

The Revd Jenn Camirand

Vicar to the Benefice of West Leigh [St Alban]



I am standing for General Synod because I believe the national life of the Church must remain accountable to the life of its parishes and the communities they serve.

I am Vicar of St Alban's, West Leigh, an estate parish in Havant. West Leigh is a place of considerable strength and neighbourliness, but also of poverty, poor health, insecure employment and social isolation. Here, the questions facing the Church are not abstract. They concern whether we will remain present in communities where sustaining parish ministry is increasingly difficult; whether our buildings can continue to serve the common good; whether children will encounter the Christian story; whether people carrying grief, trauma or financial anxiety will find a Church that knows them; and whether those whose voices are seldom heard will have any part in shaping our common life.

I was ordained deacon in 2023 and priest in 2024, serving my curacy at St Alban's before becoming its Vicar. My ministry has given me a deep appreciation of the Church of England's particular vocation: a Church rooted in Scripture, sacrament and prayer, present in every community and responsible not only for those who enter its buildings, but for the whole parish.

That vocation is precious, but it cannot be taken for granted. Many parishes are carrying growing responsibilities with diminishing resources. Clergy and lay leaders are asked to manage buildings, finance, safeguarding, governance and administration while also sustaining worship, pastoral care, mission and their own lives of prayer. National decisions can sometimes appear remote from these realities. I would bring to Synod the perspective of a parish where the future of the Church depends upon decisions being workable not only in well-resourced settings, but in communities with fewer people, less money and little spare capacity.

I would also bring a conviction that people and communities must not be treated merely as problems to be solved or recipients of something the Church delivers. God is

already present and at work among them. The task of the Church begins with attention: listening carefully, recognising people's dignity and gifts, and discerning what the Holy Spirit may be doing beyond the places in which we usually expect to find God. Renewal will not come through strategy alone. It will grow through prayer, faithful presence, honest relationships and the slow work of Christian formation.

My ministry is grounded in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. I value the breadth of Anglican tradition and do not believe that any one party within it possesses the whole truth. The Church of England must be able to hold serious disagreement without allowing organised factions or fixed positions to close down genuine discernment. That requires candour, humility, careful reasoning and a willingness to listen—particularly when we are speaking about the lives of other people.

I want to see a Church that is safer, more just and more trustworthy; one in which safeguarding is woven into its culture rather than treated principally as compliance, and which is prepared to be honest about failures of power and attentive to those who have been harmed. I also believe that the difficult questions before us require careful thought, theological seriousness and genuine attention to lived experience. Synod should be a place of discernment, not factionalism: somewhere we reason together, resist easy certainties and seek the mind of Christ for the whole Church.

I am closely involved with our church school and value the Church's presence among children, families and educators. Schools remain one of the most significant ways in which the Church serves its communities and encounters people who may have little other contact with Christian faith. That relationship deserves sustained theological attention and practical support, particularly where families and schools are under considerable pressure.

General Synod must attend to doctrine, liturgy, legislation and the governance of the Church. It must also remember what those decisions are for. They should enable the Church to worship God faithfully, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, care for people, seek justice and remain present in the ordinary places where life is actually lived.

I would come to Synod ready to listen, learn, speak honestly and undertake the work carefully. I would not claim to arrive with a settled answer to every question. I would bring the experience of parish ministry, school and community life, diocesan and deanery synods, and a commitment to ensuring that national decisions remain connected to those who will live with their consequences.

Above all, I would bring hope in the Church—not because its institutions are beyond criticism, but because Christ is still present among us, calling us into a common life more truthful, more generous and more courageous than we might otherwise imagine.