

General Synod Election Address

Alison Blackburn

Licensed Lay Minister in Durham North Team (PTO)

Durham Deanery Lay Chair

Member of Bishop's Council

Member of Energising Growth Programme Board

Sub Warden of Lay Ministries (for Gateshead, Gateshead West and Jarrow)

Former Bishop's Advisor for the National and Diocesan Shared Ministry Discernment Process (formerly BAP)

Married to Phil (who is currently Church Warden and Vice Chair of our PCC); two grown up children; one grandson.

Former Upper School Head of RE; Primary School teacher; Acting Head Teacher.

I am offering to stand as your representative on General Synod in the coming elections.

Since training for ministry myself, I have continued to be involved with Lindisfarne College of Theology: as a Personal Tutor, a Trustee and, latterly, as a member of the Core Staff, leading the Practical Theology programme for Lay Pastoral Ministers and Lay Pastoral Chaplains. I was also Personal Tutor to the early cohorts of students following the Authorised Lay Ministers of the Word course. I am currently supervising an LCT student on placement in our parish.

I am interested in supporting those training for ministry and I would take every opportunity at General Synod to champion Lay Ministry. We have a wealth of experienced, dedicated people in the diocese, who gladly give generously of their time and God-given talents to support their churches and they deserve support and encouragement themselves.

As a member of Bishop's Council, I am aware of the financial and pastoral issues facing our parishes. I would seek to promote and defend our churches across the wide variety of traditions, as we all step forward into an unknowable future, trusting in God.

I am passionate about exploring the co-existence of 'traditional' churches and new worshipping communities. What are the practicalities and how might these relationships develop in the future?

At the same time, I am all too aware of the number of churches where an ever-dwindling number of dedicated people have been 'keeping the show on the road' for a long time, but who now find that there are no new, younger people to take over from them. I understand the frustration and weariness that is out there (it's like that in my parish); the sense of overwhelm with all the new and necessary legalities for Safeguarding, Treasurers, etc.

However, I am also excited about the prospects for our diocese with our new Bishop Rick, a pending new Suffragan Bishop and a new Archdeacon. This is bringing new energy, experience and insight, from which we can all benefit.

If elected, whenever I can, I intend to bring back hope and support from General Synod and to contribute to the discussions there in a positive way, always mindful of those who have kindly given me the opportunity and responsibility to represent them at this national level.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

A Blackburn Sept 2026