

The Ven Emma Sykes

Archdeacon of East Derbyshire



Although I am new to the Diocese of Derby, I am standing for election to General Synod because I believe my breadth of experience, commitment to careful listening, and ability to represent a broad range of traditions will enable me to serve the Diocese faithfully and well.

Since becoming Archdeacon of East Derbyshire in May 2026, I have gained a growing understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing our clergy and parishes across rural, post-industrial, and urban contexts. Before this, I ministered in Birmingham Diocese for 18 years in a variety of contexts and was elected to General Synod in 2024. I therefore already understand how General Synod works, the time commitment involved, and how to contribute effectively from the outset.

During my recent time on General Synod, I noticed how the debates around LLF dominated many of the wider issues, and I experienced firsthand the pain that has been caused by people from all perspectives. At times this has led to 'tribalism' and othering one another in a way that reflects a poor image of Christ to the world and has overshadowed other important issues such as widening economic inequality, climate change, racial justice, fostering a good safeguarding culture and lack of opportunities for young people.

My experience in ministering in the richly diverse city of Birmingham has given me insight into how these issues shape everyday life and how our national debates must remain connected to the realities of our parishes and the communities we live and minister in. My more recent experience of communities here in Derbyshire has deepened my understanding of the resilience and challenges of our post-industrial and rural communities. I see the pressure this has on clergy wellbeing and how important it is to find more sustainable patterns of ministry that enable us to faithfully share the gospel in all contexts across our Diocese, including our church and community schools.

I have varied experience in both the charitable sector and ministry, both lay and ordained. My background includes supporting young homeless people, serving as the West Midlands Co-ordinator for UK Youth Parliament, and serving as a lay pastoral worker at St Michael's Church in Boldmere before becoming their Youth Minister. Since being ordained in 2007, I have ministered in city centre, suburban and inner-urban contexts, in both stipendiary and non-stipendiary roles and until April 2026, as Vicar of St Barnabas Erdington, and Oversight Minister for the Erdington Area.

I have served as a Bishop's Advisor for National Discernment Panels, assistant DDO, chair of the Mission Apprentice scheme, a member of the Malawian Task Group (including leading clergy training in Lake Diocese in Malawi), and as a leadership specialist with CPAS. These experiences have given me a broad understanding of the varied challenges that stipendiary and self-supporting clergy face and the ability to work across traditions with respect and empathy. I came to faith in an evangelical charismatic tradition, now draw on a more contemplative Ignatian spirituality, and minister comfortably within a modern catholic context.

I believe transparency is important, so I want to be clear that I support moving towards same-sex marriage and the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in the life of the Church. I also recognise and respect those who hold a different view in good conscience, and I believe appropriate protections must be in place so that all traditions can flourish. A wise spiritual director once said to me, "It takes the whole of the world to know the whole of God". I believe Christ is seen more clearly when, despite the discomfort of our differences, we find a way to hold together as the body of Christ to witness to God's transforming love for all. I want to advocate strongly for those voices on the margins that are often overlooked and unheard. I believe that God values every human being and in Jesus Christ who transcends human-made barriers and in the infinite power of the holy spirit who equips us with the grace and compassion to work for unity and the flourishing of all.

After prayerful consideration, if you believe what I have shared reflects the kind of representation the Diocese of Derby needs at General Synod, I would be grateful for your first or high-preference vote.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above, please contact me at: emma.sykes@derby.anglican.org