

General Synod Election Address

Fenella Cannings-Jurd

Diocese of Salisbury

Proposer: Ruby Thompson

Secunder: Sarah Way



I passionately believe that the future place and mission of the Church of England rests upon the discussions and decisions that take place at General Synod. I would be honoured to be a representative of Salisbury Diocese on General Synod, committed to honouring the breadth of our Diocese and maintaining dialogue and progress for the Church as a whole.

I have just finished my first year reading History at St John's College, Durham University. It has in part been my experience in the past year at Durham that has inspired in me a passion for the Church at national level, as I have not only experienced a different diocese and church, but also crossed paths with people from many varied church backgrounds. In discussion and companionship with my peers I have come to better understand and appreciate the diversity of the Church of England, and I believe this diversity should be cherished. Regardless of how we label ourselves or worship within the Church, we must commit to co-operation and respect; for without inner unity there is little hope of maintaining and developing unity with outside groups and society as a whole. It is only through co-operation that the Church can truly live out the promise of Christ. As I hope you can tell, these are issues that I am devoted to engaging with.

My personal interest in General Synod stems from the unsuccessful passage of the legislation to allow for the ordination of women as bishops in November 2012. At the time, I was in the midst of my A Level studies, and this inspired an interest in developing my understanding of how General Synod works, how the vote was lost and how this could change in the future. This interest eventually found itself expressed through my Extended Project, an independent research project on a topic of my choosing, which in my case was the future of the Church of England in relation to the issues surrounding the ordination of women as bishops, and gay marriage. Longer-term, the vote of 2012 has fuelled in me a desire to ensure that the House of Laity is never again the barrier to equality and healthy diversity. The fact that almost all Dioceses supported the measure suggests to me that the Church desired change too. I am supportive of male and female ministry at all levels, and aim to work towards ensuring that age, gender, ethnicity, wealth, sexual orientation and disability do not act as barriers to participation in church leadership. I would work to ensure that all voices are heard by General Synod and the Church of England at large; particularly the voices of those who may feel disenfranchised. I believe that God calls us to love one another and I hope to work to ensure that the love and fellowship of Christ is taken more seriously. Through my role as Disability Support Officer at St John's

College, I seek to support and promote the voices of those with disabilities or those who are struggling, and I believe these are skills that are transferable to the promotion of inclusivity within Synod.

However, this is not to say that I believe in progress for progress' sake. The Church of England has the power to act as a source of consistency when society as a whole is in a state of flux. This consistency can be achieved through the maintaining and honouring of liturgy and heritage. At the end of the day, General Synod must not forget the true purpose for which it exists: the facilitation and sustaining of Christian worship and mission. Thus, I will seek to protect the faithfulness of congregational worship as expressed through liturgy.

I understand that I may not be as experienced as other candidates for election, in part due to my age (I turn twenty in October). However, I am enthusiastic about the Church and committed to representing Salisbury Diocese at General Synod. In order to sustain itself in present and future society, it is important that the Church engages with young people such as myself. I have found my own parish, St Peter's, Parkstone, to be a wonderfully welcoming and supportive community. By seeking to represent the Diocese as a whole, at General Synod, I would be able to translate my own positive experience both across the Diocese and nationally.

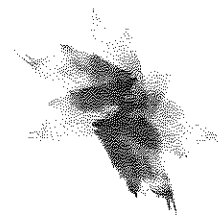
Engaging with people of all ages and backgrounds is something I take pleasure in, a pleasure I have expressed in various forms. For two and a half years, during my A Level studies, I was a trained Healthcare Advisor at Boots. Whilst it may be difficult to see how this translates to General Synod, it did in fact foster in me the ability to communicate effectively with colleagues as well as customers, some in challenging situations. I have developed this skill through my volunteering as a Sunday School helper at Durham Cathedral during term time, which has also allowed me to actively participate in worship at the Cathedral and encourage children's' worship. It may be of interest to voters to know that I am also currently exploring my vocation within the church. Whilst I am still discerning what God's path is for me in the long term, in the short term I feel that God is calling me to stand for election and offer myself and my skills to be of use for the coming quinquennium. I understand that General Synod is a significant commitment; I will safeguard my time to ensure that my studies and Synod can coexist, and that neither will come at the cost of the other.

To conclude, I believe in respect for the diversity of the Church of England, both in terms of worship style and on an individual basis. If elected to General Synod I would express this respect through patience, open-mindedness, reverence and gracefulness with my fellow members of Synod, promoting co-operation and consideration. I hope you will feel able to vote for me and I hope to be a faithful representative of the Diocese. If you have any questions or would like to discuss anything, please do contact me.

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Coalition**