

Ayo Audu

Standing for the House of Clergy of General Synod

Nominated by: The Revd Ruth Harley
of the Watling Valley Partnership
The Revd Rickey Simpson-Gray
of the Parish of Wokingham St Sebastian's



I love Milton Keynes and feel called to serve the church through General Synod. I serve in the Parish of St Frideswides Water Eaton, an estate church in an area with significant social housing. Ours is a highly motivated team of lay and ordained colleagues who I very much enjoy working with. I am adept at spotting potential gaps while the team help me to see the different ways the parts could fit well to make up the bigger picture.

Prior to ordination, my work experience spanned:

- Five years in retail financial services as a retail marketing manager.
- Training, mentoring and assessing apprentices leading up to the achievement of Level 3 & Level 4 City & Guilds Certificate in Digital Marketing. I know firsthand how developing people helps both them and the organisations they serve.
- Mapping the West African and African Caribbean diaspora communities in the UK and developing communication strategies for outreach through agencies and gatekeepers. This gives me an in depth understanding of communities that the Church of England often has difficulty reaching.
- Research into the experiences and everyday lives of migrant children in the United Kingdom, learning that every person is beloved of God and offers a story worth listening to.

I am passionate about making the good news of Jesus known in our post-Christian culture. I aim to listen and respond to human need through loving acts of service. Ministry in my context is a daily outworking of this. Here, economic marginalisation as seen in the provision of housing, health outcomes and educational attainment subsumes real lives redolent of human warmth, passion and spirit. Yet, day by day we see more people respond to the love of Jesus and come into a living relationship with God.

I have served the diocese of Oxford as:

- Member, Diocesan Synod with an interest in governance relevant to General Synod.
- Member, Oversight Group monitoring diocesan implementation of the Lament to Action report.
I know that without actualisation resolutions are meaningless.
- Co-facilitator of the Milton Keynes Missional Learning Community (Greenhouse)
The Greenhouse provides a place where teams come together to learn, share knowledge and receive training and coaching as they grow their initiatives into intentional worshipping communities.
- Secretary, Oxford Diocese UKME/GMH Chapter.

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I am passionate about these issues over which the Church of England continues to wrestle.

Estates Ministry

I believe it is time for a debate about ways of resourcing ministry and nurturing disciples within working class neighbourhoods, Ways that affirm and treasure people as persons of dignity and worth.

It would be a powerful witness if we could raise local leaders through a re-imagined local preaching authorisation scheme that overcomes barriers to access such as limited literacy, which make up the reality of life in these contexts.

I continue to learn far more about my faith from the communities I am called to serve. Amplifying their voices and creating platforms for them to advocate for and champion their own communities will be a priority for me wherever the path of ministry leads me.

Racial Justice & Inclusion

I believe that human flourishing is a kingdom imperative. Our humanity is affirmed, not diminished when we welcome and celebrate the image of God in the other.

Our church communities thrive in a culture which supports the flourishing of all God's children. I support the implementation of 'From Lament to Action'. It draws on the truth that we are all made in God's image.

I am fully supportive of women's ministry and equality for LGBT+ Christians, at all levels and in all roles in the church. By asking, "who is my neighbour?" Jesus dismantled every barrier that excludes God's children. As such the exclusion of one is an abnegation of the will of God.

Living in Love & Faith

I believe the Living in Love & Faith process is a vital tool to help us live well with difference and we need to continue exploring what it means to walk together in unity.

I believe that Synod decisions to allow the Prayers of Love and Faith to be used by those clergy who wish, and for Issues in Human Sexuality to be replaced need to be implemented as soon as possible.

I will engage with different ways that the church can remain united alongside the LLF measures being brought in, so we can fully focus on God's mission and ministry to our communities.



Safeguarding

I believe that none of us can be safe until the least of these are safe, to conflate the words of Jesus in Matthew 18 & 25. I agree with Prof. Alexis Jay about the need to create a 'person-centred culture' in which the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.

However, It is vital that the experience and understanding already gained by diocesan safeguarding teams isn't lost in the process of securing operational independence.

Significant work remains to benchmark baseline training & certification of staff. And funding sources both for ongoing work and historical redress must be secured.

"Ayo works constructively with people across a broad range of traditions and convictions, while maintaining a strong commitment to building a more just and inclusive church. His thoughtful and incisive approach to the major issues facing the church today, combined with his dedication to keeping the gospel at the heart of all that he does, makes him an excellent candidate for General Synod." - **The Revd Ruth Harley**

Thank you for reading my electoral statement. I hope you will give me your first preference vote. If you want to contact me about anything, I would be happy to hear from you.

Ayo Audu a.o.a.audu@gmail.com