

**Policy for us of Prayers of Love and Faith (prayers with and for same-sex couples)
at St John's** **23 March 2026**

1. Background

On 12 December 2023, the House of Bishops commended the “Prayers of Love and Faith”, supported by an associated pastoral guidance document, for use in regular public worship services with effect from Sunday 17 December 2023. Their use by a minister is at her or her discretion under Canon B 5 of the Canons of the Church of England.

The “Prayers of Love and Faith” (PLF) are a specific set of resources commended by the Church of England for praying with and for a same-sex couple who love one another and who wish to give thanks for and mark that love in faith before God. These came from the Church of England’s project, “Living in Love and Faith” (LLF) which led to significant internal discussions and reflection within churches across the country. The commended PLF prayers can be found on the Church of England website at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/prayers-of-love-and-faith.pdf>

2. Use of Prayers of Love and Faith at St John's

Offering the commended PLF prayers is consistent with the inclusive culture at St John's, illustrated by our being a registered Inclusive Church. The use of PLF prayers is at the discretion of the Priest-in-Charge, but the current Priest-in-Charge at St John's, Fr John Bloomer, has indicated that, as an inclusive sacramental priest, he is willing to offer them at St John's.

During discussion at the St John's PCC in January 2026 and consultation with the congregation in February 2026 regarding Prayers of Love and Faith, there was no objection to our adoption of these prayers. This policy was proposed and agreed at a meeting of St John's PCC on 23rd March 2026.

Consequently, the PLF prayers commended by the House of Bishops may be used at St John's in **two different ways**:

- a) informally by the Priest-in-Charge, or by a minister with permission from the Priest-in-Charge, in **private pastoral situations** with a person or couple, outside of acts of public worship.
- b) in prayers said informally as part, but not the central focus, of **regularly scheduled public Sunday or weekday services**, by a licensed minister, lay or ordained, as well as those who hold the Bishop's Permission to Officiate (PTO), under the authority of (and following a discussion with) the Priest-in-Charge, following a discussion between the Priest-in-Charge and a person or couple asking for such prayers.

In accordance with Canon Law, these PLF prayers **cannot currently** be used in a “**formal standalone service of public worship**”, i.e. a service which is solely focused on PLF. If a standalone public service of PLF subsequently becomes approved by General Synod, an

extension of this policy to include standalone services will be considered, subject to consultation at PCC and congregation level.

3. Communication

Following communication to the congregation of St John's, the fact that St John's is offering the commended PLF should be stated clearly on the St John's website, on "*a church near you*" with a specific "Prayers of Love and Faith" tag, and if appropriate on our social media feeds. This should indicate the extent to which we offer PLF as a church i.e. the maximum currently permissible, in private pastoral situations and as part of regularly scheduled public Sunday or weekday services.

The Area Dean should also be informed that St John's will be offering the commended PLF.

This policy has been written to be consistent with the Church of England's "*Living in Love and Faith Pastoral Guidance*" (V1, issued December 2023).

Fr John Bloomer, 23 March 2026