

30 January, 2020

Dear Archbishops Justin & Sentamu, Archbishop-Designate Stephen,

House of Bishops' Statement on Opposite-Sex Civil Partnerships

Following publication of the above Statement you will have received a letter from the Prolocutors of the Convocations to express concern. We note that they claim to speak '*on behalf of the clergy of the Convocations*', and we wish respectfully to clarify that, in fact, they have not consulted us and do not speak for us.

Indeed, we wish to thank you and the House for the clarity afforded by the Statement. We recognise that the ongoing *Living in Love and Faith* project has yet to report, but fully appreciate the need for the House of Bishops to provide clear and unambiguous guidance following the extension of Civil Partnerships to opposite sex couples.

We are also grateful for the confirmation in the Statement regarding the Church of England's doctrine of marriage and celibacy. We are aware that there are those within the Church of England who find the long affirmed teaching of the church personally painful and wish to see this doctrinal position changed. We are also thankful that the church is carefully seeking to help us hear and understand one another through the *Living in Love and Faith* process. However, we are unable to find scriptural warrant for the changes being sought.

You will be more aware than most of the depth and pain of ongoing divisions within the Church of England around issues of gender, identity and human sexuality. May we therefore assure you of our continued prayers for you all, that you will know God's grace and guidance in your leadership of us.

Yours sincerely,

Names supplied.