

Some helpful Resources for receiving the gifts of LGBTQIA+ people



Stories

This resources list begins with LGBTQIA+ people's experience, not least LGBTQIA+ faith experience and theology, as this needs to be prioritised in any genuine Christian exploration of issues concerning their lives and bodies. Stories and persons, rather than proof texts, are also central to the Christian Gospel. Nothing is so liberating for LGBTQIA+ people and the Church as fully respectful, safe and empowering conversation leading to both better understanding and affirming action. Here are some starters from various parts of the world, including Australia. As with other resources below, particular contributions from within the Anglican Communion have been especially highlighted, but there are many others which could be included (including some close at hand, sometimes 'hidden in plain view')...

Video stories:

All One in Christ

- a short (9 mins) but excellent Iris in the Community 2016 documentary sharing Welsh Anglican stories from *Changing Attitude Trawsnewid Agwedd Cymru*, the Welsh national body campaigning for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the life of the Anglican Communion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpvfBJOrdRw>

Beyond Inclusion: Part One – Lizzie Lowe's Story

- a member of the St James' Didsbury Church of England congregation, Lizzie Lowe took her own life on 10th September 2014 because she didn't know how to be a Christian and gay. The Rector, Nicholas Bundock, speaks with Revd John Bell of the Iona Community about Lizzie and her legacy on their church. The video also has some reflective questions for church groups at the end. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Wz2ylsz9-l>

Beyond Inclusion: Part Two – John Bell's Story

- renowned hymn/songwriter, liturgist and Church of Scotland Minister, John Bell of the Iona Community heard about Lizzie Lowe's death in 2017 and decided it was time to speak about his gay sexuality publicly. In this film he is interviewed by Revd Nicholas Bundock from Lizzie's church. There are questions at the end for church groups.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFiRF4jKneg>

Devout and Out: A series about openly LGBTQ church leaders

- a Canadian (CBC) series, featuring four LGBT church leaders' stories: Each episode follows one person, documenting their journey as they navigate their sexuality, identity and faith, as well as their relationship with their churches and with God.

https://www.cbc.ca/shortdocs/m_shorts/devout-out-a-series-about-openly-lgbtq-church-leaders

Pip's story – A queer priest on leaving his evangelical church and making faith more inclusive

- an openly LGBTQ priest working in the Anglican Church in Toronto, Pip grew up in a conservative Christian family and went through multiple rounds of conversion therapy to "fix" his sexuality. In his 20s, he married his best friend Kris (a woman), and they had two children. After several years, Pip and Kris could no longer keep living a lie. They decided to divorce — and were excommunicated from their faith community. Today, Pip, Kris and their family have found a home in an Anglican inclusive faith community, where queer identities are included and celebrated.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8U1TqvREtAQ>

Growing Up Gay and Christian - Welcome to The Gathering

-part 4 of *Growing Up Gay & Christian* shares some of the story of The Gathering, a lively fully LGBT affirming church of young people, featuring Delyth Liddell, chaplain of Cardiff University, Methodist minister, and leader.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stq7 YnwTLE>

Here I Am

- a warmly recommended Australian documentary (35 mins), including several southern Queenslanders: in which parents, children, partners, couples and supporting pastors and psychologists speak from the heart about the experience of coming out in a Christian environment and the responses. They discuss the importance of faith, the difficulties of coming out in families and the church, solutions to the problems, their best advice for others, and most importantly hope for the future. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSjAan3OuJA>

Just As I Am: LGBT Clergy in the Church of England

-LGBT clergy in the Church of England share some of their stories, and complex relationships with the Church, in this 2019 documentary by Journeyman Pictures:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9b5s_8rGEk

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/7570/just-as-i-am>

Out of the Box (Episcopal Church video with downloadable study guides)

- an introduction to transgender Anglicans and their faith understandings:

<http://integrityusa.org/ootb>

Why I chose my LGBTQ daughter over my Evangelical church

- in this heart-warming TED talk, Susan Cottrell (a former evangelical church leader and founder of *Freed Hearts*) explains how she chose to support her LGBTQ child, the struggles of others, and how she fights for progress inside the Christian Church and the huge difference it makes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rP01bH9Ljf4>

other helpful publications include:

LGBT stories in Brisbane Pride 2019 edition of The Eagle (the magazine of St John's Cathedral Brisbane)

https://www.equalvoicesanglican.org/uploads/2/5/8/6/25866243/%CE%A4he_eagle_aug19---compressed.pdf

Dazzling Darkness

by Canon Rachael Mann (Wild Goose Publications 2012)

- a beautiful written, moving and theologically insightful book about searching for one's authentic self in the company of the Living God: including the author's account of her gender identity journey, as well as coming to terms with chronic illness and disability. This passionate and nuanced book brings together poetry, feminist theology, and philosophy, and explores them through prayerful hunger for wholeness, self-knowledge and God.

Just Love: A Journey of Self-Acceptance

by Jayne Ozanne (2018)

- the autobiography of a leading lay member of the Church of England and one of most widely-respected lesbian Christians in the UK. Her journey incorporates a range of powerful faith encounters with people across the world, giving an inside view of what it was to be a founding member of the Church of England's Archbishops' Council and to work alongside international figures such as Tony Blair and the Vicar of Baghdad. Jayne explains what led her to be hospitalised after seeking healing for her sexuality, before becoming ostracised by many Christians after finally deciding she had no choice but to come out. Her story serves as a lifeline for LGBTI Christians struggling to reconcile their faith with their sexuality, and asks the Church to reflect on the impact of its current teaching.

Queer and Catholic: A life of contradiction

by Mark Dowd (DLT 2017)

- a fine memoir, written by award winning UK journalist and broadcaster Mark Dowd, former head of the Catholic LGBT organisation Quest, of a life lived fully as a Roman Catholic, and authentically gay.

Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays vs. Christians Debate

by Justin Lee (2012)

-the founder of the Gay Christian Network recounts his journey from a Southern Baptist home where he was convinced that the Bible clearly condemned homosexual sex, to conviction that God blesses same-sex unions. Lee identifies as an evangelical who believes the gospel to be "a personal relationship with Jesus and salvation through his death and resurrection."

Theological/academic resources

NB: the field is very large and it is frustrating that the now truly considerable corpus of careful informed LGBTIQ+ affirming literature too often continues to be overlooked in contrast to revisiting well-trodden tracks. Among other helpful and accessible recent contributions, the following may however provide some introduction to this very substantial work of several decades..

some downloadable resources:

An Invitation to the Feast: A positive biblical approach to equal marriage

-an excellent article by the Revd Simon Taylor, Canon Chancellor of Derby Cathedral, first published in *Modern Believing*. <https://www.cofe-equal-marriage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/resources/an-invitation-to-the-feast-a-positive-biblical-approach-to-equal-marriage.pdf>

The Body's Grace

by the Rt Revd Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury

- Rowan Williams delivered the 10th Michael Harding lecture (of the Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement) back in 1989, but it remains a ground-breaking text on faith and sexuality. It is now available as an electronic download at <https://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk/shop/the-bodys-grace-pdf-download/>

Chicago Consultation papers

- since 2007, the Chicago Consultation (of Episcopal & Anglican bishops, clergy & laity) has produced and collected resources that make the case, scripturally and theologically, for the full inclusion of all baptised Christians in the life and leadership of the Church, including papers from Africa and the Asia-Pacific region.

see further: <https://www.chicagoconsultation.org/?cat=4>

Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia

by the Doctrine Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia (Broughton 2019)

- an important document but uneven in both quality and argument, particularly sadly marred by the absence of contributions from open and affirming LGBTIQA+ people. However the following very valuable scholarly essays are very well worth reading: 'A response: an alternative reading of the BCP' by Matthew Anstey; 'Scripture and Moral Reasoning' by Matthew Anstey; 'How does the Old Testament help us to think about marriage and same-sex marriage?' by Meg Warner; 'Marriage, headship and the New Testament' by Dorothy Lee; 'Christian marriage: a concise history' by Muriel Porter; and 'The case for same-sex marriage' by Matthew Anstey.

<https://www.broughtonpublishing.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/marriagedoctrineessays.pdf>

A Queer Anglican Response to 'Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage & the Anglican Church of Australia'

by the Revd Dr Josephine Inkpin, Lecturer at St Francis College Brisbane, & national board member Equal Voices

https://www.equalvoicesanglican.org/uploads/2/5/8/6/25866243/two_gaping_chasms_and_an_invitation_to_w_holeness.pdf

some other helpful books & publications:

A Place at His Table

by Joel Hollier (Cascade Books, 2019)

- an important recent Sydney gay conservative evangelical affirming resource, providing exegetical chapters with a contextualizing of the current discussion and, towards the end, suggestions for how the Church, and LGBT+ Christians, might move forward.

Changing Our Mind

by David P. Gushee (2014)

- a call to the Church, by a leading Evangelical ethicist, to revise its position on homosexuality. The book (engaging with contemporary scholarship but in a non-technical way) outlines the author's journey from conservative evangelical opposition to welcoming other sex/gendered partnerships on the same basis as those of heterosexuals – lifelong, covenantal relationships.

Christian Holiness and Human Sexuality

(ed) Gary Hall & Ruth Meyers (Church Publishing Incorporated, 2011, New York)

- a guide by Episcopalian scholars for the Chicago Consultation, to how all Christians can exercise their baptismal vocation in the fullness of their sexual identity. How can we combine sexual expression with Christian holiness? Looked at afresh, what guidance do Christian biblical, historical, theological, ethical, and liturgical traditions give provide? <https://www.churchpublishing.org/christianholinessandhumansexuality>

Found Out: Transgressive faith and sexuality

by Alison Webster (DLT 2018)

- an acclaimed exploration based on the experiences of women whose spiritual lives have developed and

flourished outside the strict expectations of the traditional Church. Through such marginalised and transgressive voices, and informed academic critique, fresh language is found for making sense of life, speaking of God and spirituality.

More Perfect Union

by Rt Revd Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham (2014)

- a clearly-written book analysing the arguments for and against the marriage of same-gender couples in the Church, concluding unequivocally that the Churches should accept and celebrate equal marriage.

Permanent, Faithful, Stable

by the Very Revd Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans (2012)

- exploring the meaning and context of the mentions of homosexuality in the Bible and the moral arguments, before offering guidance to same-sex couples on forming lasting, covenanted, monogamous relationship. The newest edition also contains a critique of the Church of England's sad failure to move more positively in support of affirmation.

Queer Virtue: What LGBTQ People Know About Life and Love and How It Can Revitalize Christianity

by the Revd Elizabeth Edman, Episcopal priest, ethicist & theologian (Beacon Press 2018)

- an encouraging and welcome book which affirms that Christianity, at its scriptural core, far from being hostile to queer people, is itself inherently queer and queer people can help vitally rejuvenate Christianity in the contemporary world. Pushing well past the notion that "Christian love = tolerance," Edman urges that queer experience be celebrated as inherently valuable, ethically virtuous, and illuminating the sacred.

QSpirit

- the stimulating and information website of lesbian author and minister Kittredge Cherry, sharing and promoting the rich field of LGBTQ theology, spirituality, art and creativity. <http://qspirit.net>

Radical Love: an introduction to queer theology

by Patrick Cheng, Episcopal priest and seminary professor (Church Publishing, Seabury NY, 2011)

- lucidly introduces queer theology and historical surveys its development from the 1950s and its enriching of theology. With the ecumenical creeds as a framework, topics include revelation, God, creation, Jesus Christ, atonement, sin, grace, Holy Spirit, church, sacraments, & last things, seen through the lenses of LGBT theologians.

Reasonable and Holy

by Tobias Haller, an Episcopal priest & theologian (2009)

- a clear and thorough examination of the case for marriage equality in the light of Scripture, tradition and reason, primarily concerned with how the marriage equality fits well within the Christian understanding of marriage.

Sex and Uncertainty in the Body of Christ

by Dr Susannah Cornwell (Routledge, 2010)

- a landmark examination of the constructive Christian theological & ethical implications of the existence and treatment of intersex people.

Theology and Sexuality

by Dr Susannah Cornwell (SCM, 2013)

- a core student-friendly textbook providing a clear overview of the theological debate surrounding sexuality as broadly understood, focusing on key thinkers, concepts, and areas of discussion. Aimed at theology students studying at undergraduate and MA level who are undertaking modules on theology and sexuality, gender, sex and the human body, it is also accessible to all wishing to engage with issues of sexuality in congregations. The use of extensive glossaries, breakout definitions and examples makes the book accessible to those with little existing knowledge of contemporary debates. Included are chapters on definitions of sexuality, sexuality in the Christian tradition, Christian approaches to marriage, celibacy and virginity, transgender and intersex and same-sex issues.

This is My Body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians

(ed) Christina Beardsley & Michelle O'Brien (DLT 2016)

- a landmark book sharing the voices of transgender Christians themselves and reviewing current theological, cultural and scientific literature.

some resources for small group study

Booklets:

Sexuality – by Dr Susannah Cornwall (Director of the Exeter (university) Centre for Ethics & Practical Theology)

<https://www.inclusive-church.org/resources/inclusive-church-books>

from the *Inclusive Church (UK) Resource book series*

(each book has an introduction, theological reflection, stories from lived experience & a practical resource section):

Christian Holiness and Human Sexuality (Chicago Consultation, see more info above)

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/christianholinessandhumansexuality>

Video:

Here I Am

- warmly recommended Australian documentary (35 mins), including several southern Queenslanders: in which parents, children, partners, couples and supporting pastors and psychologists speak from the heart about the experience of coming out in a Christian environment and the responses. They discuss the importance of faith, the difficulties of coming out in families and the church, solutions to the problems, their best advice for others, and most importantly hope for the future. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSjAan3OuJA>

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<http://integrityusa.org/oob>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFiRF4jKneg>

Resources for pastoral care

helpful publications include:

from The Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion (Pacific School of Religion):

Gender, Sexuality and the Bible

- a downloadable community-based guide - for LGBTQ+ persons, families and church communities, and others who want to respond more affirmingly - with two sections: Section 1 on Sexuality and the Bible; Section 2, beginning on page 14, on Gender and the Bible)

http://clgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/GenderSexualityandtheBible_Web.pdf

For You Are Wondrously Made

(written by an Episcopal priest from a Latinx background, this is a downloadable guide for trans & gender non-conforming persons, and others who want to respond more affirmingly)

<http://clgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/For-You-Are-Wondrously-Made.pdf>

Pastoral Care with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people

- an introductory brochure (produced by Uniting Network) to provide a short overview of some of the special issues relating to pastoral care with (LGBTIQ people in the Church plus a practical guide:

nb. this is in no way intended to replace professional training and counselling.

<https://www.unitingnetworkaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Rainbow-Pastoral-Care-2015-F.pdf>

Open and Affirming Project

- informative downloadable leaflets produced in Australia by Uniting Network to assist a step by step process developed in local congregations to demonstrate how Churches can intentionally live out welcome, in all areas of life and mission. Leaflet No 1 outlines the process for a congregation to become an Open and Affirming Congregation and is a good place to start. Other Leaflets are available that address specific issues that may be encountered in the life of churches. <https://www.unitingnetworkaustralia.org.au/open-and-affirming-project>

Welcoming Gender Diverse People in Christian Spaces

- an Equal Voices resource leaflet to assist parishes, schools and other Christian entities
https://www.transspirit.org/uploads/2/5/8/6/25866243/ev_welcoming_genxder_diverse_people.pdf

Transfaith: A Transgender Pastoral Resource

by Christina Beardsley & Chris (DLT 2018)

- a resource for ministers and congregations seeking to understand and/or welcome transgender people. The book shares the results of the first research based project into the experiences of trans Christians in the UK; provides a theological and biblical framework in which ministers and congregations can begin to understand the insights and issues transgender people bring; provides a series of insights that inform the pastoral care of transgender people, their families and friends; and resources in the form of liturgies and Bible studies for use.

Trans Spirit Flourishing

- Australian transgender resource including prayer and other supportive resources, educational material and links, & contact information. <https://www.transspirit.org/>

helpful groups & networks include:

Ambassadors & Bridge Builders International (ABBI)

- ABBI serves individuals, churches, denominations, leaders and religious organisations in a respectful non-confrontational way along their journey to understand LGBTI people, their community, and relationships: providing a confidential safe space through dialogue, training and consultancy services for churches, Christian organisations and church leadership. <https://www.abbi.org.au>

Equal Voices

- Australian advocacy and support network for LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies, with local groups & contacts
<https://equalvoices.org.au>
<https://www.equalvoicesanglican.org>

Freed Hearts

- a terrific family based network, based in the USA, but with a growing number of Australian groups, providing support, education and resources: enabling parents to understand their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, keep their kids safe and their family strong; helping deal with family, religious and community wounds, and assisting the church to be more inclusive and affirming; and working with educators and therapists to help navigate relationships with LGBTQ people and non-affirming families. <https://www.freedhearts.org>

Queensland AIDS Council (QuAC)

- the peak Queensland independent community organisation, which offers a variety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people information, support and pathways to increase control over and improve their health, as a resource for social, economic and personal development <https://quac.org.au>

SOGICE

- the network, led by Australian LGBTIQ+ people of faith, of the survivors of the 'conversion therapy'/orientation change movement and their allies. <http://socesurvivors.com.au>

The Sibyls

– a confidential Christian support group for transgender people (UK based, but with members in Australia)
<http://sibyls.gndr.org.uk>