



3rd July 2024

Dear Bishop Martyn

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH – JULY SYNOD

We are writing to thank you for your work over recent months in guiding the LLF project forwards and for the publication of the latest proposals before General Synod. It is clear that you and the LLF staff team have taken great pains to ensure that different perspectives were able to contribute, and we see this reflected in the papers before Synod. We would also wish to extend our thanks to the College and House of Bishops for their continuing engagement with LLF, and hope that there will be support for the measures being proposed.

We welcome the proposal to remove restrictions on the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith in standalone services. Many of us have already seen the pastoral and missional potential of the PLF material within existing services, which will be enhanced by making them available for use in standalone services. That this opportunity occurs on a voluntary opt-in basis helps to respect conscience all round and is something that we support. While it is not the gold standard of equal marriage that many of us seek, we recognise that this is a proportionate compromise that can be offered while the Church continues to explore these areas.

We are pleased that serious discussion is progressing on the freedom of clergy to enter a same-sex civil marriage. While we would have preferred to see more on this at the July Synod we welcome the clear timetable stating a decision will be taken by the House of Bishops in January 2025. For many clergy in faithful, stable, permanent relationships this decision cannot come soon enough. It is also a decision that many lay people already in same-sex marriages and who wish to explore a vocation to ordained ministry have been patiently waiting for. We firmly believe in marriage and the benefits it offers in regularising and honouring the love between two people. All of our clergy should be able to structure their closest and most intimate relationship in this way and we look forward to the further work from FAOC and the decision of the House of Bishops.

We look forward to hearing more about the model of specific and defined delegation of episcopal ministry to maximise inclusion under episcopal pastoral care. We support the rejection of hard structural approaches to managing differences in the life of the Church and welcome an approach focussed on pastoral relationships. As a Church we must never neglect that personal relationships contribute most strongly in building up the Church as the body of Christ, and managing difference is best achieved through good interpersonal relationships ahead of recourse to legalistic frameworks.

We remain fully committed to the unity of the Church, creating a generous space where all can thrive regardless of either sexuality or sincerely held theological conviction. We appreciate your comments in the LLF papers that what is proposed may not be ideal, but will allow us a space to discern God's

will in the longer term. Sometimes the best is the enemy of the good, and seeking perfection only delivers paralysis. We therefore welcome these proposals, acknowledging that they cannot deliver everything that all seek from the LLF process, and look forward to engaging with them further.

Please be assured of our prayers during the upcoming Synod and in the work that will follow.

Yours sincerely

The Revd Neil Patterson (Together for the Church of England – Chair)

Nic Tall (Together for the Church of England – National Co-ordinator)

Professor Helen King (Together on General Synod)

The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin (Together on General Synod)

The Revd Canon Lisa Battye (The Evangelical Forum for General Synod – Co-convenor)

The Ven Malcolm Chamberlain (The Evangelical Forum for General Synod – Co-convenor and Inclusive Evangelicals Co-ordinator)

Simon Friend (The Evangelical Forum for General Synod – Co-convenor)

The Ven Nikki Groarke (The Evangelical Forum for General Synod – Co-convenor)

The Ven Pete Spiers (The Evangelical Forum for General Synod – Co-convenor)

Canon Dr Felicity Cooke (GS WATCH – Convenor)

Margaret Sheather (Affirming Catholics in Synod - Co-Convenor)

Jacqueline Stamper (Affirming Catholics in Synod - Co-Convenor)

Kat D'Arcy-Cumber (UK Global Majority member of General Synod)

Kenson Li (UK Global Majority member of General Synod and Ordinand)

The Revd Dr Charlie Bell (General Synod member)

The Ven Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (Archdeacon of Liverpool and General Synod Member)

Fr Dan Barnes-Davies SCP (Inclusive Church – Chair)

Fiona MacMillan (Inclusive Church Trustee and General Synod member)

The Revd Martine Osborne (Women and the Church – Chair)

The Revd Catherine Cleghorn (Society of Catholic Priests – Provincial Secretary)

Fr Danny Pegg (Society of Catholic Priests – Provincial Council)

The Revd Nick Bundock (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator)

The Revd Steve Hollinghurst (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator)

The Revd Alex Huzzey (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator)

The Revd Dr Kate Massey (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator and General Synod member)

The Revd Dr Paul Roberts (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator)

The Revd David Runcorn (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator)

The Revd Jody Stowell (Inclusive Evangelicals – Co-ordinator and General Synod member)

The Revd Canon Jarel Robinson-Brown (OneBodyOneFaith Co-Chair)

The Revd Jo Winn-Smith (OneBodyOneFaith – Trustee and General Synod member)

The Revd Andrew Howorth (Open Table Network – Co-Chair)
Sarah Hobb (Open Table Network – Co-Chair)

Matthew Parkes (Affirming Catholicism – Chair and General Synod member)
The Revd Dr Hannah Cleugh (Affirming Catholicism – Secretary)

Professor Elaine Graham (Modern Church – Chair)
Alison Webster (Modern Church – General Secretary)

The Reverend Jide Macaulay (House of Rainbow – Founder and CEO)

Abigail Hollingsworth (Student Christian Movement – Chair of Trustees)
The Revd Naomi Nixon (Student Christian Movement – CEO)

The Revd Nigel Pietroni (The Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England – Chair)
The Revd Dr Brenda Wallace (The Campaign for Equal Marriage and General Synod member)

Revd Ann Lynes (Clergy Consultation)
Mtr Ariadne van den Hof (Clergy Consultation)

The Revd Canon Tim Goode (Canon for Congregational Discipleship and Nurture, York Minster)

The Revd Wendy Wale (Member of New Wine Network)
The Revd Frances Shoesmith (Member of New Wine Network)
The Revd Julie Gawthorpe (Member of New Wine Network)
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