

Open Letter to Baptist Union Council

Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Revd Seidel Abel Boanerges, Moderator of Baptist Union Council.

Dear Lynn and Seidel,

We write in support of those who are currently caught in a double-bind, with their calling to marriage in conflict with their calling to Baptist ministry. We refer, of course, to those whose marriage partner is of the same gender as themselves. We support the removal of the bar to Baptist ministry for those in same sex marriages.

Lest we be misunderstood or mislabelled, we affirm our biblical commitment to both marriage and ministry: many of us would own the term 'evangelical' to describe our theological convictions, and we represent a diversity of spiritual traditions from charismatic to liturgical. We resist the reduction of evangelicalism to one shibboleth doctrine. What we have in common is the desire to right a profound wrong that we believe has occurred within the church of Christ, namely the long standing exclusion and marginalisation of LGBTQ+ people. We believe that sexuality is a gift from God, and that the call to marriage is similarly a God-given gift; while singleness and celibacy are also a calling and gifting, not an imposition. We do not believe that marriage should be withheld from people because of their sexuality, or that entering into a same sex marriage should prevent a person serving in pastoral ministry.

We want to be very clear that we believe this call to be true to the witness and revelation of scripture, and that we have arrived at our affirming position on LGBTQ+ inclusion through diligent, prayerful wrestling with the Bible.

We are also deeply committed to the Baptist family, and long and pray for its flourishing. Many of us have been Baptist ministers ourselves for many years, some in senior roles within our life together, and we value the Baptist principles of covenantal belonging and congregational discernment. It is our conviction that the Baptist Union were correct to allow congregations to make their own decisions on whether to register for the solemnisation of same sex marriages, and we believe that a similar principle should apply for Baptist Ministry accreditation. If a church does not want to call a minister who is in a same sex marriage, they should be free to not do so (just as a church can decline to have a female minister); but similarly if a church is open to the possibility, they should be free to explore this with a potential minister within the accreditation process.

We also have a profound pastoral concern for those who long to live in love and faithfulness, serving God through marriage and ministry, but who currently are unable to be true to themselves and their calling. There is, we believe, a deep injustice currently enacted on our LGBTQ+ siblings, and we long for this to be made right. Like the persistent widow in the parable, we commit ourselves to returning again and again, until justice is granted.

We challenge the Baptist Union Council to listen to the voices of those currently excluded, and to hear their stories of faith, calling, and love. We challenge Baptist Union Council to stand with the marginalised, and to take decisive action to allow Baptist Churches to receive ministry from accredited ministers who are in same sex marriages.

Those signing below do so in a personal capacity.

*If anyone would like to add their name as a signatory after publication, please email simon@bloomsbury.org.uk
The live letter with any additional signatories can be viewed at: [Open Letter to Baptist Union Council](#)*

Accredited Baptist Ministers.

1. Revd Andrew Allcock; Minister, Memorial Community Church, Plaistow.
2. The Revd Beth Allison-Glenny, Chaplain, Head of Welfare and Fellow in Theology, Regent's Park College, Oxford University.
3. Revd Julie Aylward, Chaplain, HMP Elmley.
4. Revd David Bartram, Minister of Trinity Baptist Church, Bacup.
5. Revd Rich Blake-Lobb, Accredited Baptist Minister, currently charity CEO.
6. Revd Kat Bracewell, Minister, Windsor Baptist Church.
7. Revd Alan Brand, Minister, Renew Church, Cambridgeshire; Eastern Baptist Association, Trustee.
8. Revd Danny Brierley, Minister, Chester Road Baptist Church (HEBA).
9. Revd Peter Butchers, Minister, The Hub, Beeding.
10. Revd Barbara Carpenter, Senior Chaplain, Devon Partnership NHS Trust.
11. Revd Dr Philip Clements-Jewery, Baptist Minister, retired.
12. Revd Dawn Cole-Savidge, Communities Minister, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church; Co-Director of Affirm; Tutor for inclusion of LGBTQ+ People at Northern Baptist College.
13. Revd Graham Conway-Doel, Minister Chapel Allerton Baptist Leeds.
14. Revd John Cooper, Minister, Morpeth Baptist Church.
15. Revd Sandra Crawford, Pioneer Minister Jaywick.
16. Revd Tony Crawford, Pioneer Minister.
17. Revd Sarah Crane, Head of Chaplaincy, Milton Keynes University Hospital and Central Baptist Association Trustee.
18. Revd Luciana Damascena, Minister, West Worthing Baptist Church.
19. Revd Joe Davis, Soul Place, Worthing.
20. Revd Stuart Dennis, Minister, Carey Baptist Church, Moulton
21. Revd Michael Docker (retired) formerly Minister, Tyndale Baptist Church, Bristol.
22. Revd Peter Dominey, Minister, Church from Scratch (Baptist Church).
23. Revd Nick Drury, Associate Minister at The Shore Community Church, Bognor Regis.
24. Revd Vivien Edwards, Minister, Wolvercote Baptist Church.
25. Revd Dr Rob Ellis, Principal Emeritus and Senior Research Fellow, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
26. Revd Matthew Farrow, Managing Chaplain, HM Prison Eastwood Park.
27. Revd Jenny Few, Baptist Minister, retired.
28. Revd Professor Paul S. Fiddes, Emeritus Principal and Senior Research Fellow, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
29. Revd Jonathan Fillis, Minister Haddenham-cum-Dinton Baptist Church.
30. Revd Andy Fitchet, Pioneer Minister, Picket Twenty Church & Co-Director, Affirm, Baptists Together for LGBT+ Inclusion.
31. Revd Hannah Freeland, Minister, Hooe Baptist Church, Plymouth.
32. Revd Dan Gates, Minister, Leytonstone United Free Church.
33. Revd John M Goddard, Minister, Saffron Walden Baptist Church and Eastern Baptist Association Trustee.
34. Revd Gerard Goshawk, Minister, Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church.
35. Revd Dr Ruth Gouldbourne, Minister Grove Lane Baptist Church, Cheadle Hulme
36. Revd Glen Graham, Minister, Cullompton Baptist Church, and Trustee of the South West Baptist Association.
37. Revd Ian Green, Amersham Free Church.
38. Revd Leigh Greenwood, Minister, Stoneygate Baptist Church, Leicester.
39. Revd James Grote, Baptist Minister, retired.
40. Revd Rachel Haig Avonmouth Community Centre Manager and Pioneer Minister.
41. Revd Timothy Haines, Pioneer Missioner, Bidwell West, and Central Baptist Association Trustee.
42. Revd Ronnie Hall, Managing Chaplain, HMP Stafford.
43. Revd Simon Hall, Minister, Chapel Allerton Baptist Church, Leeds.
44. Revd Marg Hardcastle, Urban Expression, Operations & Communications Coordinator.
45. Revd Dr Brian Haymes, Baptist Minister.

46. Revd Peter Heath, Assistant Minister, Worthing Baptist Church.
47. Revd Ashley Hardingham, Lead Minister, Altrincham Baptist Church.
48. Revd Martin Hatfield, Minister, Kingshill Baptist Church.
49. Revd Phillip Hatton, Baptist Minister, retired.
50. Revd Jane Henderson, Regional Minister, NWBA.
51. Revd Jo Hellenbrand, Eastwood Baptist Church, Essex.
52. Revd Neil Hepworth, Chaplain, Manchester University Hospitals.
53. Revd Rachel Holland, Community Minister Portrack Baptist Church.
54. Revd Dr Diane Holmes, Baptist Minister, retired.
55. Revd Nicolas Hookey, Chaplaincy Manager, Manchester University Hospitals.
56. Revd Natalie Hughes, Minister, Thomas Helwys Baptist Church, Nottingham.
57. Revd Charlie Ingram, Senior Minister, Bessels Green Baptist Church, Sevenoaks.
58. Revd Nikki Jenkins, Minister, Hope Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge.
59. Revd Stuart Jenkins, Minister, Roomfield Baptist Church, Todmorden.
60. Revd Richard Jevons, Portfolio Minister, East Midlands.
61. Revd Keith John, Minister, Hainault Baptist Church.
62. The Revd Dr Keith G Jones, Baptist Minister, retired.
63. Revd Simon Jones, retired Baptist Minister, Senior Research Fellow at Spurgeon's College.
64. Revd Justin Kennedy, Minister of Heywood Baptist Church.
65. Revd David Kerrigan, Baptist Minister, retired.
66. Revd Jonathan Keyworth, Minister, New Road Baptist Church, Oxford.
67. Revd Stephen Keyworth, Minister West Craven Baptist Fellowship, Barnoldswick.
68. Revd Dr Richard L Kidd, Baptist Minister and former Co-Principal of Northern Baptist College, Retired.
69. Revd Ivan King, Minister, Southend-on-Sea.
70. Revd Dr Larry J. Kreitzer, Tutor, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
71. Revd Peter Laws, Accredited Baptist Minister, currently Chaplain at Newport Pagnell MHA.
72. Revd Nick Lear, Minister at Mutley Baptist Church, Plymouth.
73. Revd David Lewis, Baptist Minister in Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership, Milton Keynes.
74. Revd Ian Ley, Ernest Street Baptist Church, Accrington.
75. Revd June Love, Minister, Southwell Baptist Church.
76. Revd Alison Mackay, Minister, Alcester Baptist Church, Heart of England Baptist Association.
77. Revd Duncan MacLean, Minister, The Well, and Chair of HEBA Trustees.
78. Rev David Mann, Accredited Pastor, Bonny Downs Baptist Church, East Ham London.
79. Rev Dr Sally Mann, Accredited Minister, Bonny Downs Baptist Church, East Ham London.
80. Revd Glen Marshall, Co-Principal, Northern Baptist College.
81. Revd Ross Marshall, Assistant Minister, Haddenham-cum-Dinton Baptist Church.
82. Revd Vicky Martin, Minister, Union Church Heathfield.
83. Revd Esther Mason, Minister, Christ Church LEP, Nailsworth.
84. Revd David Mayne, Lead Pastor, Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church.
85. Revd Brenda Morton, Baptist Minister, Retired, Worcestershire.
86. Revd Carmel Murphy Elliott, Portfolio Minister based in Manchester.
87. Revd Carol Murray, CBA Moderator.
88. Revd Emma Nash, Mission and Community Engagement Officer, seconded to The Methodist Church Connexional Team.
89. Revd Claire Ord, Chaplain, Birmingham Women and Children's hospital and Minister, Yardley Wood Baptist church.
90. Revd Mark Ord, Co-Minister, Yardley Wood Baptist Church.
91. Revd Keith Osmund-Smith BEM, Minister, Multi faith Chaplain, Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Hospital Trust; Former Moderator of HEBA.
92. Revd Dr Simon Oxley, retired Baptist Minister, Chair of NWBA Trustees.
93. Revd Mike Parker, Senior Minister, Worthing Baptist Church.
94. Revd James Pate, Minister, Daybrook and Westdale Lane Baptist Churches, Nottingham.

95. Revd Michael Peat, Free Church Chaplain, University of Bristol.
96. Revd Tony Peck, Baptist Minister, retired.
97. Revd Amanda Pink, Team Chaplain, Milton Keynes University Hospital.
98. Revd Louise Polhill, Minister, The Grove Centre Church, Sydenham.
99. Revd Iain A. Pope, Minister, Totterdown Baptist Church, Bristol.
100. Revd Andy Potter, Minister, Bessels Green Baptist Church, Sevenoaks.
101. Revd Ellen Price Minister, Trinity Baptist Church, Derby.
102. Revd Kevin Price, Minister of Wellspring LEP Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
103. Revd Vaughan Rees, University Chaplain and Director of Chaplaincy Services at the University of South Wales.
104. Revd Kezia Robinson, Regional Minister, YBA.
105. Revd Chris Rowberry, Baptist Minister, retired.
106. Revd Dr Clara Rushbrook, Co-Principal, Northern Baptist College.
107. Revd Gethin Russell-Jones, Ararat Baptist Church, Cardiff.
108. Revd Karen Sethuraman, SoulSpace Peace and Reconciliation Hub, Belfast.
109. Revd Michael Shaw, Minister, Devonport Community Baptist Church, Plymouth.
110. Revd Ingrid Shelley, Chaplain, St Barnabas Hospice.
111. Revd Dr Hazel Sherman, Chaplain, University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust.
112. Revd Dr Roger Shuff, Baptist Minister, retired.
113. Revd Dr Karen Smith, Baptist Minister, retired.
114. Revd Robin Smith, Director of Studies - The Institute for Children, Youth and Mission.
115. Revd Peter Spence, Spiritual Care Lead, St Michael's Hospice, Hereford.
116. Revd Ian Spence, Urban Expression, Bath.
117. Revd Rachel Spence, Urban Expression & currently seconded to C of E as Pioneer Minister, Bath.
118. Revd Ian Stears-Handscorn, Accredited Baptist Minister (Retired).
119. Revd Mary Taylor, Regional Minister YBA, retired.
120. Revd Angie Tunstall, retired, Urban Expression.
121. Revd Chris Upton, Minister of West Lane Baptist Church, Haworth.
122. Revd Ray Vincent, Minister Emeritus of Leytonstone United Free Church, a member of St David's Uniting Church, Pontypridd, and an Associate Chaplain at the University of South Wales.
123. Revd David Warrington, retired Minister in North Yorkshire.
124. Revd Amy Wearing.
125. Revd Mark Welch, Minister, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.
126. Revd Andy Williams, Blackley Baptist Church and Centre.
127. Revd Joanna Williams Blackley Baptist Church and The Blackley Centre.
128. Revd Dr Simon Woodman, Minister, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.
129. Revd Steff Wright, Minister, Brandon Baptist Church, London.

Baptist Leaders, Members, and Churches.

130. Hannah Ashton, Staff team, Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church.
131. Heather Bailey, Member of the Lay Ministry Team, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.
132. Mr Clive Basser, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
133. Mrs Karen Basser, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
134. Jenni Beesley, Church Secretary, Chester Road Baptist Church.
135. Eur Ing Dr Keith Bevis, retired engineer, member of Council, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
136. Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.
137. Mrs Tammy Brand, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
138. Eleanor Brennan, Minister-in-Training, Wakefield Baptist Church.
139. Ian Brewerton, member, Chorlton Central Church, (Baptist/URC LEP), Manchester.
140. Julie Bryan, MiT, West Craven Baptist Church, Barnoldswick.
141. Theresa Burton, Recognised Pastor.
142. Dr. David Bush, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
143. Mr Jonathan Bush, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.

144. Mrs Sue Bush, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
145. Joyce Caddy, member, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.
146. Edward Ceney, Minister in training at New Road Baptist Church.
147. Revd Liz Clayton, Seniors Worker, Chester Road Baptist Church.
148. Sue Clements-Jewery, member, Oakes Baptist Church, Huddersfield.
149. Liz Connelly, Pastor, Barlestone Baptist Church, Leics.
150. Sam Corry, Associate Minister, One Church Brighton.
151. Pam Davies: Minister, 57 West.
152. Mike Dillamore, Church Leader and Trustee, The Hub, Beeding.
153. Jo Dolby, Church Leader, Oasis Church Bath.
154. Luke Dowding, Executive Director, OneBodyOneFaith; Governor of Northern Baptist College; Chair of Trustees of Affirm.
155. Miss Susan Esden, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
156. Marion Fiddes, Member of New Road BC and former BUGB Trustee.
157. Robin Fisk, Church Leader and Trustee, The Hub, Beeding.
158. Debbie Gamble, Administrator, Yorkshire Baptist Association.
159. Grove Lane Baptist Church, Cheadle Hulme.
160. Sarah Guy, Deacon, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.
161. Dr Nicola Hambridge, Member, Revive Baptist Church, Leeds.
162. Amanda Higgin, Minister in Training, Regent's Park College.
163. Symon Hill, Deacon, New Road Baptist Church.
164. Revd Marie Holmes, Minister, Far Forest Baptist church & Mosaic Inclusive Church Plant.
165. Pastor David Howe, Heanor Baptist Church.
166. Dr Christine Joynes, Fellow in Theology and Director of the Centre for Baptist Studies, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
167. Philippa King, Leader and Trustee at Bonny Downs Baptist Church, East Ham, London.
168. Helen Lloyd, Church Member and leadership team member, Daybrook Baptist Church, Nottingham.
169. Elizabeth McLeod, Member of the Lay Ministry Team, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.
170. Abbie Meacham, Youth & Children's Pastor, Northfield Baptist Church.
171. Roger Nascimento, Wolvercote Baptist Church, Oxfordshire.
172. Dr Charlotte Naylor Davis, Lay minister, Revive Baptist Church, Leeds.
173. New Road Baptist Church, Oxford.
174. Miss Kathryn Osborne, Deacon/Trustee, Thomas Helwys Baptist Church, Lenton, Nottingham.
175. Jacquie Osmund - Smith, HEBA MRC & governor Northern Baptist College.
176. Nigel Padget, Secretary, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.
177. David Peters, Member, Olton Baptist Church.
178. Sharon Peters, Member, Olton Baptist Church.
179. Mr Nigel Plastow, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
180. Lahna Pottle, Youth and Young Adults Worker, Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church.
181. Hayley Prestidge-Briston MIT Strood Gospel mission.
182. Josh Reid, New Road Baptist Church.
183. RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
184. Dr Deborah Rooke, Lecturer in OT Hermeneutics, Regent's Park College.
185. Roger Saville, Deacon, West Worthing Baptist Church.
186. Tracy Shields MiT, South Ossett Baptist Church.
187. Mrs Louise Smith, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
188. Mr Simon Smyth, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
189. Fiona Spicer Pastoral assistant / Mutley Baptist church.
190. Martin Stears-Handscorn, Baptist Church member.
191. Revd Dave Steell, Minister, One Church Brighton.
192. Leanne Swift, Deacon/Secretary at Burnham on Sea Baptist Church.
193. David Tickett, Elder, Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church.

194. Mrs Jackie Walker, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
195. Mr Tim Walker, member of RENEW Church (Baptist), Lode Chapel, Cambridgeshire.
196. Frank Watton, member, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.
197. Lynda Watton, member, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church.
198. Maeve Whitchurch, Church Leader and Trustee, The Hub, Beeding.
199. Revd Hazel Wotton, Baptist Minister, retired.
200. Joyce Yeomans, Deacon and Lay Ministry Team Member, Burton Latimer Baptist Church.