

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD: 12 March 2022: Living in Love and Faith

In November 2020, the Church of England published the landmark set of Living in Love and Faith (LLF) resources to aid discernment and decision-making on questions of identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage. LLF is the most extensive exploration into this area by any church, and was designed to enable a period of church-wide learning and engagement.

The resources draw together the Bible, theology, science, and history with real-life stories designed to help every Christian explore these important topics. [Watch this video](#) to hear four people from different parts of the country share their experiences of taking part in the LLF course.

There has been much engagement with the LLF resources in the Diocese of Oxford from participants across a wide range of church traditions. In June 2021, over 400 individuals attended four online LLF intro sessions. The overwhelming majority (81.4%) of attendees who responded to the follow-up survey said they would be encouraging others to look at the LLF materials locally.

Alongside the LLF Diocesan Facilitators, Hannah Ling and Revd Gill Lovell, the Diocese of Oxford has eight LLF Advocates who have been encouraging engagement and answering questions from across the diocese, as well as running LLF Facilitator Training for those intending to lead the course in their context.

Parishes and deaneries have been encouraged to run the LLF Course and engage with other materials between September 2021 and April 2022. It is hoped that everyone who engages with the materials completes the LLF questionnaire, and may also submit creative feedback (e.g. art, videos, poetry etc).

The overall hopes for the discernment and decision-making process are:

- There is the widest possible participation across the whole Church.
- We have engaged in deep learning together about God and about being human.
- We are kinder and more understanding of each other as we travel together.
- Everyone can see that that they have been listened to, heard, loved, and taken seriously.
- The Spirit's work among us reveals something deeper in our understanding.
- The love and understanding we have experienced will help us reach our destination in a better way.

The closing date for feedback to the national LLF Next Steps Group is 30 April 2022, but continued engagement with the process will help the reception of wherever the Spirit leads the church.

The findings of the LLF listening process feedback will be published in September 2022, followed by a period of discernment within the College of Bishops in light of the LLF Book and this feedback. Proposals for a way forward will then be drafted and considered by General Synod in February 2023, concluding the LLF journey.

LLF Diocesan Facilitators:

Hannah Ling, Social Justice Adviser
Gill Lovell, Parish Development Adviser
(Buckingham)

LLF Advocates:

Revd Mark Bennet (Berkshire)
Revd Gill Barrow-Jones; Doral Hayes
(Buckingham)
Sue Scott; Revd Jan Radford; Tim Budd
(Dorchester)
Revd Anthony Buckley (Oxford)
Revd Marcus Green (Diocese-wide)