



The Next Steps Group of bishops met on Wednesday 1 February 2023.

The Next Steps Group of bishops are looking forward to listening and attending to Synod members' reflections on LLF at General Synod next week. They noted that Synod members' feedback about the draft *Prayers of Love and Faith* and the proposed new *Pastoral Guidance* will be instrumental in shaping the way that these two strands of work are taken forward and brought back to Synod in July 2023.

The group reiterated that the *Prayers* and the *Guidance* belong together. In particular, the *Prayers* will not be commended before the *Pastoral Guidance* has set out clear reassurances for clergy and laity in relation to being able to either offer or not offer the prayers. The Next Steps bishops welcome Synod's participation in setting out what such reassurance might look like in practice and what approaches would be helpful to enable church communities to engage with one another well in relation to the opportunity these prayers offer.

Similarly, the group affirmed that bishops are eager to listen to and take part in the debate on the House of Bishops' motion. Within the reality of continuing disagreement in Synod, among bishops, and across the Church more widely, bishops hope that the deliberations about the motion and proposed amendments will give bishops a sense of the mind of Synod and a steer for the outworking of the Church's response to LLF.

The Group noted that they were meeting on the first day of LGBTQi+ History Month and reflected on the aims and significance of the month in relation to General Synod and the ongoing work.

The meeting ended in prayer.

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