

Emma Joy Gregory

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It is a privilege to be standing for the Diocese of Bath and Wells after sixteen years of representing the Diocese of Exeter on General Synod. I hope I can be a new young-professional representative for this area, whilst offering the continuity of many years' experience.



Personal Details and Employment

I work as a full-time teacher of English GCSE and A-Level at King's College, Taunton. I was born in Exeter and graduated from Oxford University, which is where I met my husband Philip. I worship at Holy Trinity Taunton, a church in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. I also volunteer as a trustee with responsibility for safeguarding at Pusey House in Oxford.

It is a shame that school teachers are such a rarity on General Synod, as we have so much to offer. Despite needing to balance time commitments very carefully I believe that an active working person like me brings a 'real world' perspective to the Synod, which is very important.

I enjoy spending time with my six god-daughters and my tabby cat, and I love the novels of Thomas Hardy, the poetry of TS Eliot and the jazz of Ella Fitzgerald.

My contribution so far

I was a key contributor to the discussions which led to arrangements through which women became bishops in the Church, whilst ensuring permanent sacramental provisions for traditionalists like me. This is laid out in 'The Five Guiding Principles.' Jesus prayed that his Church may be one, I believe that we can all live together thanks to the continuation of these agreed values.

On the floor of General Synod I have given speeches on a variety of issues, often offering the perspective of younger members of the Church. I played a key part in the debate on 'Valuing People with Downs Syndrome', putting forward an amendment whereby expecting parents should not be given information based on the presumption that a Down's syndrome baby will be terminated. I also worked closely to support a fellow member's successful private motion regarding how the Church can support families who cannot afford to pay for funerals.

As a Synod representative I have been interviewed for a variety of radio and television programmes, including Newsnight on BBC2, Radio 4's The Today Programme, ITV News and Channel 4, as well as BBC local radio.

Current Debates and the Needs of Our Diocese

The **decline in local church attendance** is a pressing concern across the country. The poverty and social problems of our region are too easily overlooked and underestimated, while resources for rural parishes can be very strained. I'd like to help the people of Bath and Wells speak up about what they need to effectively minister to their local community.

Raising young Christians in the 21st century is a daunting task; my job as a teacher means that I know how to relate to teenagers. It is often assumed that all young people think the same, where in reality they are just as varied as the rest of us. Naturally, in Bath and Wells we long to see **more young people in the pews**: our witness to them should be confident, unapologetic and joyful.

Under the **Mission and Pastoral Measure** there are fears that traditional parochial ministry may be under threat, with new forms of organization, such as mission areas, where people may find it less easy to relate to their parish church and priest. I believe that necessary checks and balances must be retained so that the right of parishioners are not overridden by a centralized diocesan or deanery plan without proper opportunities to comment or object.

We must all recognise the **financial problems** that the Church is facing. I consider, however, that reducing the numbers of stipendiary **clergy** should be the very last resort and that we should encourage vocations to ordained and other ministries as a priority. I also support the proposed improvements to the **Clergy Discipline Measure** and believe that the Church should be very serious about examining recent failings in supporting clergy who face false allegations about their conduct.

Legislative Business on the Synod agenda is often poorly-attended, but I believe that all members should take this more seriously and try to understand the details of what they are voting for. This is crucial, given that General Synod, and the Westminster Parliament, are the only bodies in the land that can make national law for England.

The consultation on '**Living in Love and Faith**' is very important and should not be rushed. My position is that I will always vote and speak to defend the Church's biblical and traditional understanding of marriage, the sanctity of life, and the importance of family as God's gift to us.

Please do give me your first or high preference vote and remember all General Synod candidates in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Emma Joy Gregory

