

# Zoe Ham

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## About me...

Hi, I'm Zoe. I'm 35, married to Robin, and we have five young children. It'd be an honour to serve God on General Synod and represent you & our Diocese, as well as the people of Cumbria.

- We live in **Barrow-in-Furness**, where our family is part of St Paul's Church. My husband is ordained and we moved to Barrow six years ago to do **pioneer ministry**.
- We helped plant Grace Church Barrow in 2017. This has been a real adventure, with **joys and challenges**, but we rejoice in having seen **people come to faith and grow as disciples of Jesus**.
- One of the unexpected consequences of lockdown was that Grace Church and St Paul's Barrow began exploring the possibility of merging to be **'better together'**. After lots of prayer, listening, and shared worship, in due course, two became one!

## About my background...

- I grew up never knowing a time when I didn't believe God was good and that He loved me. My dad's work meant we relocated often, but it was my parents' 'policy' to always take us to our **local Anglican parish church**, whether it was Hull or Essex (or Glasgow - Church of Scotland naturally!). Often this meant being in a Sunday school with just my siblings, but church was always part of who we were.
- In my teenage years my dad's work took us to Australia, Vietnam, and Azerbaijan, and so I had the privilege of seeing church as an ethnically diverse, international community. This wasn't without its challenges, but it gave me **a heart for church as being rich in diversity** and showed me **the gospel was for all peoples and cultures**.

## About my experiences...

- My background and degree was in **Natural Sciences**, but I spent five years working as a **lay staff member** of Anglican churches in London and Cheltenham, where I had the joy and responsibility of **supporting and ministering to young women**. This is something that I still love to be involved in...
- As such, here in Barrow I have helped run Toddler Groups, a course for young mums, and most recently I worked with our ordinand Hannah to run a **COVID-support group for new mums** with lockdown babies. I also lead a women's Bible-study and occasionally run **Christianity Explored** with women I know. I'm part of the children's ministry at church, and have led a home group with my husband.
- I love living in Barrow and Cumbria. Incredibly, it's now the place I've lived for the longest! I think being part of the community here has made me more aware of how sometimes **groups of people can feel disconnected or 'off the radar' from wider society**. I think that can happen with the wider Church too, but **God's heart has no 'forgotten places', just as He has no 'forgotten people'**.

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P.T.O.

## Why stand for General Synod?

- A number of people have **encouraged me to consider standing for General Synod** over the last few years and over time I've taken that more seriously! I care passionately about the Church of England - and I hope that's because **I care passionately about God, the gospel, and about people!**
- I'm aware we face some **very important issues** in this next season, not least in light of the COVID pandemic. Just as we have refreshed our Diocesan vision, so the Church of England is crucially considering its **Vision & Strategy for the 2020s**. And the **challenges of finance and clergy numbers and re-organisation** will play a key part in that, just as they are doing so here. We also need to hear back from the wider Church and faithfully navigate forwards with '**Living in Love & Faith**', an area full of complexity, pain, and passion.
- People tell me I'm quite articulate and clear-headed! (My kids might not always give that impression in their response to me!).
- I'm eager to represent all lay people in the Church, and I'm **always happy to have a chat on the phone/Zoom or over a brew**. I'd hope you'd feel I was approachable and eager to listen and understand, whatever your views or background.
- I'm keen to help Synod be **connected to the reality on the ground in places like Cumbria** - and vice-versa.
- Ultimately the challenge for the Church to '**proclaim afresh in every generation**' is one that I feel keenly, especially as I consider both my own children and their generation, but also my own friends here in Barrow, many of whom don't consider themselves religious or especially spiritual. I want to be part of a Church that doesn't lose sight of its mission nor loses its confidence in the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as we seek to 'follow daily, speak boldly, care deeply and tread gently'!

**Thanks so much for considering my candidacy for House of Laity on General Synod for Carlisle Diocese.**

**Your vote in these elections is important. Please feel very welcome to call or or email me (contact details overleaf) if you have any questions or would like me to elaborate further on any particular issues.**

**If you felt able, I would very much value your first preference vote or, failing that, the highest preference that you are able to give to me.**