

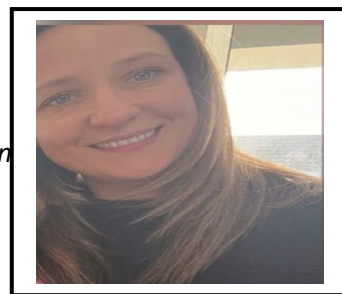
BETHANY SUTHERLAND

St.Edmund's - Allenton & Shelton Lock

Nominated by: Olugbemiga Adefuye of St Edmunds Allenton and Shelton

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About me

I moved to Derby 16 years ago to study Psychology at university. Having quickly fallen in love with the warmth and friendliness of the city, I chose to stay and now proudly call Derby my home. I have built both my personal and professional life here and have a strong connection to the local community.

My professional background is in social care, particularly residential care for children who have experienced complex trauma. Through this work, I have seen how easily children can become hidden or misunderstood by society. I am passionate about ensuring that their voices are heard that they are treated with dignity and compassion, and that those who are vulnerable are given the opportunity to thrive. I believe this experience has shaped the way I approach safeguarding, pastoral care, leadership and advocacy.

Faith has also been a constant part of my life. I have been part of various Church of England churches throughout my life and was confirmed at the age of 14. My mother is also a Church of England vicar in another diocese, so I have grown up with a strong understanding of both the joys and challenges of ministry and church life. I now worship at St Edmund's Church, a growing church with an increasingly diverse congregation of families, young people and individuals from the wider community, including people who have had little or no previous experience of church or faith. For the past year, I have served as Safeguarding Parish Officer, as well as being a member of the PCC and Standing Committee. These roles have given me a greater insight into how the Church of England works and, importantly, how decisions made at a national level ultimately affect the experience of people within our local churches and communities.

I also serve on the welcome team, because I believe passionately that everyone should feel genuinely welcomed into the Church and find a place where they can belong, build relationships and explore their faith. Alongside this, I am part of the children's team, which is a real privilege. I love helping children to develop their understanding of God and their relationship with faith, while making church a place where they feel safe, valued and able to have fun.

My priorities

A Church rooted in and serving its community-I want to see a Church that is outward-looking, relevant and deeply rooted in the communities it serves. A Church where people feel that they belong, regardless of their background or previous experience of faith, and where our buildings and congregations are places of genuine welcome, fellowship and connection.

A Church committed to safeguarding and pastoral care-Safeguarding must remain at the heart of everything we do. I want to support a Church where everyone can feel safe to belong, where people are treated with dignity and compassion, and where pastoral and people care are seen as fundamental rather than additional to the life of the Church.

A Church passionate about children and young people-I want to see the Church continue to nurture and invest in children and young people, creating opportunities for a new generation to encounter and grow in faith. I am passionate about supporting the revival we are seeing among younger generations and ensuring that they have a meaningful voice and place within the Church.

A Church faithful to its calling-As a lay member of General Synod, I would seek to listen carefully to the experiences of people in our parishes and communities and bring those voices into the national conversation. I want to contribute positively and constructively, while ensuring that the Church of England remains faithful to its calling, its faith and its Canon Law, and that national decisions translate into positive outcomes for local churches.

I would be honoured to serve as a lay member of General Synod and to bring my experience, perspective and passion for the Church, safeguarding, our communities, and the next generation. Thank-you for reading and considering me.