

General Synod: Election Address, Valerie J Hallard



I am standing for election to represent the laity of our Diocese on General Synod at a time I see as crucial for the Anglican Communion locally, nationally and internationally. I am encouraged by the approach being taken by our Archbishops, moving away from large-scale debate and promoting informed and facilitated discussion, which is my preferred way of working. The national Reform and Renewal agenda focussing on mission & outreach mirrors our intentions as a Diocese. I would hope to be a voice to influence the development and implementation of the national programme with the experience in Cumbria, and learn lessons from others that might benefit our own Diocese. I pray for a renewed sense of the churches' mission and a Christian voice being heard in our troubled world.

My professional background as a Careers Adviser has taken me through offering guidance to young people and adults, establishing guidance networks, teaching RE & Careers in secondary school, and latterly as 14-19 Development Manager for the local authority, establishing and facilitating partnership-working across the school/college/private training sector in order to broaden the curriculum for 14-19 year olds. I took early retirement in 2012 when the curriculum was reined back in, following a change of government.

I was grateful to be able to use my professional experience in the service of the church by acting as Lay Training Coordinator (p/t) in this Diocese from 1993-99. This involved developing and running adult discipleship courses, particularly Footsteps and linked workshops and lay conferences; undertaking parish audits & stewardship promotion and delivering workshops covering team-working, learning styles, relationships, career planning and spirituality using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. I was Lay chair of Solway Deanery Synod 1996-99 and a 'Pastoral Selector' assisting in the discernment of a call to ordained ministry in candidates from other Dioceses for a similar period. Recently I have acted as a group leader for 'Called to Serve' and currently I am a member of Deanery & Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Council so, if elected, I hope that my General Synod experience can be fed back into those bodies and vice-versa.

My commitment to ecumenical mission as expressed in Cumbria's 'God for All' movement and the associated development of Mission Communities is also evidenced in my role as Secretary to Churches Together in Workington & District. Social justice is a longing of my heart at all levels- local, national and international, so I am a Foodbank volunteer and greatly value the opportunities to listen to new voices which that brings, I'm also a Christian Aid volunteer speaker/teacher and a longstanding trustee of Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC). The Greenbelt Festival (a Christian gathering where the Arts meet Social Justice) is an important annual pilgrimage for me and an opportunity to experience new forms of worship, ranging from vibrant to reflective, also to listen to contemporary theologians, some who share my particular interest in Palestine/Israel, amongst other issues. Locally I'm concerned about youth unemployment and the increasing

isolation and loneliness as local facilities & services disappear, so I see a need for community voices and services with which the churches must engage.

I came to West Cumbria when I married my husband Rick in 1979 and have two adult sons. My youngest has returned to live locally with his partner and two young daughters, so I have a regular role as 'Nanna Val', which is an absolute delight.

I am a member of my local parish church of St John's, Workington and currently serve on the PCC. I have particular responsibility for the Intercessions rota, liaison with our uniformed youth organisations and I share the Fair Trade Rep role. I enjoy the quietness of an Anglo-Catholic style of worship, but the history of my church membership is very eclectic. I love and value the diversity and inclusiveness that the Church of England represents, qualities that I hope will be reflected in our developing ecumenical Mission Communities.