# **APPENDIX C**

# Facilitation Group Feedback from Diocesan Synod Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Question 1: How are you feeling following what has taken place at General Synod recently relating to Living in Love and Faith?

# Question 2: How does this impact mission?

# Group One

- Confusion / anger
- Recognise the deep hurt
- For same sex partnerships there is hurt, pain, rejection
- Feel that the word of God has been rejected
- Only solution same sex cross. Repentance
- Believe God resolves
- Refer to scripture
- In modern times with the voting close it shows the split. The split is shameful
- Saddened that is has taken so long.
- 1000 years of slavery has been acknowledged
- Having relationships with partners dragged into sex
- · Love is not part of it
- Biblical context is difficult
- Life is not black and white
- Can invite congregations to celebrate same sex partnerships
- Clouded by sex / not love
- Red herring sex / money sells copy
- Promote Jesus sin or no sex for same sex couples
- Inclusion take out of context what said in bible
- Character of God seen through eyes of Jesus
- Sexuality complicated
- Bible says physical sexual activity. Abuse
- Priests vessels of Holy Spirit
- God will decide
- Relationship individual and God
- Serious concept. Sin requires guilty knowledge
- Not liking to see people downtrodden
- Not liking to see people in fear
- Forces have to hide sexuality
- · Would conduct services of blessing same sex couples
- Immense relief remember ordination of women survives because of it
- Feel uplifted outworking what God wants to see
- True bonding Bible struggles to define
- True bonding between 2 people it does not feel right to intervene
- Don't believe Jesus said about bond between 2 people
- Don't believe left blueprint

- Up to us to look at examples and reflect what's happening now
- We live today not 2000 years ago. Pope Francis wants more, not less people to come to church. Society moved on accepts barriers of previous years have gone
- Pleased progress made in right directions
- Taken time of previous generations to go away
- Couples same sex. Feel they should be accepted into family of God.

- Will not make too much difference
- Same needs should be treated equally
- Some existing parishioners may have issues
- Need to handle this carefully
- More occasional offices better
- Most important thing is the need to be upfront with congregations and PCCs
- May not have picked up details in document
- Lots of things said. Behoves us to make this work
- Early stages drip fee back quickly and accurately
- Important not to get out of hand. Handle it sensitively
- God has always wanted us to do. Do it properly
- Perhaps have moderators within parishes
- Problems discussed at PCCs first
- Share with PCCs. Robust discussion. Some churches within benefice will be in favour and some against
- Need to feel listened to
- Honesty / transparency
- Shared outcome with PCCs
- Think might blow over people have different views
- Need to have open conversations. This is the reality of our society
- Understanding essential. Our job is to speak of humanity and Jesus
- Caring community already. Not discussed issue. Inclusive church. Aware of everyone
- Next step when topic raised
- Include you as you are. Jesus loves you as you are
- Awareness already in congregation
- Diversity of couples
- Do congregation disservice. Just know it will be the norm
- Church coming up to date
- Turn around in thinking
- Next step gay blessings
- How to deal with reality of ministers not going to take blessings etc.
- Conflict PCCs / ministers
- Number of churches who say no
- Procedures to enable same sex blessings meant to be welcoming. Who is gay / not
- Should be welcoming who wants to come to church. No difference
- Must welcome. Love each other regardless
- Not impact great relief
- There will be balance
- Individual parishes need to proceed prayerfully and obediently
- Prejudice cast aside

# **Group Two**

- Sad, threatened
- A danger of breadth of church will disappear
- Folks like me who hold a certain position, may not have a future in the Church of England
- Still confused bit let down by the Bishops, haven't done as promised
- Fearful for local ministry, already gained / lost people
- What happens when it is known I will not do prayers?
- Relieved long time talking about LLF
- Long time going around in circles
- Now making small steps
- We are an inclusive church. Believe we are to minister to those on margins
- Colleague has left the Church of England as has been hurt
- Hurt done to people in gay relationships
- Respect that others have different views and would hope to still work together moving forward
- Relieved some movement happening
- Worried that General Synod would keep going
- Difficult for people on fringes of church to understand why this is a big issue for us as a church
- Concerned whatever people's views it is not clear where / what support is available for lay / ordained, churches
- Explicit support needed people need to see the detail. If this is not seen schism could happen. If it is in place schism could be perhaps averted
- Everybody loved by God
- This process has been a wrestle for me because of my theological position and I have people who work for me who are gay
- Perplexed by this
- Worried for the church this draws a line
- It could create confusion
- I wish I didn't have to face up to these questions but know I need to
- World is changing but church is not called to be of the world. However, people are important
- Relieved (things moving forward), concerned (people will leave CofE), worried
- Breadth of church currently means people have been able to choose their home
- Sad people might feel they need to leave
- Frustrated that we can't give concrete answers / timescales
- Language not clear can be confusing
- May push church away from young people, who have less worries on these issues
- Mission and growing churches I feel that unless we fully open our doors we can't grow, because we are excluding who do not feel they belong
- Tired, hopeful and optimistic, relieved
- Delusions that what follows is easy
- I am confident the careful relating with one another, which is part of being Anglican, could help maintain our relationships
- Clarity about opting in is helpful
- Confused sometimes about the fear that some at General Synod (having a target on back) because of the society we live in which is ordered and protected
- For young people this is a non-issue

- Glad the church has taken tiny steps forward
- I don't have to feel embarrassed about this barrier
- Lot in the world, which is not good, LLF could help us in addressing other issues, gives us more legitimacy
- It is not anything goes

- Expect all churches will gain or lose some members
- There will be movement of people across churches
- Reduced opportunities for church to reach into schools (which are keen to have us) will my position bar me from schools etc?
- Issue is now at parish level. Some feel they can no longer stay with us
- I don't really know
- Locally, maybe it shouldn't really make much difference as no one will be forced to do anything.
   So shouldn't be deal breaker for us. We should be able to continue to work together.
- I would like clarity on how we could 'opt in'
- Financial implications: I'm not afraid. We are used to being creative with our limited resources
- We don't know in our context what the implications will be
- As some of our families have children 'coming out' LLF make it easier to have conversations
- We need clarity and timescales and language to enact this well at local level
- It may open up conversations about our current marriage service, domestic abuse, marriages in general at local and diocesan level up
- It will allay fears for everyday congregation members
- It would depend on what the driving agenda is
- The church needs to understand its primary purpose which is to promote Jesus Christ to all people
- If we focus on primary focus of the church, it will not be a problem
- If we make LLF our primary agenda it may make us lose our focus on the real purpose of the church
- LLF is important within our overall mission as a church
- Why would this affect particularly our diocese of Canterbury?
- This may confuse people if some opt in and some opt out
- It may be people only hear the loudest voices
- I worry about media coverage. They will present this in an exaggerated way and not present the nuances of this
- Some doors may be closed unnecessarily
- If one church in an area doesn't opt in, the assumption may be that all churches are of the same view. This could lead to unnecessary closing of doors
- Locally this will be a positive, as we did LLF 18 months ago. So this will help people now understand that the national church has made progress
- There is lots of hidden stuff going on that will affect our mission and our finances
- There are people who are still expressing their views, who are not at the table. They are just making threats.

## Question 1.

- More aware of others and where they might stand in relation to LLF
- Discussions have been very painful at times
- Sadness about the effect on others
- Felt a chasm in work. Care of the person matters. Works with diversity in team. Have come to different place
- 'Love one another and our neighbours as ourselves.' No room for prejudice. Asking for tolerance and understanding towards the same goal of loving one another. Affected by a change in family (lay)
- Low, depressed, demoralised by what's decided. Faith in Bishop's down. Concerned about his
  future in ministry. Not about loving but <u>how</u> we should love. Gospel values. We've failed as a
  church to teach about Gospel values. Vulnerable
- Saddened by the issue. Feels distant from it. Can't start changing scripture
- Tired. Done a lot of work for it. Frustration, anger at leadership not transparent. Sad. Not reconciling by Bishops. Apostolic teaching. Determined

- Pessimistic outlook: polarised and harder to see how we can hold together as a church. The
  process suggested is untenable.
  - Leave the church
  - Difficulty of a number of churches with different views where does it leave the incumbent?
- We will become more siloed re one of the prayers
- Appointing multi-benefice will be difficult
- Total compromise will become an issue focussed church
- What gets said from the front doesn't reflect the views of us all. God is great bigger than all this
- The church will continue to decline big effects on diocese. We are losing our voice. We won't be saying anything different
- Schism gives room for the two groups to get entrenched
- What unity do we think we have at the moment? Damages unity across the board
- Impact on chaplains where their organisation is inclusive and they end up having to do what they don't believe in

- No particular emotion
  - Sad divided
  - o Feels right
- Comfortable with decision
- Deeply rural welcome inclusivity
- Pleasantly surprised
- Concerned not heard resistance
- Glad principles are before us
- Uneasy regarding General Synod given the motion's gone forward <u>so</u> slimly narrow margin i.e. 'where is my attention to power'
- Troubled in rural parishes seeing growth and good youth work and other opportunities
  - o But how this handled
  - Questions for him regarding episcopal authority
- Frustrated, exasperated, concerned. Holds to traditional view keenly aware 'old fashioned'
   Rare to have opportunity to explain not homophobic. (This is a valued space)
- (Process). Concerned regarding process gone through. This conversation should have happened in March – before General Synod. Hard to fathom why this conversation now.
- No opportunity to go up to General Synod.
- Concern now how do clergy know where they sit?
- Doesn't understand why go forward now
- This is a flash point
- Under attack felt this within the deanery
- In difficult position as about to look for a post and will need to be conscious
- Hard to talk about it without getting emotional
- Unclear if it is a clergy or PCC decision
- · Feels like it is the only thing
- Her view but doesn't mean need to press on anyone else
- Grateful for this opportunity. this a safe place to speak
- Feels tired of the process knows will go on
- Pleased vote close because it shows the division
- Pleased progress made as it was
- Feeling sorry for those feeling hurt because don't feel welcomed nationally
- How do we hold all this together worldwide?
- <u>Disconnected</u>. Was part of LLF- but now <u>more</u> distant and has no agency in it no voices.
   Feels disconnected from the process
- Conflicted this is difficult
- Scripture need to accept can come to different conclusions and acceptance that it's insolvable
- Where there is cost disproportionately borne by LGBTI+ people
- Invective
- Concern disappointed at use of ruses
- So many involved in politicising i.e. = close attention to law
- Use of Charity law to divert finance away from body of Christ
- On individual level can discuss well. On wider level we don't has been extreme nastiness.
- Hope that both sides will reach point where can work well together in the future
- Recognition that there is genuine disagreement. How do we hold people together?
- Need grace to air things and together especially when move away from a safe space

 It's a mess – how to feel part of the Church. Didn't see the principles modelled at General Synod. Amen to the principles but so disappointing when not held to

- Parishes and clergy have to opt in
- So risk that people could be targeted in some way
- Not sure how
- In a mixed benefice, some will opt in / out
- It is a bit like the issue of divorce so with this process PCCs are involved in opt-in
- Will need to be collaborative
- Hope will come through this process this way:
  - Some churches will support, some don't
  - Some process for episcopal oversight
- A way of working out the two parts
- Challenge six churches in the parish
- Some people will stop coming in a PCC votes (whichever way)
- Good that PCC involved but also problematic
- Could be complicated, especially with greater number of large benefices
- Doesn't think division is inevitable
- Schism is a decision to stop connection with another
- We have agency and can consciously decide to remain united
- Large range of views within a single benefice
- A gay person may hold traditional view how will we pay attention to those voices?
- He wants to get on and proclaim Jesus, but this presents an issue will he have energy to make provision and hold those views?
- Hold on to that fast and make Jesus known
- In <u>short-term</u> need <u>clarity</u>
  - Big time pressure on some individuals
  - Will need patience
- <u>Mid-term</u> = will be some movement (some already changed church). Hope will be between churches and not structures
- Questions Bishops and General Synod struggling with since 2017 is now sharply coming to parishes
- Structures wouldn't want different structures as sees hurt it's caused
- Mission we want to get on with our mission. This can't dominate and squeeze out that imperative
- In the process leading up to this, was there analysis of individual views? Or do they listen and represent?
- Younger generation have different focus and more pressing issues and are much more tolerant of sexuality
- We get so wrapped up in LGBT+ issues but church must change to be relevant
- This question is sharper
- Feels very divisive and hurtful for some who are natural collaborators
- Are we under-estimating the need for pastoral care and the emotional gravity of feeling
- Care of congregation, Care of Clergy and Care of Bishops all needed
- We mustn't underestimate the care that will be needed
- Also need materials / support for discussion at PCC and wider church level
- Some differences of opinion on the table about whether things are concrete or not. Clear that shaky understanding about exactly what next

## Question 1.

- Conservative evangelical journey towards Catholic liberal
- Inclusive Evangelical
- St Paul culturally limited. 'Science'
- Leviticus is difficult anyway
- Worried: Evangelicals will leave / separation
- Don't want divide like ordination of women
- But some variation sooner
- Overall pleased'
- Journey from Conservative Evangelical. But ADDO gay guy!
- God's love → change
- Respect each
- Upset by some language and behaviour
- WWJD?
- Go back and forward like tennis game can't sit on the fence, make a decision about where I stand – ok
- Started liberal → church '<u>Truth</u>' of God in Word
- Turning away from God painful to see
- Not loving for me to encourage others in sin
- Perplexing, painful.
- Terrifying, word, where does this stop?
- I hate division. Want to see both sides
- Love the broadness of Anglican church
- I see they are real people
- Worry separate
- Jaded, desperate. Was at Synod did not model well
- People used Bible and changed others and it
- Am an Anglican broad faith
- Exclusion is non-Anglican
- Scripture / Reason / Tradition
- Fudge in prayers
- 'Cautious conservative' on this issue
- Dismay
- Bishops haven't done the work
- Polarisation
- How do I apply for a job in future?
- Dread future
- · Friends on both sides

- Safeguards for conservative evangelicals to keep them in will need oversight
- My pastoral care will be stronger than reservations.
- I hope provisions will be made otherwise → litigation
- Conservative Evangelicals think gay = sin in a way no one saw being a women as sinful
- Think only 2-3 months window for structural provision
- Managed separation would not be disaster affirms where Synod is. 'Settlement'
- Strength of Anglican church is its diversity. So to lose a sector is damaging

- Don't want to leave
- Team ministries will be challenged
- Is there a queue waiting to have blessings?
- What is the pastoral need? How much will this impact us?
- Or will it build bridges LGBT+ community, will it attract new worshippers?
- The cry is to accept individuals as they are therefore more important than pragmatism as above
- Principal question is about 'identity', affirmation and acceptance
- Love people as they are
- For some churches this won't go far enough
- For very many churches this is not central or of importance
- To bring all to discuss this whether it's seen as 'relevant' or not
- Archdeacons / Area Deans we might be diverted to spend all our energy
- A distraction
- Will we have to leave buildings?
- Discord it's creating is out of proportion / outweighs the benefits
- How many people are subconsciously put off the church by our current position?
- Church is seen as detached from society, unloving and so new services will help us reach our culture
- Is there greater liberalisation in middle class areas and less in working class?
- Are we appeasing / attractive by our stance?
- So far in diocese, quality of conversation has not been good

# Question 1.

- Trying to process
- Can I continue?
- Hurt
- Difficult
- Withdrawing share
- Gravity, seriousness
- Bible teaching
- Uncomfortable
- Priority loving people outside the church
- Loving organisation
- Not concerned with other issues than loving
- Bible teaching
- Vocation of deacon
- Those on margins and fringes
- Volunteered as chaplain
- Very pleased with results, people in church now feel on fringe
- I can feel wrestling
- Sadness about costs, length of time, energy, hurt on both sides (if sides)
- Glad about result
- Blessing is given. Follow Jesus
- Sins forgiven, would end structures
- Offer to all, not judge, reminded we're loved
- Sad, divisive and weaponised especially text
- · Life of risen Lord
- Change and conflict go together
- Church need to learn how to manage conflicts
- LGBTQ+ feel uncomfortable, not given communion
- Growth not exclusion
- Younger
- Decision brought into church
- Worried if folks refused sacrament
- Hope numbers on sheet not published
- People trying to help will be discouraged
- As an evolution of women
- Too long coming
- Love neighbours as ourselves
- Journey. Attitude changed towards homosexuality
- Unsatisfactory process in General Synod
- Most important that stay together. What structures?
- 1. Stop arguing on issue

- Hope structure of church does not change much
- Own church welcomes everybody
- Needs to work
- Clear on stance

- Hope model to be sorted
- If couples are rejected, pointed to other churches
- Years on from ordination of women, come to terms quicker
- Hope Synod discussion is not the same on the ground
- Inclusive labels, hope increases
- Look out. Not just LGBTQ+
- Hope all listened to
- Some can say not for me, redirect
- Biggest challenge, decision made not for everybody
- Inclusive and welcome to community
- Help society recognise whole church decision
- Agreeing to disagree
- Honesty alongside each other
- Unity partly expressed in money, worried re finances
- Don't know, much change going on
- Continue in unity and loving
- Ordination of women splits meant to be resolved, not happened
- Not wanting church within church
- No more flying bishops
- Love in unity, in diversity or go, not meant to be harsh
- Diocese reducing priests, what is the role of different ministries, follows from reduction
- Status of deacon problematic
- · How church is seen to function if we say love each other
- Work input into database
- Problem assumed if cleric meets gay person
- Makes evangelism difficult etc gay, not encouraged to church
- Call out secular bad behaviour e.g. scams
- Scripture, who will inherit the kingdom? Washed, sanctified, justified by grace
- Departure from orthodox doctrine e.g. 1 Cor 6 9-11
- Blessings seen as weddings, deceptive
- Clarity around structures, clear differentiation
- Want to continue to minister in diocese
- Episcopal oversight necessary
- Under Anglican Communion
- Not comfortable with blessing what Bible or church doesn't teach
- Gospel about love and truth
- Jesus call to change lifestyle
- Do in loving and generous way

# Group Seven

## **Question 1**

- Feelings of anger and betrayal, loss of trust in the House of Bishops in their transparency with General Synod (not making legal advice available such that Houses of Clergy and Laity were fully informed)
- Disappointment in outcome for the church, betrayal of 2000 years of scriptural teaching
- Confused and saddened, as our ethos is to love one another
- One negative is that this has never come up in person's church
- Know it is causing a lot of pain, but admires the CofE for tackling the issue honestly and sensitivity. Jesus never portrayed the issue one way or the other.
- Focus on this issue, yet other questions pastoral care for people choosing only to have sexual relations within marriage, how do they feel? Reference also to couples living together before marriage and why this does not get similar scrutiny.
- Sense that LLF materials has a predetermined outcome, felt like a workbook.
- Feels, like many people, 'in the middle', inner turmoil and really wrestling with it notes that these people are coming from different places/perspectives.
- Can see from General Synod that the issue is divisive. Person in favour of PLF, faith is a gift.
   Sad that the church is sending a mixed message to the gay community.
- Confused how to approach pastoral work with young people. Hope and pray that God's love is greater.
- We bless what we see God blessing. If you can bless a gay couple, why not marry them? Is this interim step not just making the matter harder to navigate?
- Sensitive to impact on clergy with same-sex partners.
- Torn between inclusivity and the sanctity of union between one man and one woman

## Question 2

- Priest trying to balance multiple churches, different views in congregations, anxiety around making decisions in this context and practical application. Struggles to see where pastoral care is for priests to handle this
- Vulnerability of incumbent decisions may create conflict between PCC/incumbent. Vicar considering joining a union or getting indemnity insurance.
- Risk of division:
  - Parish people leaving CE for other churches, or will people self-select on the churches they attend?
  - Includes those within Deanery churches offering PLF and those not
  - Wider Diocese some clergy may struggle to stay, or will seek alternative episcopal oversight. Bishop Rose has been forthright in her views, should a bishop not endeavour to hold people together? 'House style' of Bishop has been unhelpful.
- Believe it is still a discussion for the whole church issue has not been raised in the deanery
- Have benefitted from facilitated conversations between clergy. Chapters working together for the sake of the Gospel, but what might change when PLF is implemented?
- Group LLF discussion material likely not as widespread across deaneries as might be expected, so in a sense 'the horse has bolted'
- Young adults strong sense of justice, questions around identity, might churches be criticised and challenged?
- Also extremes (binary positions) often seen in media make this difficult you are either in/out, for/against
- Impact on mission and ministry clarity from churches, to articulate what they are able to offer in terms of pastoral provision, or signposting locally to where services with PLF available

•	Decision by GS keeps this mar force for mission/ministry	tter elevated as a topi	c – want to focus m	ore on Jesus as driving
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# **Group Eight**

# **Question 1**

- Not sure how I'm feeling. I have six parishes in a multi parish benefice. People are confused.
   I'm worried about the time that it's going to take to talk, process and deal with what has agreed.
- I feel the process has gone well. The church and Synod have done well, I'm pleased with the results. Though I am anxious, how you deal with what has been agreed in the parishes.
- Parishes have not really engaged with the issue previously. Partly through fear over the divisions exposed, partly not knowing how to handle issues personally. Now General Synod has forced this into people's thinking.
- Previously we have run LLF courses in the deanery, but there was very little engagement. Few
  people came to the sessions that we put on. Not sure why, maybe through fear over divisions.
- We didn't run the LLF courses in the parish because there were so many other very important issues to deal with in the parish such as our buildings how to maintain them, raising money, whether or not we we're going to get clergy.
- I feel we are creating an issue for people in the parishes, where previously there hasn't been an issue. I'm worried we're creating theology to suit us. I'm worried that we're deviating from scripture.
- I'm dead against what has been agreed. I feel what happens in the privacy of a bedroom should be kept private. I don't believe in same-sex marriage.
- I feel desperately sad about the whole process. It's hugely impacted our family. My son would not recognise my priesthood because of his sexuality. The attitude of the church contributed to his low self-opinion of himself leading to self-harm. It drove us apart. This process has helped some healing. As a church, we have not demonstrated ourselves as a loving accepting community. Instead, we have demonstrated or showed ourselves to be arguing, it's not come across positively in the media.
- I'm saddened by the process; it's highlighted deep divisions and misunderstandings. I'm sad to see divisions among friends and colleagues in the parish. I don't feel it's a huge issue.
- Clergy have a representative ministry. I lead ministry in a multi-benefice parish, and I feel a huge tension of holding a diversity of views. I have one church warden, who is married and gay, and in another parish where very traditional views are expressed, and I feel the tension.
- I feel the church has a huge leadership challenge. The church needs to act decisively, with no fence sitting. We need to be very clear about how the printed prayers will be used should be used. The instructions need to be very clear. We need to be strong as a church. The leadership needs to give direction and the change managed in our parishes.

# **Question 2**

- Not a huge impact on churches. I think there will be anger in some parishes that the decisions have not gone far enough. In a mission since we can now have conversations with younger people, that were previously not possible. Young people now will have confidence to be able to come and have conversations with us that previously they might not have had knowing there is a change in the position of the church.
- Impact at a local level will be negligible. These changes will not bring revival, but they are valuable. It will impact positively on mission. The changes will probably be gentle. We won't be turning away people who are looking for affirmation. But I do feel that they will be painful splits in congregations.
- It will be positive to mission in many ways. I work in schools, run youth groups and groups discussing faith and life issues. I think and hope that young people will come more readily to ask questions were previously they would've thought the church was closed on the issue. I am

concerned about the divisions in the church. I'm worried about the financial impact of parishes withholding Parish Share.

- We should be mindful that the voting has been very close. The closeness of the vote is probably going to be reflected by the division of opinion in our parishes. It probably is the case that people who previously questioned by the church now feel attracted to come to church with the show with the church, showing it is more inclusive and welcoming. It is difficult to know how to keep the four different traditions of our church content: Evangelical, Anglo Catholic, High church and Traditional.
- We should be mindful that the voting was very close. We need to be careful about the language that is used. There should be no triumphalism as was experienced after the Brexit referendum.
- Impact on mission? Mission with the wider church is going to be impacted it is going to affect our relationship with the churches in the Anglican Communion, particularly in Africa.
- How do I think? I don't think the church will split. I can't see people will stop coming to church
  just because the vicar marries gay people. I was once a Methodist but left the church because I
  didn't want to sign the pledge.
- I have a real worry that positions will harden. I worry about that impact on the mission. Why should we take you so seriously when you are so divided. In my evangelical background I'm worried about those who talk about leaving. I think this can be a huge distraction. However, among young people, it will help and demonstrates an openness to conversations.
- The decisions will have consequences. If relationships are blessed and affirmed, what is to be our attitude when couples want to raise children? I am unsure about how far this should go.
- I feel the tension of one hand of how "anything goes" against judgementalism. Judgementalism inevitably has a negative impact on mission. However, sometimes God says no there are limits.