

Alexandra (Sandra) Isaac

32 Barrett Road,
Norwich, NR1 2HZ
07891 578028
ajmmaths@gmail.com

PSO St Helens and St Edmunds, Costessey
Lay Chair Norwich South Deanery
Lay representative Diocesan Synod

My name is Sandra. I am 66 and live with my husband, Peter, in Lakenham, South Norwich. We have three adult sons and two grandchildren.



You will be aware that our Diocese is encouraging us to talk to each other about our stories, and this is my story:-

As an adult, I believed in God, but Peter and I did not attend church. Our first baby was stillborn, two weeks overdue, with no apparent cause. In our pain and confusion we needed God's help to get through and so we named her Faith. A local vicar visited us in hospital in Ely. On our first Sunday home, we attended church and he ran down the church to embrace us. That unforgettable welcome brought us back to church, and we have attended with joy ever since.

We were later blessed with three sons. One was baptised by Maggie Guite, one of the first women deacons to be ordained. Her preaching taught me that Christian faith is not about being "successful", but about knowing that God accepts us as we are.

When Peter was posted to France, we joined St Luke's, Fontainebleau, which met in a school. As a church, it was a great place to be, particularly as there were so many children. Socialising after church was hugely beneficial to us all, particularly for the boys as they could play basketball or football with their friends, along with Dads and MBA students joining in. The boys loved everything about church.

Our chaplains helped deepen my understanding of Christ and gave me opportunities to grow. I led a women's Bible study, completed an online theology course through St John's College, Nottingham, and started a Bible study at INSEAD.

After nine years, we returned to Britain and settled in Lakenham. Readjusting was difficult, but we joined Holy Trinity, Norwich as it had a thriving youth and children's ministry. I later trained as a mathematics teacher, working in schools across south and east Norfolk before teaching at Wymondham College. I saw the effects of poverty in council estates, rural communities and coastal areas alike.

I eventually became a mathematics tutor and have supported about 100 GCSE and A-level students, including Iranian refugees and people from the Lakenham Council estate.

Prayer has become central to my faith, contemplating Christ and allowing his Word to shape my heart and life. I trained as a spiritual director, completed the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and now lead a weekly online prayer group. As part of the Diocesan Prayer Diary team, I travelled across Norfolk, gathering stories to encourage informed prayer and to help witness how Christ transforms lives and communities.

I have led and supported children's ministry, served on parochial church councils and spent six years as churchwarden at Holy Trinity, including during an interregnum. I have been a lay representative in Norwich South Deanery for 20 years and now serve as lay chair.

I am currently Parish Safeguarding Officer at St Helen's and St Edmund's, Costessey. Through revitalisation, our church has grown into a diverse, intergenerational community of people from different backgrounds, nationalities, abilities and incomes. It is a place where everyone is welcome. It is a great place to be.

Why my story is relevant to General Synod

My experience has given me four clear priorities:

- Clergy training and well-being: I am committed to clergy training and well-being, so that clergy are supported, valued and able to thrive in their ministry.
- Children and young people: The Church must offer engaging ministry where younger generations enjoy taking part and know they belong.
- Diversity and inclusion: Churches flourish when they welcome people of different backgrounds and build relationships with under-represented communities.
- Safeguarding: As a parish safeguarding officer, I understand the practical challenges of supporting children, disabled people, vulnerable adults and older people.

I would bring to General Synod substantial experience of parish, deanery and diocesan life, together with a commitment to ensuring that every person is welcomed, valued and cared for as someone made in the image of God.

I am grateful to the following people for proposing and seconding me:-

Proposer: Anna Price, Gorleston

Seconder: Matt Elliott, Loddon

Thank you for reading my election statement. I respectfully ask for your first-preference vote so that I may represent you and help ensure the Church of England continues to grow, thrive and remain relevant to the next generation.