

Dr. Laura Oliver

Age: 34

Tel: 07767076008

Email: laura.m.oliver@hotmail.co.uk

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.

Below, I will describe a little about me, my Christian faith, the ministries that I am involved in, why I feel called to stand for General Synod and how I will serve you on it. Please feel free to use the contact details above to get in touch if you would like to get to know me better or ask me any questions.



Me

- I was born in **Preston** and brought up in Longridge, with my parents and two younger sisters.
- I became a Christian 12 years ago whilst at Medical School in Brighton after a friend invited me to church. I heard the good news about Jesus taught and put my faith in Him.
- I moved back to Preston when I qualified as a doctor in 2012, joined **All Saints Church** and have lived and worshipped here ever since.
- I am a **GP**, currently working part-time in a surgery in Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston.
- I have 5 godchildren ranging in age from 3 to 8 years old who I love to spend time with. I enjoy cooking for my friends, learning to grow my own vegetables and being outdoors!

Church Ministry

- I have served on the **PCC** at All Saints for the last 7 years and have been the **Vision Champion** for the last 2 years. I am looking forward to the diocese's Vision 2026, hoping to make the Good News about Jesus Christ more widely known in Blackburn diocese.
- I am on the **Evangelism Team** on the PCC, in which I am 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**, being responsible for the children aged 7 – 11 years. It is such a joy seeing the children start to understand the bible and the great news that it holds! I also enjoy helping organise and run our Children's Holiday Bible Club each year.
- Over the last couple of years, I have been undertaking online modules in **Biblical Counselling** through the Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation, with a desire to use this in a way that enables people to see God's love in their lives even through the most difficult of times.
- I am involved in the **Music Team**, playing the bass guitar in the music group and leading the church family in singing God's praises.
- In our **Parish Ministry**, I have cooked meals for families to provide practical help when needed.

Wider Church Ministry

- I am a member of the **Christian Medical Fellowship** and am involved in our local group which meets regularly to encourage one another and pray together as fellow workers in healthcare.
- I am a **trustee** of three Christian organisations:
 - All Saints Church, Preston
 - The True Freedom Trust
 - Beautiful Hands Charitable Organisation
- I personally support **mission** in various parts of the world where people are working to make Jesus known – in Laos, Madagascar, China, and Rwanda. I also support the Association of Evangelists' work slightly closer to home in Sussex!

Why General Synod?

- The Church of England is **our** church! It is a wonderful institution that has a solid foundation that is a benefit to the nation and the wider world.
- I have **time** to use in the service of God at General Synod and feel called to do that by being part of the body that steers the Church.
- My professional experience as a GP has given me the privilege of looking after people at their most vulnerable, and I hope that this will equip me well to compassionately contribute to emotive discussions.
- In the next few years, important decisions will be made that influence the future of the Church – decisions that I would like to be involved in.
- I believe that the **bible** is God's word, and we should aim to follow its teachings on all matters, and I would encourage all decisions to be made with it in mind.
- There will undoubtedly be disagreements between Christians as we all strive to do what we think is best, but I will endeavour to build **unity** and consensus wherever possible.
- I will seek to represent **all** laity if elected, and I commit to being available to my electors after meetings and to provide feedback to them on debates and the development of legislation.
- I am conscious of some important areas that will be discussed in the next Synod:
 - **Children and families.** There are sadly many churches with few or no children as part of the church family. Teaching the children about the Good News of the gospel is a real joy for me, and I feel passionate about encouraging young families to be part of church. Finding ways to encourage them through the doors and hearing about Jesus is vital in keeping the Church healthy and growing.
 - **Human sexuality.** Following the publication of the Living in Love and Faith review at the end of the last Quinquennium, I hope to be able to lovingly contribute to future discussions as we consider this very important topic.
 - **Financial stress.** Many churches are facing monetary difficulties with declining congregations and a drop in giving. For church ministry to be effective, it must be properly protected, and resourced, and organisational changes may have to be made to enable this to happen.
 - **Climate change.** The Lord has graciously given us a beautiful world, and we have a great responsibility to preserve and protect it. In order to do so, we must ensure we act urgently and effectively to fulfil our commitment to make the Church carbon neutral by 2030.

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.**