



Recently the Church of England has introduced Prayers of Love and Faith. These are prayers which can be said with and for a same-sex couple to celebrate their relationship. Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley (Bishop of Newcastle) describes them with these words “The *Prayers of Love and Faith* are resources to pray with and for a same-sex couple who are committed to one another in faithfulness and love. They are intended to enable those who wish to give thanks for and joyfully mark that commitment before God and their community of faith.”

At present these have been approved nationally to be commended for use. This means that they aren't something each church has to use, like the order of service for Baptism. But each church must make their own decision to offer them or not. At Christ Church we discussed this at our last PCC, and we are keen to offer these prayers. At present we can only offer them in the context of a regular service (Sunday Morning or Evening or Wednesday midweek service), rather than as a standalone service, though there is hope that soon we will be able to offer these. For me it's therefore a sadness that we cannot yet offer either a standalone service or a service of marriage for a same-sex couple. This recent change feels like half a step in the right direction and there is much further to go.

I would therefore like to extend a warm welcome to any same-sex couple who would like to join us for Prayers of Love and Faith. As a time to celebrate your relationship and to bring it before God. If this is something you would like or would like to talk about more you can contact me on 0191 3882228 or [revjestall@gmail.com](mailto:revjestall@gmail.com)

*Grace and Peace*  
*Rev. John Estall*