

## GENERAL SYNOD

*Living in Love and Faith*

## Progress Report and Passing the Baton

**Summary**

This paper gives an overview of what has happened since the publication of the Living in Love and Faith Resources in November 2020. It also invites members to offer their reflections on Synod's engagement with Living in Love and Faith as a means of 'passing the baton' to the newly formed Synod that will be inaugurated in November 2021.

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**PROGRESS REPORT****1. Next Steps Group**

The Terms of Reference of the Next Steps Group are to

- a) Agree and commend to Dioceses approaches that enable meaningful engagement with the LLF resources in as wide and representative range of churches as possible;
- b) Encourage effective and wide use of the resources across the Church;
- c) Encourage the House and College to engage with the process and hear the learning emerging from churches' engagement;
- d) In response to a substantive period of church-wide engagement with the resources:
  - draw up scenarios for different outcomes and consider the ecclesial implications;
  - consider and bring forward to the House proposals for consideration of any motions or other business that should go to the General Synod arising from the process of learning proposed by the LLF resources.
- e) Draw on the diversity, experience and expertise of the members of the Pastoral Advisory Group, a Reference Group and LLF Advocates
  - to ensure that engagement with the resources is framed in as pastorally sensitive and safe way as possible for everyone, especially LGBTI+ people;
  - to advise on the preparation and delivery of facilitation training and resources to achieve the above;
  - to extend the reach of the group, when appropriate, to diverse stakeholders.
- f) It is expected this work will be completed by the end of 2022 at the latest.

The [Next Steps Group](#) is comprised of 11 bishops, chaired by the Bishop of London. The group has met 11 times since June 2020. It has produced the overarching strategy for engagement and listening across dioceses, and a timeframe for the discernment and decision-making phases of the process, outlined here:

Feb 21– Jan 22	Church-wide engagement Designing, gathering, analysing and summarising feedback Episcopal listening and reflection Ecclesiological work and interaction with church-wide findings
Jul 21	<b>General Synod</b> LLF: ‘Passing the baton’
Sep 21	<b>College of Bishops</b> Reflections on the process of church-wide engagement
Dec 21	<b>House of Bishops</b> Reflections on the process and extent of church-wide engagement and ‘The Gift of the Church’
Jan 22	<b>College of Bishops</b> Reflections on implications of initial findings (in regions)
Feb 22	<b>General Synod</b> Engagement with and reflection on initial findings and ‘The Gift of the Church’
Mar   Apr 22	<b>‘Listening to the Whole Church’</b> Findings published in a variety of media
May 22	<b>House of Bishops</b> Discernment and reflections on implications for decision-making
Jul 22	<b>General Synod</b> Engagement with House of Bishops’ initial reflections on decision-making.
Sep 22	<b>College of Bishops</b> Reflection on recommendations that have been shaped by General Synod engagement
Nov 22	<b>General Synod</b> Consider recommendations from the House of Bishops

The Group has initiated and completed the appointment of LLF Advocates in all dioceses. It also oversees engagement with other churches and faith communities. In April 2021 it appointed a [Reference Group](#) which acts as a sounding board for developments.

In March 2021 the group produced Guidance entitled, ‘[Braver and Safer: Creating spaces for learning well together](#)’ and has overseen the process of a rollout of facilitation training. A [Pastoral Principles Course](#) was published in April 2021 and guidance for using the LLF resources with young people was produced in June 2021.

The Group has appointed a small team of specialists in quantitative and qualitative research to assist with the process of ‘Listening to the Whole Church’ by means of an online survey, focus groups and creative responses.

A resource entitled 'The Gift of the Church' is being drafted and will be widely consulted upon. Its purpose is to enable reflection on the implications of the findings of church-wide engagement with the LLF process on the Church's life together

The group has done the LLF Course together as a means of engaging with the materials as a group and to strengthen relationships.

## **2. Engagement**

### *Dioceses*

36 Dioceses have held or plan to hold LLF Taster Events. By July 2021, approximately 5,500 people will have participated in an LLF event.

A total of 69 LLF Advocates have been appointed, with Advocates active in all the dioceses. Advocates from the dioceses have met regularly every month since January to share good practice and progress and to advise on developments.

### *LLF Learning Hub*

Approximately 9,000 people have registered on the LLF Learning Hub.

### *Other churches and other faith communities*

An interfaith seminar was held in June 2021, and a seminar for ecumenical partners is planned for autumn 2021.

## **3. Facilitation Training**

20 LLF facilitation training sessions will have taken place by mid-July, involving approximately 350 participants.

## **4. Listening to the Whole Church**

An online survey was launched at the end of March 2021, and the opportunity to respond creatively was launched in April 2021. Focus Groups are planned for the autumn of 2021.

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## **PASSING THE BATON**

As part of the presentation to Synod, members will be offered an opportunity to contribute their reflections about

- their experience of the LLF journey so far
- their learning about engaging with LLF
- their hopes for the *process* of Synodical discernment and decision-making in 2022

These will be collated and offered to the incoming members of Synod in November 2021. To help members recall Synod's journey through the process of producing the LLF resources, the Appendix outlines key moments in Synod's engagement with LLF and the Pastoral Advisory Group.

## APPENDIX:

### Synod engagement with Living in Love and Faith and the Pastoral Advisory Group

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February 2017      **GS 2055** *Marriage and same-sex relationships after the Shared Conversations: A Report from the House of Bishops*

The motion 'That the Synod do take note of this Report.' was lost after a counted vote by Houses. The voting was as follows In the House of Bishops, those in favour 43, against 1, with no recorded abstentions; in the House of Clergy, 93 in favour, 100 against, with 2 abstentions; in the House of Laity, 106 in favour, 83 against, with 4 recorded abstentions, so the motion was lost.

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July 2017              **GS Misc 1158** Next Steps on Human Sexuality

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July 2018              PRESENTATION AND QUESTIONS  
*The presentation set out the vision for the LLF resources and how they are being produced, involving a wide constituency and assisted by the work of the Pastoral Advisory group.*

SEMINARS  
*Biblical Studies*  
*Theology*  
*Social and biological sciences*  
*History*  
*Pastoral Advisory Group*

#### PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS

##### **Vision**

*Members were invited to contribute to the vision of LLF (then the 'Episcopal teaching document')*

##### **Questions**

*Members were invited to respond to 'What are your questions about identity, sexuality & relationships?'*

##### **Process**

*Members were offered an opportunity to offer their reflections on the process and plans so far.*

##### **Prayer Space**

*Members were offered a range of ways to pray for LLF and the Church.*

**GS Misc 1188**

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February 2019      PASTORAL ADVISORY GROUP PRESENTATION  
*Members of the Pastoral Advisory Group presented the 'Living Letter' which outlined the Pastoral Principles and the rationale for them, and offered a preview of the Pastoral principles which were published in April 2019.*

**LLF PRESENTATION**

*The LLF presentation set out the LLF 'learning outcomes' and the shape and breadth of resources planned.*

**QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO A PANEL**

*LLF and PAG members responded to questions from members of General Synod.*

**FRINGE MEETINGS**

*Members had an opportunity to join one of 4 informal drop-in' fringe sessions with members of PAG and LLF present to respond to questions and open up discussions.*

**GS Misc 1200**

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July 2019      LLF PRESENTATION  
*The presentation described the challenges and hopes of the process of producing the resources and showed an introductory film about LLF featuring members of the LLF groups.*

**SEMINARS**

*Members were invited to participate in seminars addressing key questions that shape the LLF draft book:  
Who are we?  
Where are we?  
How do we hear God*

**BIBLE STUDY**

*'Encounters on the way' offered members an opportunity to reflect on the Emmaus story alongside lived experience stories*

**WORKSHOP**

*Members were offered an opportunity to experience using the Pastoral Principles in small groups led by members of the Pastoral Advisory group.*

**GS Misc 1217**

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February 2020

**PAG PRESENTATION**

*The work of the Pastoral Advisory Group was presented, and a film describing the Pastoral Principles was shown.*

**LLF PRESENTATION**

*A short presentation described the final stages of producing the resources, calling the church to commit to engaging in learning together and to participating in a change of culture about how we to one another as individuals, in our church communities and within the national Church. This was followed by reflections from a panel of LLF members.*

**QUESTIONS**

*Members of General Synod were invited to join the panel to ask questions and engage in conversation.*

**FRINGE MEETINGS**

*Members had an opportunity to join one of 3 fringe meetings, in which participants were offered a sample small group study around the LLF topics.*

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November  
2020

The Living in Love and Faith resources were published.

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