

5th September 2025

Dear Diocesan Synod Member

As we prepare for the upcoming meeting of the Diocesan Synod on **Saturday, 20th September 2025**, I wanted to share the purpose of the meeting and how we hope it will unfold.

This is a special Synod meeting for information and discussion on Living in Love and Faith (LLF).

To ensure a wide range of perspectives are respected and reflected, I met with representatives from [Together](#) and the [Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship](#) alongside the Chairs of the House of Clergy and House of Laity to shape the agenda. I'm grateful for their open and positive engagement with the task. We also learned from other dioceses who had engaged with LLF in recent Synods.

Purpose of this Synod

We hope this Synod will:

- Provide space for members to engage with and listen to one another regarding LLF
- Deepen our understanding of the diversity within our Synod
- Affirm our unity in Christ
- Offer feedback to the LLF Programme Board and Working Groups
- Prepare ourselves as a Synod and diocese for the decisions to be made by the House of Bishops in October 2025 and ongoing

Background: Living in Love and Faith (LLF) and Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF)

The LLF process is part of the Church of England's ongoing journey to listen, learn, and respond to evolving views in society around identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage. Background on LLF can be found here [Living in Love and Faith | The Church of England](#)

As part of the House of Bishops' response, a suite of resources and prayers—*Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF)*—has been commended. These prayers are intended for same-sex couples, addressing a gap in existing public forms of prayer.

In July 2024, General Synod asked the House of Bishops to undertake further work on PLF, particularly around their use in bespoke services and the pastoral reassurance required. In response, the LLF Programme Board has put forward draft proposals as a possible way forward. These proposals have not yet been agreed by the House of Bishops. Instead, feedback is being sought to inform their deliberations later this year.

A key part of this informal consultation is engaging Diocesan Synods in exploring the proposals. Our upcoming Synod meeting provides an opportunity to do just that.

Structure of the Synod

The Synod has four parts:

- 1. Welcome and Preparation**

We will begin with prayer, scripture, and how we will ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

- 2. Responding to National Church Questions**

Members will be invited to respond to questions posed by the National Church using *Mentimeter*, an interactive online tool that allows everyone to contribute anonymously and view responses in real time. This feedback will be shared with the House of Bishops.

- 3. LLF in Bristol Diocese**

While national decisions are pending, we will continue to consider LLF in our local churches and communities. This section will help us navigate this journey together with unity and grace.

- 4. Next Steps**

We will outline what happens following the meeting, including how feedback will be shared with the National Church and updates on decisions made by the House of Bishops and General Synod.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 20th September for an opportunity for reflection, conversation and discernment. Let us hold this Synod, and one another, in our prayers in the coming days.

Yours

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Neil Swindon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Revd Neil Warwick
Acting Bishop of Bristol & Bishop of Swindon