

To all General Synod Members

8<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

### **Living in Love and Faith – next steps**

Thank you so much for the way that you engaged and contributed to the debate on LLF at General Synod. Many people have commented on the generous and gracious tone of the debate and the growing sense of a possible way forward. I am under no illusion that the challenges facing us remain significant, but I believe these can be addressed through prayer and good conversations, building on the previous LLF work.

Given that the debate was cut short (in a helpful way), I thought it worth writing with a little more detail on what the next phase will now look like, and an invitation to be involved in ongoing work.

I heard the concerns of many for more detail beyond the suggested examples of “commitments” I brought to Synod. As I mentioned at the General Synod, we are seeking to put a Programme Board in place to oversee the ongoing work of LLF. This will include myself as lead bishop, other bishops convening working groups, and senior NCI staff working on LLF.

We are also looking to re-form several working groups to take forward more detailed proposals. In outline, these are:

1. **Pastoral Guidance Working Group** - to draft Part 3 of the PG - chaired by a bishop, with representatives from Synod.
2. **Pastoral Reassurance Working Group** - to draft an outline proposal for the minimum structural provision that is both necessary and proportionate - chaired by a bishop, with representatives from Synod.
3. **Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) Working Group** – to plan the process by which standalone PLF can be brought forward for authorisation or approval - chaired by a bishop, with representatives from Synod.

The work of these three working groups will be brought back periodically to the Programme Board, to ensure an integrated package across these areas can, with the agreement of the Business Committee, be brought to Synod in July. We anticipate the working groups meeting at least three times before the July meeting of General Synod, including a residential gathering in early May, to enable groups to make progress ahead of the House of Bishops’ meeting later in May. Alongside this we will have separate meetings with key groups ahead of the July group of sessions.

This letter is an open invitation to all Synod members to express interest in helping with this work. You might have a particular interest in one of the working groups or wish to be involved in stakeholder gatherings. An expression of interest does not commit you to anything at this stage and will be kept confidential. We anticipate that we will not be able to involve all those

who do express an interest. The groups will be necessarily small with focused pieces of work, and we will need a balance of people in each of these. We would expect all those involved with the working groups to have read or used the LLF resources.

As suggested by one speaker at Synod, these groups will not involve just the “usual suspects” but rather be a wide-ranging group of people who have not necessarily engaged extensively in the LLF process up to now. For continuity, we will involve some who have been involved in previous steering or reference groups. However, we do want to just hear from those who have not been involved in working or stakeholder groups before.

All expressions of interest will be considered by the Programme Board and LLF Staff Team, and the membership of the working groups will reflect the diversity of views held across General Synod and the wider church, including recognising the diversity of views held by LGBTQI+ people and those of Global Majority Heritage. We would expect the membership of the various groups to be public, in line with our commitment to transparency.

Please email [georgina.morgan@churchofengland.org](mailto:georgina.morgan@churchofengland.org) with your name, diocese, synod number and a short paragraph (not more than 150 words) on why you are interested and what relevant experience and skills you bring by Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

We will also be putting in place the two ‘formal’ groups that have already been outlined as required following the commendation of the PLF:

**Pastoral Consultative Group** – to aid bishops, diocesan staff and others with answers to the broad questions that arise from the implementation of PLF and other LLF work. This group will comprise a small number of bishops, supported by consultants.

**Independent Review Panel** – to hear concerns about the implementation of the PLF and application of the Pastoral Guidance, and to hold bishops and diocesan staff to account. This is likely to have an initial interim stage and be made up of a panel of people with a range of theological positions and professional experience.

Can I also take this opportunity to thank you for the many expressions of support and assurances of prayer which I received at Synod, and subsequently. I have felt myself held in prayer and for this, I am deeply grateful.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Martyn Snow', with a cross symbol at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Martyn Snow  
Bishop of Leicester

Bishop's Lodge, 12 Springfield Road, LE2 3BD

0116 270 8985, [bishop.leicester@leicestercofe.org](mailto:bishop.leicester@leicestercofe.org), [www.leicester.anglican.org](http://www.leicester.anglican.org)