



KEEPING FAITH: EVERY VOICE MATTERS

CEEC calls on EVERY evangelical church, member and leader to:

- share with your bishop(s) your dismay at the decision of the General Synod to 'green light' the bishops' proposed *Prayers of Love and Faith* to affirm and celebrate relationships outside marriage between one man and one woman, which will often be sexually active
- take appropriate actions in your context in response to this development
- make sure that any action you take is known about within your local church and by CEEC (see next page for CEEC contact details)

Every person, parish and context is different, so your voice needs to be expressed in a way that is appropriate for you. ***The following is a 'menu' of ways in which ministers, lay people, and churches can make your voice heard.*** These are grouped under five headings :

1. RELATIONSHIPS WITH BISHOPS
2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIOCESAN STRUCTURES
3. FINANCE
4. WITHIN LOCAL CONGREGATIONS
5. EVANGELICAL UNITY LOCALLY

You are invited to draw on this menu, using however many actions you feel appropriate at this time and reviewing this going forward.

CEEC will continue to work with and support you – please see the final section for our commitment to you.

We commend the following principles in whatever you do:

- ***Relationship*** – seek, where possible, to meet (perhaps together with others who share your concerns) your bishop(s) or church leader(s) in order to talk, call to repent and pray things through face-to-face (Mt 18:15¹, Rev 2:21², Gal 2:14³)

¹ If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over

² ²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

³ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all...

- **Respect** – be respectful of those who are leaders, of those whose actions you are resisting, and of fellow evangelicals whose responses are different from yours (Rom 12:10⁴) - work out how to do this in the context of the Realism principles below
- **Realism** – about your own *context* (what is God calling you to do personally or as a church) and about *timing* (what actions are appropriate in the short term - eg ahead of the July General Synod - and what might you do later, if the *Prayers of Love and Faith* are ultimately endorsed).
- It might be helpful to indicate at this stage to your bishop what further actions you might feel obliged to pursue if the *Prayers* are commended by the House of Bishops or their new Pastoral Statement departs from biblical teaching (Lk 14:28⁵)
- It will be important in that event to consider principles such as avoidance (Romans 16:17⁶), contending for the gospel (Jude 3⁷) and not providing support to those who promote a gospel that is no gospel (2 John 10-11⁸; Gal 1:9⁹)
- **Reconciliation** – although this is, sadly, a time of conflict, we are called to seek peace and reconciliation. CEEC’s approach, if it becomes necessary, is to negotiate and agree a settlement, which can be welcomed across our differences without theological compromise (Rom 12:18¹⁰ Gal 6:10¹¹) in accordance with the Realism principles above.

We encourage you to put your concerns in writing to relevant leaders (eg your bishop(s), area dean, clergy, PCC,) and inform others you have done so. It is important to record actions by lay and ordained leaders or PCCs in PCC minutes.

Please let us at CEEC know what actions you are taking (i.e. a list of numbers from the list below) by emailing ceec@ceec.info and using the subject line ‘every voice matters’.

For reference, please also inform us of the name of your church/parish, church leader(s), any position you hold, and your diocese (for our privacy policy see our website).

⁴ Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves

⁵ Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?"

⁶ ¹⁷ I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

⁷ ³ Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

⁸ ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

⁹ ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

¹⁰ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone

¹¹ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers

1. RELATIONSHIPS WITH BISHOPS

In conversation and communication with any bishop(s) you might:

1. Recognise the challenges they face and the church's failures that need addressing but tell them that you believe the proposed prayers are indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England concerning marriage and sexual intimacy, and that you are concerned that the new Pastoral Guidance may also follow this path (perhaps ask your bishop to ensure that the revised proposals are brought back to the General Synod in July for proper scrutiny in a debate)
2. Indicate the impact that the actions of the House of Bishops has had on you, your trust in them collectively as guardians, under Scripture, of the faith and teaching of the church, and your relationship with the Church of England; if clergy, make bishops aware of any pastoral issues in your parish, and the clergy time being taken up in attending to them, as a result of the Prayers of Love and Faith proposals, bearing in mind that bishops share the cure of souls in every parish
3. Inform them that you will not use the prayers (clergy) or that you have asked your clergy not to use the prayers (laity)
4. Express concern at the lack of clear protection provided for clergy and ask them what they will be doing to ensure clergy are protected

If they voted against the motion you might:

5. Thank them for doing so and encourage them.

If they voted for the motion (or abstained) you might:

6. Ask them why they did so and request that, in the light of the amendment (endorsing no change in the doctrine of marriage and requiring the prayers not to indicate departure from that doctrine), they reconsider/repent and reassess the proposals
7. Request that – following the example of the Archbishop of Canterbury in relation to the Anglican Communion – they commit publicly to refrain from using the prayers themselves to avoid even further impairing your relationship and increasing damage to their ability to be a focus of unity
8. Make clear (if clergy, wardens or PCC, as applicable) that their actions have undermined your trust in them as guardians, under Scripture, of the faith and teaching of the church and thus their ability to act as a focus of unity
9. Inform them that you will not be able to welcome them to preach, preside, or confirm in your church
10. If clergy, request or indicate a desire/intent to find alternative episcopal oversight (CEEC is exploring what kind of alternative episcopal oversight might be available)

2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIOCESAN STRUCTURES

There are likely to be two broad approaches to these relationships which may vary over time and from case-to-case.

- o Some will feel duty bound in conscience to *withdraw from participation* in some or all areas, (sending apologies and explaining why you are no longer attending) or *resign from positions*

- Some will embrace a form of *continuing but conditional and critical engagement* which they believe should be the primary stance and focus, at least until July. This might involve:
 - a. being constructive in all that remains good
 - b. ensuring that a safe space is offered to enable you to continue to teach and witness to biblical truth and work to encourage faithful evangelism and mission
 - c. being openly critical of the proposed direction set by the bishops and the General Synod
 - d. seeking to find consensus for new secure and settled structural arrangements bringing about a degree of visible differentiation at a national and diocesan level
 - e. making clear that future attendance cannot be assured unless some such settlement is achieved.
 - f. withdrawing from participation in Holy Communion and corporate prayer/worship in these contexts

You might wish to consider which approach to follow and how best to do that in a number of different areas, including:

11. **Deanery chapters.** These, and deanery synods, may also be a good context in which to discuss what new structural arrangements might be best for all perspectives
12. **Deanery synods.** PCCs should ensure that ALL of the lay places available to them are taken up so that their voice is fully heard – remember that lay members of deanery synods are the electorate for lay members of the General Synod
13. **Diocesan synods.** Members attending should speak and consider asking as many formal questions as possible in order to hold bishops and diocesan staff to account, seek to reverse the direction set, and work for a new settlement
14. **Diocesan events (e.g. conferences) and training.** These (other than safeguarding) may be withdrawn from or continue to be attended with an approach of critical engagement
15. **Cathedral events.** If your Cathedral Dean signed the letter authored by the Dean of Canterbury, inform them of the damage this has caused to your relationship to the cathedral (eg impaired communion, non-attendance)
16. **Exploring Vocations.** If you are exploring a vocation to ordination or licensed lay ministry or are an ordinand you may want to discuss the impact of the bishops' decision on you with those you trust in your parish, diocese, or training institution and explore how you can best be supported as you consider its consequences (e.g. concerning how/whether to proceed, who would ordain/licence you, where you would be willing to serve¹²)
17. **Supporting Vocations.** If you are involved in helping others discern vocation, explain to your bishop the impact on you (eg you may be struggling to recommend people) and what you have seen and expect of its wider consequences for vocations

¹² Examples might include asking for a different bishop to ordain you, withdrawing from ordination this summer, asking for a training incumbent who shares your convictions in this area

3. FINANCE

Given the bishops and the General Synod are setting a future course of direction away from biblical teaching and the doctrine of the church, many individuals and PCCs will feel they must begin to review their financial commitments in the light of their responsibilities to be faithful stewards and trustees.

Among the options for PCCs to consider are:

18. Suspend or delay any payment above and beyond the cost of any stipendiary ministers (and reasonable contributions to diocesan services including safeguarding) at your church or pause the entire contribution, whilst you work out what to do longer term
19. Suspend or delay all parish share payments (they are legally voluntary)
20. Ask your local DEF to set up a Good Stewards Trust (if there is not one already) through which your giving to the diocese could be channelled
21. Set up your own parochial trust into which any assets can be put that are not property of the DBF (inc equipment like PA gear, instruments (not the organ), office equipment etc)
22. If, as an individual, you are likely to redirect some or all of your personal giving away from the parish (e.g. once definite steps are taken), give as much notice as possible of your intention to your PCC Treasurer

4. WITHIN LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

23. If you are a lay person
 - a. write to your clergy about your concerns (so that they are informed and can relay the level of such concerns to the bishop)
 - b. write to your bishop (especially if you are a church warden and so a bishop's officer). See 1-10 above
24. If you are a clergy person keep the PCC and congregation informed of developments as appropriate including of any meetings with or letters to the bishop(s)
25. If you are a warden indicate support for your clergy to the PCC and to the congregation
26. If you are a warden, consider using different promises at your swearing in ceremony
27. As a PCC, collectively take various actions set out above, e.g. writing to the bishop and/or asking to meet them, stating the effect of the bishop's action on their relationship with the parish, reviewing management of finances, recording actions in the minutes
28. As a PCC, formally support the actions of your clergy, e.g. declaring support in relation to alternative episcopal oversight
29. Take up ALL the lay places available to you on your Deanery Synod – remember that lay members of deanery synods are the electorate for lay members of the General Synod
30. Ask for/offer teaching and preaching on sex and marriage, especially if not been done recently

31. Encourage people to sign up to the CEEC e-bulletin for regular news at <https://ceec.info/e-bulletin/> and consider giving to CEEC, as we seek to represent evangelicals, and to the ministry of Living Out, as they serve some of those most impacted by what the House of Bishops are suggesting, at <https://ceec.info/give-to-ceec/> and <https://www.livingout.org/about-us/how-to-support-us>

32. Circulate CEEC resources such as the video series "God's Beautiful Story"
<https://ceec.info/resources/gods-beautiful-story/>

5. EVANGELICAL UNITY LOCALLY

33. Get more involved in your local DEF/DEN and encourage both clergy **and laity** to do so

34. Find ways of supporting each other especially as clergy and lay leaders e.g. WhatsApp group, regular Zoom meetings

35. Encourage one another to consider this menu of actions and, where appropriate, to act together, maintaining fellowship when responses differ

36. **Commit to pray together for one another, the Church of England, and the Anglican Communion**

IN SUPPORT OF THE ABOVE CEEC WILL

- Continue the 'Keeping Faith' campaign
- Encourage and facilitate clergy and churches to pray for the CofE to hold on to/return to the historic faith
- Encourage, through partnership with EGGs, continued participation in the General Synod in order to ensure no change to the doctrine of marriage or departure from it in the Prayers of Love and Faith and forthcoming Pastoral Guidance
- Help parishes/clergy find legal advice as necessary to support churches/ministers
- If and when necessary advocate for new structures that will enable the evangelical voice to witness within the CofE through authentic expression of apostolic ministry in the CofE
- Advocate for new selection/training pathways if necessary to secure apostolic witness in the CofE
- Support evangelical TEs who wish to maintain/adopt a fully orthodox position
- Support those in BMOs and advocate for ongoing church planting and funding opportunities
- Explore whether membership of GSFA (Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches) might be a route, not just to develop fellowship with other orthodox Anglicans overseas, but aid the development of new oversight structures in England