

Melanie Burnside

Vicar of Helmsley and Upper Ryedale, Cleveland Archdeaconry

Nominated by: The Venerable Dr Amanda Bloor, Archdeacon of Cleveland

Seconded by: The Revd Canon Maggie McLean, Canon Missioner, York Minster



About Me

Before ordination

15 years in the grain industry, working with rural and agricultural businesses.

Ministry

Vicar of eight churches; Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands; former Methodist Authorised Presbyterian alongside Anglican ministry; experience of supporting curates on placement.

Leadership & mission

Germinate Leadership; Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail; two major National Lottery Heritage Fund projects.

Children & young people

A strong supporter of children and youth ministry. Our churches employ a Children and Youth Worker working across churches, schools and communities.

Family

Married to Ben, with three adult children and two grandchildren.

"Mel is a prayerful and practical person with a deep love and understanding of the Church of England. As a member of General Synod, she would work to ensure that the voices of under-represented groups are not only heard, but listened to with respect and compassion."

Lucy Willshaw, Youth & Children's Worker/LLM (Reader)

WHY I AM STANDING

I feel called to stand for General Synod because I love the Church of England and believe God is calling us to be a Church in which everyone can belong, participate and flourish. At the heart of my faith is the conviction that every person is made in the image of God and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for everyone.

I come from a working-class background and was brought up by a single mother in former mining communities in Derbyshire. My childhood was not always settled, and later in life I experienced periods of unemployment, reliance on the benefits system and housing insecurity, including a time when my family needed emergency accommodation. I also live with a chronic neurological condition. I was the first in my family to gain a degree. My life and ministry have since taken me through market town and coastal communities to the rural communities I serve today. Those experiences have given me a lasting awareness of how easily circumstances can change, of the barriers people can face, and of whose voices can be missing when decisions are made.

I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the Church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity or sexuality. I wholeheartedly support the ordination and equal ministry of women at every level of the Church and the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people.

For me, inclusion means everyone, because God's love is for everyone.

PARISH, PLACE AND PIONEERING MINISTRY

I serve eight churches across a large rural area of North Yorkshire. Although our communities can appear prosperous, rural poverty, domestic abuse, loneliness and isolation are often hidden, while poor transport and digital connectivity create real inequalities of access.

I am strongly committed to the parish system, but that does not mean resisting change. I am leading two major National Lottery Heritage Fund projects bringing together buildings, heritage, mission and community engagement.



Through developing the Saint Aelred's Pilgrim Trail I have also discovered how pilgrimage can open new ways for people to encounter God through our churches, Christian heritage and landscape.

I believe the Church needs both rootedness and imagination.

MINISTRY TOGETHER

I care about clergy wellbeing and sustainable parish ministry, but equally about lay vocation. Lay people are not simply there to fill gaps left by fewer clergy. God calls lay and ordained people to different and complementary ministries, and both need to be valued, supported and heard.

My ministry is also deeply ecumenical. Alongside being an Anglican priest, I served concurrently as an Authorised Presbyterian in the Methodist Church. That experience strengthened my belief that we have much to receive from Christians of different traditions and that our shared life and witness matter.

Among the continuing work of General Synod, I am particularly interested in inclusion and racial justice; clergy care and wellbeing; sustainable ministry and funding; safeguarding and healthy governance; church buildings and mission; ecumenism; and children and young people.

WHAT I WOULD BRING

I would bring convictions, but also a willingness to listen. I would engage seriously with people whose experience or theology differs from mine, and seek God's wisdom through prayer, careful listening and thoughtful engagement.

Above all, I would keep asking what decisions made nationally will mean for the parishes, clergy, lay people and communities who have to live with them.

I would be honoured to represent the clergy of the Diocese of York and would be grateful for your highest possible preference.

