

2024

EDINBURGH DIOCESAN SYNOD



ELECTION
NOMINATIONS
24 FEBRUARY 2024

GENERAL SYNOD MEMBERSHIP - CLERGY

The Revd Ryan Bennett

Ryan was born and grew up in Bendigo, Central Victoria, Australia. His family including Robert, Rosalie, Renee, Gerard and nephew Flynn are all still Victorian based, living on the Surf Coast, west of Melbourne. He was educated in Bendigo and upon completing Secondary education, moved to Melbourne and undertook a double B.A. & B.Theol degree program at Monash University and Trinity College, Melbourne respectively. Ordained in the Diocese of Ballarat in 2008, Ryan served in both Ballarat and Melbourne dioceses' before taking up the position as Bishop's Chaplain with Responsibility for Christ Church Cathedral, Ballarat followed by becoming Parish Priest of Springmount (Creswick, Clunes, Learmonth and Newlyn) in the goldfield's region of Central Victoria. During this period, Ryan served a term on both Bishop in Council as well as the Retired Homes Committee.

In January 2019, Ryan moved to New York with the Sponsorship of the Society of the Sacred Mission to undertake the MA *cum laude* and Master in Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) programs successively at the General Theological Seminary. He served as Assistant Priest of Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue whilst living and also assisting at St. John in the Village Parish in Greenwich Village.

Ryan received scholarship support to undertake the PhD program in Practical Theology and Ethics at the University of Edinburgh School of Divinity (New College), moving to Edinburgh in January 2021. Ryan become the Locum Priest at Christ Church Morningside during the Interregnum (part-time) whilst studying full-time and living in the adjacent clergy house. He was appointed as Associate Rector of Christ Church, Morningside in October 2023. He enjoys life, study and ministry in Edinburgh and likes to explore Scotland, alongside reading, music, cooking and new gins!

The Revd Christine Downey

Christine has had 10 years' experience working in visual arts, as an art gallery curator, and artist's manager before graduating with a degree in Divinity from Huron University. Christine began her priesthood in Canada in 2006 and joined the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2017 as rector of St. Mary's, Dalmahoy. Her love for the arts coupled with the belief that there are important new ways that people are finding "modern prophets" the church should notice, has led her to read informally, in the area of popular culture.

DIOCESAN STANDING COMMITTEE

Dr Michael Wood

...is a counsellor and psychotherapist based in Melrose. He holds a BA and an MPhil from the University of Oxford and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, where he recently completed a PgDip in Counselling. Prior to re-training, Michael worked as an academic specialising in German literature and thought and intercultural exchange. He taught and researched for a number of years at the University of Edinburgh, where his responsibilities also included ensuring the effective and smooth running of courses and welfare for honours students, all within the complex ecosystem of his department. He has undertaken voluntary roles with Bethany Christian Trust, Passing the Baton, Place2Be, and Hope Counselling, and helped to steer the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club through the tricky landscape of a global pandemic, as its Honorary Secretary.

A native of Edinburgh, Michael has a long association with and commitment to the Diocese of Edinburgh. After a childhood spent at St Thomas's in Corstorphine, he moved (to join the rest of his family) to St Mary's Cathedral upon becoming a treble chorister there. When he moved back to Edinburgh for his PhD, he returned to St Mary's Cathedral where he has remained ever since – although he occasionally worships at Holy Trinity in Melrose too. He has represented the Edinburgh Diocese on General Synod since June 2021 and hopes to find more ways in which to contribute his experience, skills, and enthusiasm to the Diocese's work. Moreover, he would hope to bring a perspective from outwith the City of Edinburgh directly into the work of Standing Committee.

DIOCESAN MISSION & MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Revd Nicki McNelly

Rector, St. Cuthbert's Colinton

It is my pleasure to be serving in Edinburgh for a second time and I have a great passion for unity amongst our diocese and a desire for mutual support.

My faith journey is varied as it was formed in the army, where my husband served for 31 years (I only served for four). We had chaplains of many denominations and coped with whatever the tradition of the 'current' padre was. I finally found my comfort in Anglicanism and Sacramental Worship, and with the encouragement of the Chaplain General, discerned

my vocation to ordination. I studied at Cranmer Hall, Durham and was made Deacon in 2009 and ordained Priest in 2010 at St. Mary's, Edinburgh, where I served my curacy.

From there Bishop Kevin invited me to be Provost at St. John's Cathedral, Oban, where I served for five years but I missed city life and returned to Edinburgh in 2017.

I live at The Rectory with my husband Iain, daughters, Ceri (29) and Anya (32), granddaughter, Eira (4 years) and two dogs.

Positions / Roles held:

2023 – Present	Chair, SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) Edinburgh and The Lothians
2023 – Present	Diocese International Convenor
2020 – present	Provincial Synod Member
2017 – Present	Rector, St. Cuthbert's, Colinton
2016 – Present	Army Cadet Force Chaplain, Edinburgh and The Lothians
2015-2018	Church in Society
2014-2017	Volunteer Chaplain, Hope Kitchen, Oban
2013-2017	Canon, Cathedral of the Isles, Cumbrae
2013-2017	Argyll & The Isles Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections
2012-2017	DMMB Argyll & The Isles
2012-2017	Provincial Synod Member
2012-2017	Taynuilt Churches Together
2012-2017	Lorn Leaders Network
2012-2017	Provost, St. John's Cathedral, Oban
	Rector, St. James' Church, Ardbrecknish
2011-2012	Volunteer Chaplain, St. Columba's Hospice
2009-2015	Officiating Chaplain to the Military
2009-2012	Curate, St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh
2005-2009	Lay Member Army Archdeaconry Synod

The Revd Liz O'Ryan

It has been a privilege to sit on the Ministry Board for Mission as Provincial Rep for the Diocese of Edinburgh for the past four years, and would be delighted to continue to serve as a member now that I am no longer involved in Provincial Mission Board.

Since writing my dissertation for my Masters in 2011 about Mission strategies in Episcopal Churches in Glasgow and Galloway, I have continued to be interested in how we can facilitate and encourage each other in ministry and enable our churches to grow. I have enjoyed my time on DMMC and would much look forward to continuing to serve.

Positions held in church:

2011 Ordained deacon
2011 MTh Glasgow University
2012 Ordained priest
2011 – 14 Curate St John's Greenock
2011 – 14 Member of the Welcome, Integration and Numerical Growth Team
 for Mission Action Plans in GnG
2014 – 19 Associate Priest St Mungo's Alexandria and St Augustine's Dumbarton
2018 – 21 Diocesan Advisor for SEI
2019 - Rector Holy Trinity Haddington
2022 Vocations Advisor for Edinburgh Diocese
2022 Reviewer for Clergy Ministerial Review
2019 - 2023 Edinburgh Rep on Provincial Mission Board and therefore serving on DMMC

Other positions held in Community

2014 - 2019 Trustee and Treasurer of independent Foodbank in Dumbarton
2020 – 2023 Chair of East Lothian Foodbank
2023 - Governor of Compass School, Haddington
2023 - Trustee of 'Keep The Heid' Mental Health Café

DIOCESAN FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CONVENOR

Robert O'Riordan

I was born on Malta in 1957 and went to school at Glenalmond and then to The University of Kent at Canterbury studying English and Drama,

Between 1981 and 2000 I was a stockbroker in Edinburgh working for Bell Lawrie Macgregor and Brewin Dolphin. I was initially responsible for giving investment advice and subsequently I was a founder of a subsidiary, Stocktrade, a pioneering on line broking firm. My remit covered technology, compliance, business development and private clients.

From 2001 until 2014, I was a Client Director at Baillie Gifford & Co.. I had responsibility for investment trust companies board and shareholder relationships which included internal and external communications, PR, marketing and corporate affairs.



After retiring in 2014, I was Convenor of the East Lothian Scottish Liberal Democrat Party and its candidate in the 2019 General Election. I am now less involved in party politics although still a party member. I was Vestry member, Deputy Lay Elector, Rector's Warden and Treasurer at St Adrian's, Gullane between 2001 and 2020 as well as being a committee member of the North Berwick and District Association of Churches. I am now a member of the congregation of St Anne's, Dunbar and a Trustee of the SEC Pension Fund.

I am divorced with three grown up children. I live at Dunglass in East Lothian, am a keen but poor golfer, an avid reader, cook, walker and needle worker.

I very much welcome the opportunity of convening the Diocesan Finance & Management Committee.

PROVINCIAL MISSION BOARD

The Revd Christine Downey

Christine has had 10 years' experience working in visual arts, as an art gallery curator, and artist's manager before graduating with a degree in Divinity from Huron University. Christine began her priesthood in Canada in 2006 and joined the Scottish Episcopal Church in 2017 as rector of St. Mary's, Dalmahoy. Her love for the arts coupled with the belief that there are important new ways that people are finding "modern prophets" the church should notice, has led her to read informally, in the area of popular culture.

PROVINCIAL FAITH & ORDER BOARD

The Revd Isaac Knight

Isaac serves as the Associate Rector of St Mungo's Balerno and Livingston, where he has specific responsibility for the pastoral care of the Livingston congregation. Isaac loves all things sport; his first degree was a Sport degree at Durham University, and he has a particular interest in the interplay between sport and faith, and how sport can be a vehicle for sharing and living out the Gospel. Following his time at Durham Isaac worked as lay Assistant Chaplain at Uppingham School in Rutland before training for ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. He served his curacy in the Diocese of Oxford. Isaac is married to Ruth, and they are expecting their first child in March. Isaac and Ruth share their home with a black Labrador named Poirot.