

Christine Burgess; answers to GS questions to House of Laity

Q1. I fully support the equality of women at all levels of ministry, including ordained and episcopal ministry.

Q2. I voted in favour of this motion and firmly believe that that all baptised, believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ. I also recognise that there are different opinions on questions of sexuality and relationships in the Church, and that we will only be able to move forward once we recognise that, and allow space for each other's belief and practice, as we already do for those remarrying after divorce.

Q3. My church has never applied restrictions on who can benefit from receiving the ministry offer. That a few churches do use money to try and impose their will on others is not how Christians should behave, and I believe we should give generously to support ministry in all parishes across the diocese.

Q4. I recognise the challenges that a decline in stipendiary clergy presents, and I think that training lay leaders is a helpful development. I also think that addressing some of the barriers that present people moving through the discernment process into training and ordination is essential. This includes supporting the moves in Synod to better support those from a working class background into ordination, and also permitting those married to a same sex partner to enter the discernment and training process. That we actively deter or even ban some from exploring ordained ministry when parishes don't have enough clergy to lead them is not a sensible strategy.

Q5. I agree with ordaining self supporting local leaders, as long as they have received appropriate training in theology and pastoral matters, and have a wider perspective than just the local one.

Q6. The priorities for the next five years should be;

- creating a church that affirms committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationships
- ensuring that Global Majority Heritage people are heard and supported and can fully belong
- putting in place safeguarding structures that protect children and vulnerable adults

Q7. As a Christian the teaching of the Bible is foundational in my belief and practice, however, how Scripture is interpreted and applied is something which needs to be done with care. There are many good Christians who, in all conscience, sometimes conclude differently on what Scripture has to say, and we need to make space for each other. I do believe, as is stated in 1 John 4:7, that we should love one another and that everyone who loves is born of God. The emphasis of Scripture on relationships needing to be loving, permanent and faithful is something that is still relevant for us today, whether it is applied to opposite sex or same sex relationships. Where there is love between two people, God is present, and I respect that from a biblical standpoint.

Q8. While the LLF as a unified project concluded in February 2026, in that conclusion it was acknowledged that there were still several issues that needed to be addressed. These include the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in standalone services and whether clergy can receive a licence to minister if they are in a same-sex civil marriage. I support the use of the PLF in standalone services as the liturgy has been commended for use by the House of Bishops and should be made available in those churches and by those clergy who opt in for their use, and where pastorally appropriate. I also support clergy in a same sex marriage being able to receive a licence to minister. This is on two grounds. First, if we take the pastoral wellbeing of our clergy seriously we need to support their relationships if they choose to marry. Second, with a shortage of people coming forward for ordination we need to allow those who are called to serve to test their vocation, including those who have done the right thing in marrying their life long partner. I also believe that there does not need to be structural accommodation for those opposed to same sex relationships should these changes be made, as they are all opt in for those who wish to make use of them. Clergy and churches who are opposed can continue in their ministry exactly as they are doing at present.

Q9. I have belonged to my local church for over sixty years. I like to serve by helping with a toddler group, wardening and encouraging my siblings in Christ whenever I can. This means I have a strong sense of the local, while also looking wider afield and growing in my understanding of the mission of the Anglican Church. Over the past five years while being on General Synod, I have done as much reading as I could, and voted according to my conscience. I see reporting back to my two deaneries as crucial, and always try to focus on debates that are relevant.