

# General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

Answering is optional in all these questions. Enter your response below the questions.  
Responses limited to 200 words per question

## Your Calling

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| 1 | In what ways do you think God has called you to this role?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|   | <p>I believe God has called me to this role through many years of serving the Church.</p> <p>My faith grew from something inherited into something personal, and that led me to become increasingly involved: from helping with Sunday school and Bible studies, to serving on the PCC and Deanery Synod and training as a lay leader.</p> <p>Through all of that, God has given me a growing concern for the wellbeing of the Church and a desire to contribute to its life and mission. Standing for General Synod feels like a natural next step: an opportunity to offer the experience, skills, energy and time I have at this stage of my life in service of the wider Church.</p>                                                      |
| 2 | What is your personal hope for the Church of England?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|   | <p>My hope is for a Church that is visible and viable in every community - and where everyone can find a place to call home. I would love to see churches that are genuinely multi-generational: congregations where an eight-year-old, a student and a ninety-year-old know each other's names - and call each other friends.</p> <p>I hope we can be realistic that there is no single answer that fits every parish. Our variety is a real strength - something to be nurtured and grown, rather than limited. I also hope for a Church that is comfortable with difference in all its forms - one body, many parts - where we can recognise that we are all needed, even when we do not all think or worship in exactly the same way.</p> |

## Church of England Structures

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| 3 | What do you consider the three top priorities of the Church of England over the next five years?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|   | <p>First, sustaining parish ministry. Save the Parish documents a decline in stipendiary clergy, we need to make sure that ministry in our parishes is properly resourced with full regard for wellbeing.</p> <p>Second, rebuilding trust. That means trust in safeguarding, but also trust between Synod, bishops and parishes. Hope Hailey's report on trust, shared with Synod in July 2026, underlines how complex this is, but also gives us some grounds for hope. The Archbishop of Canterbury described trust as the roots, I think that is a helpful image.</p> <p>Third, becoming genuinely multi-generational. Many parishes have lost several generations, and I would love to see churches where all ages are wholeheartedly part of</p> |

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|   | church life, recognising that there is no single model that will work everywhere and it won't all happen on a Sunday.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 4 | What do you feel are the main safeguarding topics for discussion at the General Synod? How would you rate your own understanding of those topics?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|   | <p>I think the Church should be open to independent supervision. Mandatory reporting and the implications for the sacrament of reconciliation need careful consideration, but that should not be a barrier to independent supervision.</p> <p>Consistency matters too - how safeguarding is understood and practised across parishes and dioceses, and how we support Parish Safeguarding Officers, many of whom carry significant responsibility as volunteers.</p> <p>I am also conscious of the tension around volunteering, particularly for older people. We need robust safeguarding, but we also need to make volunteering as straightforward and accessible as we can. I would want us to look carefully at where there are unnecessary barriers, without compromising the importance of proper safeguarding. Survivors need to know there are processes that are accessible, properly resourced and timely.</p> <p>My own understanding is strongest at parish level and developing at national level. I have completed the required training, serve on a PCC where safeguarding is a standing item, and understand the premise of recent debates. I am always willing to learn more.</p> |
| 5 | Do you recognise the key structure of the parish and priest as the bedrock of local ministry and mission in the Guildford Diocese and the Church of England?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|   | Yes, wholeheartedly. I believe in the mission of Save the Parish: to sustain a thriving, cradle-to-grave parish system with well-trained clergy providing regular worship, pastoral care and the sacraments, fully embedded in and serving their local communities. In our church we say that we don't need to know everyone - but we want to make sure everyone knows us, and knows that there is a welcome and invitation to develop relationships that involve friendship, faith, companionship and care.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 6 | What is your view on maintaining a church in every parish when many are struggling financially?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|   | <p>For me, a church in every parish means maintaining a real Christian presence in every community - through worship, prayer, pastoral care and service. Our buildings are important, and our people are the beating heart of them.</p> <p>I agree with Save the Parish's concern about withdrawing from communities that may struggle to sustain ministry from local resources alone. I have seen what sustained ministry can do. Some years ago, in a time of interregnum, I am told that my own church was described as a failing church, with a small faithful group of people keeping it going. A decade of consistent Holy Spirit filled leadership has changed that significantly, and the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|   | <p>church is now a thriving, healthy community. For me, that is a reminder that churches can change, given time, stability and investment.</p> <p>But I also don't think faithfulness means preserving every existing arrangement indefinitely. Every additional church in an incumbent's portfolio adds another layer of work and affects clergy wellbeing. We need to be honest about what we can resource, and prayerful about what church can look like.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 7 | <p>Given the previous question, what thoughts or concerns do you have about the choice of central funding for limited focal projects or a model of funding towards the dioceses in support of all parishes?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|   | <p>I am not opposed to some strategic or focal investment, there should be some resource for dioceses having the freedom to experiment and try new things - and there are stories of successes. But I would like to see the next spending plans shift a meaningful proportion of resource towards the core support of parishes.</p> <p>As an example, I understand that around £79 million a year is currently directed towards diocesan strategic plans, much of it through project-based funding, while 36 of the 42 dioceses are running deficits, with a collective shortfall of around £60 million a year. If those figures are right, there is an obvious question about whether we are putting too much resource into creating the new while allowing the existing parish infrastructure to quietly erode.</p> <p>Sustaining the life and ministry of our parishes should not be seen as a lack of ambition. It should be viewed as the ambition.</p>                                                                       |
| 8 | <p>How would you solve the burden of expensive church building maintenance costs?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|   | <p>Some practical things can help. Grant schemes such as the National Churches Trust and the new Places of Worship Renewal Fund can make a real difference to small PCCs facing major repairs. Sharing professional expertise across deaneries and dioceses would help too - most PCCs only deal with major building works once in a generation, often with volunteers having to work out the process for themselves.</p> <p>Longer term, we need to be open to different uses. A building used seven days a week, for a repair café, warm space, play group or concert has a stronger case for support than one open for two hours a month. Friends schemes can also encourage local people with no religious affiliation to take an interest in their historic church and contribute to upkeep. Churches have always been community buildings as well as holy places, but what is right for a cathedral may be very different from what works in a village church. That judgement is best made by people who know the place.</p> |

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| 9 | Should a candidate for General Synod who threatens to redirect parish share to the Ephesian Fund, withdraw their candidacy? Why or why not?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|   | <p>No, I don't think so. Voters are entitled to know a candidate's position and make their own judgement - that is what an election is for. I would not want someone's candidacy removed simply because I disagreed with their views.</p> <p>I do, however, disagree with redirecting parish share. I think the principle of mutual support is important, and I would be concerned if parish share became dependent on agreement over a particular issue. If an elected Synod member chose to direct parish share to the Ephesian Fund, I would expect that to be fully transparent, with any potential conflict of interest declared and the member withdrawing from relevant decisions.</p> |

### Doctrinal and Theological

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| 10 | In what ways does the doctrine of original sin (as defined in article 9) influence your wider theology and ethics?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|    | <p>I value historical documents such as the 39 Articles as part of my inheritance of faith. I don't understand original sin as inherited guilt; I understand it as a description of the human condition: our tendency towards alienation, selfishness and separation from God and one another.</p> <p>I hear a good expression of this condition in Romans 7:15–20. More widely, Paul often speaks of sin in the singular, as a power or condition we find ourselves caught up in, rather than simply a list of individual wrong actions. Sin can be personal, but it can also become embedded in structures and values around us. That means our ethics must take seriously not only individual behaviour but the systems and cultures we create. Sin is what traps us, but through Christ, God sets us free.</p> <p>The consequence for me is humility. If none of us is untouched by sin, none of us should be too confident in our own judgement - or too quick to judge others. Who isn't humbled when Jesus asks why you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own?</p> <p>For me, that points not to despair but to grace.</p> |
| 11 | Thomas Aquinas defined love as "to love anything is nothing else but to will good to that thing." (Summa Theologica 1.20.2, c.f. Romans 12:9). Do you agree with this definition? If so, how would you define the word <i>good</i> (particularly but not only moral goodness), and practically what does it mean to will good when loving God or our neighbour?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | <p>Yes. I think it is both simple and demanding: love is not merely how I feel about someone, or approval of everything they do, but willing their good.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|  | <p>And “good” begins in Genesis: God creates, and repeatedly sees that it is good. Goodness is therefore about the flourishing of God's creation and of people made in God's image, not simply what I happen to prefer for someone else.</p> <p>In practice, willing another's good means seeking their flourishing, and doing so with the patience, kindness, faithfulness and gentleness that Paul describes as fruits of the Spirit. It means seeking another person's flourishing, rather than simply getting my own way or doing what feels good in the moment.</p> <p>Loving God means willing what God wills, and Paul makes that concrete: hate what is evil, honour one another and practise hospitality. Love therefore becomes something we practise, not simply something we feel.</p> |
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### **Mission and Ministry**

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| 12 | <p>What is the most significant change to the structure/strategy of the Church of England that will allow more people to come to know Jesus?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|    | <p>If I had to choose one: put ministry - ordained and lay - back at the centre of where the money goes, and protect stretched and exhausted parishes from expectations to deliver growth with less.</p> <p>An incumbent covering four or five parishes cannot build the relationships from which faith actually grows. People come to know Jesus through someone who knows them: at a funeral visit, a toddler group, a hospital bedside, a walking group.</p> <p>A well funded plan to promote vocations within the church, remove barriers and reverse the decline in stipendiary numbers, alongside training, deploying and properly supporting lay ministry is needed.</p>                                                                                                                       |
| 13 | <p>Why does it appear that other denominations are able to attract children and youth more than the Church of England?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|    | <p>I would gently question the premise - plenty of Anglican churches do this well, including in our own diocese. But where others are doing better, we can always seek to learn.</p> <p>I would also question the assumption that the answer is always separate youth provision. My experience of helping to establish Wild Church, an all-age outdoor service, is that children thrive when they are visibly part of the whole church - and that the adults are changed by it too.</p> <p>We also have real assets: buildings of historic interest, outdoor spaces, the choral tradition, willing volunteers and a presence in every community. Families are looking for belonging as much as content. A congregation small enough that a child is known by name is an advantage, not a failure.</p> |

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|    | For me, whole-church ministry - looking beyond Sunday attendance and helping children and young people become part of the life of the whole church - is much more important than simply creating separate provision for them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 14 | Care for Creation is part of the Church's marks of mission. How do you feel about the net-zero targets for 2030?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|    | <p>I support the commitment to net zero, although I think meeting it by 2030 across 16,000 buildings, many of them listed, will be very challenging. For some parishes, a target without realistic funding risks landing on PCCs already struggling with basic maintenance, and could lead to frustration rather than action.</p> <p>The fifth Mark of Mission is not optional. Those who suffer first and worst from climate change are often the poorest, and caring for creation is part of the Church's responsibility to them. So I would not want the target abandoned.</p> <p>To make meaningful progress, we need a partnership between parishioners, the wider community, parish councils and the national Church, with realistic support and resources at every level.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 15 | What are your thoughts on encouraging more people to enter the church as trainee ordinands?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | <p>It is important that our church communities are alert to people who show an interest in vocation, and make sure there is space for them to be heard and nurtured. We must believe that God is at work in this and be ready to play our part. This is a parish activity, and clergy under pressure have less time for nurturing vocations, which makes the problem self-reinforcing.</p> <p>Clergy wellbeing must remain a priority. If people see clergy who are supported, valued and able to flourish in ministry, that will make a difference to how they understand a vocation to ordained ministry.</p> <p>Synod's unanimous support for Fr Alex Frost's motion on working-class vocations was right, and the same principle applies to rural communities and to those whose route in isn't academic. The Church must be intentional about reaching the people God may be calling - people with the gifts, faith, resilience and desire to serve the Church and its communities, from all walks of life.</p> |

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### **Inclusivity**

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| 16 | Are you aware of the Racial Justice Covenant in place for the Guildford Diocese, and can you make a statement about your recognition of the aim of the covenant and your support?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|    | <p>I am aware of the Racial Justice Covenant adopted in our diocese in 2023, with a refreshed version launched in May 2026. I support its commitment that growing diversity is an integral, accountable part of the Transforming Church Transforming Lives framework.</p> <p>I recognise that my own experience of the Church will not be the experience of everyone, we each have different experiences and face different challenges. It is therefore always important to listen, learn and be willing to see things from perspectives different from my own and listen well to others with different lived experience.</p> <p>Our communities are increasingly diverse, and the national picture shows that increasing diversity among ordinands does not automatically translate into greater diversity in senior leadership. I want to be part of a Church that is committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church and for our diversity to be a celebrated strength.</p>                                             |
| 17 | How will you encourage a Church of England where each parish can foster a balanced and informed understanding of inclusivity, creating a culture where differing perspectives can be expressed openly, and where everyone feels genuinely heard, seen and valued?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|    | <p>I think we have a responsibility to acknowledge that Christians can hold different views about certain things, and to create spaces for tolerant conversation in which views can be expressed openly and respectfully to increase mutual understanding and nurture friendship. My son studied RS at A level and was given this framework for exploring difficult questions: some Christians believe this; other Christians believe that; what do I think? This led to some really interesting conversations between us. This provides a good starting point for fruitful conversation where we can explore our faith together, acknowledging Jesus as Lord, taking our various views as inspiration to get to know Him and each other better, and live in community.</p> <p>For me, inclusivity means more than allowing people to have a different view. It means making sure people are genuinely listened to, that their experiences are taken seriously, and that they know they are seen, valued and have a place in the life of the Church.</p> |
| 18 | What do you think the Church of England needs to do differently if we are to engage those who have experienced the church to be abusive, homophobic or sexist?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|    | The Church needs to give a clear signal that it is willing to be different. That means taking people's experiences seriously, being willing to change where we have caused harm, and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|    | <p>making sure people know where they can find support. We should be willing to work with trusted organisations and communities such as Inclusive Church, seeing them as valuable partners in the mission we have to share the hope we have in Christ and the love we have received from God.</p> <p>This is closely connected to what I have said elsewhere about inclusion. We need to be a Church where people are genuinely heard, seen, affirmed and valued, where difference does not lead to rejection or exclusion, but to positive conversation that benefits everyone, and where each individual knows that they belong.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 19 | <p>How do you think the Church of England can ensure LGBTQI+ people are fully welcomed, valued and able to flourish in the life of the Church?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|    | <p>I stand as part of the Together group because I believe in a Church of England where there is space for everyone.</p> <p>We can ensure LGBTQI+ people are fully welcomed, valued and able to flourish by making sure there is full equality in access to the life and opportunities of the Church. Everyone should receive the same invitation to belong, participate and serve, whether that is serving on a PCC, leading worship, working with young people or being called to ordained ministry, without sexuality becoming a barrier to some parts of church life or a condition of full belonging. People should know that they are born in God's image and fully part of the Body of Christ</p> <p>I also recognise that many people in this diocese hold different theological views in good conscience. I have worshipped happily in evangelical and more traditionally liturgical churches, and have learned from both. I believe we need to find ways of making space for genuine differences of conviction, while ensuring that LGBTQI+ people are not asked to carry the cost of that disagreement.</p> |
| 20 | <p>Given that faithful Christians interpret Scripture differently on difficult and contested questions, how would you seek to maintain unity within diversity when they disagree?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|    | <p>One aspect of the Save the Parish Manifesto that caught my attention was the commitment to agree to disagree. That could represent a really important cultural shift for the Church of England. We seem to have become increasingly accustomed to assuming that disagreement means that someone has to be defeated or excluded. I wonder whether a healthier ecclesiology might allow us to say, with integrity, that we disagree profoundly about some things while still recognising one another as fellow members of Christ's Church.</p> <p>That connects with something I have been learning through attending bible study that incorporates a variety of traditions. I have become particularly interested in a practice where pairs or small groups journey together as 'friends' and 'accompaniers' to regularly</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|    | study scripture together and wrestle with different interpretations. In this practice, disagreement is not a problem to be resolved - two people can read the same text differently, argue their interpretations vigorously, and still remain in relationship. Difference does not diminish God or necessarily threaten the community, but helps shine a light. Jesus would have been very familiar with this practice "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" he said.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 21 | Do you believe that women and men are treated equally in our churches? If you were elected to the General Synod, what changes would you like to see which would support women's ministry?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|    | <p>I am fortunate to be part of a parish where I believe women and men are treated equally, and where I have never personally experienced barriers because I am a woman. However, in speaking with friends and colleagues I recognise that this is not everyone's experience. I am committed to equality for everyone, at every level and in every role in the Church.</p> <p>Supporting women's ministry means paying attention to practical matters such as training, development, appointments, stipends, maternity and flexible working. We also need to be alert to assumptions we make about roles in church life. Asking women to organise the baking, take minutes, or do the washing up simply because they are women may seem trivial, but those assumptions matter. Equally, we should not assume that men do not want to participate in the practical, pastoral and relational life of the church.</p> <p>I recognise that there are different theological convictions within the Church about the ministry and roles of women and men. I believe there needs to be room for those differences, while ensuring that women are free to exercise the ministry to which they are called and are not disadvantaged simply because they are women.</p> |

### Equal Marriage and Marriage Law

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| 22 | Marriage laws in the UK are being reformed, with the proposed change moving the system from licensed buildings to licensed officiants. Should clergy be permitted to conduct weddings in any dignified and safe location?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|    | <p>Emphatically yes. I think this is a significant opportunity for mission and evangelism.</p> <p>If a couple with a genuine connection to a parish want to marry in a barn, garden, woodland or field (all part of God's good creation), why would we turn them away and watch them go to a registrar instead? The Lord's my Shepherd - he leads me into green pastures. Some churches already offer 'Forest Church' - so why not a forest wedding?</p> <p>The parish church should remain an important part of the preparation for marriage, wherever the day of the wedding takes place. I would rather see us embrace the opportunity to meet people where they are than put unnecessary boundaries around it.</p> |

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| 23 | How do we resolve the apparent conflict between making all people feel included and welcome whilst holding firm to the Bible's and CofE's historic position on marriage, and so allow the CofE to move on from endless debates about sexuality?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|    | <p>Please also see response to Q20. I do not share the view that the Bible requires the Church to maintain its historic position on marriage. I believe there is a faithful biblical basis for full equality, including marriage being open to any couple who want to make a lifelong commitment to love one another.</p> <p>I am also conscious that there are deeply held theological convictions within the Church that differ from my own. I see the starting point for a settlement being provision for those different convictions, rather as was done around the ordination of women, including being willing to signpost people towards Christian communities whose theological understanding is closer to their own. That does not diminish God or the Church; it recognises that we are one body with many parts.</p> <p>I also think we need to be honest about how unconscious bias can shape the way Scripture is interpreted and applied, particularly where there is a power imbalance. Holding a theological conviction does not remove our responsibility to listen carefully to the person in front of us, recognise their vulnerability, and ensure that everyone is treated with dignity, feels they belong, and is safe within the Church.</p> |
| 24 | If you were an Incumbent, would you allow an assistant priest or curate in your parish to use the Prayers of Love and Faith if, in conscience, they felt able to do so?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    | <p>Yes. The Prayers of Love and Faith have been commended by the House of Bishops and are lawfully available; if a colleague in good conscience felt able to use them, they are there to be used.</p> <p>And I would apply the same principle in reverse. I would not want a colleague who could not in conscience use the prayers to be pressured into doing so, or thought less of for it.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 25 | Would you support a member of your congregation who was in a same sex marriage being on your PCC, or leading worship or children's/youth work in your church?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|    | Yes. See answers 19, 21 and 23. I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |