

## Clergy Candidate for General Synod 2026



# Rev. Clare Challis

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### GENERAL SYNOD FOCUS: A VOICE TO SERVE OTHERS

In stepping forward for General Synod my heart is to represent others. I'm stepping forward to represent 'The People' - people in our parishes, people in our schools, people in the work force, people in leadership, people in poverty.

### WHY STAND? – STAND FIRM!

Why have I stepped forward for General synod? To be honest, I've felt a nudge to do so, and I am taking the first few steps.

When I was a curate in Winchester diocese at the time when Bishop Jonathan was the Bishop of Southampton, I stood for **Winchester Diocesan Synod**. I engaged in many discussions and debates and thoroughly enjoyed it. However, it wasn't until the debate regarding Women Bishops that I knew I had a significant part to play. **I listened carefully to the opinions of others** and could see that this was a complex issue where views were divided across a broad spectrum of churchmanship. A number of people were invited to address the whole synod, and I was chosen to be one of them as a female clergy person. By the grace of God, I was able to **speak with humility and clarity**, and I sensed that I had enabled the debate to move forward in a positive way for all.

I hope that being on General synod will give similar opportunities and help turn the tide on many of our challenges, enabling the church to **Stand Firm through adversity**.

### WHO AM I? – WHO I AM!

Our lectionary readings recently have been focussing on the life of Moses. When he articulated the **"Who am I?"** question he also listed before God his 'disabilities' rather than his 'abilities'. I'm tempted to do the same! However, I'm struck by God's response who took those small three words – "who am I" and turned them around and declaring to Moses **Who I am!** This has to be my starting point also, as it's not primarily about me, it's primarily about the **Godhead**. God's ability to Call, God's ability to Equip, Gods ability to lead, Gods ability to save, Gods ability to Rescue. I just get to join in!

So, the 'who am I' that I am offering to General Synod is not someone whose confidence is in their own gifts, prior experience, qualifications, etc - my confidence is in the great I AM and **enabling the national church to continue to grow in confidence**.

## KEY ISSUES? – KEY PEOPLE!

In reflecting on the role and responsibilities of being on General Synod and having researched previous agendas, there are those standing who may want to speak towards certain key or current issues. That's not me! I don't have any particular agenda that I'm wanting to pursue. I feel called to serve **people not issues**. With that in mind there are key people who I'd like to address.

- **Clergy and lay leaders'** wellbeing needs to continue to be addressed.
- I am passionate that the church gives **a global welcome to all outsiders** so that barriers are broken down and effective **evangelism** can take place.
- **Children, young people and families** must be a priority, so that our churches can grow younger.
- the **broken, poor and disabled** within society must be served to relieve suffering.
- As someone who has walked alongside victims of historic abuse, continuing **raising safeguarding standards** is paramount.

**Proposer:** The Revd Fiona Grove – Rector of St Nicholas Church Wickham, Previous area dean of Eastleigh deanery.

**Seconded:** The Reverend Canon Nick Ralph - Residentiary Canon, Director of Social Enterprise and Engagement

## A BIT ABOUT ME

Came to faith at 11yrs, started ministry at 17yrs, over 30 years of Christian experience in a variety of denominations. Qualified outdoor education coach and assessor, Ordained Priest 2013, been through 5 dioceses, over 12 parishes, married to Andrew, 1 cat, too many boats to count!

Love baking, woodwork and the great outdoors. Strengths –exceptional ability at complex problem solving. Weaknesses – I have a hidden disabilities and illness - prone to drowning in emails.

Once described as “Exceedingly Adventurous - Exceptionally Creative - Coolest Vicar for miles around!”



***Thank you for reading this. I hope that you will give me your first or a high preference vote. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07887 702 021 or [rev.clare.challis@gmail.com](mailto:rev.clare.challis@gmail.com)***

*or pop by for a visit*

The Vicarage, 9 College close, Rowlands Castle, PO9 6AJ

The kettle is always on; cake is freshly baked!

*If elected I commit to being available to providing feedback to you over the period of my service.*

God Bless

Love Clare