

Living in Love and Faith conversations ahead of November Synod



A group drawn from across different traditions within the Church will meet next month as part of ongoing work in the Living in Love and Faith process.

Invitations have been issued to join three facilitated conversations in September ahead of consideration at the November Synod of proposals to enable same-sex couples to come to church following a civil marriage or civil partnership for prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and for God's blessing on the two people.

The group, created at the invitation of the Co-Chairs of the Living in Love and Faith Steering Group, Bishop Sarah Mullally and Bishop Philip Mounstephen, will bring a wealth of knowledge from prior involvement in the LLF process, as well as a range of lived experiences. Membership of the group will be published at a later date.

The group will receive an update on the ongoing work on pastoral guidance and pastoral assurance in relation to the Prayers of Love and Faith and will be asked to provide their insights and reflections.

The outcome of the conversations will feed into discussions at meetings in the autumn of the College and House of Bishops ahead of the November Synod.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, said the creation of the group was part of the next stage of consulting widely following the July Synod.

"The House and the College of Bishops have a real desire to create a loving, generous, ecclesial and pastoral space, despite deeply held differences of opinion, in which we can share our ministry and implement the motion agreed by the Synod in February," she said.

"There is a desire to joyfully offer a pastoral response to loving, faithful and long-term same sex relationships. There is at the same time no intention of changing the doctrine of marriage as expressed in the canons and the authorised liturgy of the Church of England.

"Holding these commitments together is at times painful and complex. As part of this we are seeking to listen to people's hopes and concerns and to ensure that they are satisfied that their views have been taken into consideration."

The new group has been formed after the General Synod received an update earlier last month on the work which has taken place since the landmark debate in February welcoming proposals to enable same-sex couples to come to church following a civil marriage or civil partnership for prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and for God's blessing on the two people. The proposals came out of a six-year period of listening, learning and discernment known as Living in Love and Faith.

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