

EQUAL

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
EQUAL MARRIAGE
IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



Joint Statement to General Synod from Inclusive Church and the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England on Living in Love and Faith and the [response from the Bishops of the Church of England](#) about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Both *Inclusive Church* and *the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England* are committed to the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in the life and ministry of the Church of England. We note the apology offered today by the House of Bishops for the rejection, hostility and exclusion that LGBTQIA+ people have so often endured from the church. However, we are saddened to learn that the proposals being brought to General Synod in February do not include proposals for marriage equality, and that the ban on same-sex marriages in church will continue. The offering of prayers of blessing and the statement that the bishops wish ‘to welcome same-sex couples unreservedly and joyfully’ whilst welcome is not full inclusion and acceptance. For many it will represent continuing painful exclusion.

We welcome the acknowledgment that *Issues in Human Sexuality* (1991) is to be withdrawn and note that new Pastoral Guidance will be issued later in the year. We fully expect that guidance to allow clergy to enter into same-sex marriages and to continue to serve in ministry, and for ordinands who wish to marry in the future to be able to enter the ordination process. Clergy already in same-sex marriages must be offered the opportunity to serve again, should they wish to do so. It would not be sustainable for

clergy to be able to offer blessings and pray ‘unreservedly and joyfully’ for relationships that they themselves cannot enjoy. This guidance must be national in its application and we expect the bishops to address the continuing scourge of homophobic language and attitudes in the church.

We will continue to work towards the day when equal marriage is a reality in the Church of England and see these proposals as a staging post on that journey. We hope that General Synod will, in its discussions in a few weeks, remember that this is not an academic debate or simply about abstract theology. This is about real people, real lives, real relationships and the faith of fellow Christians.

Whilst we understand and share many of the misgivings of our supporters and allies about the bishops’ proposals we nonetheless want to thank the bishops for the seriousness with which they have undertaken the task of the last few years. And with all our hesitations and misgivings we none the less urge members of General Synod to welcome these proposals, and to hold the bishops to account for the outworking of their apology and these proposals in the lives of LGBTQIA+ people in the Church of England in the coming years.

ENDS