



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit

Module 7.1 Sexual Orientation

REMINDER

Theological reflections on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

A *Theological Reflections on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* document is provided separately. All participants should have a copy of this when they attend their first session. It does not need to be considered in detail every time, but participants should be introduced to it at least once, and made aware that this is the starting point for all our work on EDI issues in the Methodist Church.

Module 7

Contents

Module 7 has two parts:

7.1 Sexual orientation (In this booklet.)

Opening worship

EXPLORE (key information, learning points and activities)

EXTEND (for further study or personal reflection)

Closing worship

Appendices (separate publications)

- *Homophobia: Definition and Guidance*
 - Living with contradictory convictions worship resources (challenging conversations)
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7.2 Welcoming same-sex couples and their families

(This is set out in a separate book as an enrichment module, specifically requested by the Methodist Conference in 2014.)

Opening worship

EXPLORE (key information, learning points and activities)

APPLY and REFLECT

(Case studies)

EXTEND (for further study or personal reflection)

Closing worship

Appendices

Activity 1 – Different perspectives on marriage

Activity 2 – We are family

Module 7.1

Sexual Orientation

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EXTEND (for further study or personal reflection)

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2. Being biblical
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Closing worship

Appendices

(separate publications available on the Methodist Church website)

- *Homophobia: Definition and Guidance*
- *Challenging Conversations* – A worship resource to support *Living with Contradictory Convictions*

Opening worship

Thanks for friends who keep on loving
Singing the Faith 619

The Holy Spirit is poured out in unanticipated ways
Acts 10:9-16, 44-48

Prayer

Lord God, who greets us anew
in the change and challenge of each day,
grant us insight to recognise you at work,
stillness to hear you speaking to us
through the events of this day,
and courage to respond.
Amen.

(Ian White)

EXPLORE

1 Context and introductory activity

Context

The aim of this module is to consider how to continue in the 'pilgrimage of faith', in which the Methodist Church recognises, affirms and celebrates the participation and ministry of lesbians and gay men in the Church. The approach is through people's stories and thinking about our own experiences, including how we live with a diversity of views within the Church. We have opportunity to consider those points in Church life where we need to be particularly aware of how discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people impacts on individuals and on the life of the Church.

Introductory activity – listening to each other

Learning objective

The purpose of this exercise is to develop participants as listeners rather than talkers. There may be differences of opinion and you may need to help participants to see that they live with differences of opinion all the time. This is important because the Bible is interpreted and understood differently by people who support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality and those who disagree. Both sides use the Bible, and the Church has not resolved this difference of view – but the Church does expect people to respect others.

This introductory activity should take about half an hour and every member of the group needs to have time to speak, but also to hear at least two other speakers. So it is recommended that people work in teams of three or four.

Individually, think of a situation where you have encountered disagreement. This could be something you have experienced or observed. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the experience by yourself. If it helps, jot down a few notes. Examples could be differences of view between family and friends about:

- Should the chairs in church be arranged in rows or in a circle?
- Should junior church be before, after or at the same time as the Sunday morning service?
- Should there be more wind farms?
- Should we get rid of all weapons?
- Diet, such as vegetarians versus meat eaters.
- A political/ethical question like: how to reduce a budget deficit, whether all pensioners should get a winter fuel allowance, whether all school children should have free school meals, what is the boundary between free speech and being offensive.
- Should we ban smoking?

Then, in their small teams, each person tells their story of this encounter/experience – especially how they felt about the disagreement and whether or not they could learn to live with the difference of opinion. The other members listen and make no comment whilst the story of the disagreement is being told.

The person who told the story then remains quiet while the others in the team say in turn what struck them about the story and any thoughts and questions that arose for them whilst they were listening. Team members should not comment while each person is giving their thoughts.

When everyone has spoken and given feedback, the team reflects together on the experience of the listening exercise. Talk about what you learned from it and how that might be applied positively in how you consider the rest of this module.

As a team, try to identify two or three issues where:

- views once commonly held have changed over time
- there is no agreement on what is right, so people have agreed to disagree.

2 The journey to date: living with contradictory convictions

When we consider Scripture we find that on some subjects, such as marriage and sexuality, there is a diverse and changing range of views and there is a wide range of ways in which Christians understand and interpret Scripture. This prompts a great deal of reflection for the Church, and we 'live with contradictory convictions'. In short, there are some things where we disagree and have agreed to disagree for the time being, but to do so with respect for other people and their understanding of the Bible.

In terms of employment, and in the provision of goods and services, it is illegal (under the Equality Act 2010) to discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation – ie whether they are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual. The law allows religious/faith organisations to opt out of some parts of the Equality Act in relation to employing people for religious purposes (eg ministers, priests, rabbis, pastoral workers), but not for secular purposes (eg administrators, accountants, kitchen staff).

The 1993 Conference Resolutions on human sexuality are:

1. The Conference, affirming the joy of human sexuality as God's gift and the place of every human being within the grace of God, recognises the responsibility that flows from this for us all. It therefore welcomes the serious, prayerful and sometimes costly consideration given to this issue by the Methodist Church.
2. All practices of sexuality which are promiscuous, exploitative or demeaning in any way are unacceptable forms of behaviour and contradict God's purpose for us all.
3. A person shall not be debarred from church on the grounds of sexual orientation in itself.
4. The Conference reaffirms the traditional teaching of the Church on human sexuality; namely chastity for all outside marriage and fidelity within it. The Conference directs that this affirmation is made clear to all candidates for ministry, office and membership, and having established this, affirms that the existing procedures of our Church are adequate to deal with all such cases.
5. The Conference resolves that its decisions in this debate shall not be used to form the basis of a disciplinary charge against any person in relation to conduct alleged to have taken place before such decisions were made.
6. That the Methodist Church recognises, affirms and celebrates the participation and ministry of lesbians and gay men in the Church. The Conference calls on the Methodist people to begin a pilgrimage of faith to combat repression and discrimination, to work for justice and human rights and to give dignity and worth to people, whatever their sexuality.

3 Homophobia

In 2000, the Conference passed a resolution from the Youth Conference Report: “The Methodist Conference, with the Methodist Youth Conference, unequivocally states that homophobia is unacceptable and reaffirms our Church's openness and inclusivity.” In 2014, the Conference resolved that further work be done to define homophobia and provide guidance on how to deal with homophobia. A definition and guidance was produced in 2015, a copy of which is provided with this toolkit. It can also be found online at www.methodist.org.uk/homophobiaguidance.

4 Civil partnerships and same-sex marriage

In 2006, as part of the ongoing ‘pilgrimage of faith’ for the whole Church, the Conference agreed that it is not possible, in the light of the 1993 Resolutions, to use Methodist premises for the purposes of blessing same-sex civil partnerships. In 2008, the Conference resolved that in the light of the findings of its consultation, it was not the time to review the Resolutions on Human Sexuality. However, the Conference also resolved that there was no reason per se why a Methodist (either ordained or lay) may not form a civil partnership. Additionally, in light of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, in July 2013 the Methodist Conference set up a working group on same-sex marriage and civil partnerships to consider whether the Methodist Church's position on marriage needs revising in light of changes in society, undertaking this consideration with reference to Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. The working group reported to the Conference in 2014. The working party's recommendations focused chiefly on the pastoral implications of the new same-sex-marriage provisions. The Conference reaffirmed the 1993 Resolutions on Human Sexuality and, whilst resolving that it was not possible for there to be the blessing of same-sex marriages on Methodist premises, agreed that there should be an appropriate pastoral response. Ministers in consultation with Church Councils, may (but are not required to) consider requests and offer the prayers, thanksgiving and pastoral support for those entering civil partnerships and/or legally formed same-sex marriages. The Conference also agreed that, as with civil partnerships, there was no reason per se why a Methodist (either ordained or lay) may not enter a legally formed same-sex marriage.

1. On the matter of marriage in church for same-sex couples, the 2014 Conference agreed that a time of listening and reflection was needed over the next two years to hear and understand better the differing views on same-sex marriage; in the meantime, the Methodist Church would not ‘opt in’ to having same-sex marriage in church (as the law permits) at this time. In 2016, the Conference directed that the Church's Statement on Marriage and Relationships should be reviewed with a Relationships Task Group to take this matter forward with the support of the Connexional Team and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. There was a strong desire across the whole Conference that these conversations be conducted with the same grace and prayerfulness that Conference itself experienced in its own discussions.

APPLY and REFLECT

1 Case studies

This section contains case studies for you to reflect on in small teams.

Each team should consider at least two of the stories. If possible, all of the stories should be looked at by at least one team. There will be an opportunity to offer feedback to the whole group.

Each of these is a true story, although names and some details have been changed to maintain anonymity.

At the end of the stories, there are questions for you to consider. It may be helpful to refer back to the SCIP classification in the Introductory Module. Here is a headline reminder of the SCIP classification:

- **Structural** – eg legal and political structures, policies, committees etc
- **Cultural** – the cultural norms of a group or society, commonly held views
- **Institutional** – practices, how things are done
- **Personal** – personal behaviours and practices

Before you read the stories

2. Think of a time when you or someone you know felt welcomed and had a sense of belonging in church. Write down the words and emotions to describe how you/they felt.
3. Think of a time when you or someone you know felt unwelcomed or did not belong in church. Write down the words and emotions to describe how you/they felt.

Christine's story

Christine is in her 40s. She trained as a local preacher, having sensed a call to preach at MethSoc while at university. She has always felt confused about her identity, worried that the way she felt about some women was contrary to the Bible's teaching.

She served as a mission partner in Africa and this took her away from the challenges of liberal Western life. It gave a purpose to her singleness and she loved the work.

Back in the UK, Christine is really torn about her feelings. She would like to have a partner to ease her loneliness, but is not sure whether her liking for a friend, John, is enough to get married. She finds Halima's company more exciting, but prays that she will not be tempted by this. She wishes she could have an honest conversation with her minister, but doubts whether he would understand her dilemma.

Questions

Experience

- What is preventing Christine having an honest conversation with her minister? What might she be worried about, especially as she is still working out for herself how she feels?

Learning and action

- How could the Church create a 'safe space' for people to speak about their feelings, where they can feel they are not judged?

Martin's story

Martin is single, in his 70s and looks after his increasingly frail mother. He's always been a Christian and has served as a Methodist junior church teacher for over 20 years. He became aware of being gay in his teens, but couldn't admit it to himself, let alone anyone else. He became challenged to face his sexuality in his 50s, through debates in his trade union meetings and the reports of the 1993 Methodist Conference. He serves as a circuit secretary and the circuit staff are far more interested in his clear and promptly produced minutes than his sexuality.

Questions

Experience and learning

- What prompted Martin to face his sexuality?
- How might other lesbian, gay or bisexual people be affected by the current conversations in Methodism? How would you know?

Action

- How could the church create a 'safe space' for lesbian, gay and bisexual people to speak from their experience?

Moira's story

Moira is in her mid-30s. She is a lay employee working in three churches. She is openly in a civil partnership of eight years, which is accepted and supported by the congregations she works for. However, her ecumenical colleagues have been undermining and bullying both her and members of one of the Methodist churches. By effectively refusing to work with Moira or her church members, these colleagues make one of the church mission projects very difficult to manage. Moira is uncertain as to where she can turn for help.

Questions

Experience

- Are 'bullying' and 'undermining' Christian behaviours?
- Within Methodism, who or what is failing Moira?

Learning

- What is the effect of leaving Moira unsupported? Specifically, how might this affect her, the members of her church and the wider mission of the church?

Action

- How can Moira be supported?
- What support and procedures are in place if you became aware of someone being bullied? How could you/we ensure such support and procedures work for lesbian, gay and bisexual people?

Robin's story

Robin is in his 30s, an only child of Christian parents. He grew up in a conservative Methodist church and while at school had no support, because of Section 28*. While he was at college, he had major struggles with his sexuality and the Church's teaching. Fortunately, an understanding chaplain helped him understand God's unconditional love and he was later confirmed. Robin introduced his boyfriend David to their local Methodist church, but they now attend the Metropolitan Community Church in the city centre. Unlike the Methodist church, it supports their household and has a Sunday school that David's two children enjoy.

Questions

Experience

- If we say that we affirm lesbian and gay people in the life of the Methodist Church, why does Robin no longer attend?

Learning

- How affirming of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people is your church? How do you know?

Action

- What could you/your church do to demonstrate that LGB people are welcome?

* **Section 28** of the Local Government Act 1988 prohibited local authorities from "promoting" homosexuality or gay relationships as a "normal family relationship". It prevented councils spending money on educational materials and projects perceived to promote a gay lifestyle.

Peter's story

As a result of family and social pressures, Peter married, because acting on being gay was still a criminal act when he was growing up. In spite of much effort and counselling, the marriage broke down. Mainly because of the trauma and the effect his divorce had on church members, Peter withdrew from all church activities (except church attendance) and was single for the following eight years. Then Peter met a younger Christian member of the armed forces who attended the same church. Gradually a love grew between them, such that they made a commitment to each other and began building a home together. They have lived together for 14 years in a loving, monogamous relationship.

Questions

Experience and learning

- What kind of cultural expectations does society, church and family place on young people? And, in Peter's case, what were the consequences of that?

Action

- What could you/your church do to support young people to understand their feelings?

Richard's story

Richard responded to an urgent request for volunteers to share in leadership of the church youth group. A single man in his late 20s, Richard had recently moved into the area and joined the church. His offer was accepted once a clear DBS check had been received and safeguarding procedures and training completed. After a few months, one parent visited the minister to say that he and a number of parents had learnt that Richard was gay. These parents no longer wanted Richard to be involved in the Christian care and nurture of children and young people. The minister felt conflicted as to how to proceed.

Questions

Experience

- What false assumptions/conclusions have been made about Richard?
- How would you feel if such assumptions were made about you or a member of your family?

Learning

- What should the minister do? Who can help?

Action

- What could you/your church do to ensure that homophobic assumptions are recognised and changed?

Grace's story

Grace is in her 70s and a retired deacon. For almost 50 years, she had a faithful relationship with Pam, another deacon. They managed to keep together despite lots of miles travelling to see each other on Saturdays. They never formally spoke to anyone of their relationship, but Sarah realised how much they meant to each other when she helped Grace look after Pam in her last months of a terminal illness. Grace found the funeral service very difficult. It was organised by Pam's sister, who hardly knew Grace. She was just mentioned as a kindly fellow deacon who'd nursed Pam at the end.

Questions

Experience and learning

- What would it feel like if your relationship/marriage was not acknowledged?
- How could Sarah have supported Grace?

Action

- What could you/your church do to ensure that lesbian and gay people's perspectives are acknowledged and listened to?

Matt's story

Matt is 40, and grew up in a Christian household. He married when he was 21. He has a very conservative understanding of the Bible and feels that marriage can only be between one man and one woman. He also disagrees with remarriage after divorce and considers that people should not have relationships outside of marriage. Matt worries that if the Church decides to agree to same-sex marriage, his relationship with the church he grew up in will be damaged. More than that, he is concerned that if his understanding of the Bible is not respected, then his relationship with God may suffer.

Questions

Experience and learning

- What is Matt concerned about in this story?
- How might people like Matt be feeling over current discussions about reviewing the Church's statement on marriage and relationships?

Action

- What could you/your church do to show that people like Matt are listened to?
- And what could you/your church do to help members live with contradictory convictions?

Bill's story

From an early age, Bill recognised that he was attracted to people of the same sex. Having grown up in an evangelical church, this created a struggle through his teenage years as to who he was and what was expected of him. At university, he joined another evangelical Methodist church and recognised his need to share his story. Plucking up courage he found a minister who provided a 'safe space' to discuss his sexuality and encouraged him to be honest with his parents. After their initial shock, they expressed and continue to express their love for their son for who he is. Their son's minister put his parents in touch with a colleague who helped them in their own spiritual journey as they came to terms with Bill's sexuality. Bill chose to let a group of friends know he was gay and his choice to lead a life of singleness. They became a group of friends with whom he continues to share his struggles, loneliness, joys and hopes.

Questions

Experience and learning

- Why was it important to Bill for him to be open and honest about his sexuality?

Action

- What could you/your church do to ensure that lesbian and gay people's perspectives are acknowledged and listened to?

Jessica's story

Jessica has been married for 20 years and sincerely doesn't believe she is homophobic. She doesn't agree with same-sex marriage in church. Based on her understanding of the Bible, her view of marriage is traditional and she feels strongly that its purpose is to ensure that children are brought up by their biological parents. Jessica feels that people who intend to have children should marry and all others should be celibate. If same-sex marriage is allowed, Jessica feels it will reduce the status of all marriages, including her own.

Questions

Experience and learning

- What is Jessica concerned about in this story?
- How might people like Jessica be feeling about the current conversations about marriage and relationships?

Action

- What could you/your church do to help members live with contradictory convictions?

2 Summary and questions

Thinking about your answers to the questions and issues raised in the case studies, you should now reflect on:

- **what you have learnt**
- **what the stories might mean in your church**
- **what you will do.**

Summary

The Methodist Church recognises and affirms lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the life and ministry of the Church.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people:

- experience their sexual orientation as an authentic and integral part of their identity
- often face hostility from other people whose attitude to them is a barrier to authentic debate
- often feel invisible, isolated or unsupported in church because their identity as LGB people is often ignored or not acknowledged.

In recognising a wide diversity in how Christians understand Scripture in relation to sexual orientation, we are called upon to:

- acknowledge this diversity
- believe that Christ called us to strive to live together
- realise that this can only be done by reliance on the grace of God to enable mutual respect, love and continuing exploration together
- recognise that these views are held as deep convictions
- acknowledge that those who are called to Christ are done so through God's calling rather than personal choosing
- agree to continue to explore these differences in the light, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through our pilgrimage of faith.

Questions

Experience

- What is your experience of the Church dealing with issues of sexuality and sexual orientation?
- To what extent do labels matter to God?
- In what areas of your life would you feel it was acceptable to talk about sexuality/sexual orientation? In what areas would you consider it taboo?

Learning

- What structural, cultural, institutional or personal issues are there for the people in these stories?
- How might assumptions about lesbian, gay and bisexual people impact on individuals and on the mission of the Church?
- How might you and/or your church community help and support the person/people in the stories?
- How are you able to worship alongside members of the church who hold different and contradictory convictions to your own on sexual orientation?

Action

- What could your church do to recognise, affirm and celebrate lesbians and gay men in Church life?

EXTEND

For further study or personal reflection. Keep for use with other modules.

Contents

1. Diversity of views
2. Being biblical
3. Being theological

1 Diversity of views

Within the Church, there is a diversity of views on sexual orientation. A few days before the 1993 resolutions were adopted, the then President of the Conference summarised the range of views held within the Church in these words:

“For some it seems clear, on the basis of biblical teaching, that intimate sexual practices between persons of the same sex are forbidden ... for others it seems equally clear that the biblical doctrines of creation and grace, and modern insights into the nature of sexuality, call for an acceptance of such practices when they occur in the context of deeply committed relationships of love.”

(Methodist Recorder, 17 June 1993).

Reflect

- Some people feel that the debate on human sexuality is the wrong focus and receives too much attention.
- Some people feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it concerns biblical witness.
- Some people feel that this debate is a necessary focus because it is a matter of God’s unbounded grace and that this is an issue of justice.

In recognising the wide diversity of views, we:

- acknowledge this diversity
- believe that Christ called us to strive to live together
- realise that this can only be done by reliance on the grace of God to enable mutual respect, love and continuing exploration together
- recognise that these views are held as deep convictions
- acknowledge that those who are called to Christ are so through God’s calling rather than personal choosing
- agree to continue to explore these differences in the light, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through our pilgrimage of faith.

Questions

- Were you aware of the Methodist Conference Resolutions on human sexuality?
- Which positions are represented in your congregation?
- How might you ensure that the Conference resolutions are known within your congregation?

2 Being biblical

The biblical passages that apparently speak directly about same-sex activity are:

- Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13
- Genesis 19 (refers to gang rape and inhospitality to strangers)
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- 1 Timothy 1:10
- Romans 1:26-27

Different commentators respond to these differently. Some argue that:

1. These texts are speaking about sexual activity between two men or two women and therefore relate to activity today. If these texts are clear, then same-sex sexual activity is condemned.
2. These texts need to be understood in the very different context in which they were written. For example, Genesis 19 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are not referring to mutually loving same-sex relationships, but are challenging the ways in which sex was used as a way of exerting power over people, or even as part of a pagan religious ritual. The passages were challenging any circumstances where sex happens without love, or without consent.

These two perspectives are developed further on the next page and are presented as a dialogue.

Commentator 1	Commentator 2
<p>These texts are speaking about sexual activity between two men or two women and therefore relate to activity today. If these texts are clear, then same-sex sexual activity is condemned.</p>	<p>These texts need to be understood in the very different context in which they were written (eg Genesis 19 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are not referring to mutually loving same-sex relationships, but are challenging the ways in which sex was used as a way of exerting power over people, or even as part of a pagan religious ritual. The passages were challenging any circumstances where sex happens without love or without consent).</p>
<p>Jesus affirms heterosexual, monogamous marriage, though as far as we know he did not marry.</p>	<p>Jesus is silent regarding any same-sex sexual activity.</p>
<p>Out of all the apparently specific Bible references to homosexuality, every one is negative regarding its practice.</p>	<p>There are many other things prohibited within the Old Testament that we do not think of as problematic today. Examples include eating certain animals (Deuteronomy 14:3-5), or charging interest on loans, (Deuteronomy 23:19).</p>
<p>A discomfort with homosexuality resurfaces in the new covenant (New Testament) and is articulated in three new separate references. While the New Testament makes it clear that the ritual requirements of the law are now superseded in Christ (Acts 10:9 – 15), the moral law remains intact and in fact is reiterated forcibly.</p>	<p>The same-sex activity that would have been known in the time of the New Testament Church was embedded in Roman and Greek culture and was often sex between men and young boys, or with temple prostitutes and therefore idolatrous. Loving, stable relationships between two people of the same sex were not known (or at least not acknowledged) and therefore cannot be condemned by these texts.</p> <p>And because the context of life in the world was so different when these texts were written, these texts do not speak authoritatively for today about same-sex relationships.</p>

Another perspective

Idolatry, promiscuity and shrine prostitution are what Paul is addressing in Romans 1, not same-sex relationships between faithful and committed partners.

Exegesis and hermeneutics are two essential tools for understanding the Bible. Exegesis is a critical explanation of the written text: for example, looking at the genre, structure and meaning of its words and phrases, sentences and paragraphs and seeking to describe and reflect on them. Hermeneutics refers to theories of interpretation, ie how we understand and make meaning from the Bible.

In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Paul writes: “Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”

“It’s cultural” we say. But, if that’s the case, why is the issue of the role of women regarded as ‘cultural’ by so many, while homosexuality isn’t?

Questions

- How do you respond to the different ways of reading these texts?
- How do you relate to those people who read them differently to you?

3 Being theological

As well as thinking about the specific biblical texts, there are some wider issues within our faith that help us to think about same-sex relationships. We do theology whenever we talk about God (that is literally what theology means – ‘God talk’). So, what is it that the Bible and the teaching of the Church throughout the centuries tell us about being Christian? Again, different commentators point to different aspects of the Christian story.

Some theologians think in different ways and might stress the following:

<p>That in creating human beings ‘male and female’ God intends men and women to complement one another by getting married and this is the pattern of Christian life in relationships.</p> <p>That the Church is called to a holiness of living which calls it to live differently from the surrounding culture.</p> <p>That God intends human beings to procreate, while same-sex relationships are, by definition, infertile.</p>	<p>That God calls people to a variety of different ways of living, some to marriage, some single (like Jesus) and others to same-sex relationships. The Bible does not stipulate one set way of living.</p> <p>Jesus has broken down identities such as male and female, slave and free, Jew and Gentile and sexual orientation is like this.</p> <p>That God’s grace is always including people who have been marginalised by society. It is a matter of justice.</p>
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Questions

- What for you are the big themes of the Christian story? What do they say to you about how the Church might understand same-sex relationships?
- How do you deal with living in a Church where other people profoundly disagree with you and what can we all do going forward?

Closing worship

1 John 4:7-21

Prayer

Day by day, dear Lord,
of thee three things I pray:
to see thee more clearly,
to love thee more dearly,
to follow thee more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.

(Attributed to St Richard of Chichester, *StF* 444)

Let love be real, in giving and receiving
Singing the Faith 615