

# DR CARYS UNDERDOWN TSSF

Nominated by Shayne Ardron, General Synod

Seconded by Penny Pullen, Akeley East Deanery



## About me

- Lifelong Anglican
- Verger at Leicester Cathedral
- Diocesan Rep for Leicester City Deanery
- Head Server and Sacristan at St Nicholas, Leicester
- Member of a dispersed Religious Order (Third Order of the Society of St Francis)
- Unite/Church of England Employees and Clergy Advocates (CEECA) rep

## Experience

- Have served on Leicester Diocesan since 2024.
- Previously on Bristol Diocesan Synod (2015-2018) & Llandaff Diocesan Conference (2008-11)
- Have been a Trustee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (England & Scotland), an ecumenical peace charity, since 2019
- Worked for Plaid Cymru at the National Assembly for Wales (as it then was) from 2007-2010 as a Research and Admin Officer. I wrote briefing documents for Assembly Members for their speeches in the *Siambwr* (Chamber)
- Did the *Difference Course* 2020 with the Cathedral and Tree of Life
- Mental Health First Aider.
- Did the *Exploring Christianity* Course while I was in Bristol
- Studied *Exploring Theology: Living with the Bible and Belief* online with Sarum College 2021-3

## Where do I stand?

I am 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. I am led to this position because of my encounter with Jesus and my reading of scripture. Jesus spent time with those the religious of his day saw as sinners and challenged ideas of who was in and who was out and what it meant to truly serve God.

My spirituality is deeply sacramental and liturgical and influenced by St Francis. I have worshipped in churches in a range of traditions within the Church of England and Church in Wales, from evangelical to Anglo-Catholic. I am also involved with the charismatic catholics in On Fire Mission.

I believe we need listen to each other and try and understand where we are coming from rather than shouting at each other. I think the habits suggested by the Difference Course of “Be Present, Be Curious and Reimagine” are important ones as we try to find ways forward as a church participating in the reign of God in the world today.

I have tried to work with people from different traditions, even when I disagree with them on some aspects of theology. As a student, I attended the English and Welsh speaking Christian Unions in Aberystwyth and the College CU at Fitzwilliam and benefitted from those

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experiences even though I disagreed with their position on various issues, not least whether women could preach. I was also a member of Cambridge MethSoc, serving as President for a term, taking “Methodist Distinctives” as my theme including a session on the then recently published Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

## ***Inclusion***

It is very important to me that inclusion is not seen as being only about sexuality or gender but about issues of disability, class, race, age, poverty, mental health. I have been influenced by disabled friends and their experience of exclusion and disappointment when some of the online accessibility decreased as we “returned to normal” after the pandemic. I am a fan of “both/and” not “either/or”. I welcome the work of the Neurodiversity Working Group which led to the recent synod motion and look forward to the work of neurodiversity champions.



*Carys Preaching at  
On Firm Mission*

## ***Climate Change***

I support Synod’s commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 and will be keen to hold the church to account on this matter. As a Franciscan, our relationship with our other than human kin and use of the planet’s resources is very important to me

## ***Racial Justice/ Project Spire***

The report *From Lament to Action* was a very important one and those of us who are white need to listen to the experiences of Anglicans of colour and be ready to challenge racism where it occurs. Project Spire has been badly misunderstood in many places. It is important that we as Christians take a lead on doing something to acknowledge the ways in which we benefitted from the slave trade.

## ***Safeguarding***

This is another area where the Church has failed in many ways and we need to embed it in all we do, not as a box-ticking exercise but as a core part of our faith, remembering what Jesus said about those who harm children. Sadly less progress has occurred on this in the last quinquennium than we might have hoped and it needs to remain high on the agenda.

## ***Parish ministry***

The work of our local parish churches is the heart of our mission as the Church of England and more needs to be done to support each church in their work and in maintenance of listed buildings. However, it is also important to find ways to share resources across churches so that there are not churches left in interregnum for years while others have multiple priests and many other resources. What can be shared and what needs to be local?

## ***Anglican-Methodist Relations***

As a former President of Cambridge MethSoc, I have taken a close interest in the discussions around the Covenant and its implications and still have close friends who are Methodists who offer me their perspective.

I feel called to offer my skills and experience to the church to serve on General Synod and ask you vote for me first preference. Above all I encourage you to vote and rank the candidates so your voice is heard.