

## **Letter from the Archbishops**

22 July 2020

To: All Members of General Synod

### **Ref: Special Session of General Synod on 24 September 2020**

Standing Order 2(6)(b), provides that in circumstances of special urgency or importance, the Presidents of the General Synod may summon a special session.

We consider that such circumstances exist. It is not practically possible at present to hold a group of sessions in the usual way and we do not know when it will be again possible to do so. Nor is it currently possible, under the Synod's Constitution and Standing Orders, for the Synod to transact business remotely. There is important business which the Synod must transact before the end of this year. This includes the approval by the General Synod of the Archbishops' Council's budget for 2021, which is a statutory requirement under the National Institutions Measure 1998, and the approval of Fees Orders for 2021. Other business the Synod needs to address without delay includes amending safeguarding legislation to take account of recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and the giving of final approval to the Cathedrals Measure.

For those reasons, we need legislation that will enable the Synod to meet and transact business remotely should it still not be possible by November for it to meet in the usual way. The Government has not been able to make time for this in Parliament. We therefore need to legislate by Measure and are summoning a special session of the General Synod for this purpose on **Thursday 24 September 2020**.

This meeting will be held physically at Church House, London. Although no Synod member can be denied admission to this meeting, we will in practice hope to work with the three Houses to ensure that only a quorum-plus of members need attend to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements.

The only business we envisage being on the agenda for the special session is a draft Measure to enable the Synod to meet and conduct business remotely. It is proposed that all stages of the Measure would be taken at the special session. We do not expect to have any other business at this meeting, even urgent business outlined above. These items will be taken to the November Group of Sessions.

Members will receive further details, including the draft Measure, from the Synod Office in due course.

Archbishop of Canterbury

Archbishop of York

Presidents of the General Synod