

JILL CAPORN

All Saints, Sidmouth · Ottery Deanery · Diocese of Exeter

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WHO AM I?

My name is Jill Caporn. I am married to David and we have two teenage children, aged 18 and 16. As a family we attend All Saints Church, Sidmouth, where my husband is the incumbent. I grew up in south-east London before moving to Bristol, where I studied music for four years. After gaining my MA in Music I worked in London for Macmillan Publishers on the world-renowned *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* before returning to Bristol to study for a PGCE in Primary Education. Since 2001 I have worked as a Church of England primary school teacher (with management responsibilities), a private music teacher, and an external exam marker and invigilator. In my spare time I love singing and playing the violin, reading, and exploring the East Devon countryside and coastline.

EXPERIENCE

Growing up in south-east London I attended a church in the Diocese of Rochester. I became a Christian at that church, where I sang regularly in the robed choir and was immersed in the children's and youth activities. I served on the PCC there, and later at the Bristol church where I worshipped and served in the music ministry from 2000 to 2013.

I love serving the local church through leading discipleship groups (such as a weekly Ladies' Bible Study) and through music, particularly with a focus on young people, developing their musical gifts alongside their growing faith. In all the churches I have attended (in south-east London, Bristol, Wiltshire and Sidmouth) I have been committed to the musical ministry: building the skills and confidence of musicians from the congregation, training choristers, enabling vocal music to flourish through festival choirs, organising music for 'churches together' events, leading contemporary musical worship for all ages, and fostering emerging musical talent through children's and youth bands. At All Saints Sidmouth I have the privilege of leading the music ministry, which includes leading the musical worship for the annual Bible Conference 'Keswick in Devon'.

Investing in the young people of the local church and community is an essential part of my lay ministry. I currently support our church's youth and children's minister by leading the teenage Bible study group, leading assemblies in the local primary school, and taking part in primary school RE workshops. I have also served as a parent member of the local Church of England primary school's Ethos Group, and over the last 25 years I have mentored teenagers one-to-one as part of formal programmes.

WHY I AM STANDING FOR GENERAL SYNOD

I love the local church. Having belonged to churches in suburban, urban, market town, semi-rural and rural settings, I have been excited to see the Gospel transform lives, both within the church family and across the wider community. The parish is where faith is nurtured, vocations are discerned and communities are served, and I want the decisions we take nationally – about money, people and priorities – to be measured by how they will help local churches to flourish. That includes investing in lay ministry, so that lay people are trained, trusted and released to use their gifts in helping to lead others in their journey of faith.

One of my greatest encouragements has been watching the relationship between my church and its local schools grow – small stepping stones of faith for families, and deepening trust between school, church and community. The Church of England's role in education is a precious inheritance, but far more than just a structural one. As Multi Academy Trusts become larger and more complex, we must work purposefully to protect the distinctive Christian ethos of our church schools and to keep each school meaningfully connected to its parish church. I will champion both a strengthened Christian ethos in our schools and living partnerships between schools and the churches on their doorstep.

I am standing because trust needs to be rebuilt. Confidence in the national Church is low – damaged by safeguarding failures that have caused deep and lasting hurt, and by a manner of decision-making in recent years that has too often left parishes feeling unheard. There is no quick fix, but a need for safeguarding that is rigorous, compassionate and properly resourced in every parish, decision-making that is transparent and genuinely consultative, and a Synod that listens before it legislates. I will bring to those debates the perspective of the pew, the school gate and the vicarage kitchen table.

Trust has also been damaged in our debates around the sensitive issue of human sexuality and marriage – questions that are deeply personal for many in our church families. I continue to hold a traditional view of marriage, but I am committed to working alongside those with whom I disagree, engaging always with honesty, grace and prayer.

Lastly, I see at first hand the pressures on parish clergy with growing administrative and reporting demands often introduced for the best of motives wearying those called to preach, pray and pastor. Clergy and their local teams need to be trusted to discern what will bear most fruit in their context and given straightforward access to the resources to pursue it. My prayer is to see clergy well supported and joyful in ministry, not disillusioned or burnt out – for healthy clergy lead to healthy churches.

MY COMMITMENT TO YOU

Thank you for reading this election address. If elected, I am committed to being a prayerful and faithful member of the General Synod, seeking to contribute in particular on issues that will lead to the nurturing of the faith of young people, the flourishing of lay vocations, the well-being of clergy, and the rebuilding of trust across our Church. If you decide to vote for me, I would very much appreciate the highest preference vote you feel able to give me.

Yours in Christ,

