**Rev’d Claire McArthur**

For those of you who haven’t yet encountered me, I’m known locally as Rev Claire. I have been married to Gavin for 25 years and am Mum to three wonderful adult children. I was born in Coventry and it is such a privilege to serve God in my home city.

I am currently Rector at Stoke, St Michaels, Coventry an urban parish in the East Deanery.  A central church in terms of tradition. Although working in an urban environment I understand the issues facing my rural colleagues through my work as trustee at the Arthur Rank Centre an advocacy for rural ministry. Within the diocese I undertake a number of positions, I am the Chair of the House of Clergy, a vocations advisor, I work closely with the communication and operational teams advising on digital and social media strategy, and GDPR and I sit on the mission fund panel. I would invite you to vote for me so that I can not only represent your clergy views at our local diocesan level but also at a national level.  I feel that these roles go hand in hand.

I am passionate about protecting parish ministry and am still in awe and excited that everyone is part of a parish, our national church should be for everyone, regardless of gender, age, disability, tradition, race, socio-economic status or sexuality. I believe that we are all made in God’s image and are accepted and loved. We should welcome all. I feel it is important that we walk alongside members of our parish through the life events of baptism, marriage and death. It’s a privilege to lead the Eucharist each week, where we meet as the family God, renew and refresh ourselves to enable us to go out as the light in our sometimes dark world.

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;” I am at my happiest when I am supporting others, on shift at the night shelter, feeding hungry families, alongside the bereaved, visiting the sick or welcoming the refugee.

I am aware however of the issues we are all facing around maintaining our buildings and raising our parish share and that the current system needs to be addressed in order to maintain meaningful productive sustainable ministry at the local level.

Regarding LLF - marriage and being in a relationship are God’s gift to us, to help two people find companionship, help and comfort. It is a means of grace, in which two monogamous consenting people, living faithfully together, may find the fulfilment of human love in tenderness and respect. As church, we should celebrate this, regardless of sexuality.

I feel that all genders are called to lead and be part of building God’s kingdom. As a woman and a strong leader, I feel that in parts of the Church of England, although we have attempted equality through mutual flourishing, we still have a long way to go for everyone to accept mine and other women’s ministerial leadership and unique calling.

I am a contextual theologian and each day I read scripture, learn from it and I aim to make It relevant to the current world we live in. I am passionate with sharing the gospel with others so they too can live in relationship with our living creator God. I endeavour through prayer and examen to recognise and see the glimpses of God on a daily basis. I feel strongly that we need to look after and maintain our natural world.

Before ordination I represented laity in the clergy disciplinary measure and sat on a number of panels, I am aware of the detrimental effects of getting it wrong and the pressure it places on clergy well-being and ability to thrive using a system, handling complaints, that needs to be reviewed and improved.

I am ashamed to say I work for the Church of England when I read or learn about abuse that has happened in the past or continues to happen within our midst.  I understand the importance of having strong safeguarding procedures and transparency. I wish all, regardless of position, are held accountable for their actions or those of others in their charge.

I am a strong communicator and a national digital expert, before my ordination five years ago, I worked for over 20 years at the BBC. I was Head of Communications and Digital at the Motor Neurone Association. I also was Head of Digital Services at De Montfort University. I therefore understand generational marketing and getting the gospel across in this secular environment we find ourselves in. I feel that all my skills make me an ideal candidate to serve as your representative on General Synod. Please vote for me. Thank you.