

How do we share in God's mission in light of the theological, pastoral and practical issues arising from the collection of essays published as Marriage, Same Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia?

We are just two weeks away from the first of our Synod conversation forums relating to issues raised by the Doctrine Commission Essays. I am writing to you to encourage you to register and to attend the sessions to be held on March 19th for Clergy and March 20th for the Laity on Synod.

I'm sure you will recall that at Synod in 2019 it was resolved:

"THE DOCTRINE COMMISSION BOOK. *That this Synod:*

1. recognise the courageous and thoughtful contributions by the Rev'd Associate Professor Matthew Anstey and the Rev'd Dr Katherine Smith to the Doctrine Commission's recently published collection of essays on Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia.

2. requests that the Diocesan Council, before next year's Synod, arranges for at least two discussion forums allowing for respectful, mediated and safe discussion of the significant theological, pastoral and practical issues raised by this publication."

Diocesan Council has arranged the first of these forums. Mindful of the need to ensure the conversations are respectful, mediated and safe we have engaged the Rev'd Bronwyn Pagram to facilitate them utilising the Open Space process. Open Space has been described in previous correspondence on this topic from Secretary of Synod, and the resource materials and explanatory video's can be accessed [here](#) (Link to our website)

Open Space uses 'circle processes' to help people engage in dialogue about aspects arising from the question. 'Dialogue' involves intentional, respectful, deep listening with an attitude of enquiry and openness. Dialogue creates 'a free flow of meaning between people in the sense of a stream that flows between two banks' (David Bohm). In hosting this day, we seek to listen to the Holy Spirit moving between and among us, in and through our conversation and listening.

Apart from the gathering question, Open Space contains no pre-set agenda. Participants will propose the agenda based on the aspects of the question most important to them. Groups will then form to discuss the topics of interest to them. You will be free to join, not to join, leave or stay in any of those conversations throughout the day. We will together create and hold space so that everyone who wishes to speak will be able to speak and to be respectfully heard.

At the conclusion of the day, we will together discern and provide input to Diocesan Council what future conversation forums may be valuable. A written report of the proceedings will be provided to all participants within seven days of the meeting.

Please do read the Doctrine Commission essays before your come. You can download them for free [here](#) (link to Diocesan Website)

Pre-registration is essential.

Clergy may register here

Laity may register here

I am personally looking forward to participating in and deeply listening in these conversations. I look forward to hearing what you have to say.