

# The Ven Karen Gorham



## *Something about me....*

I am 51 years old and have been Archdeacon of Buckingham since 2007. Prior to this I spent almost 16 years in parish ministry before and after theological training. This has included experience in many different contexts from a large Charismatic Evangelical Church in Essex to an Anglo-Catholic parish in East Hull, from FE Chaplaincy in Bristol whilst training to the Market town of Northallerton, from Chaplain to a Special Care Baby Unit in Yorkshire to Area Dean of Maidstone, from serving on diocesan committees to being an Assistant DDO

All this has all shaped my understanding of, and commitment to, Parish Ministry which has served the local community

at its heart.

I consider myself a broad evangelical with catholic depth and a liberal hospitable heart.

I am wholly committed to supporting the local church in its mission and ministry. My current role includes much encouragement and support of clergy and parish officers in their day-to-day work and, in the wider diocese, overseeing the work of various committees including the Self Supporting Clergy Officers Group. In the past I have chaired our Kimberley and Kuruman link committee and established the New Communities work across the diocese.

It was in Canterbury Diocese that I was first elected onto General Synod and I have thoroughly

enjoyed the last five years representing Oxford. This has included being on one of the working parties and being invited by the archbishops to serve on the small Panel of Synod Chairs, a scary yet essential role to enable Synod business to run smoothly and effectively.

This is an exciting and challenging time for the Church and if elected again I would offer the same commitment to Synod as I give to every other part of my work.

It is essential that this diocese is well represented on General Synod at all levels of church life and I hope that you will be able to support my nomination for a second term with your first or second preference vote.

## *The Next Five Years...*

Synod deals with substantial work affecting the life of the whole church. In the past I have participated in debates on the rural church, liturgy, parish mission, clergy terms of service and women in the episcopate. The next Synod will need to address some important topics, not least the increasing gap between the church and society which feeds into our mission and evangelism agenda, our multi-faith agenda and the need to have a prophetic voice in the life of our nation.

For the church itself the

renewal and reform agenda will engage us all in looking at how the church at local level can be best released and resourced centrally.

As an archdeacon on synod I am committed to us developing a flexible approach which serves the needs of our parishes, ensures good process and simplification, and is creative enough to bring about change where it is required

Clergy Pensions, Church Buildings, our responsibility to the environment and the appropriate revision of

Canon Law will also need to be considered as we develop a flexible church to meet the needs of the 21st century whilst preserving the best of the past and providing a secure base from which we can step out in faith to meet the challenges ahead with the Good News of the gospel.

It's not all about sex, however the conclusions of the ongoing conversations on sexuality will impact everyone, and a sensitive, compassionate, wise and pragmatic response will need to be found.

## **MY VISION IS FOR A CHURCH THAT IS:**

- ◆ Reflective of God's generous welcome and hospitality.
- ◆ Flexible, enjoying the gifts of all and taking risks for the sake of the kingdom.
- ◆ Generous in giving its time, talents and money.
- ◆ Bold in proclaiming the gospel to those outside it and creative in how it does that.
- ◆ Hugely supportive of its clergy, values the sacrifices they make and makes provision for their well-being.
- ◆ Willing to change and adapt appropriately at national and diocesan level for the sake of the local.
- ◆ Joyful in its mission and fun to be part of.
- ◆ Creative with its heritage so sacred spaces enable individuals to encounter God.
- ◆ Willing to come out of its buildings and engage in public debate and respond to the needs of the world.
- ◆ Primarily committed to the worship of God in Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit in mission to God's world.



## *My thoughts on Reform and Renewal*

Church growth cannot be a 'one size fits all' programme driven from one part of the Church of England. It can only be a Spirit led revival based on living out God's love in Christ in an authentic and infectious way, with the appropriate tools to take people on in their journey as disciples.

The Central Church and the Dioceses each have a part to play in resourcing parishes for that task of growth and making a difference in the World. Without a national deployable workforce of clergy, trained appropriately, or a shared pool of financial resources the Church of England is likely to limit itself by fragmenting into

self-contained diocesan units. We all have a shared responsibility to one another as a national church, and that means financial support for poorer dioceses, making sure all who are called are offered the same training opportunities, and particular assistance for areas of deprivation.

Let's continue to do together that which is possible, whilst at the same time developing local responses to specific local need.

Therefore as an elected member of General Synod I would support the following:

\* Continued pooling of training costs across the

dioceses,

\* Further simplification of our legislation to reflect practice on the ground, and make church life less bureaucratic,

\* The sharing of good practice, facilitated by the central church, in discipleship, nurture, apologetics, faith sharing, leadership development (not just for a select few!) and worship,

\* Continued development of our liturgy to make sure it is accessible, inclusive and above all understandable,

\* A continued central selection facility for clergy (under 55 yrs) to ensure national deployability, the best use of gifts and retain standard criteria.

ARCHDEACONS HAVE  
A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN  
THE LIFE OF GENERAL  
SYNOD AS THEY FORM  
A NECESSARY  
REFLECTIVE BRIDGE  
BETWEEN THE MAKING  
OF DECISIONS AND  
THEIR  
IMPLEMENTATION IN  
THE DIOCESES.

## *My thoughts on an Inclusive Church...*

The introduction of Civil Marriage for same sex couples, has created a dilemma for the Church. Should Christian marriage (as performed in Church buildings) be open to all, or remain something distinct and different? That will be one question to be explored in the next five years of General Synod.

Also - If marriage is to remain the key relationship in society today for those who are committed in their love for one another

how can we work for its strengthening? How can the local church, if it desires, welcome all those who seek God in their relationship with an appropriate liturgy?

I believe that God does not withhold a welcome from anyone who comes to him, and therefore all have a valid place within God's Church. All of us, whether single, married, heterosexual or gay, ordained or lay has to work

out what this means for our lives and our ministries. Including the parameters around which relationships work, such as faithfulness, fidelity and generosity, all within an authentic Biblical framework .

This will lead to disagreement, as conclusions and consciences will differ. However it need not be the parting of the ways as people fear, but an acceptance of difference and the reflection of a broad church at its best.

## *My thoughts on General Synod .....*

Over the last few years the communication of Synod matters has changed completely. Voting preferences are now public, members blog and send messages via Twitter from the Synod floor. The report in the Church Times a few days later is already old news. I am wholly committed to a synod which is transparent and I am open to engaging with others in debate

and communicating how synod works, what has been agreed and the difference it will make.

Whilst I do have particular preferences as outlined in this paper, for the majority of the time I will be voting for the good of the diocese and the church as a whole, as the subject of the vote affects

clergy and laity in the parishes.

Archdeacons have a key role to play in the life of the General Synod as they form a necessary reflective bridge between the making of decisions and their implementation in the dioceses. The Diocese has been well served in the past and, if elected again, I will continue to do the same in the future.

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