



An open letter on behalf of Inclusive Evangelicals in the Church of England November 2023

AN INCLUSIVE EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

As we approach the November Synod, as evangelical members of the Church of England with an inclusive perspective, we continue to pray for all involved in the church at this crucial time. We gratefully acknowledge the enormous amount of hard work on all sides that this lengthy process has involved, and we now urge that genuine progress towards a more inclusive church be made at the November Synod. We are aware this process goes back 6 years to an original decision to discover in the words of Archbishop Justin a radical new Christian inclusion of LGBTQ+ people. This is still the vision we are looking to see implemented.

We believe the outcomes of LLF as supported at the February General Synod reflect the mind of the majority in the church, particularly that:

1. The majority want to see affirmation of same-sex relationships through the prayers for God's blessing of same-sex couples that are part of the suite of prayers and services offered by the Prayers of Love and Faith. Many would wish that we were going further than this.
2. There is a strong desire across all traditions and perspectives within the church to be more welcoming and inclusive.
3. There is a willingness to accept a diversity of views and a desire to keep the church together.
4. The church looks to our bishops to provide clear leadership working with Synod in advancing these convictions.

As evangelicals whose prayerful reading of scripture has led us to an inclusive position on same-sex relationships, we urge that there be no further changes to the proposals of the House of Bishops (GS2289), which were welcomed by a vote in all three Houses of the General Synod in February 2023. We believe that the full suite of prayers, including the standalone service of blessing, should now be commended for immediate use in line with the February Synod position, and we look forward to being able to give thanks in prayer before God for faithful, loving same-sex relationships. We also believe that pastoral guidance should be issued by the House of Bishops, as a matter of urgency, which will permit clergy to enter same-sex civil marriage, in accordance with Article 32, which states that clergy may marry at their own discretion.

As evangelical Christians we celebrate the diversity of the Church of England, and are committed to joyfully working, worshipping and ministering alongside Anglicans of different theological traditions and views on this issue. We believe that the choice to use the Prayers of Love and Faith should be a decision left to the conscience of the minister concerned and this needs to be protected for either decision, but we do not feel the need for any structural differentiation to accommodate different opinions. We oppose any approach which would divide the church, including alternative episcopal structures. We are one church, with a breadth of convictions, united in Christ. We recognise that same sex relationships is an area of disagreement, but we believe it is not one over which Christians should divide. In the individual churches and networks within which we worship there are sometimes diverse opinions on sexuality, so structural differentiation would only serve to divide those churches and networks.

After this long, careful process of biblical, theological and pastoral discernment we believe it is essential that significant progress is made at the November Synod to affirm the dignity and relationships of LGBTQIA+ Christians before God and in the full life of the Church of England. Affirming that we are evangelicals who are part of the Church of England we therefore sign this letter, acknowledging that sadly for some of us that has to be anonymously in the positions we find ourselves.

Signed...