



Helen Grogutt

Standing for the House of Laity General Synod 2026

Dear Elector,

I am standing for General Synod because I am passionate about lay ministry, committed to serving our communities and determined to help the Church of England flourish for future generations. As someone deeply rooted in lived ministry, I would welcome your first preference vote.

I am 59 and taught in primary schools for 35 years. Faith had always been my anchor, but my ministry was always squeezed in around school life. Four years ago, after moving into the centre of Norwich, God's nudge became increasingly difficult to ignore. Two years later, I took early retirement, and since then God has opened doors to opportunities I could never have imagined!

I've worked in a pastoral role at a Jewish Summer Camp for three summers, helped launch a community café based in our church, supported local neighbourhood groups, enjoyed chaplaincy at the Cathedral, joined charity boards and mentored LLM students. I want to ensure that the voices of lay people, parishes and local communities are heard clearly in national decision-making. **I believe the Church is strongest when people who hold different perspectives listen to one another with grace, honesty and respect.**

What would I bring to Synod:

- **Insight into Licensed Lay Ministry, discipleship and encouraging confident Christian service in local communities.**
- **Experience of working collaboratively at parish and diocesan level with clergy, laity and bishops.**
- **A grounded approach to discussions around parish experience and pastoral concerns.**
- **Compassion, practicality and lived experience, alongside a willingness to listen and learn.**

Church and Diocesan Service:

- I have been a licensed lay minister for seven years and have experience serving in both urban and rural parishes. I currently serve predominantly at St Giles Church in the centre of Norwich where I preach, lead services and co-lead a Community Café.
- Since September 2025 I have been the Bishop's Adviser for Licensed Lay Ministers in the diocese of Norwich.
- I have served on various PCCs and am also secretary of a diocesan charity which supports retired clergy.
- I am a Chaplain at Norwich Cathedral and a Staff Mentor for those training as Lay Ministers in the diocese.

Life Beyond Church:

- I was a primary school teacher, Senior Manager and Lead for English and RE for 35 years.
- For several years I was a staff governor, both in a city school in an area of deprivation and later in a village school.
- Once a month I volunteer with a street feeding team in Norwich.
- I also work part time in hospitality, welcoming pilgrims from around the world.
- I enjoy walking, reading and spending time with family and friends.

Nominated by: Dr Jane McClarty – Deanery Lay Chair, Ingworth & Sparham

Seconded by: Professor Roger Bland – Deanery Lay Chair, Holt.

I believe that God's gifts are found throughout the whole people of God. This includes LGBTQ+ people, whose vocation, ministry and discipleship should be recognised, celebrated and nurtured. I support the Church's continuing journey through Living in Love and Faith towards greater inclusion and belonging.

As the Church of England faces important decisions about its future direction, I feel called to serve on General Synod.

Service in the Community:

I have seen the church grow when it is outward facing, inclusive and rooted in community life. Alongside much that is prosperous and flourishing in Norwich, I also encounter significant deprivation and need. Through our weekly community café, engagement with residents and through volunteering with a Street Feeding Team, I see how the church can be Christ in difficult circumstances. I am passionate about us working together to do all that we can to reduce inequalities in society.

Encouraging Lay Ministry and Discipleship:

The Church's future depends on the confidence, faithfulness and gifts of all God's people. I believe that the parish system remains one of the Church of England's greatest strengths and that thriving local churches are essential to serving every community. Throughout my ministry I have been passionate about equipping others to discover their vocation and serve Christ in their everyday lives. Whether through mentoring Lay Ministers, supporting those in training or encouraging ministry within local churches, I have seen how people flourish when they are trusted, nurtured and given opportunities to grow. I want to advocate for a Church that invests in discipleship and fully recognises the vital contribution of lay people in every community.

Listening Across Difference:

General Synod brings together people with a wide range of experiences, traditions and convictions. At a time when debate can sometimes become polarised, I believe the Church needs people who are willing to listen carefully, speak honestly and seek common ground wherever possible. My experience in education, parish ministry and diocesan service has taught me the importance of building relationships and valuing different perspectives. I would seek to contribute thoughtfully, respectfully and prayerfully to Synod's discussions and decision-making.

Inclusion:

"The members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."

(1 Corinthians 12:22)

Coming from a working-class background where I was the first in my family to obtain a degree, I have a strong desire to see more working-class candidates being selected to and supported in training as Lay Ministers and Clergy. All too often gifts are overlooked by conventional measures of status, education or influence. I am fully committed to widening participation in training pathways for all, regardless of background, gender, ethnicity, learning need, neurodiversity or sexuality.

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

Helen Grogutt

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