

ROS CLARKE

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About me

I am 47 years old, single and celibate. I am a member of Castle Church, Stafford, where I am involved in pastoral ministry and theological training. I have previously worked as a teacher, a chef, an administrator, a romance novelist, and for Lichfield Diocese as the first Online Pastor in the Church of England. I currently work as Associate Director of Church Society, a patronage body in the CofE with a commitment to ongoing reform and renewal of the church in biblical faith. My responsibilities include online communication, encouraging lay people, training women, and writing about Christian issues and biblical teaching. I have a PhD on the interpretation of the Song of Songs, and I have written a Lent devotional on women in the Bible due to be published by IVP later in 2021. Outside of work, I love doing all kinds of arts and crafts and I've recently taken up wild swimming. I am an avid reader and a sporadic gardener.



Why I am standing for General Synod

Past experiences

I have been a member of the Church of England since coming to faith aged 12, when I was baptized at St John the Baptist, Littleworth (Stafford). I have been employed in various capacities by two parish churches, studied at an Anglican training college, and worked for the Diocese of Lichfield. I have served as a PCC secretary, a Deanery Synod rep, and for the past three years on Diocesan Synod, to which I have just been re-elected. I am passionately committed to the Church of England and I feel that now is the time to step up to be involved in the national church as well as locally in the parish, deanery and diocese.

Present concerns

The past 18 months have brought into sharp relief some of the pressures on the church: financial concerns; lack of engagement with children and young people; falling clergy numbers; the issues raised in the Living in Love and Faith resources; ongoing safeguarding concerns and more. It is clear that the church needs a renewed vision and passion for its commitment to be 'a Christian presence in every community' and I would be honoured to use my voice to represent the laity of Lichfield diocese as we face up to these challenges.

Future hopes

"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." Revelation 7:9

This is the future of the church: a great multitude, diverse in every way, worshipping Christ. It is my hope and prayer that the Church of England will be constantly reforming and renewing itself to grow ever closer to this vision. As we consider the issues likely to arise in the next Synod, the choices that are made will help us move towards our glorious future—or not. My commitment is that I will always be seeking God's wisdom, as revealed in his Word and illuminated by his Spirit, through prayer, to bring about the fulfilment of his kingdom.



Areas of particular experience and interest

Developing digital resources and fellowship

Many churches have risen to the challenge of going online in the last 18 months and we now have a huge opportunity to turn these new skills and resources towards ongoing digital ministry in all kinds of ways. My experience of that work in this diocese and beyond makes me well-placed to contribute to discussions about the digital future of the wider church. I chaired the award-winning YouTube show, TGI Monday, established the successful Online Pastor Facebook group for the diocese, helped to develop the diocesan online safeguarding policy, spoke at the Premier Digital Conference and recently was invited to lead a seminar on online church for Ripon College, Cuddesdon.



Valuing and equipping lay people

Lay people are the heart of the Church of England, without whom there would be no church. Without the faithful service of lay people in all kinds of practical and pastoral roles, the church would largely cease to function. I am deeply committed to making suitable support and training available to all lay people in the church, but especially those who take on roles that involve sharing the Bible: Sunday school teachers, home group leaders, pastoral visitors, lay readers and many more.



Discrimination in the church

Like most of us, I have been shocked by the recent revelations concerning ongoing and systemic racism and class prejudice within the Church of England. I have also experienced first hand discrimination on the basis of gender. In the past 12 months I have commissioned and edited magazines on the subjects of racism and class prejudice in the church. Listening to these stories of facing constant aggressions and microaggressions on the basis of ethnicity, colour, accent, educational background has made me passionate about using my own privileges to speak up for the rights and needs of others.



I've had the pleasure of knowing Ros for a few years now and I certainly support her standing for General Synod. Ros spoke at Stoke Deanery Chapter, giving us support and advice for using online resources to help church communities and she was great at guiding us through different options. Ros has also led evenings for our Synod/Chapter She has a captivating teaching style where she both offers great ideas and content as well as offering different tools to guide your own thinking. Ros has a wealth of knowledge of the scriptures which she communicates well and has a lively approach to both challenge and explain.

Fr Tommy Merry, Vicar of Fenton,
Assistant Rural Dean Stoke-on-Trent

I believe we need Ros's unique background and expertise in the General Synod.

Chik Kaw Tan
General Synod member,
Newcastle Deanery

Ros is passionate about biblical truth and has a desire to pass on her knowledge for the equipping of lay people to teach the Bible in their own context.

Rev'd Deborah Aitken, Hanford.

Thank you for your service on Deanery Synod and for taking seriously your important role in this election. You are welcome to contact me if you have any questions or would like more information prior to casting your vote.

If elected, I will be YOUR representative in the national church, and I hope you will feel free to contact me about any questions or concerns relating to the national church.

Please consider giving your first place nomination to me: ROS CLARKE.