

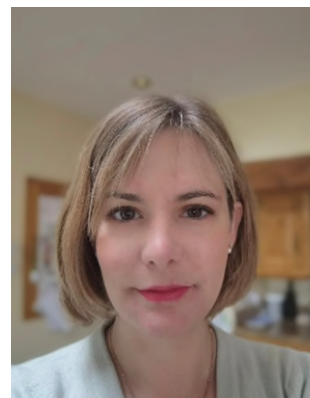
Election Address 2026, House of Laity Candidate

Heather Baker

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Proposer: Margaret Eyre, Deanery Synod Representative

Seconded: Ruth Sillar, Deanery Synod Representative



Background

I am 37 years old and worship at St Olave's Church in York where I am also a Deanery Synod representative. Since becoming a Christian at the age of 17, I have enjoyed upholding the Church of England's strong choral tradition, singing in several chapel and church choirs over the years. I believe the Church of England is called to be a sacramental, inclusive, and hopeful presence in every community. As someone shaped by the liberal catholic tradition, I am committed to a Church rooted in worship, generous in theology, and courageous in its public witness.

Professionally, I serve as a Public Health Practitioner for the City of York. My current portfolio focuses on Drugs and Alcohol, where I work to ensure that some of the city's most vulnerable residents can access effective, compassionate support for the treatment and recovery of substance use disorder. I also collaborate with partner organisations to promote approaches that uphold dignity, minimise harm, and respond to people in need with professionalism and care.

Why I am Standing

The General Synod carries significant responsibility for shaping the mission, governance, and witness of the Church. I am standing because:

- I want to help the Church respond wisely to the needs of a changing society while remaining rooted in its sacramental identity.
- I believe in strengthening trust between parishes, dioceses, and national structures.
- I care deeply about ensuring that national decisions reflect the lived experience of local churches.
- I want to contribute to debates with clarity, compassion, and a desire for the common good.

My Approach to General Synod

If elected, I will:

- Listen attentively to the concerns and hopes of those I represent
- Engage constructively in Synod debates, seeking wisdom rather than victory
- Communicate openly about the work of the Synod, ensuring transparency and trust
- Pray faithfully for guidance in all deliberations

General Synod holds significant responsibility for shaping the policies, structures, and national direction of the Church. In particular:

Mission and Growth

The Church's calling is both pastoral and missional. Communities of faith must be nurtured and reach those who have not yet found a place within the life of the Church. Growth is spiritual, rooted in conviction that the Gospel speaks to every generation. Championing mission and growth means supporting parishes as they respond to the needs of their communities. It encourages confident discipleship that enables local mission. A church that welcomes, listens, and values all people is better equipped to flourish and grow.

Inclusion

I believe that Church is for everybody, regardless of background, be that gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or socio-economic status. I fully support the representation of women in ministry and that there should be equitable participation at every level of the Church.

Community

I believe that the Church's strength lies in its relationships and shared purpose. A church that values community recognises that faith is not only lived in worship but in the everyday connections that sustain individuals and families.

Climate Change

The Church has a moral and theological duty to safeguard creation and act for the common good. Climate change is already shaping the lives of communities across the world. Championing climate responsibility means recognising that environmental stewardship is integral to Christian witness and strengthens its social and ecological commitment to justice, care and long-term stewardship.

It is hugely important to me that the General Synod has volunteers who are not afraid to challenge and contest proposals from the Church.

Should I be elected, I will carry out my responsibilities with diligence and integrity. I offer a strong and committed Christian voice- one that is willing to speak publicly with clarity and conviction, and to represent you faithfully, sincerely, and energetically. I will do so to the very best of my ability, guided by a deep sense of service.

Thank you for reading.

Heather

