

Candidate: Sandra Isaac

1. Describe your Anglican identity in three words

Traditional, evangelical, Anglican.

2. What would be your top three priorities for this coming General Synod if you were elected?

My priorities would be:

- supporting well-trained, fairly paid and hope-filled clergy, with proper pensions and a healthy work-life balance;
- helping churches welcome, disciple and involve many more children and young people; and
- strengthening safeguarding so that children and vulnerable adults are safe and survivors are heard.

These priorities belong together. Supported clergy encourage confident congregations; children who know they belong can grow in faith; and mission flourishes where people are safe and valued. I would keep the local church, where faith is lived and communities are served, at the heart of Synod's decisions.

3. What would you bring to General Synod which will enhance its culture, reputation and work?

I would bring substantial experience of parish, deanery and diocesan life, including service as a parish safeguarding officer and Deanery Lay Chair. Having been born in Borneo and lived in many places, I understand what it feels like to be an outsider and would encourage a warm culture of welcome. I would listen carefully, speak courteously and seek to represent differing views fairly. I care deeply about the Church's reputation and integrity, so I would support decisions grounded in evidence, careful reasoning and our shared Christian faith. I hope to bring gentleness, practical experience and confidence in the Church's future.

4. How best could the National Church use its significant financial resources to further the Five Marks of Mission?

National resources should strengthen mission and ministry in local churches. That means supporting stipendiary clergy, filling vacancies and improving clergy training, pay, pensions and wellbeing. We also need sustained investment in effective children's, youth and families ministry, especially where local resources are limited. Funding should help churches build relationships with schools, make buildings accessible, care for creation and develop practical outreach such as community cafes and advice hubs. The National Church should serve the local Church rather than the other way around.

5. What steps must General Synod take to ensure robust, independent and transparent safeguarding practices?

Safeguarding must be genuinely independent where necessary, transparently governed and subject to effective external scrutiny. There should be clear responsibility at every level, consistent national standards, fair processes and proper support for victims and survivors. As a parish safeguarding officer, I know that policies only work when they are understood and practised locally. Training should therefore be practical, proportionate and properly resourced. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not simply the safeguarding officer's task. Synod must listen carefully to survivors, protect children and vulnerable adults, hold those in authority accountable, and test whether reforms are making people safer in practice.

6. What is your vision for the rural church and how should its life and mission be supported?

Rural churches are precious centres of gospel ministry and pastoral care. Their value cannot be measured simply by congregation size or income. Their clergy are present at life's most significant moments, baptisms, marriages and funerals, and provide a focus for shared joy and grief. Although administration can be burdensome, there may be creative ways to reduce or share it. Church buildings should be valued as assets for worship and community service, while acknowledging their considerable costs. We should aim for more than managed decline, recognising the transformational benefits that an active church can bring to its local community and school.

7. What do you believe the Church's role is at this time of climate crisis?

Christians are called to be faithful stewards of God's creation. The Church should lead through practical action in its buildings and energy use, speaking with Christian hope rather than fear. My church has solar panels and three large batteries, significantly reducing its carbon footprint. I support helping churches choose greener energy and improve efficiency, while ensuring national expectations are evidence-based and affordable. I welcome the carbon sequestration work at Bacton and am greatly encouraged by the direction oil companies are taking towards achieving a sustainable balance: one molecule of carbon captured for every molecule released into our atmosphere.

8. How would you foster racial diversity and challenge discrimination in our Church?

Racism has no place in the Church: every person is made in God's image, and in Christ the walls of hostility are broken down. I already work with Christians from different backgrounds, and I would help remove unjust barriers to participation and leadership. In my church, I encourage people of different nationalities to lead readings so that our visible life reflects our congregation. I have also supported asylum seekers and refugees facing difficult legal proceedings. In a polarised society, the Church should uphold human dignity, welcome the outsider and build our common identity in Christ.

9. What are your views on Project Spire?

Transatlantic chattel slavery was an abhorrent evil, and racial injustice must be taken seriously. However, substantial questions have been raised about the historical evidence used to justify Project Spire, including the relationship between Queen Anne's Bounty, the South Sea Company and the South Sea Annuities. Before supporting such a major financial commitment, I would want those questions independently examined and openly answered. Any response should have transparent governance, proper accountability and clearly demonstrated benefits. Significant resources should not be committed on a disputed historical basis, particularly while parishes, clergy and frontline mission face urgent financial pressures.

10. What is your view about the sacramental ministry of priests and bishops who are women, and do you personally receive their ministry in full?

I believe God calls us, as a royal priesthood, to joyfully declare the praises of Christ, who brings us from darkness into his wonderful light. Women and men alike serve under Christ, our true High Priest, so ordained ministry should never overshadow the ministry of the whole Church. I value clear leadership from both women and men, alongside bishops who safeguard apostolic teaching for future generations. I also recognise the importance of appropriate pastoral and sacramental provision for those who cannot, in good conscience, receive women's ordained ministry. I warmly support the Church's commitment to mutual flourishing for everyone within our shared life.

11. What is your view on the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles?

The House of Bishops' Declaration and Five Guiding Principles remain an important part of the settlement that enabled women to become bishops while making space for those who cannot receive their ordained ministry on theological grounds. Commitments made in good faith should be honoured. I support the principles' aim of mutual flourishing and the highest possible degree of communion within one Church. I would not support reopening the settlement without a compelling reason. I support helping women flourish in ministry whilst keeping appropriate provision available for those with conscientious objections.

12. What is your view about blessings after civil same-sex marriage and same-sex marriage in church?

Everyone should encounter genuine love, welcome and sensitive pastoral care in our churches. With close gay family members, I understand personally how vital it is to love people well. I also uphold the Church of England's doctrine that marriage is between one man and one woman. Last year, the Faith and Order Commission warned that introducing PLF into public liturgy without formal authorisation or broad doctrinal consensus strains the framework of liturgy. Because worship both expresses and shapes belief, I cannot support blessings that effectively celebrate same-sex marriage. Any change to doctrine should be made openly, through proper process, not indirectly through changing practice.

13. What is your view about ordaining or licensing clergy in same-sex marriages?

This question causes understandable deep pain whatever conviction is held. The Faith and Order Commission last autumn pointed out that Canon C26 and B30 remain in place: the Church of England considers marriage to be between one man and one woman. This doctrine refers to other authority as its basis, and that authority is scripture, "Our Lord's teaching". Any changes would mean repealing other instances of "Our Lord's teaching" by Act of Parliament. Proper open synodical and canonical processes need to take place with robust integrity. High level proportionate pastoral provision needs to be provided whatever the outcome.

14. How do you plan to communicate and consult effectively with the wider electorate?

I would communicate, as needed, before and after significant Synod meetings, using email, deanery and diocesan meetings, and personal conversations. As Deanery Lay Chair, I am accustomed to reporting back, answering questions and listening to local concerns. I would actively invite views before important debates and votes, including from people who disagree with me. My contact details are available to members of the diocese, and I would be pleased to hear from electors directly. I hope to listen carefully, explain votes honestly and remain accessible and accountable to the people who entrusted me with the role.