

The LLF journey is now moving from a 'listening' phase to a 'discernment' phase, as the bishops reflect on what they have heard from the people of the Church of England as well as through their own engagement with the LLF resources, with Scripture and the tradition of the Church. During the autumn of 2022, the College of Bishops will gather for three residential meetings to meet, talk, reflect and pray together. They will seek to discern and articulate what the Spirit is saying to the Church as they consider these important questions and what it means to live in love and faith together.

Following these three College of Bishops gatherings, the bishops will share the outcomes of their discernment with General Synod in February 2023.

The overview

The Living in Love and Faith resources are to enable the whole Church to embark on a journey together. The journey has four stages:

Learning together about the subject matter, about each other, about God and about our calling as a Church.	□ 30 April 2022
Listening to what is emerging from our learning together about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage and about our life together as church communities and as a national Church.	□ September 2022
Discerning what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today.	□ December 2022
Deciding how discernment is translated into a way forward for the Church.	□ February 2023

The roadmap

Here is a more detailed road map of the journey, including how members of General Synod will be invited to engage:

Sep 21	College of Bishops	Bishops committed themselves to a series of conversations in regional groups, 'Centred on Christ: Conversations on the Way', to prepare for discernment and decision-making regarding Vision and Strategy, Organisational Change, and LLF.
Nov 21	General Synod	A guide to LLF for new members was provided; an update; 'Passing the Baton' reflections from Synod members of the previous quinquennium; the LLF Road Map.
Dec 21	House of Bishops	The House reflected on the extent of church-wide engagement and considered how to prepare for the discernment process.
Feb 22	General Synod	Reflected on and engaged with the Pastoral Principles.
Spring 22	Diocesan Synods	Some Diocesan Synods took the opportunity to reflect on engagement in dioceses so far and the role of Diocesan Synods in shaping the Church's discernment process. Resources and a process were provided.
30 Apr 22	'Listening to the Whole Church'	The window for submitting feedback via the questionnaire and/or submitting a creative response was closed on 30th April 2022.
May 22	House of Bishops	The House reflected on Diocesan Synods' engagement and its implications for the process of discernment in the autumn.
Jul 22	General Synod	Members of General Synod engaged with LLF in small groups as well as with creative and reflective elements, including an art installation entitled 'Faith and Fracture' at York Minster, and, at York University, an exhibition of creative responses to LLF, entitled 'From the Heart'.
Sep 22	'Listening to the Whole Church'	The findings of the responses to churchwide engagement were published on 2 September 2022 under the title, 'Listening with Love and Faith'. A resource, 'Friendship and the Body of Christ', was also published to encourage reflection and conversations about what it means to be church with diversity and difference. They can be found here .

Sep 22-Oct 22	Next Steps Group	Members of the Next Steps Group of bishops are holding meetings with representatives of 21 organisations and networks representing a wide possible range of views relating to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. The organisations are listed below.*
Sep 22	College of Bishop	This meeting, which was to initiate the bishops' process of discernment and decision-making, was cancelled because of the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Instead bishops are doing some reflective work individually ahead of the meeting in October.
Oct 22	College of Bishops	Bishops gathered from 31 October to 3 November. The programme can be found here .
Dec 22	College & House of Bishops	Bishops gathered from 12 - 14 December. The programme can be found here .
Jan 23	College of Bishops	Bishops will agree the outcomes of the discernment process to bring to the wider Church and General Synod.
Feb 23	General Synod	Consider proposals from the College and House of Bishops and agree a clear direction of travel.

* List of organisations and networks

The Society	Mosaic	Affirming Catholics
Society of the Holy Cross	Church Missionary Society	CEEC
New Wine	USPG	The Church Society
HTB Network	Changing Attitude (England)	Living Out
OneBodyOneFaith	Campaign for Equal Marriage	Evangelical Group of GS
Diverse Church	Ozanne Foundation	The Junia Network
GS Gender & Sexuality Group	Society of Catholic Priests	Inclusive Church

Scenes from College of Bishops Residential

The vision for the LLF process: What is our hope?

Recently, the Next Steps Group considered what it would look like for our deepest hopes for the LLF journey to have been met. They are:

- **Participation:** There has been the widest possible participation across the whole Church. We have engaged in deep learning together about God and about being human.
- **Relationships:** We have learned to be kinder, understanding one another's perspectives better. We have become more at ease with ourselves as a Church.
- **Outcome:** Everyone can see that they have been listened to, heard, loved, and taken seriously. The Spirit's work among us has resulted in a revelation of something new, unexpected.
- **The Future:** Our deeper understanding and love will enable us to face new questions in a better way. We are hopeful as we move into the future together in love and faith.

The Next Step Group

A Living in Love and Faith Next Steps Group has been formed, led by the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally. The task of this group is to:

- Encourage participation in using the LLF learning resources as widely as possible
- Listen attentively to what is emerging from the learning across the diocese
- Explore possibilities for our life together as a Church
- Plan into the future as discernment leads to decision-making in 2022.

The Next Steps Group will support dioceses:

- with facilitation resources and training to help churches create safe spaces for learning
- in promoting the creative sharing of feedback and reflections from churches' learning together
- by coordinating initiatives and sharing good practice
- by helping bishops and their senior staff to capture and listen to the emerging learning across their diocese.

The Next Steps Group will encourage each diocese to appoint one or more 'LLF Advocates' who will be supported by the Next Steps Group and whose responsibility will be to encourage as much participation as possible in their diocese.

Finally, the Next Steps Group will rely on a Reference group of diverse people across dioceses to assist them with their work.

Who are the members of the Next Steps Group?

- The Bishop of London, the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally (Chair)
- The Bishop of Fulham, the Rt Rev Jonathan Baker
- The Bishop of Grantham, the Rt Rev Nicholas Chamberlain
- The Bishop of Sherborne, the Rt Rev Karen Gorham
- The Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
- The Bishop of Warrington, the Rt Rev Bev Mason
- The Bishop of Truro, the Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen

The [terms of reference for this group are available online](#).

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[Read more about the reference group](#)

This group is made up of 'grass roots' people who are actively involved in the life of the church, the group acts in an advisory capacity to the LLF

Next Steps Group of bishops in order to:

- suggest contextually sensitive, practicable and creative ways of enabling church communities to participate in LLF learning activities;
- suggest creative and contextually sensitive ways of enabling church communities to communicate their learning and experiences to the wider church as a result of engaging with the LLF resources;
- act as a 'diversity sounding board' for the Next Steps Group's plans and outputs;
- be alert to occasions where misconceptions or anxieties about engagement with LLF may need to be addressed.

The members of the group are as follows:

- Tracey Huizinga
- Julie Withers
- Simon Burrows
- James Nash
- Rachel Price
- Emily Watson
- Jan Moore
- Emma Brae
- Julian Sampson
- Chris Page
- Alison Booker
- Sarah Hobbs
- Mike Aldridge

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