **Crown Nominations Commission rules and regulations**, seeking to ensure the process by which Diocesan Bishops are nominated is fair and just.

I have also been able to speak several times in the various debates on **marriage and sexuality**, using my own personal experiences as a single, same-sex attracted woman to ensure no relevant voices are forgotten in the discussions and that God's good word on sex and marriage is upheld.

As well as speaking in debates, my time on General Synod has offered other opportunities to serve. I have:

- served on the **Crown Nominations Committee** that interviewed and nominated Bishop Philip North to his current position as Bishop of Blackburn
- been part of a **Mutual Flourishing** group set up by Bishop Philip to ensure women of all theological persuasions can flourish in ministry in Blackburn Diocese
- been elected to the **Committee of the Evangelical Group on General Synod**, helping to equip members of the wider group with all the knowledge they need to participate fully in upcoming debates
- served on the **Steering Committee** for the **Miscellaneous Provisions Measure** and Draft Amending Canons Nos 42 and 43 that was formally enacted in February 2024
- been an active member of both **Preston Deanery Synod** and Blackburn **Diocesan Synod** as a result of my election to General Synod. It has been a pleasure to serve in this way.

Me

- I was born in **Preston** and brought up in Longridge, living with my parents and two younger sisters.
- I became a Christian 17 years ago whilst at Medical School in Brighton after a friend invited me to church. I heard the good news about Jesus and put my faith in Him.
- I moved back to Preston when I qualified as a doctor in 2012, joined **All Saints Church, Preston** and have lived in Preston and worshipped at All Saints ever since.
- I am a **GP**, currently working part-time in a surgery in Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston and part-time in a clinic serving Preston's Rough Sleeper population.
- I have five godchildren, two nieces and a nephew, whom I love to spend time with.
- I enjoy cooking for my friends, learning to grow my own fruit and vegetables and being outdoors!

Church Ministry

- I have served on the **PCC** at All Saints for the last 12 years and have been the **Vision Champion** for the last 7 years.
- I am on the **Evangelism Team**, which is responsible for planning and organising events that encourage people that do not yet know the Lord Jesus to think through His claims.
- As part of the **Women's Ministry**, I run a book club at church. This has proved to be very popular, and in reading various Christian books we have been able to encourage each other in our faith and learn together from many different authors.
- I teach in **Junior Church**, leading the children aged 7 – 11 years.
- I help organise an annual **Holiday Club** for primary school aged children. For the last few years, we have had the privilege of teaching almost 100 children over 2 days about Jesus whilst having a lot of fun in the process!
- I am involved in the **Music Team**, playing the bass guitar or the piano in the music group, helping to lead the church family in singing God's praises.

General Synod 2026 onwards

Much has happened in the last five years on General Synod and God has graciously used me in the ways listed above. With your support and God's help, I pray that I can continue this work. There are several issues facing us in the next quinquennium that I feel that I can usefully contribute to:

- Disagreements on various issues risk dividing us, and I hope to encourage **unity** wherever possible, whilst ensuring God's word is honoured in all situations.
- Reforms in **safeguarding** will be discussed, and we must ensure the church is a safe place for all. Every person, precious and worthy in the sight of God, should have the opportunity to hear the wonderful gospel of good news safely and without fear, and I will do what I can to ensure this.
- We need to hold the Church Commissioners to account to make sure that all parishes have proper **financial support**. This will allow local congregations to serve God wholeheartedly in their day-to-day ministry, reach more people with the gospel and encourage **younger** people through the doors.
- Encouraging the Church to continue in its efforts to become **Carbon Net Zero** by 2030 will enable us to be good stewards of the world God has entrusted to us.
- In a time where many congregations are declining in number, and clergy are therefore required to look after more parishes than previously, **clergy well-being** must be a vital focus.

Thank you for taking the time to read my election address. Please consider voting for me in the upcoming elections, and in God's strength I will do all I can to represent you in the next General Synod. **Laura Oliver.**