

General Synod Election Address for the House of Laity – Wendy Coombey

My name is Wendy Coombey and this is my address for re-election to General Synod. Whilst many of you will know me as a Diocesan Support Minister, as Community Partnership and Funding Officer, I am also an active member of the congregation at Leominster Priory, a committed and active Christian since childhood. I sing in the church choir and have done since the age of 9 and have been Churchwarden and PCC secretary. I have lived in Herefordshire all my life and feel that I understand the rural nature of the communities across the Diocese. During my first 5 years on General Synod, I have done my best to advocate for those communities particularly for the rural church. If I was re-elected, I would continue to do my best to be that voice, along with my other General Synod Colleagues.

Over the next five years, Synod will be considering some important issues, such as the revision of the Mission and Pastoral Measure. This has the potential to make a significant impact at a local level, and we need to provide a strong voice that reflects the nature of our Diocese. I have come to have a good working knowledge of many of the pressure points for parishes and a good understanding of many of the subjects being considered over the next five years at Synod – particularly around church buildings and rural ministry and mission. I am an elected member of the Church Buildings Council, where I offer a rural perspective on the care and management of church buildings, but more importantly I try to offer a counter to the strong heritage voice and offer a perspective on these holy places as centres of worship and community and not just heritage assets.

I have enjoyed being part of the decision-making process and discernment of where God wants His church to go in terms of mission and discipleship. I am equally passionate about the need for the Church to build on the work carried out during the pandemic, and to see our national resources channelled into mission to those in greatest need, whether they are in urban or rural communities – faith and works go together and that belief has underpinned my work in the Diocese for the past 20 years.

I am standing as an Inclusive Church candidate again, as how we treat people equally, and not based on their sexuality, is something I also passionately about - and quiet simply the work isn't finished. Taking part in the Shared Conversations and the subsequent Living in Love and Faith process has shown me that despite some progress the Church has a long way to go until it is able to truly say that is offering that radical, loving, Christ shaped, grace filled welcome to all and particularly the LGBTQI+ community. I believe that God is calling the church to a point where we can find it in our hearts to honour love in all its many forms and I want to see the Hereford Motion debated and passed.

I hope you feel able to support my re-election to General Synod.

Wendy Coombey

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