

## From our Bishops

### Living in Love and Faith - many voices, one Church

*The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have written to all clergy inviting them to take part in a “courageous, comprehensive and innovative initiative”.*

The letter, sent out on Monday (9<sup>th</sup> November) invites the clergy to explore the new resources for Living in Love and Faith revealed this week.

The Archbishops write:

“The LLF project was set in motion in 2017 in the context of painful divisions in the church and changing social attitudes about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. The first aim of the project was to create resources that will help the whole church learn how these questions fit within the bigger picture of a humanity that is liberated by Jesus Christ and infused by the Spirit to reflect the image of God in which we are created.”

Led by the Bishop of Coventry, and including our own Bishop Nicholas, over 40 people have been involved in producing these resources, which are now complete.

At the heart of the resources is the LLF Book, commissioned and commended for study by the House of Bishops, and a video version of the LLF Course. Alongside these, the LLF Learning Hub – accessible via [churchofengland.org/LLF](http://churchofengland.org/LLF) – contains a host of specially commissioned films and podcasts as well as an online library for further study.

The Archbishops encouraged clergy “to explore these and, in particular, to obtain the LLF Book – either in hard copy or in its digital form on the website.”

They said:

“The second aim of LLF is to encourage and support churches around the country to use the resources so that everyone has an opportunity to learn together so that we grow in understanding of our common life.”

A group of Bishops chaired by the Bishop of London that includes Bishop Karen, has been tasked with coordinating the feedback and ensuring the process of engagement involves as many people as possible at parish, deanery and diocesan level. The group will find ways to gather what emerges from your engagement so that it can properly contribute to the bishops’ discernment of a way forward for the church.

Acknowledging that the resources had come out at a challenging time for the Church the Archbishops said:

“We are acutely aware that the pandemic has created stresses which are placing unique and heavy responsibilities on many of you as you continue to fulfil your vital pastoral ministry. Rather than laying further burdens on you, we want to support you as you consider when might be the most appropriate time for you and your church community to engage with the LLF resources and process, and how this might best happen in your context.

“These long-awaited resources, supported by the Bishops of the Church of England, have been eagerly anticipated by so many. Our hope is that collectively we will engage with one another across communities to build greater understanding and appreciation of each other's views. Using the Pastoral Principles, the LLF materials can enable open, honest and gracious conversation and learning together, with the Bible as the guiding light.”

To introduce active clergy and LLMs to this material, Bishop Nicholas and Bishop Karen are inviting them to one-hour online sessions that will also be available on our website.

Full Letter:

FROM: ABC and ABY TO: All clergy via post MAILING DATE: 9 November 2020 [Verso of letter has infographic illustrating overview of LLF resources] Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are writing to you about the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) project and the resources that have been launched today. Our hope is that you will explore the resources and join churches around the country in taking part in this courageous, comprehensive and innovative initiative. The LLF project was set in motion in 2017 in the context of painful divisions in the church and changing social attitudes about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. The first aim of the project was to create resources that will help the whole church learn how these questions fit within the bigger picture of a humanity that is liberated by Jesus Christ and infused by the Spirit to reflect the image of God in which we are created. Led by the Bishop of Coventry, over 40 people have been involved in producing these resources, which are now complete. As you can see from the enclosed leaflet, there are many LLF resources that are now provided for you and your church communities to explore and use. At the heart of these is the LLF Book, commissioned and commended for study by the House of Bishops, and a video version of the LLF Course. Alongside these, the LLF Learning Hub – accessible via [churchofengland.org/LLF](http://churchofengland.org/LLF) – contains a host of specially commissioned films and podcasts as well as an online library for further study. We encourage you to explore these and, in particular, to obtain the LLF Book – either in hard copy or in its digital form on the website. The second aim of LLF is to encourage and support churches around the country to use the resources so that everyone has an opportunity to learn together so that we grow in understanding of our common life. A group of Bishops chaired by the Bishop of London has been tasked with coordinating this support and ensuring you have access to it. The group will find ways to gather what emerges from your engagement so that it can properly contribute to the bishops' discernment of a way forward for the church. We are acutely aware that the pandemic has created stresses which are placing unique and heavy responsibilities on many of you as you continue to fulfil your vital pastoral ministry. Rather than laying further burdens on you, we want to support you as you consider when might be the most appropriate time for you and your church community to engage with the LLF resources and process, and how this might best happen in your context. These long-awaited resources, supported by the Bishops of the Church of England, have been eagerly anticipated by so many. Our hope is that collectively we will engage with one another across communities to build greater understanding and appreciation of each other's views. Using the Pastoral Principles, the LLF materials can enable open, honest and gracious conversation and learning together, with the Bible as the guiding light.

We encourage you to use the LLF Book and the videos of the LLF Course to guide discussion groups as a parish or perhaps as part of a deanery or larger group. The Course is an opportunity to understand where we are in God's story, how we hear God and how we can learn from each other. We hope that, through engaging with these materials, people will be inspired by Scripture's glorious vision of God's intention for human life and, more than ever, see Christ in one another.