

Definitions and jargon for “The Church and Sexuality: A First Look” 1st February 2023

LGBTQIA+ - An acronym for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and “+” to show this does not represent every person who would identify within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Human Sexuality – the term the Church of England tends to use to capture everything around gender, sexuality, marriage, and sexual conduct. A catch-all term for wide ranging conversations.

Issues in Human Sexuality – A document published by the House of Bishops in 1991 which still directs conversations around sexuality with candidates for ordination.

Laity – anyone who is not ordained or consecrated (e.g. into a religious order).

Synod – the governing body of the Church of England. Three houses: laity, clergy, bishops. All diocesan bishops are included in the House of Bishops. Suffragan bishops, clergy and laity are voted into their respective houses. The houses of clergy and laity also include representatives from religious communities, TEs, administrative and governance staff, and some other groups e.g. youth council.

House of Bishops – those bishops who sit on general synod (all diocesan, elected suffragans).

College of Bishops – All of the bishops including suffragans.

Same-sex attracted/Side B/Side A – SSA used by those who experience same-sex attraction but do not wish to use the term “gay”; Side B refers to those who identify as gay and are committed to celibacy; Side A refers to those who identify as gay and would seek a partner.

Anglican Communion – the churches around the world which find their expression of faith rooted in Anglicanism. These churches traditionally look to the Archbishop of Canterbury as one of their points of unity.

Lambeth Conference – the meeting of Bishops from across the Anglican communion, last happened in 2022.

Gender – the social and cultural expression of sex. Gender may or may not reflect sex assigned at birth.

Celibacy – a life-long commitment to live without sexual intimacy.

Chastity – traditionally chastity means refraining from sexual intimacy outside of marriage. In current debates it is often used to describe a commitment to morally good, faithful sexual commitment. Someone who is chaste will not use sex in an immoral way (applied within marriage as well as outside of it).

Scripture/tradition/reason – the tools the Anglican church uses to discern what is right. Different traditions within the church of England (e.g. evangelical, Anglo-Catholic) may weigh each of these differently. Some Anglicans draw from Methodist or Charismatic traditions and include *experience*.

Blessing – An excerpt from the Bishop’s response to LLF: “To pray for the blessing of people is to reflect the blessing of God in all creation. To declare certain ways of life as blessed is to recognise that for the blessing of creation to be fully realised, human beings need to walk in God’s ways. [...] we ask for God’s blessing – recognising that it is not our blessing or approval that is conferred, but a prayer for God to bring about flourishing and growth in the ways of God.”