



## DOUGLAS DETTMER

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*Proposer* The Ven. Nick Shutt

*Seconded* The Revd Canon Cate Edmonds

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I have served on General Synod as one of your Proctors in Convocation since 2012 and am standing for re-election as I have been encouraged by many others to do so, and because I feel a real sense of vocation to continue representing clergy colleagues in this way while offering back the practical experience of synodical work built up over the past ten years. To that end, I will be grateful for your first-preference or high-preference vote in the election.

The General Synod is the only forum outside Parliament which can make the law of the land, and indeed its primary function is to shape ecclesiastical legislation. As in Parliament, much of the legislative work of General Synod is behind the scenes. Over the past decade I have developed a close familiarity with the Synod's ways of operating and have sought to apply that expertise both in the day-to-day work of legislating for mission nationally and by channelling it back locally, to support mission and ministry here in our own diocese.

A priority for me is the 'simplification agenda' to which the General Synod has been strongly committed over recent years. I'm a member of the central Legislative Reform Committee, which scopes potential church legislation on behalf of the Archbishops' Council and among other things is currently working on significant changes to the Mission & Pastoral Measure to make it more useful for the church of the twenty-first century. I was closely involved in the recent updating of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure governing appointments, and as part of the Steering Committee helped to pilot the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure through the Synod. As a member of the Legal Advisory Commission, I help with the shaping of advice to clarify practical questions of ecclesiastical law as the need arises.

In the area of mission and public affairs I am a longstanding member of the national Rural Affairs Group, whose role includes keeping rural issues in the foreground of the church's thinking and engaging with government and other bodies on rural and agricultural policy.

In both rural and urban areas, a 'mixed ecology' is essential for the whole church's effectiveness in mission in our generation. Having been a multi-parish rural incumbent in this diocese for seventeen years and now one of your four archdeacons supporting clergy and lay people in rural and urban parishes, I remain utterly committed to the parish system as the bedrock of the Church of England's proclamation of the Gospel in our localities, and to our own Exeter diocesan vision for the growth of mission communities encompassing churches, chaplaincies, schools, and new worshipping communities of many different kinds—with the parish church at the heart of it all.

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I have served the whole thirty-one years of my ordained ministry in this diocese. As a parish priest in mid Devon I was elected chair of our diocesan House of Clergy and for many years a rural dean and archdeaconry warden of Readers. In all those capacities I have had the privilege of getting to know our large, diverse diocese and its clergy well. If elected, I would continue to bring to the General Synod **not the views of any one party or group but rather the perspective of the diocese as a whole**, especially its priests and deacons.

Of all the decisions taken by the General Synod over the past decade, the most significant was approval of the legislation enabling women to be ordained as bishops. I strongly advocated and voted for that legislation, and subsequently I have been thankful for its having made possible in our diocese the ministries of two outstanding suffragan bishops who are women, alongside whom it has been for me a joy and privilege to serve.

At the same time, both in the Synod and in the diocese I have worked to ensure provision for those who for conscientious theological reasons cannot accept that development, so that they and their ministries can continue to flourish within the Church of England. I so much value the fact that people with widely differing perspectives on this question have felt able to consider me their representative over the years.

The outcome of the process leading to women in the episcopate and its foundational principles for our life together as a church—based on trust, mutuality, and respect for conscientious difference—are of deep significance beyond that particular debate. They give me hope that as a church we will be able to find a way through other complex issues including those around human sexuality with which the Synod and the wider Church of England are currently engaging through the *Living in Love and Faith* process.

In the discernment around teaching and practice which lies ahead, I believe the Church of England needs to walk a path which enables faithful Christians who differ in their theological and practical interpretation of scripture to stay alongside each other in good conscience. From the Elizabethan Settlement onward, history shows that the ability to do so has been one of the strengths of the Church of England, and I believe that by God's grace it can continue to be. I value the historic comprehensiveness and tolerance of the Anglican 'middle way', which when founded on deep theological integrity and spiritual authenticity are among the distinctive gifts which further our church's mission in the society we are called to serve.

In my own ministry as a parish priest and archdeacon in this diocese, time and again I have witnessed mutual love and respect for one another across differences lived out in practice in the life of our mission communities, and I believe that with prayer and openness to God, what is possible locally is likewise possible across a diocese and nationally.

*Living in Love and Faith* is a process of listening and learning, and I will continue to do both. In the meantime, while the questions at the heart of that process are the highest-profile agenda item for the next Synod they certainly are not the only one. Whether in debates about national matters of public concern or in the detailed work of shaping ecclesiastical legislation, I have been grateful for the trust colleagues have placed in me over the years and if asked to serve on the Synod for a further term, I will continue to work hard to represent this diocese and in particular its clergy to the best of my ability.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch by email, letter or phone if you would like to talk about any of this, and in any case I look forward to seeing many of you at our diocesan online hustings and responding to questions there. With my thanks and best wishes,

