



The Bishop of London, the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally
The Bishop of Fulham, the Rt Rev Jonathan Baker
The Bishop of Grantham, the Rt Rev Nicholas Chamberlain
The Bishop of Sherborne, the Rt Rev Karen Gorham
The Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Rev Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
The Bishop of Warrington, the Rt Rev Bev Mason
The Bishop of Truro, the Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen
The Bishop of Bradwell, the Rt Rev Dr John Perumbalath
The Bishop of Maidstone, the Rt Rev Rod Thomas

4 October 2022

Dear Bishops,

We wanted to add our voices to the many who are urging the Church of England to move forward with marriage equality.

This is something that we are not only passionate about pastorally, though that is definitely part of our motivation. Each of us has seen the harm done to many LGBTQ individuals who feel that the lack of acceptance within the marriage structures of the church equates to their lack of value in the sight of God. Most of them would accept intellectually that the two are not connected, but this theoretical understanding does not always reach from the head to the heart or prevent the personal sense of hurt.

We are also passionate about the question from a professional position. Being identified with a church that is widely believed to be homophobic or, at best, overly slow in its response to LGBTQ rights, makes our jobs as Dean and as Chaplains of King's so much harder. Questions have been asked about how a representative of the Church of England can be the university's champion for EDI matters when the Church is a place of such inequality for its LGBTQ parishioners. LGBTQ staff and students have expressed their anxiety about whether the chapels and the chaplaincy are safe spaces for them.

Thirdly, we are passionate about this theologically. The God we are drawn to, and who we attempt to serve in our ministries and to show to our community, is one of unbounded love and unswerving justice. The continued exclusion of our LGBTQ siblings from the possibility of marriage seems to us a sin against both these parts of God's nature. We do not find the few biblical verses that address same-sex acts a compelling counter-narrative to the biblical story of an ever-expanding circle of loving calling that is God's voice addressing humanity.

We know that the Church of England continues divided on this subject as, of course, does the wider Anglican Communion. We also believe that if we wait for perfect agreement we will never move forward. The cost of further delay for the institution is greater alienation from the people (and especially the young people) that God has called us to serve and, we believe, a greater distance from the calling of Christ. The cost for our LGBTQ siblings is seen in the mental health issues that particularly affect this cohort and in the barrier it places between them and knowing their true identity as God's beloveds.

We write knowing the heavy weight of responsibility that lies on your shoulders as bishops of a divided church, so be assured that you are in our prayers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Clark-King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev'd Dr Ellen Clark-King
Dean

The Rev'd Jim Craig
Chaplain, Guy's Campus

The Rev'd Tim Ditchfield
College Chaplain

The Rev'd Sarah Farrow
Vice-Dean and Chaplain, Waterloo and St Thomas's Campus

The Rev'd Dr Jenny Morgans
Chaplain, Denmark Hill Campus