

House of Laity

Philip Billson

Question 1

a) Please could you describe your views in relation to the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in a same-sex relationship and whether, if elected to Synod, you would support or not the marriage of clergy in same-sex relationships. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for whatever position you take on these issues.

I recognise this to be a divisive and sensitive issue which touches many lives, all of whom have a right to the pastoral care of their parish church. I am supportive of the Church's traditional teaching, which is based, amongst other texts, on Jesus' words in Matthew 19:4-6.

b) I would like to know if you support women exercising ministry in the Church, whether as clergy, bishops, etc., and whether women clergy are accepted within the church in which you worship.

I am wholly supportive of the ministry of women at all levels in the Church. My sister was one of the earliest ordained women priests in the Church in Wales, and the life of the church I attend in Manchester is much enhanced by the ordained priestly ministry of a female.

c) Please could you explain your views on the climate crisis and the diocesan commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030. How does your faith support the views you hold about this?

Colossians 1:15-16 states that in Jesus 'all things were created, through him and for him,' and that it is an ongoing process in which we are called to participate - 'through him all things hold together'. Creation care is part of the church's mission to 'reconcile to himself all things'. The specific commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030 is an important aspiration for Manchester Diocese.

Question 2

Do you support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the Church, including ordination as priests, consecration as bishops, and ministry as diocesan bishops and Archbishop?

I am wholly supportive of the ministry of women at all levels in the Church. My sister was one of the earliest ordained women priests in the Church in Wales, and the life of

the church I attend in Manchester is much enhanced by the ordained priestly ministry of a female.

Question 3

What is your response to the appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist? Is it the Christian vocation to seek the conversion of Jews and Moslems?

The appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist is a cultural and religious aberration which directly contradicts some biblical texts, amongst them Leviticus 19: 33-34: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."

It is the Christian vocation to respect every human being as made in the image of God (Genesis 3). However, I must always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks me to give the reason for the hope that I have. But to do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). I do believe that God has revealed himself uniquely to us in Jesus Christ.

Question 4

(Addressed specifically to candidates standing for election to the House of Laity.)

Do you support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same-sex relationship?

I recognise this to be a divisive and sensitive issue which touches many lives, all of whom have a right to the pastoral care of their parish church. I am supportive of the Church's traditional teaching, which is based, amongst other texts, on Jesus' words in Matthew 19:4-6.

Rob Chilton

1a. Prayers of Love and Faith, and clergy in same-sex marriages

I support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith, and I would support clergy being free to marry a partner of the same sex.

My main reason is that to do otherwise denies both history and the present. Same-sex couples have always been part of the life of the Church, in our pews, in our choirs, on our PCCs and in our vicarages. Many of them have served faithfully for decades, often in silence. Pretending otherwise is neither honest nor kind. When a couple come to church to seek God's blessing on a committed, faithful and loving relationship, I believe the Church should be able to give it gladly.

I am committed to equality for everyone, at every level and in every role in the Church, regardless of sexuality. The Church must be a place where all feel safe, with no exceptions. I don't see how we can promise either while treating our LGBTQ+ clergy and laity as second-class members of the Body of Christ.

1b. Women's ministry

Yes, wholeheartedly. I support women's ministry as deacons, priests and bishops. Female clergy are not only accepted at my own church, but lead it, as our past two Incumbents have been women.

1c. The climate crisis and Net Zero 2030

Caring for creation matters a great deal to me, and the biblical reasons are plain. "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is" (Psalm 24:1). It isn't ours to exhaust. From the beginning, humanity was placed in the garden "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15), as stewards and not owners. Caring for creation is also one of the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission, alongside proclaiming the Gospel and serving those in need. The people who suffer first and worst from a changing climate are the world's poorest, so this is a matter of justice as well as stewardship.

I support the Church's commitment to reaching Net Zero by 2030, which General Synod itself adopted. It's right that the Church leads by example. But Synod needs to be realistic about what it asks of parishes. Many congregations already struggle to heat and repair old buildings, and they will need practical help and proper funding to decarbonise, not just targets. It is also important that, as is current practice in our own Diocese, sensible approaches are taken to granting permission for replacement heating systems, and an unaffordable 'one size fits all' model is not imposed on poor parishes for the sake of Net Zero targets.

2. Women in all roles in the Church

Yes. I rejoice in women's ministry as priests, as bishops, as diocesan bishops, and now as Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church is richer and more faithful for it.

3. Christian nationalism, and the conversion of Jews and Muslims

I find the rise of so-called Christian nationalism troubling. Too many of those who wave the Christian flag loudest seem to have little connection with the Church and little knowledge of what the Bible teaches. Christ's kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:36). The Gospel belongs to no nation and no party, and it can't be used as a badge of ethnic or national identity to exclude others. The Christian vocation is to love our neighbour and welcome the stranger, not to build walls with the Cross painted on them.

On your second question, I would love for everyone to know and follow Jesus, and I pray that all people come to know His love. But evangelism is an invitation, not a campaign against other faiths. Our Jewish and Muslim neighbours are fellow children of God, and we are called to treat them as brothers and sisters, with respect, friendship and honesty. The best witness we can offer is to live the Gospel faithfully ourselves.

4. Prayers of Love and Faith

Yes. As I said above, I support their use. I would go further if the Church were ready to. But in the absence of a better solution, they are an important step towards welcoming same-sex couples properly, and I would support them being used appropriately and generously.

Deborah Ewing-Chow

Question 1.

a) Please could you describe your views in relation to the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in a same-sex relationship and whether, if elected to synod, you would support or not the marriage of clergy in same sex relationships. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for whatever position you take on these issues.

With regard to the ongoing discussions around human sexuality and relationships I support the current church position on marriage and relationships. As such I would not support the introduction of same sex marriage for any Christian in the church. I believe in celibacy for "single" Christians before marriage and Christian marriage being only between one woman and one man.

I enjoy close friendships with people across the various sides of the debate recognizing and deeply lamenting the confusion and unnecessary damage that have accompanied this process.

b) I would like to know if you support women exercising ministry in the church - whether as clergy, bishops, etc and whether women clergy are accepted within the church in which you worship.

I support and celebrate women exercising ministry across the church and worship at a church with an ordained woman in senior leadership

c) Please could you explain your views on the climate crisis and the diocesan commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030. How does your faith support the views you hold about this?

I support the Diocesan Target for Net Zero by 2030 and am particularly pleased that is has specific actions and recommendations around buildings and travel to work.

Question 2.

Do you support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the church, including ordination as priests, consecration as bishops and ministry as diocesan bishops and Archbishop?

Please see above Answer to Question 1 b

Question 3.

What is your response to the appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist? Is it the Christian vocation to seek the conversion of Jews and Moslems?

Christian Nationalism conflates national identity with personal faith and can be a dangerous tool for hard right wing policies and strident racism. It is a growing danger for both service and mission of the Church of England . As Christians we look to the Kingdom of God across all national boundaries.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the unique message of salvation for absolutely everyone, universal in scope and offered in humility, grace, love and mercy rejecting coercion of any kind.

The following question (although similar to Q1) has specifically been addressed to the candidates standing to be elected to the House of Laity:

Question 4.

Do you support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same sex relationship?

I know and believe that all baptised , believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ. With regard to the ongoing discussions around human sexuality and relationships I support the current church position on marriage and relationships. I believe in celibacy for "single" Christians before marriage and Christian marriage being only between one woman and one man. As such I do not agree with the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy to bless relationships out of these contexts as that would be contradictory.

John Hobson

Question 1(a)

Please could you describe your views in relation to the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in a same-sex relationship and whether, if elected to synod, you would support or not the marriage of clergy in same sex relationships. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for whatever position you take on these issues.

(i) I welcomed the measured discernment that led to the opportunity to affirm the blessing of same-sex relationships through the use of the said prayers ["PLF"] albeit in what I consider to be restricted spaces and away from full public affirmation of the Church.

The Anglican Church talks a narrative that all are welcome in the Kingdom of God, seeking as it does to reflect the example of the founder of our faith, Jesus Christ, of Nazareth.

Whilst there is much to be commended about what is sometimes termed 'generous disagreement' I believe that a central starting point is to recognise where power in organisations such as the Anglican Church lies and to then consider the distress felt by the relentless contesting of the validity of Christian people in same-sex relationships - be they our sisters, brothers, family members, colleagues, perhaps even ourselves.

(ii) I would support the opportunity for clergy in same-sex relationships to marry. I am no expert - theological or otherwise - on the history of marriage, modern or otherwise, or indeed of property rights.

My view of a Church being large enough to facilitate and support the marriages of all its clergy, if that is what they choose/have chosen, sits within my settled outlook of what I believe full/radical inclusion should look like and what the Bishops have previously said they are interested in.

Question 1(b)

I would like to know if you support women exercising ministry in the church - whether as clergy, bishops, etc and whether women clergy are accepted within the church in which you worship

(i) Yes. I believe in the full equality of women's ministry across every level of the church.

As a young adult my political consciousness was hugely informed by the movements, both historic and more recent, for women's equality.

My theological thinking at the same time was informed and changed by Christian writers such as Elaine Storkey who spoke into the Evangelical milieu into which I was born and what I had previously known.

(ii) My parish church's curate is a woman. I feel a degree of sadness that that even has to be said.

Question 1(c)

Please could you explain your views on the climate crisis and the diocesan commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030. How does your faith support the views you hold about this?

(i) I believe that the move to build consensus for concrete/achievable action across the world for international action on the climate/ecological crisis is to be welcomed and embraced.

It is within that context that the Diocesan commitment – as across a multitude of organisations operating within the public square – has emerged.

The finer details of what that means practically need to be developed in consultation with parishes in Dioceses such as ours, through support and practical encouragement informing the stewardship and care for churches and grounds, and thinking more broadly.

I think that climate issues encompass wider issues of environmental and social justice and is an open space into which the Church can speak.

I'm encouraged by the creativity we see around initiatives such as Eco-church, which can engage congregations across demographics through education, community and local micro actions.

(ii) The idea of stewardship of spaces, the care for what has been built by others, has deepened within my own Anglican journey and I think sits within the Fifth Mark of Mission and also the ancient words of 'fruit that will last' [John 15:16] learned in Sunday School, long ago.

Matters of environmental and social justice have long influenced my own understanding of faith and what we might then be called to do.

Question 2

Do you support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the church, including ordination as priests, consecration as bishops and ministry as diocesan bishops and Archbishop?

Please see my answers at Question 1(b) above.

Question 3

What is your response to the appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist? Is it the Christian vocation to seek the conversion of Jews and Moslems?

(i) I think this is a subject that requires careful, on-going and wise discussion.

At the Synod in July 2026 the Bishops led a session that started to facilitate discussions that may lead to a deepening of our understanding.

Primarily I see the 'appearance' of Christian Nationalism as a manifestation of a search for identity in polarising times of which there are material roots and which I consider to be economic in origin.

What is wholly apparent however is the need for every public-facing/involved organisation to stand firmly against the othering of communities and the attendant rise in racism wherever/however that manifests itself.

This must include a Church that listens and is there for all but which doesn't compromise on the welcome of the stranger - of anyone - and centres an outlook that sees the face of Christ in all.

(ii) No.

My further answer is that I simply can't bring to commit down a response that might do any kind of justice or respect to the questioner. If the person asking the question wishes to email me, please do so and I'll try and respond accordingly.

I am sadly unable to be present at the hustings, so please do email me.

Question 4

Do you support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same sex relationship?

(i) Please see my response to Question 1(a) above.

Jason Johnson

Q1 my views in relation to the use of the prayers of love and faith liturgy for blessings of couples in a same sex relationship or marriage and the inclusion of clergy, is that everyone is welcome within the church of England and to receive the lord, regardless of choices or circumstances, for example if someone wants to marry a person of the same sex then surely they are entitled to live and be treated like others? Therefore the church of England should be actively encouraging the acceptance of decisions that the clergy and laity make and further encourage them to continue with their choices and thrive

within the church, therefore if elected to General Synod, I myself am in full support of this issue for the simple reason I am a happily married Gay Man and know Clergy who are simply being punished for marrying the same sex

B) I am fully in support of woman exercising their right to partake in their chosen ministry within the Church of England and their roles as I have worked with many women priests who are highly skilled in their roles also we are accepting of women Clergy at St Elisabeths as our Vicar is a Woman!!!

C) if elected to General Synod, I would be fully in support of the Diocesan Commitment to reach NET Zero by 2030, I would also ensure that this process is kept on track to meet Diocesan Requirements.

Q2, I support and Rejoice in all roles that are fulfilled by clergy and laity, continuing to support them to flourish and Grow their Churches, with a continued deeper understanding of the Bible Christ and true meaning of Christianity, I am pleased that the Archbishop of Canterbury is our first ever leading lady to take on this role!

Q3 my response to the appearance of those claiming to be both Christians and Nationalists is that they are welcome within the Church as long as there is an understanding that we are governed by the Lord God and respect our views as a Church, we will always listen and respond appropriately – for which the Church of England, should provide a Guide to FAQ's or Responses for the issues the church is or will face in the future!

Q4 I am once again fully supportive of blessing people who are in same sex marriages or relationships, therefore I believe that the Church of England should work towards supporting the progressiveness of this work, I myself am in support of same sex relationships or marriages as I believe they are all the same people!

Loretta Leung

Question 1. a)

That is one of the reasons why I would like to stand for the General Synod. It is difficult to say simply “yes” or “no” based only on watching recordings of past General Synod meetings and seeing how discussions from the working groups are presented. I would like to be involved in those working groups so that I can gain a first-hand understanding of the discussions and contribute to them, including in any new groups that may continue the work following the conclusion of the formal Living in Love and Faith (LLF) programme.

I understand that it is right for parishes to have the choice of whether or not to use the Prayers of Love and Faith. I also understand why these prayers could not be an official order of the Church of England, as there is still significant disagreement on this matter. However, when a parish decides to use them, there is still a process to follow to demonstrate that the decision has been properly considered. These processes may be described as pastoral care, but they can also be experienced as hurtful or burdensome.

If this process is understood as pastoral care, I wonder why we would not apply the same approach to non-practising Christians or non-baptised couples who wish to marry in church. This raises questions for me about how we understand pastoral care, inclusion, and the way we treat different couples who come to the Church.

Regarding the marriage of clergy in same-sex relationships, this is still not permitted within the Church of England, and the issue is connected to questions of doctrine. But there is room for an open theological conversation about the doctrine and how it relates to our understanding of marriage, ministry, and the Church.

Question 1. b)

For me, the fact that there were no women among the apostles was contextual. At that time, women were not as well educated as men, especially within the Jewish tradition. If the education system is fairly equal regardless of sex, I cannot find a reason not to support women exercising ministry in the Church. The church where I worship also accepts women clergy.

Question 1. c)

From my point of view, the climate crisis is about more than the commitment to reach Net Zero. It is about repentance for not managing God's creation well, as we are commanded to do. It is also about the salvation of the whole of God's creation.

Our response to God's calling to care for and manage His creation is a faith journey. It is also an opportunity for teaching and theological reflection. Net Zero is an important target for the Church of England, but I think our response to the climate crisis needs to be more than simply achieving that target. I hope the General Synod can do more to help the Church understand and live out our responsibility towards God's creation as part of our faith.

Question 2.

Yes, I support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the Church, including as priests, bishops, diocesan bishops and Archbishop. My reasons are as outlined in my answer to Question 1. b)

In particular, in leadership roles within the Church, women can bring different gifts and perspectives that can complement those of men. This can help fill gaps and enable the Church to serve people of all kinds more fully.

Question 3.

I appreciate the deep commitment of those who are passionate about sharing the Gospel. However, I feel that if evangelism is understood and practised only in this way, it can narrow our understanding of the Gospel and of our Christian faith. There are broader ways of living out and sharing our faith. I do not see this simply as a binary choice between belief and unbelief, nor do I see one group of people as more superior to another.

I value and cherish interfaith dialogue. There is always something we can learn from one another, while remaining faithful to our own beliefs.

Question 4.

I understand that this question is specifically addressed to candidates standing for the House of Laity. As a lay person, I see one of our particular privileges as being a bridge between the clergy and the wider congregation. For that reason, I would rather share testimony and help people to see different perspectives than simply say whether I “support” the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy, especially where there may be strong disagreement within a congregation.

I was baptised in 1997, while I was studying Clothing Studies for my first degree. As a new Christian, I began to wonder why homosexual people were not accepted in the Church. Some of my senior students had great talent in design, and their way of thinking and seeing the world was very different and creative. I wondered: if God has given someone such a special insight and ability to contribute to the world, why would the Church not welcome them? I could not believe that God would treat them in this way.

Later, while studying theology, some of my fellow students also opened my eyes to areas of life and faith that I had never thought about before. They were homosexual as well. This led me to visit a church in Hong Kong that welcomed LGBTQIA+ people, so that I could understand more. At that time, most churches in Hong Kong did not welcome them, which was one reason why a church specifically welcoming LGBTQIA+ people had become necessary.

When you live and worship alongside people, and look into their eyes, you see that they are not people whom the Church should simply stand against, but people whom we are called to love. This is the kind of testimony I would want to share with a congregation: not to tell people what they must think, but to help them see another perspective and

understand the people behind the discussion. I hope this could help the congregation understand why their church has decided to use the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy, particularly where there is strong disagreement, and help us avoid losing those who hold a different view.

In the General Synod, I would also hope that members of the House of Laity, particularly those involved in relevant working groups, could bring the discussion down to earth and keep it connected with the experience of ordinary congregations. As a heterosexual person, I have found that I can speak up for LGBTQIA+ people in a way that is not seen as speaking for myself. I hope this can help me raise their voices and bring a different perspective to the discussion.

Abigail Ogier

For each question, I begin with a simple one sentence answer for those with limited time to read, followed by a longer account of my views for those that are interested in reading on.

Question 1.

a) Please could you describe your views in relation to the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in a same-sex relationship and whether, if elected to synod, you would support or not the marriage of clergy in same sex relationships. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for whatever position you take on these issues.

I support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith and would welcome authorisation for these to be used in “stand-alone” services, I agree with the fact that ministers and congregations can opt-out of this provision and I would support change to enable clergy to enter same-sex marriages and for people in such marriages to be able to be ordained.

My support for PLF is rooted in extensive reflection on scripture going back over many years, I do not believe that the passages cited as prohibiting same-sex relationships were talking about faithful, committed relationships. Rather, I have concluded that they were speaking of specific sexual acts in particular contexts. I believe that human beings are created to be in relationship with God and with one another, and for many people (although not all) that includes being in a committed, faithful relationship with another person, experiencing the sense of “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). I know that for some people that kind of relationship can only be found with someone of the same sex, just as I can only find it with someone of the opposite sex. Others are able to find this with the right person regardless of sex. Some faithful Christians are gay

or bi-sexual, and we should celebrate their committed relationships just as we do those of heterosexual Christians.

I also support change to allow clergy to enter into same-sex marriages, and for people already in such marriages to be able to be ordained (or if already ordained, to move to new posts) for the same reasons. I know how important the support of a partner is for many clergy. Those partners inevitably make many sacrifices to support their husband's, wife's or civil partner's vocation – being denied the opportunity to marry should not be one of them. I also know people who would have been excellent priests but decided to marry their same sex partner and therefore left the discernment process.

b) I would like to know if you support women exercising ministry in the church - whether as clergy, bishops, etc and whether women clergy are accepted within the church in which you worship.

Yes, absolutely.

I was delighted at the nomination, election and subsequent enthronement of Archbishop Sarah as ABC. All aspects of the ministry of women clergy are accepted within the church in which I worship, which is signed up to the Inclusive Church statement.

c) Please could you explain your views on the climate crisis and the diocesan commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030. How does your faith support the views you hold about this?

I support the diocesan (and the national) commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030, based both on my belief that creation is God's and we are merely custodians, and on my concern about the impact of climate change on other people, whom scripture teaches me are my neighbour.

I voted for the churches route map to Carbon Net Zero in July 2022, aware how ambitious this target was and is. While acknowledging the amount still to do, I think we have achieved more than we would have done had we not set our sights high. Within the Manchester Diocese, we are playing our part, with the Environment Working Group and our Diocesan Environment Officer doing good work with very limited resources, supporting and encouraging participation by churches and schools all of which adds up.

I believe that creation belongs to God, not to us – we are entrusted to steward it and we have a responsibility both to God, to our brothers and sisters in the parts of the world most vulnerable to climate change and to future generations who will be sustained by the earth, as long as we care for it. I believe that throughout scripture, particularly the Old Testament, God gives us guidelines and frameworks that limit our impact on the

earth and our hoarding and misuse of its resources, and we would do well to take more notice of these (for example fallow years – exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 25:3-4) This is not to suggest that we can apply these in the same way today as in ancient Israel, but that more attention to the principles would help us find new ways to treasure creation in line with the fifth mark of mission.

Question 2. Do you support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the church, including ordination as priests, consecration as bishops and ministry as diocesan bishops and Archbishop?

Yes, absolutely. See also my answer to 1.b above.

Question 3. What is your response to the appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist? Is it the Christian vocation to seek the conversion of Jews and Moslems?

I believe that a narrow, racially based nationalism is not compatible with the demands of Christian faith, that we should seek to challenge those leading “Christian Nationalist” type movements while seeking to understand and positively influence those drawn to them. I do not feel that in the current context of rising antisemitism and Islamaphobia that conversion of Muslims or Jews is an appropriate focus for Christians.

I am conscious of the different connotations of the word “nationalist” in other parts of the UK (Scotland and Wales specifically), but in the English context, nationalism tends to be narrow, exclusionary and racist. This is contrary to the vision of God’s Kingdom in Revelation 7:9. Some people are being drawn into a narrow form of nationalism (which they describe as Christian) because they are looking for a sense of belonging. As the Church, we have a better way of belonging – belonging to God’s beautiful and diverse kingdom. I believe that Christians are called to speak out against injustice including the failure to welcome refugees and other migrants (which is contrary to Deuteronomy 10:18-19) and to speak against racism in all its forms. I also believe we are called to welcome to everyone into our fellowship, including those tempted to seek easy “answers” in populism and nationalism.

I do not believe that I am called to seek the conversion of those who practice Judaism or Islam. I do not feel that I have the standing to judge the relationship that others have with God, whatever faith they profess. My role is to live out my own faith in an open and attractive way, and to give an account of it when asked, and to engage with my neighbours whoever they are in solidarity and love. From a pragmatic point of view, I know that someone from another faith attempting to convert me would have the opposite effect and would make me feel antagonistic towards that faith.

Currently in the UK we are seeing a rise of both antisemitism and Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, and I believe that our calling as Christians in this context is to stand

in solidarity with Muslims and Jews against the prejudice and violence that they face. Respecting someone's faith as their own to hold is not indifference, but is rather an expression of love.

Question 4. Do you support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same sex relationship?

Yes – see also my answer to 1a above.

Christine Sharp

1. a) As I said in my statement, I firmly believe that we are all equal in the eyes of God and should be all inclusive and welcoming to everyone and treated in the same way. I support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in same sex relationships. I feel that if we are "Living in Love and Faith" this what we should be doing. Therefore, I also support the marriage of clergy in same sex relationships.

James 2: 1,4 "My brother's and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So treat everyone the same If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? Aren't you like judges who have evil thoughts?"

1b) I fully support women exercising ministry in the church, whatever level of role as clergy or laity. Women clergy are accepted within my church.

1c) The climate crisis: We have to realise that we are all now affected by climate change. The climate crisis is serious and we have all experienced the results of this during summer 2026.

Psalms 24: v.1-2 "God owns the earth and everything in it because he created and established it upon the waters." We are asked to protect God's world. We must appreciate that other parts of the world are becoming especially vulnerable to climate change which affect livelihoods in ways we are not yet experiencing in the UK. Do we support World Water Day? World Environment Day? World Water Day this year - "Where water flows, equality grows." I certainly support the aims of Net Zero and we should continue to strive for Net Zero by 2030. This will be a challenge for many churches already struggling financially and unable to afford improving things like heating, but there are so many smaller things that can be done. As a Church we should be vocal in raising awareness of the climate crisis and lead by example with the ways we are aiming to address this.

Question 2.

I certainly do support and give thanks for the invaluable ministry of women within all roles in the church.

Question 3.

Christians may love their country but only as a second loyalty, always beneath Christ. The Bible tells us to look after our homeland but our true citizenship is in heaven and unites Christians from every part of the world. Nationalism, rather than saying Christ decides who we are, forgets the Bible's teaching on welcoming strangers and loving enemies. If loyalty to Our Lord overcomes everything then patriotism should be healthy.

We definitely aren't here to convert Jews and Muslims. We should show respect to all other religions.

Question 4.

Please see my response to Question 1a as this covers this in detail.

James Wilson

Question 1. a) Please could you describe your views in relation to the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for blessing couples in a same-sex relationship and whether, if elected to synod, you would support or not the marriage of clergy in same sex relationships. It would be helpful if you could outline the reasons for whatever position you take on these issues.

I voted for the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy as a member of the 2021-26 Synod and will continue to support it, while respecting the consciences of clergy who disagree with me and do not wish to use the liturgy. Through studying Scripture, I have become convinced of the theological case for inclusion of LGBTQ people and for the celebration of same-sex relationships (having previously held a conservative view). I have also observed that many young people in particular see a contradiction when the church proclaims a God who offers unconditional love to all but excludes gay people and this can be an obstacle to them exploring the Christian faith.

For similar reasons, I would support marriage of clergy in same sex relationships. I think it's extremely regrettable that the church has missed out on the ministry of many people who would otherwise have pursued a call to ordination but have been excluded because of who they love.

b) I would like to know if you support women exercising ministry in the church - whether as clergy, bishops, etc and whether women clergy are accepted within the church in which you worship.

Yes, I fully support and rejoice in women exercising ministry in the church including their ordination as priests and their consecration as bishops. Women clergy are fully accepted at St James and Emmanuel, the church at which I worship. Women have served as team vicars in our parish, and we currently benefit from the ministry and service of a number of retired clergy who are women, all of whom have and continue to benefit and nourish our church community.

c) Please could you explain your views on the climate crisis and the diocesan commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030. How does your faith support the views you hold about this?

Yes, I believe manmade climate change is one of the biggest issues facing humanity today and the church not only needs to play its part in tackling it by aiming to reach Net Zero by 2030, but by demonstrating prophetic leadership to wider society.

My view is the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission to be good stewards of creation has a strong Biblical basis beginning in Genesis 2 and ending with the Christian hope that God will heal and restore creation, a work I believe God is inviting us to participate in.

Question 2. Do you support and rejoice in the ministry of women in all roles in the church, including ordination as priests, consecration as bishops and ministry as diocesan bishops and Archbishop?

Yes. My personal faith has been enriched and encouraged by the ministry of a number of ordained women and I fully support and rejoice in their ordination as priests and their consecration as bishops including that of Archbishop Sarah.

Question 3. What is your response to the appearance of those who claim to be both Christian and Nationalist? Is it the Christian vocation to seek the conversion of Jews and Moslems?

Whatever people's views about establishment, we can all agree that the civic role the Church of England plays in the life of our nation as the established church is a huge honour and privilege. Through it, we can lead the celebration of the values, history and community we share as a nation.

However, recently we have seen a rise in groups, particular within the last couple of years, who have distorted patriotism and misused the notion of pride in our country in order to demonise immigrants and to promote a politics which seeks to divide rather than unite, often coopting Christian language to do so. I believe the church should be

taking a firm stand against the groups that are twisting the Christian message in this way.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he said it was to love God and to love our neighbour. When he was then pressed on who our neighbour was, he responded with a parable about someone who his fellow countrymen would have regarded as a foreigner and a religious outsider. If anyone is invoking Christianity to spread hate and division, I believe they are distorting our faith and spreading a false gospel. The Church of England needs to model a better way by celebrating what unites us as a nation.

In answer to your second question, I believe we are called to share the hope we have in Christ to all people. I also believe that salvation and reconciliation are a work of God not a work of man and that you cannot 'convert' people by forcing them using legislation which seems to be what a number of so-called 'Christian nationalists' seem to be advocating. This is not effective and it's not what Christ modelled. Instead we should be sharing Jesus' message in love and humility.

The following question (although similar to Q1) has specifically been addressed to the candidates standing to be elected to the House of Laity: Question 4. Do you support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same sex relationship?

Yes. As I stated in my answer to Q1a, I voted for the introduction of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy and will continue to support it as a step towards a more inclusive church.