

REVD. NICKI PENNINGTON

STANDING FOR THE HOUSE OF CLERGY OF GENERAL SYNOD

Nominated by The Very Revd. Dr. Frances Ward, writer, theologian and Priest in Charge of St Michael's and St John's Churches, Workington, formerly Dean of St Edmundsbury, and an elected member of General Synod from 2015-17.

Seconded by Rev Richard Corrie (Assistant Curate in Warnell Parish team).

"I'm nominating Nicki because I feel she represents a sometimes-forgotten part of the county, believes strongly in the power and need of parish ministry and is an advocate of an inclusive church that I believe the Church of England should be. And she does and is all of this with such an infectious enthusiasm." Rev Richard Corrie

WHO AM I?

I live on the west coast, serving as Priest in Charge of four churches of the Crosslacon Parish. I love reading, watching films, walking, and running, not very fast, nor very far, but I am consistent!

I have lived in Cumbria for 28 years, working in numerous roles across the county. I have an appreciation of Cumbria as a diverse county, richly blessed by its natural beauty and which derives great strength from local community.



WHY AM I STANDING?

The Church of England faces many challenges, globally, nationally, and locally in a world still reeling from Covid. As climate change becomes increasingly urgent, we are becoming profoundly aware of the harm we inflict when we fail to cherish and safeguard creation, or to treat each person, as made in the image of God. It has never felt so critical as a church to be responsive to the concerns of poverty – both material and spiritual, taking action to discern and nurture God's growing kingdom where we live, work and worship. I feel called to serve on General Synod as the Church of England faces important decisions about its future direction and mission. I hope through my voice at General Synod that the perspectives of clergy serving in multi church parishes in deprived rural areas, as I do, are heard and considered.

WHAT WOULD I BRING TO THIS ROLE?

Rooted in the Anglican Church.

I am a cradle Anglican. As a student and young adult, I experienced church in a number of different denominations, returning to worship in an Anglican parish following our move to Cumbria in 1993. Since then, I have been an active member of the local Anglican church, a Lay Reader from 1998, serving in a rural team and small market town, as a member of the PCC, leading worship and preaching. I focused on developing All Age ministry in the team.

Since ordination I have ministered in parishes on the west coast, where the challenges of local transport, employment, and energy provision are high on the agenda. Seeking the well-being and flourishing of local communities, I have participated in and developed projects including the local Fare Share Food Pantry, a Renew Well-Being Café as one part of the parish's commitment to becoming a 'Healthy Healing Hub', and I am a member of Cleator Moor's New Town Fund Board, which successfully received a substantial grant from national government.

From 2017 to 2019, I held a diocesan role in supporting discipleship in local churches. As a result, I am familiar with the significant variety of churches across the diocese. I am currently a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding panel.

Wide experience of ecumenical collaboration in missional outreach

I served in the Churches Together group raising awareness of domestic abuse in churches and facilitating ecumenical awareness-raising training. I was a member of the team that organized the national conference on domestic abuse, "Hidden Wounds in our Midst."

I have a role in "Engaging Theology in Cumbria," and participated to deliver the 'Caring for our Common Home' conference in 2019 which encouraged churches and community groups to reflect on how to address climate change.

I am a member of Cumbria Churches Together Anna Chaplaincy Steering Group.

A commitment to whole life discipleship

I am dedicated to creating opportunities for reflection and learning. I have played a key role in organizing and delivering local training opportunities including a day exploring the Biblical tradition of Lament, “Ministry to Older Adults,” and was part of the leadership team delivering the year-long “Growing Leaders” course, enabling many individuals to explore their future ministry.

A wide-ranging professional background in social care

I have a background in 25 years of Social Work, as a practitioner, manager, and project developer, specializing in work with children and families in various safeguarding and therapeutic service roles in both inner cities and in rural areas.

KEY INTERESTS AND CONCERNS

I am inspired by Cumbria’s Refreshed God for All vision, rooted in the Anglican marks of mission.

Treading Gently

I wholeheartedly welcome General Synod’s commitment to become carbon net zero by 2030 – the challenge is how this will be achieved. Nationally, the church should take a lead, by example and as prophetic witness.

I believe in a church that affirms that each person is made in God’s image, equally valued, and encouraged to flourish, exercising their God given gifts and ministries at all levels and in all roles in the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality. I support the current conversations discerning what it means to be ‘Living in Love and Faith.’

Caring Deeply

The IICSA report revealed that our church is not yet a place in which everyone’s welfare and well-being is safeguarded. It is vital that we embed safeguarding in our everyday practice and ethos, and develop a meaningful compassionate response, actively supporting those who have been deeply harmed by abuse within the church.

Following Daily

Our parishes are communities where people can grow as Jesus shaped disciples, serving and supporting all that upholds the common good. I support measures that balance the importance of nationwide initiatives alongside processes that enable the national church to learn from and be shaped by the experience of the local parish.

Speaking Boldly

The Church of England holds a privileged position at the heart of national life and our voice should be used prophetically at this critical time to speak out boldly for all that builds up the common good, promoting justice nationally and internationally.

HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

As a General Synod representative, I hope to be a channel through which we as a diocese can share our experiences of working collaboratively with our ecumenical partners whilst simultaneously bringing back to the diocese learning and wisdom from around the nation, especially initiatives that would support our growth into becoming a simpler, humbler and yet bolder Church. I welcome the opportunity to further God’s kingdom as a member of General Synod. It would be a privilege to represent the clergy of Cumbria for the next term.

I will leave the last word to The Very Revd. Dr Frances Ward who has nominated me: She writes:

I think Nicki will be excellent on General Synod. She has the experience and confidence to find a strong voice there, representing the perspective of the rural parish church in Cumbria, and particularly from the western fringes and margins of the national church – a voice not always heard. She is an articulate ambassador for inclusivity of all sorts – for example, from her knowledge of the ravages of poverty from her social work background in West Cumbria, and is a stalwart advocate of the relevance of the contemporary church for all, regardless of race, culture or gender. She is an open and generous listener with good, wide-based networks, so will be a highly effective representative of the clergy of the Diocese.

Thank you for reading my electoral statement. If you would like to discuss further any issues that I have raised then please feel free to contact me at The Vicarage, Trumpet Road, Cleator. CA23 3EF. Tel: 07462194549. Email: revnickipennington@gmail.com. I would be grateful if you would give me your first preference vote. Thank you.