

Frances Holmes



Standing for the House of Laity of General Synod

Nominated by Karen Storms (Watford Deanery)

Seconded by Dr Gregory Batts (Watford Deanery)

About me:

I am 51 years old. I've been married to Andy for 22 years and we have two teenage boys aged 14 and 17. We all attend and are involved at All Saints' Leavesden in North Watford.

I have a degree in Librarianship and Information Studies and diploma qualifications in Data Protection and Anti-Money Laundering. I work in Risk Management at a large professional services firm, where I have been for the last 11 years.

I come from a Christian family, and have always been involved in church life, making my own personal commitment at around 15 years old at a Youth for Christ event in Norwich. I volunteered as a Sunday School teacher before leaving home for university in Birmingham, where I was also involved in a local church. After graduating, I took up a job opportunity in London, and moved south!

I met my husband at Hinde Street Methodist Church in London, which hosted a joint Anglican/Methodist chaplaincy at the time, and we got married there in 1998. Andy grew up as a 'child of the vicarage', and my father-in-law was Vicar of a team benefice in Yorkshire. Sadly, he died of Motor Neurone disease a year after our marriage, while still in post, and we appreciated the care with which both he and my mother-in-law were supported by the Bishop, Archdeacon and other clergy.

We moved to Watford in 2008, and started to attend our local parish church, where we were made to feel welcome and supported with our two small children. It was wonderful to find a church with a broad age range. We soon put down roots and joined the electoral roll, becoming involved in the life of the church locally.

I find inspiration and joy in various styles of worship – from Cathedral Evensong, through open air services at the Greenbelt Festival, to our weekly sung liturgy which combines familiar hymn tunes with Taizé chants. Receiving communion regularly is an important part of my spiritual practice.

Christian Service:

As an adult I've been involved in both the worshipping and organizational life of each church community I've joined – as a singer, musician, bible reader, and leader of intercessions - as a Class Leader, Church Steward and member of Church Council in Methodist churches, and as a home group leader, junior church leader, PCC and Deanery Synod member, and Churchwarden in the Church of England.

I served as Churchwarden between 2011 and 2014. This was three very busy years during which I collaborated with a great team of volunteers on launching and running a successful £250,000 fundraising appeal to replace the church roof while temporarily

relocating services to the nearby hall, liaising with English Heritage and the Diocesan Finance Board. I co-lead the church community after the Vicar left for a new post, prepared a new Parish Profile document to advertise the vacancy, and worked with Bishop Paul and Archdeacon Jonathan to interview and appoint a new incumbent.

After the Covid-19 lockdown started, I became increasingly involved in leading music and intercessions for the streamed services initiated by our Vicar, Edward Green, making recordings of hymns each week when we were at home, and attending to sing live on the broadcasts once this became possible.

I now feel called to service on the Church's General Synod, as we continue to journey together through a period of significant change in both the Church and wider society, in which it is vitally important that the voices of ordinary people of faith are heard.

Where I stand:

- **Inclusion** – I'm committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.
- **Women's Ministry** – I unequivocally support the ordained ministry of women – at all levels.
- **Clergy wellbeing** – Comprehensive support for our clergy and their families – covering both physical and mental health - is very close to my heart. I would support a review of the Clergy Discipline Measure and the implementation of a more organised system of supervision to aid in the early identification and mitigation of potential risks.
- **Working together** – We're at our best when we listen to each other and work together. The CofE is a 'broad church' and I pray that we can model holding together different viewpoints, without losing sight of the need for equality.
- **Mission & discipleship** – These should be central to our thinking, with a sensitivity towards specific local ecumenical and inter-faith scenarios. Meeting together to study and discuss Scripture nurtures our faith and provides opportunities to invite others on the journey with us. I support the making of pragmatic decisions about the long-term viability of some church buildings – with an openness to collaboration between parishes.
- **National Life** – It is of vital importance to speak truth to power and maintain a clear Christian stance on issues of poverty, racism, climate change, and injustice – both nationally and internationally.

My proposer Karen writes: *"I have known Frances for over 10 years and am honoured to nominate her to the General Synod House of Laity. She is a Christian role model, leading in faith with kindness, fairness, and humility. I know that she will have a positive impact in this role."*

My seconder Greg writes: *"Frances is a committed and thoughtful member of our Deanery Synod, who will be an excellent representative of our Diocese at General Synod."*

Voting:

Thank you for reading my election statement. Your vote matters - please use it!

The election is on a single transferable voting basis. If you would like to vote for me – please put me high on your list – ideally as your first preference.

Frances Holmes

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