



## Church of England backs blessings for same-sex couples

### Description

The Church of England's governing body on Thursday endorsed plans to let priests offer blessings to same-sex couples, after hours of acrimonious debate highlighted deep Anglican divisions on the issue.

The Church's General Synod — comprising hundreds of elected members, which meets two or three times a year — backed the proposals by a wide margin following an eight-hour debate across two days.

A total of 250 bishops, clergy and laity supported the reforms, while 181 opposed them and 10 abstained, at a vote held at the Synod gathering in central London.

Unveiled last month after nearly six years of internal debate, the plans will not change rules banning Anglican priests from officiating at weddings of same-sex couples.

Synod members supported an amendment endorsing that stance, while also voting in favour of the proposal to allow blessings for civil marriages or civil partnerships in a church.

They also recognised “the failure of the Church to be welcoming” to LGBTQ people, following an unprecedented apology last month by bishops for the “hostile and homophobic response” they have sometimes faced.

But the moves have sparked a backlash from progressive Anglicans who say the Church is not going far enough, and from critics arguing any changes are divisive and unwelcome.

Bishop of London Sarah Mullally welcomed the Synod's backing for the changes, and acknowledged the splits with the Anglican church in Britain and beyond.

“I recognise that there are those who are deeply thankful for this and there are those who are hurting,” she said, vowing to “be mindful of the deep divisions” going forward.

“These divisions on these questions go to the heart of our human identity,” Mullally noted.

“I and the archbishops hope that today's thoughtful, prayerful debate marks a new beginning for the

Church as we seek to go forward, listening to each other.”

The Church of England has been under political pressure to reform its approach to same-sex marriage ever since it became legal in England and Wales in 2013.

Although dozens of other countries have legalised same-sex unions, homosexuality remains banned in many parts of the world.

That includes in highly religious and conservative countries in sub-Saharan [Africa](#), which help make up the Anglican Communion of 43 Churches in 165 countries.

Anglicanism boasts around 85 million members, and is the third largest Christian communion after the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

### **Category**

1. History-Archaeology-Past Mysteries
2. Main
3. Racism-Trans/Gender-LGBTQ+-Sex. crimes

### **Date Created**

02/11/2023