



# St Helen's Bishopsgate

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Monday 30 January 2023

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullaly DBE  
The Old Deanery  
Dean's Court  
London EC4V 5AA

By email and post

Dear Bishop Sarah,

Bishops' response to Living in Love and Faith

As the members of the PCC's standing committee, we are writing on behalf of the St Helen Bishopsgate PCC, and our various congregations, to express our grave disappointment and concern at the House of Bishops' response to Living in Love and Faith.

In light of St Helen's prior letters and discussions, it will not surprise you that we regard both the House of Bishops' Report and the Draft Worship Resources as unbiblical, contrary to the doctrine and teaching of the Church of England, and therefore entirely inappropriate.

Three aspects cause us particular concern.

First, as you know, for many years the St Helen's Church family has been a safe place for a significant number who live with same sex attraction, but who seek to live a celibate life in accordance with God's commands. They are greatly encouraged by knowing that they are loved and included within the body of Christ at St Helen's. The pastoral damage from the House of Bishops decisions for these members of Christ's flock is very significant. We have been hearing since the announcement about how they are being affected personally by it.

■ **CHARITY NAME**  
The Parochial Church Council  
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of  
St Helen, Bishopsgate

■ **REGISTERED CHARITY NO.** 1131501

Secondly, we find the House of Bishops' Report to be disingenuous. It pays lip service to the Church of England's doctrine of marriage, while commending a means by which, in practical terms, the doctrine of marriage may be circumvented and undermined. It is a pretence to suggest that these prayers neither equate with the blessing of same sex marriage, nor contravene the Church of England's doctrine of marriage. Even within the press conference last Friday, the bishops on the panel, including yourself, contradicted many of the claims made in the Report.

Thirdly, the autocratic nature of the process appears to have bypassed the elected clergy and laity of the General Synod.

We find it deeply disturbing that, as the diocesan bishop, you made clear in your answers to questions that you expect that same sex, sexual, relationships will be blessed by clergy in the Church of England.

We wrote to you prior to the completion of this process to indicate that steps such as you have taken will inevitably further affect our already broken partnership with the House of Bishops. We shall await the conclusion of the General Synod in February before seeking a conversation about the provision which will be necessary for those forced by your decision into having no acceptable episcopal oversight.

Whilst we await developments and give prayerful consideration to our response, the PCC has asked us to pause our current contributions to Common Fund.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Revd William Taylor, pp Jeremy Anderson CBE, pp Andrew Ross, pp Paul Simpkin, pp Andrew Wales