

ELECTION STATEMENT - FIRST TIME CANDIDATE FOR THE HOUSE OF LAITY (GENERAL SYNOD)

Name: Louise Sanderson

Parish: St Peter's Church, Hutton Cranswick, East Yorkshire **Deanery:** Harthill **Diocese:** York

My Priorities

I want to live in a country where every church really is living Christ's story. Every church, whether it's in a small village or a large city, should be the beating heart of its community – a place where everyone is welcome, where pastoral care, prayer and spiritual uplift are central and where everyone feels safe asking for help. We need to reach out to the people who Jesus would be seeking out now – the broken, the lonely, and the anxious and, as he would do, help them to feel worthy, valued, equal and loved.

The Church is no longer relevant to the vast majority of people in our country. They may use their local church for baptisms, weddings and funerals, but it is clear that many feel uncomfortable and out of place when they do attend these services. We need to reach out to them and help them discover the God-sized hole in their lives. This cannot happen without the parish and its ministry team becoming the central focus of the Church of England's priorities and resources. Every community needs access to a priest more than it needs a building, just as we need doctors more than surgeries. Our church buildings are beautiful beacons all over our country, but they are nothing if they are not inhabited by and attracting loving and caring congregations, with a priest who has time to lead them and to care for all the volunteers as well as the parishioners. Good pastoral care is vital but is often ad hoc.

Rather than taking bold steps in this direction, the Church of England is an organisation operating from a place of fear and it is not working for us or the people we so long to serve. If it was truly Christ-like-generous with its time, money and resources, it would not need to 'build bigger barns' in which to store its ever-growing wealth (reported as £11.6 billion in May 2026) while increasingly elderly congregation members stand for hours behind cake stalls and jumble sale tables to fund the upkeep of their church and the diocesan freewill offering. It is time to stop hoarding money and focus on saving people, as I believe Jesus would do. We need to trust what he said about money.

We also need our churches to be able to invest in our buildings, retaining their beauty and awe and wonder while making them accessible for everyone and fit for the 21st century without having to overcome the pedantic and punctilious obstructions they often encounter.

Children have to be at the heart of our outreach. The church can take credit for founding the education now provided by the state, but it still has so much to offer. I have a vision of many more children expanding their education with Christian teaching every week and being given the opportunity to realise their musical talent by singing their hearts out in choirs, experiencing our wonderful 1000+ year English musical heritage. I am hopeful that the new RSCM initiative will help with this. The recent BBC broadcast of Songs of Praise featuring Hull Minster shows just what can be done when raw talent is given opportunity. I have seen the benefits that this training can bring to young people in my time teaching music. The aural ability and confidence when performing of those students who sang in church choirs was a joy to see. They also had confidence to live by the morals Jesus taught. With over 30 years' experience as a secondary school teacher and performing musician I am passionate about bringing young people into our wonderful churches, so I am seeking to recruit more children into our church choir and work more closely with our local school and youth organisations.

About Me

I was confirmed into the Church of England over 30 years ago after attending churches of various denominations since I was three years old. I was licensed as a Recognised Parish Assistant four years ago and have been an Authorised Lay Minister for three years, focusing on ministry across our benefice of six churches and leading services during a two-year interregnum. I also was instrumental in reinstating regular care home visits in our village. I am a member of my church's PCC, have served as PCC secretary twice and am in my



My licensing as an RPA



Playing the violin at our church Christmas Tree Festival

second term as an elected member on Deanery Synod. I am a founder member of our church Mission and Outreach Committee, attracting more people into church by putting on events there such as a Faith Badge evening for Beavers and Cubs, an annual Christmas Tree Festival, Church Open Days and concerts where local talent is given an opportunity to shine. I sing in our RSCM affiliated choir and play violin in the worship band. I was a member of the Bishop of Hull's first Discipleship Group, and I am presently developing a 100-mile cycling pilgrimage route around the deanery in which I live (Inspired by Faith in the North Pilgrim Places).

I am an action person. I enjoy working as part of a team and I can lead when required. I enjoy organising events, but I am just as likely to be found serving drinks at a fundraising event or leafleting the village as leading a service or giving a violin recital.

Outside of our benefice I am a volunteer Money Mentor for Community Money Advice (which recently joined forces with Christians Against Poverty) and a Tearfund Speaker, as I am passionate about alleviating poverty both in this country and in the developing world. In my previous parish I was the Fairtrade representative. As a Tearfund Speaker I still get the opportunity to visit a wide variety of churches and bring their good ideas back home, as sharing best practice is something every church and diocese should do. I love visiting different churches when away for the day or on holiday and, while my musical tastes are eclectic, if there is a choral evensong happening, I will be there – that is my personal spiritual uplift for the week! I also deliver talks and give recitals regularly all over East Yorkshire.

I have always stood up for the underdog, which I attribute to my Christian upbringing. A good example of this is when I was teaching I agreed to act as union representative for a year. A member of staff was unfairly suspended and, along with the other two reps, I spent many fraught hours getting him reinstated.

Why I am standing and what I will bring to the role

So many people I have talked to are frustrated with and increasingly worried about the status quo. I want to be your representative and help bridge the increasingly large gap between our parish churches and the slow-moving machine that leads us. I have been told that I may find some of General Synod pedantic, but I am determined to make use of every minute and I will take every opportunity to take part in discussions and speak up for parishes. I would welcome the chance over the next five years to help direct the leading machine that is General Synod in the direction that I know so many of you, like me, are desperate for us to go. I will continue to talk to as many of you as I can and honestly represent your views. Having delivered many talks and school assemblies, I can write and deliver a meaningful speech, and I hope that I get the opportunity to do so if elected. I will also use every possible communication channel to feed back to you as much information as I can accurately and quickly, as well as writing formal reports. I will ensure I earn my place and that I am 'good value for money'.



I am creating a cycling pilgrimage route visiting all the churches in our Deanery.

If you would like to contact me for more information, or to ask me specific questions, I will be more than happy to respond.

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