

Oddiwrth Esgobion yr Eglwys yng Nghymru

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From the Bishops of the Church in Wales

November 2024

Dear friends,

We are writing to you as we need to begin a period of discernment for our Church. As many will know the five-year period for the Experimental Rite allowing clergy to bless the marriage or civil partnership of couples already married or partnered in a civil ceremony, comes to an end in September 2026. It will be necessary for the Governing Body to decide what happens next, and whether to extend permission for its use beyond September 2026.

The Bishops believe the decision whether to extend this permission or let it lapse or to take a further step and provide for clergy to solemnize the marriage of same sex couples requires this shared discernment. We wish to make it clear how significant this process will be and that we are ourselves engaging in discerning what seems right to the Church and the Holy Spirit. Although we find ourselves in different places on this issue, we are committed to the prayerful listening and discussion which marks all good decision making under God.

To aid our shared discernment, and as a first step, we are inviting each diocese to meet in smaller groups to listen to one another. This may be at Ministry or Mission Area level, at Deanery level or in whatever way seems best to each diocese, and we are asking the leadership in each diocese to develop an appropriate process. We want to invite the Church to listen together to one another and to the Holy Spirit and to give the people of God opportunity to express their views, hopes and concerns in a way which is marked by a spirit of generosity, mutual respect and love. These gatherings will not be a time for discussion or debate. We need first simply to listen to one another at this time.

In the Spring 2025 we will be attending to these issues and each diocese will confirm the precise format and locations of our gatherings. We expect the response and feedback from these gatherings will begin to allow us to discern how the Church in Wales sees the future in relation to this issue.

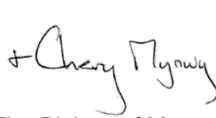
In the meantime, grace and peace from God

+  Cambrensis

The Archbishop of Wales

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The Bishop of St Asaph

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The Bishop of Monmouth

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The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon

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The Bishop of Llandaff

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The Bishop of St Davids

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The Bishop of Bardsey