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Dear Fellow Clergy

I was new to the North East when I came to Holy Spirit Denton, and I feel privileged that God has brought me here to minister alongside such an amazing bunch of people, both clergy and lay. The diocese and the Church as a whole are poised to experience some exciting and challenging times, with the recent announcement of our new bishop and the implementation of the Reform and Renew initiative. In these times of global uncertainty we need to be a strong voice for Christ in the light of our mission imperative and the pastoral care of our people.

My Education

My original degree was a BSc in Life Sciences I started life as a high school teacher. I moved to Canada for several years and on my return to the UK retrained to teach primary and Special Needs children. I trained at NOC as a single parent, working full time, was awarded the Leeds BA in Theology and Pastoral Studies and am just beginning the MATM at Cranmer Hall.

My Ministry

Worship Styles of worship I have experienced vary from open evangelical as a child and young person; charismatic and Cathedral worship in Canada; liberal catholic here and in Southport. I am most at home in this tradition and consider that Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, BC was effectively my sending church.

Evangelism From teenage years I have worked in missions, both in the UK and abroad. They were with various organisations, and were aimed at meeting people where they were; ordinary people on the streets or at home; British tourists on holiday abroad; foreigners on holiday here. These experiences taught me how vital mission is, the need to clarify who we want to reach and how, and the dangers of allowing the Church to become too insular. All this translates into my being comfortable with Fresh Expressions alongside being a traditional Anglican with a heart for parish ministry.

Pastoral Types of churches I have served in range from small town suburban, vibrant inner city and where I am now, which is best described a combination of suburb and outer estate. Like many people I love pastoral work, especially the occasional offices. I am continually heartened that despite the press' lamentations, people in this country have a deep spirituality. Changes in society mean that although they no longer feel obliged to attend Sunday services, they come to us when they need us; funerals, weddings and baptisms are an evangelistic opportunity we should not miss.

The Wider Church Before I moved to Newcastle I was on General Synod as a proctor for the diocese of Liverpool. I have also worked with DDOs on a regional level on vocations. I served on Liverpool's diocesan synod for several years, and am now on Newcastle's. I know it makes me sound strange, enjoying this aspect of church life, but I feel it is important for ordinary people to be involved in guiding the direction the wider church takes on issues which involve them and their families.

Through our CIFER group I am one of the link persons for the Archbishops Council for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns. CMEAC exists to support minority ethnic Anglican concerns of all kinds, which include vocations and ministry, and I am also on the diocese's newly formed Developing Stewardship Group (DSG).

World view I have long been a supporter of Greenbelt. My ministry has been enriched by the exposure to their alternative worship, range of seminars, and issues of social justice and fair trade. I am committed to helping work towards a church which is welcoming for all, regardless of their ethnicity, sexuality and gender.

The Sales Pitch

The call to priesthood seemed like a natural development of my ministry as a teacher. My primary motivation was always to make a difference, even if it was only in the life of one child: so my ministry is founded on the pastoral, to help the whole person move towards being all God truly wants them to be. This includes the use of all our gifts and talents, including music and the drama of the liturgy. Hence an evangelical whose personal journey has been largely up the candle! I am now a card carrying member of SCP (Society of Catholic Priests), though I still have a lot to learn.

Why do I want to be re-elected to General Synod? That same concern; that our church should be everything that God calls it to be. My own life journey with its difficult times as well as uplifting moments means that I am able to understand and address a wide range of issues from personal experience: because I come from an unconventional background I am usually able to see things from more than one point of view, and tend not to prejudge situations.

I do enjoy the debates, and although on some topics I am clear in advance which way I will vote, after listening carefully to some speakers I have been moved to change my view in response. Our foundation as a church based on the pastoral system calls us to be inclusive, yet diverse. The next quinquennial of General Synod is a crucial one if we are to avoid another damaging split.

The temptation to oversimplify the position of those who disagree with us is seductive, as is judging those whose life experiences are very different from our own. Last time I was on General Synod I was on the committee for Open Synod; a forum which enables people from different perspectives to meet together and listen to one another. I believe that if we are to grow, both individually and as the Church of God, we must explore the other side of the argument, understand one another's point of view as we seek a way forward together.

Areas of Special Interest

- Inclusion
- Vocations and education
- Safeguarding

I would like to thank Nick Darby and Jane Scott for nominating and seconding me for this election. I include a word from them both;

“Jacqueline is a positive 'can-do' parish priest, whose inclusive style encourages others to find a place within the life of the church. She plays an active part in the life of the wider church - at every level. She has brought a fresh perspective to the mission of the deanery which is much appreciated.”

“Jacqueline is an encourager and able to nurture people's gifts and skills.”

And thank you for reading this election address; I appreciate you taking time out of your busy day. Please be assured that if elected will do my best to make sure that together we preserve the best of our traditions while remembering the Church is not ours to preserve, but Christ's.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss any of the issues I have raised.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Stober