

Claire Levin candidate for the House of Laity, Diocese of Chichester



The Church of England currently has just 6250 Full time Stipendiary positions, a drop of 28% since 2000. More clergy are resigning from their roles than those retiring. Strategic restructuring is cutting stipendiary posts and spreading those remaining so thin, that they are unable to meet the needs of their parish(es). This current trend is not sustainable.

I am standing for election to General Synod because I believe the Church of England's national life must be rooted once again in the faith, worship and service of its parishes. The parish church is where people most often encounter the Church: in prayer and worship, in baptism, marriage and burial, in pastoral care, in schools, in community service, and in the quiet daily witness of clergy and laity serving their neighbours.

I support Save the Parish because it gives voice to a conviction shared by many across our dioceses: that the parish system is not an optional extra, but one of the Church of England's greatest gifts to the nation. A flourishing Church needs properly resourced parishes, sustainable stipendiary ministry, well-supported clergy, valued lay volunteers, and finances directed clearly towards mission and the cure of souls.



If elected, I will work for a General Synod that listens to ordinary parish churches that takes seriously the pressures they face: stretched clergy, increasing benefices, anxious churchwardens, fragile finances, building responsibilities, and exhausted volunteers. I will argue for decisions that strengthen local ministry rather than burden it, and for national and diocesan structures that serve parishes rather than expecting parishes simply to fund structures.

My priorities would be:

- to defend and renew the parish system as the Church's primary framework for worship, mission and pastoral care;
- to support fairer funding for frontline parish ministry, especially in poorer and rural communities;
- to value stipendiary clergy and protect them from unsustainable workloads;
- to honour the vocation, wisdom and labour of lay people who sustain parish life week by week;
- to scrutinise national strategies, spending and legislation so that they strengthen local churches rather than weaken them;
- to encourage confidence in Anglican worship, preaching, sacramental life and pastoral presence in every community.

I recognise the breadth of the Church of England and would seek to work constructively with others across traditions and perspectives. But I would bring to Synod a firm commitment to putting parish, priest and people at the heart of our common life. Renewal will not come by overlooking the local church; it will come by trusting, resourcing and encouraging it.

About me

I have been a member of Holy Trinity, Hurstpierpoint for 27 years, and have spent much of that time as a member of the PCC and Deanery Synod. In the past, I served on Diocesan Synod. I am currently Lay Chair of Hurst Deanery Synod. I am also a Reader, and hold a Masters degree in Christian Liturgy.

I spent over 42 years working in the Legal Profession and as a (now retired) Solicitor, I am familiar working with, and interpreting legislation. I am comfortable with issues of governance, process and legislation, which General Synod work involves. I pray for God's will to be done.

I ask for your support and your first-preference vote, so that together we can help the Church of England recover confidence in the parish system and serve every community with faithfulness, hope and joy.



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