

# **Statement of Needs and Theological Conviction under the House of Bishops' Declaration**

**by the Parochial Church Council of  
The Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton**

We reaffirm our desire to flourish within the life and structures of the Church of England, in accordance with the Five Guiding Principles set out in the House of Bishops' Declaration, and our commitment to Christ's mission in the Diocese of Oxford. We recognise the diocesan bishop and other bishops of this Diocese as the true and lawful holders of their offices, and wish to maintain the highest degree of communion with them that is consistent with the theological convictions that underlie our Resolution.

The theological convictions set out below are held by a significant number of worshippers in our parish. The Resolution will ensure that the episcopal and priestly ministry exercised in our parish is such that can be received with integrity by all who worship here. Our Resolution contributes to the Church of England's 'wider commitment to sustaining diversity'.

Women have always exercised various ministries in the Church. However, those who are unable to receive the sacramental ministry of women as bishops and priests hold that neither Scripture, nor apostolic Tradition, nor the great majority of the Church throughout the world today endorse the ordination of women as bishops and priests. There is therefore doubt as to whether the roles of bishop or priest are, sacramentally speaking, roles that women can exercise. We ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish should be exercised by those whose sacramental ministry is not subject to such doubt.

The unique sacramental ministry of a bishop is to ordain bishops, priests and deacons. In receiving their ministry, we receive the ministry of the bishops who ordained them. If there is doubt about the sacramental ministry of women as bishops, there will be doubt about the sacramental ministry of those whom they ordain. **We therefore ask that episcopal and priestly sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be exercised**

- ❖ **by male bishops at whose consecration a male bishop presided and who stand in the historic, apostolic succession of bishops so ordained, and**
- ❖ **by male priests ordained by such bishops.**

We are pledged to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and the other bishops of this Diocese, and we reject any suggestion that ordaining women to the episcopate and priesthood renders a bishop's episcopal ministry invalid. However, our flourishing requires the flourishing of our priest. We understand that our priest can only flourish if he is in full communion with a bishop and with all those whom that bishop ordains to the priesthood – a full communion made visible when he stands together with them at the altar. Therefore, we request that episcopal sacramental and pastoral ministry in this parish be entrusted to a bishop who ordains only men to the priesthood.

Approved by the PCC on [DATE]