An Open Letter: Living in Love & Faith Summary Report



December 2025



Open Letter Summary Report

Overview

Following the October announcement from the House of Bishops regarding the effective halting of the LLF process and a change of direction from the discussion towards and votes taken for fuller LGBTQ+ inclusion, Inclusive Church wrote an Open Letter and invited those who wished to be included as a signatory to it, to do so. People were asked to provide their name and home postcode, with the option to also add their title, the name of their church and an estimate of the size of their regular church congregation.

The letter was available for one month, with no external media coverage, publicity through diocesan channels or paid promotion.

Executive Summary

Almost 7000 people asked to be included as a signatory. All Church of England dioceses, (including all cathedrals), are represented.

More than 3000 individual churches were named by the signatories. The majority of those churches are sized between 36-100, but many were larger.

Around 2000 of those who signed are ordained. These include ordinands, curates, currently serving clergy (at every level) and those who have retired.

Following below is some basic analysis and grouping of the data provided from the signatories, the names and numbers for each diocese are then listed as appendices.

Dioceses will receive the full breakdown for their diocese.

The Archbishop of York, Archbishop Designate of Canterbury,

Helen Fraser the LLF lead, Together for the Church of England and
the Church Times will be provided with the entire list.



More comprehensive interrogation of the data could be done by those with local knowledge of the dioceses and their churches. Inclusive Church would be open to explore this further with others who are interested in considering how best to support, equip and encourage those interested in engaging with the topic of inclusion and accessibility amongst a diverse population.

List of files

- 1. Summary report
- 2. Text of the Open Letter, which can also be viewed here: Open Letter webpage
- 3. Diocesan lists names of those resident in each diocese who signed, and the churches represented.

Comments on Data Presentation

Use of Names

Names are listed alphabetically by first name to emphasise the humanity of respondents. This is an intentional decision to contrast with the reality that too many of the LLF conversations have been disconnected from acknowledging that this involves real people, with lived experience, faith and valuable stories.

The choice to present the names by diocese connected to *home* postcode was an additional decision to highlight the impact and importance of where we live on both our identity and the opportunities that are open to us.

Use of Titles

Titles supplied by signatories have been included. It was a conscious decision to remove 'the Revd', whilst this is the traditional formal correct usage, it was felt to be more appropriate to use



shortened clergy titles to present a better sense of equality between clergy and laity.

Where titles were ambiguous and possibly contained typos, they have been removed.

Churches and Diocesan Groupings

As this was an Open Letter rather than a structured survey, the information provided by signatories varies in precision and completeness. Home postcodes were requested and an optional field for church names, church postcodes were not asked for. This approach prioritised accessibility and ease of participation, while still enabling meaningful geographical and ecclesial mapping.

The open-text nature of the church-name field inevitably produced a wide range of naming conventions, including abbreviations, local nicknames, merged benefices, and partial titles. While significant effort has been made to group and reconcile these, some duplication or ambiguity is likely to remain. A small number of postcodes also contained errors or speech-to-text artefacts, introducing further minor uncertainty.

When people have named a whole benefice, every effort has been made to indicate how many churches this implies they have a close connection with.

Any church that has been named has been included, we have listed and grouped them in order of number of mentions, with the most mentioned at the top each time.

Caution is advised for anyone seeking to draw conclusions about the churches named to consult and cross-check with the Inclusive Church Directory when considering if a named church might be a safe place for an LGBTQ+ individual to join. The churches listed towards the top of each list will have a noticeably stronger inclusive feel and welcome.





Notes on Worship location

For the most part, signatories have been listed according to the diocese as indicated by their home postcode. It is important to note that home location does not always align with worshipping location. Some signatories live in a different diocese from the church they attend; others (e.g., university students) listed a home postcode alongside their term-time church. We have not sought to artificially reconcile these discrepancies. This was a deliberate decision, reflecting the reality that although the Church often operates in clearly bounded diocesan units, people's patterns of belonging and participation are far more porous, mobile, and interconnected.

It was felt appropriate to focus the presentation in this way, emphasizing names and homes, to highlight that these are real people, some of whom it has taken a lot of courage to put their name out publicly in this way. Throughout the LLF process there has been a lot of discussion *about* LGBTQ+ people and their needs, wants and hopes as if they are hypothetical scenarios. There has also been a lot said about the need for support, protection and provision for those for whom the proposed changes go too far. There has been very little acknowledgment that this is also a need, perhaps indeed more pressing, for those for whom this is their identity, reality and life being discussed and limited. Real harm and hurt is being experienced on a daily basis by LGBTQ+ Christians within the Church of England.

Little has also been said of those who are supportive of LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality, but who, for a variety of reasons, are committed to worshipping at a church where this view does not feel safe to admit to. The pressure, fear and discomfort experienced by those people, of whom there are far more than this letter is able to portray, needs to be acknowledged and considered more actively.

For these reasons, the dataset should be regarded as highly significant in its overall trends and directional insights, while



allowing for a reasonable margin of error in the fine-grained details. None of these variances materially alter the conclusions, and there has been no attempt to manipulate or misrepresent the data. Rather, these interpretive notes serve to ensure the findings are read with appropriate nuance and grace.

Overseas and Online

Whilst the Open Letter is from those who consider themselves members of the Church of England, there is some flexibility to this. Some who asked to sign no longer attend church, or have moved overseas or to another denomination, however if they felt they were prevented from membership to the CofE due to the lack of LGBTQ+ inclusion, it seemed appropriate to include them.

A number of people also indicated that they worship online, are members of a dispersed community or are currently not involved with a church community. This is significant to take note of as it is often a result of being excluded in some way from Onsite Sunday morning worship – through disability, access to transport, shift working, sexuality, caring responsibilities etc.

Some people specifically stated that they do not currently attend a church, as they do not feel it is safe for them, or someone they care about, to do so, due to their sexuality and/or gender identity.



Key Findings

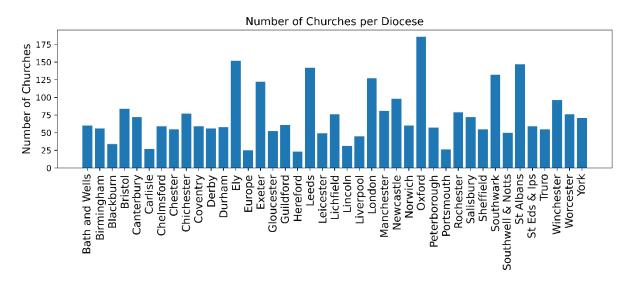
Number of signatories

Over 7000 requests were received to be included as a signatory to the letter. Including three PCCs who formally discussed and voted to sign as a group to demonstrate their commitment to this.

Once duplicate entries were removed and the data cleaned up the final count of signatories was 6848. It is worth noting that this figure reflects what was possible through organic networks and word-of-mouth, primarily via personal contacts and social media. With dedicated financial and administrative resources for wider communication, the number would almost certainly have been significantly higher.

The Churches Represented

Around 3,000 churches are represented, spanning a wide range of contexts, from large rural benefices to single urban parishes. While the bar chart below illustrates this spread, dioceses differ significantly in geographical size, population, and locality types so the numbers should not be treated as directly comparable. They are presented in this format for ease of reference.







Comparison of data by Diocese

	No. of people	Clergy	No. of Churches	Cathedral mentions	
Bath and Wells	117	50	53	2	
Birmingham	219	46	56	1	
Blackburn	93	30	34	1	
Bristol	244	54	84	4	
Canterbury	156	46	72	8	
Carlisle	60	19	27	3	
Chelmsford	106	41	59	1	
Chester	120	33	55	1	
Chichester	258	55	77	1	
Coventry	192	42	59	9	
	Clare's at the Co	athedral		12	
Derby	163	46	56	2	
Durham	137	45	58	3	
Ely	157	46	152	4	
Europe	56	24	25	0	
Exeter	186	64	122	4	
Gloucester	103	38	52	3	
Guildford	157	42	61	2	
Hereford	42	18	23	3	
Leeds	264	82	142		
	Bradford Cath	edral		3	
	Ripon Cathedral,	/Minster		5	
	Wakefield Cathedral				
Leicester	143	23	48	5	
Lichfield	152	50	76	2	
Lincoln	74	13	31	3	
Liverpool	114	44	45	4	
London	278	93	127	0	
Manchester	172	39	81	3	
Newcastle	169	59	98	1	
Norwich	132	47	60	5	
Oxford	502	161	186	2	



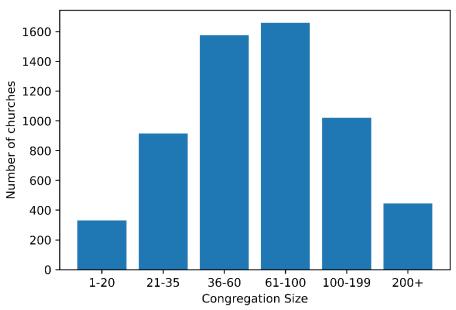
Peterborough	124	32	57	5
Portsmouth	65	20	26	2
Rochester	186	51	79	13
Salisbury	57	26	72	1
Sheffield	210	48	55	12
Sodor and Man	3	0	0	0
Southwark	474	110	132	37
Southwell & Notts	174	27	51	1
St Albans	420	93	147	15
St Eds & lps	86	32	59	6
Truro	46	12	55	5
Winchester	168	53	96	2
Worcester	129	43	77	8
York	129	52	71	11
TOTALS	6837	1949	2996	217
Overseas				
(Other)	11	4	5	
	6848	1953	3001	

In addition, a number of people provided the name of their benefice, team ministry or group. It would be fair to presume that those people regard themselves as having a relationship and presence therefore with each of the churches in the grouping named. We have tried, where practical, to indicate this.

Congregation Sizes

4830 people estimated their congregation sizes, based on the options offered. If we limit the estimations to one per church the spread of responses is as shown below, where estimations varied for the same church, the median figure was chosen.





Due to variations in how these figures were reported, whether referring to an individual church, a parish, or a benefice, we advise caution in interpreting the numbers too rigidly. Nevertheless, they provide a strong indication that challenges the commonly cited narrative about the small size and unsustainability of churches with inclusive theology. We recommend that the Church of England undertake further analysis to ensure that decisions and rhetoric reflect the reality of faithful, steadfast ministry across a diversity of contexts. Furthermore, we encourage this to be considered alongside the provision of equitable financial and administrative resourcing, so that churches committed to inclusivity are supported in continuing their vital work.

Clergy classification

Are you ordained?	Number	
Yes	1977	
No	5030	
Not disclosed	59	

Of those who are ordained, we have the following additional info:



Title	Role	Number
Canon	Members of a Cathedral Chapter	228
Venerable/Ven	Archdeacon	14
Very Revd	Cathedral Dean	13
Rt Revd	Bishop	7

Interpretation & Significance

The Inclusive Church Open Letter demonstrates that more than 3,000 churches across the Church of England contain at least one individual who is committed to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, and is now willing to go on record for this. This represents approximately one in five Church of England churches. In many cases, the number of supporters within each congregation is considerably higher, though only one signature is needed for a church to be represented in this dataset.

Almost 2,000 clergy, including curates, incumbents, chaplains, archdeacons, deans, and seven bishops, and 5000 lay people willingly added their names to this public statement of support. This is a significant indicator of the depth of conviction among those in ministerial leadership. A notable proportion of these clergy hold Permission to Officiate or serve in non-parochial roles, meaning they are not tied to a single parish and could offer Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) in churches currently in vacancy, or where incumbents feel unable or unwilling to do so.

At least 19 churches known to be vocal in opposing LLF developments have members who signed this letter. This reinforces a critical point: no congregation is theologically homogeneous. Inclusive individuals often worship in settings where leadership positions, PCC decisions, or external reputation do not reflect the full diversity of belief within the pews. Conversely, many people who wished to sign did not do so, citing reasons including emotional fatigue, lack of psychological safety, fear of local repercussions, or feeling that the Open Letter was not forceful



enough. This list therefore represents not the total available support but the portion of it able and willing to be made public at this time.

Taken together, the scale and distribution of this response indicate widespread, cross-diocesan commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion, expressed organically and without any formal publicity or institutional backing. These findings challenge the narrative that substantial support for inclusion is confined to isolated urban pockets, activist groups, or small congregations. Instead, the data suggests a broad and deeply rooted desire for an affirming church life across traditions, regions, and ministry contexts.

Conclusion

The magnitude of this response should serve as a source of encouragement to those who feel isolated in their hopes for a more inclusive Church of England. The findings offer a clear signal to the House of Bishops that there is considerable concern across the Church regarding the slowing, or reversal, of progress toward LGBTQ+ equality and authentic inclusion.

As an episcopally led, synodically governed church committed to serving every community in the nation, the Church of England has a responsibility to listen attentively to the breadth of voices, this should also include an awareness of those who speak more quietly. The relative quietness must not be misinterpreted as lack of conviction or care. The magnitude of support demonstrated by the signatories of this Open Letter reveals there is a substantial portion of the church calling for integrity, courage, and the honouring of Synod's decisions towards LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality. It is time that this was heard.

It is hoped that the evidence presented will assist dioceses, national church bodies, and individual leaders in recognising the pastoral need, theological commitment, and widespread readiness for a more inclusive and equitable future.