

DR RACHEL JEPSON

Local Voice, National Impact for Birmingham Diocese

Candidate for General Synod 2026



Proposer: Ruth Cooper, Lay Chair, Handsworth & Central Deanery Synod; St Mary's, Handsworth

Seconder: Adam Chinery-North, Kings Norton, Moseley & Shirley Deanery Synod; St Peter's, Hall Green

WHY I AM STANDING

It is an enormous privilege and joy to represent you as a lay member of General Synod. As a proud, born-and-bred Brummie, my heart is deeply rooted in the Church of England Birmingham. As a member of the Archbishops' Council, I actively ensure our diocese is strongly represented at the highest national level, and I'm asking for your vote to continue to serve you on General Synod.

I have the experience, knowledge, and energy to continue serving our diocese conscientiously and effectively. I long to see a church where all gather to love Jesus, and all feel they belong. I remain committed to listening prayerfully, maintaining an open mind, and fostering good disagreement and debate across all Synodical business.

MY PRIORITIES FOR GENERAL SYNOD

- **Resourcing Parishes:** The parish is at the heart of our mission and ministry. I am acutely aware of local financial struggles and will press for national funding to be distributed fairly to support stipends and parish life, liberating clergy and volunteers.
- **Building an Inclusive Church:** Fully committed to equality for everyone at all levels and roles within the Church, regardless of disability, ethnicity, economic power, sex, gender identity, learning ability, mental health, neurodiversity or sexuality. Serving on the Appointments Committee, I work to broaden diversity across the central bodies of our Church.
- **Championing Children & Young People:** As a life-long educator, I am passionate about securing the place of children and young people within the church family, including on General Synod and the Council for Christian Unity, schools, and wider society.
- **Safeguarding & Integrity:** Robust, fit-for-purpose safeguarding remains a vital Gospel imperative that must be embedded and continually strengthened across all contexts.
- **Ecumenical & Inter-Faith Engagement:** Drawing on my role as Vice Chair of the Council for Christian Unity, and experience of working and worshipping in inner-city Birmingham, I will continue building bridges and deepening friendships across denominations and faith communities.

ABOUT ME

• National Governance

Member of the Archbishops' Council (elected 2020 & successfully re-elected 2025) ensuring Birmingham's voice is heard at the highest level.

• Diocesan Leadership

10 years on Bishop's Council; Diocesan representative on Birmingham SACRE since 2006.

• Parish Commitment

Life-long Christian, and member and former PCC Chair of St Martin-in-the-Bull Ring.

• Profession & Vocation

35 years in education as teacher, researcher and senior leader. PhD from Durham University in Religious Education.

• Contact & Connect

Email: racheljepson12@gmail.com

Phone: 07759 858734

Dear Deanery Synod member,

Thank you for reading my election statement. You can learn more about my experience and my passion for building God's Kingdom on page 2. Do contact me if you have any questions and please consider giving me your 1st preference vote.

Yours in Christ,

A RECORD OF ACTIVE SERVICE ON GENERAL SYNOD

National & Legislative Leadership

- **Archbishops' Council:** Elected lay member (2020 & re-elected 2025) contributing directly to the Church's national governance, organization and strategy.
- **Council for Christian Unity Vice Chair:** Since 2015 (elected 2013) working closely with leaders from other denominations and representing the Church of England at the Churches Together in England Residential Forum.
- **Appointments Committee:** Member since 2015; dedicated to expanding diversity across Church boards, councils and legislative bodies.
- **Legislative & Reform Work:** Member of Legislative Reform Committee; Trust & Trustworthiness Reference & Task Groups. Served on Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure Steering Committee; and Revision Committees: Festival of God the Creator & Commemoration of the 21 Martyrs of Libya; Draft Care of Cathedrals Amendment Measure; Additional Collects; Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure.

Other Contributions to Synod

- **Chaired Synod debates:** Appointed to chair General Synod debates (2016–2021).
- **100% attendance record:** In person.
- **Confident voice for women:** Spoken and voted in favour of women bishops. Gave maiden speech in *Voices from Africa* debate, celebrating the lives and roles of women I met when visiting Malawi.
- **Submitted questions:** Focusing on teaching and learning resources in our Church schools.
- **Led worship:** Part of the daily worship team at Synod.
- **Group member of *Make Synod More User Friendly*:** Working to make General Synod a more effective and practical forum for representatives from all dioceses.

BUILDING THE KINGDOM IN BIRMINGHAM AND BEYOND

I am passionate about building the Kingdom in our home city, our nation and all of God's world

- **Parish Leadership:** Chair of PCC, St Martin-in-the-Bull Ring (2008–2011, 2020–2024); long-standing active parishioner.
- **Religious Education Champion:** Diocesan representative on Birmingham SACRE since 2006; former Diocesan Board of Education member. Postgraduate research for MA, Farmington Institute Millennium Award, and doctorate.
- **Theological Education:** Governor of The Queen's Foundation for Theological Education, Birmingham, since 2013.
- **Church Representative:** Represented the Church of England at Porvoo Leaders' Consultation, Portugal; Moravian Church Synod; Methodist Conference; and 21st Anniversary Anglican-Methodist Covenant celebrations.

A bit more about me

- **Committed to Youth & Global Mission:** Co-leader & participant in Malawi-Birmingham Diocesan Youth Exchanges; leadership development in South Africa with Youth for Christ; Church Mission Society India Experience Camp.
- **Active member of these groups:** Affirming Catholics, Women and The Church (WATCH) and Together for the Church of England.
- **Dance:** Argentine tango and swing dancing.
- **Karate:** Black belt, 1st Dan.

MY PLEDGE TO YOU

I pledge to remain accessible, accountable, and prayerful. I will continue to listen to all perspectives across our diocese, report back transparently from General Synod, and ensure the Church of England Birmingham is represented with clarity, integrity, and warmth.

Please give DR RACHEL JEPSON your 1st preference vote