

CANON DAWN BRATHWAITE



**Standing for re-election to the
House of Laity of the General Synod
Diocese of Birmingham**

I would welcome your first preference vote

About Me:

I have served as a lay representative on General Synod since 2021 and have contributed to discussions/debates at Diocesan and Deanery Synods.

I am a retired solicitor/partner in a national law firm fortunate to have amassed a range of skills over the years which I hope make me a well-rounded individual, with the knowledge, skills and tenacity to represent the diocese. After stepping away from law, I became the firm's first strategic lead for diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

I chair the West Midlands Racial Justice Board which provides governance oversight of the West Midlands Racial Justice Initiative – a collaborative endeavour promoting racial justice across six dioceses in the West Midlands. I am also a member of the racial justice board of the Diocese of Birmingham.

I currently sit as a Non-Executive Director across two NHS group hospitals in the West Midlands, chairing the People Committee and sitting on the quality, audit and remuneration committees.

I am married with 2 daughters and 3 granddaughters.

My Faith:

I have been a member of the Church of England for as long as I can remember and certainly going back to my early years growing up in Jamaica. I was made a Canon in November 2025. My faith is very dear to me and each day I strive to fulfil the roles where I have been called to serve, anchored in **Proverbs 3:5-6**, trusting in the Lord and allowing Him to direct my paths. I do worry that as a church we have become tribal – each to their own 'affiliation'. I pray that we continue to hold the whole together as we journey forth. My passion for a more inclusive world is linked to my faith. I am committed to equality for everyone, and to a church where there are no barriers (spoken or unspoken) because of one's ethnicity, disability, socio-economic background, sexual identity or gender.

I have worshipped for over 20 years at St Boniface Church, Quinton.

General Synod: the last five years:

The lay voice brings an important perspective and is critical to synodical debates.

LLF occupied much space and rightly so, given its impact. For those of us who dared to hope and voted for wider inclusion, the ultimate outcome was deeply disappointing. Safeguarding affects us all. There were robust debates which involved listening, penitence, seeking forgiveness and implementing more rigorous processes.

There were positive and encouraging debates on the role of young people and the future of mission more widely. We took note of the report on trust and trustworthiness in the church, promoting unity in our nation, support for children and young people in the care system and how we support those who are neurodivergent to have a fuller role in the church. Last but by no means least, we started this quinquennium with a commitment to racial justice and greater inclusion, but were bewildered to see the significant cuts to the racial justice programmes for 2026-2028.

After the pain of the safeguarding disclosures we now have better governance in this area. We also have a Redress Scheme to compensate victims. It was a privilege to have been a member of the **Abuse (Redress) Steering Committee** - bringing scrutiny to the Measure (legislation) for this compensation scheme before it was approved by Synod. I am currently on the **Mission and Pastoral Measure Revision Committee** considering proposed legislative changes.

My top takeaway as a General Synod member:

- ❖ *We will have views on issues but we have to be prepared to listen well, to challenge effectively but kindly, not always accepting the status quo and exercise independence of thought.*

Why am I standing again?

Good question! It has been a privilege to have represented the lay members of our diocese. I have so much more to contribute being far more familiar with the Synodical process and the wider needs of the diocese and of the Church of England as a whole. There are major items to be debated – from mission, national church governance, further work on safeguarding, inclusion, Net Zero, to name but a few.

I feel that I have the skills and depth of experience to engage in these wider debates and to the various legislative reforms ahead. Where appropriate, I will bring a Birmingham voice, and particularly the voice of our lay members, to these debates and proposals for reform.

Thanks for reading this election address and I would ask you to prayerfully considering making me your first preference.