

Reverend Alicia Dring

General Synod Election Address

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There is a challenge for us all as we emerge into a new reality following the pandemic. The Church of England is no different to any other part of the society – thrust into demanding and inevitable change – and yet we proclaim a gospel that is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is HOW we do this that is key and I believe we are called to be courageous, faithful and focussed.

In the last synod, I served for just 18 months, having been appointed to fill a casual vacancy for what I thought was just two meetings – this was extended an additional year due to the lockdown and the work of Synod had to adapt along with the rest of the world. It was a sharp learning curve, but made my maiden speech and now feel better equipped to serve in the next session of Synod should I be elected.

As a Derby girl I am proud to have served the Diocese since my ordination in 2003 following my training at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. I have served as Curate in Ockbrook and Borrowash, as Rector of Sawley and now as Vicar of St Peter's Littleover and St Andrew's Blagreaves.

I have also served as Dean of Women, on Senior Leadership Team, on Bishop's Council and for over 10 years on Diocesan Synod. During that time, I've also been a training incumbent, worked on Clergy Wellbeing and was on Vacancy in See for Bishop Libby's appointment. I am currently the Diocesan Advocate for the Living in Love and Faith project to encourage us to listen to each other and to God about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. This has been challenging to my own inherited theology and it has helped me to grow in understanding and compassion. I am passionate to help others to explore these excellent resources in safe spaces across the Diocese.

My heart is in the parish and I love being a local priest – living as part of a community, whether that is in church, school, at the Co-op or in the pub. And that is how I approach the work at General Synod, to advocate for those of us in ministry on the ground. The pandemic has been exhausting on so many levels and we have learned to become more agile so we can continue to bring hope to our communities. Now, with fewer priests and more responsibilities our voices need to be heard at the heart of our Church. More than ever before we need people there who are not pushing particular agendas or only elected to push for a specific vote but to listen, to learn and to speak out for those of us who work week by week to do the best for the people we are called to serve.

Having now found my feet in Synod, I believe I am well placed to serve you and Diocese with integrity and to advocate for priests and their parishes in these changing times.

Alicia