

The Pride material “Grace Like Glitter” launch

Excerpt:

You can't get rid of glitter. It doesn't matter whether you sprinkle it like fairy dust or send it in a card; whether you glitter-bomb as a protest or decorate your face with it at a festival. It doesn't matter how the glitter got there in the first place – you can't get rid of glitter. (..)

As LGBTQ+ folk, we believe that God's grace is always there in and around and woven through our lived experiences. We exist, whether folk like it or not, and so we are sprinkled liberally with God's grace. We have noticed that resources for and by LGBTQ+ folk in a faith context often focus on suffering and sorrow. And don't get us wrong, we know there is plenty of suffering to go around, and we have experienced more than our fair share of it.

And yet, we also want to do justice to God's grace, and to the joy and euphoria that living our authentic lives as LGBTQ+ people brings. And so, whilst some of these resources contain raw glimpses of our pain, the overall tone that we are going for is one of hope, of joy, of love and, yes, of grace like glitter. We hope that these resources will help you to spread grace like glitter too, wherever and whoever you are. May it be so.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0Ar8Cw8Fi2RpHtaZoftwB4SHbjAnwLGy8kxyFHtfjTnzphjAuav8SnMPoxC3b2L4cl&id=100005037420123&m_entstream_source=timeline

Breathing Space: a week on Iona for LGTBQ+ folks and allies

spending time together, exploring their own identities and the Iona Community's work for social justice.

There's plenty of time to discover community over meals, to laugh and relax outdoors, to engage in creative activities, to explore this beautiful island with its white sandy beaches and profusion of wildlife, to read or write in the library – or simply be quiet in the peace of the church or the landscape

It would be really helpful to know if there are staff and students who'd like something like that next year – then we can plan to do it for sure. Please feel free to send the info around!

<https://m.facebook.com/IonaCommunity/photos/a.10150226571841211/10159464633256211/?type=3&source=54>

Warmly,

Urzula

Rev Dr Urzula Glienecke

Associate Chaplain (she/her)

The University of Edinburgh

Chaplaincy Centre

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For this and other information on the Chaplaincy, please visit our website at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy>.

A message for you from Urzula Glienecke (she/her), Associate Chaplain and SPN volunteer

Dear Members,

Today we have an exciting and emotive message for you from Urzula Glienecke (she/her), Associate Chaplain and SPN volunteer:

I'm delighted to share some great news from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Today it voted in favour of 'same sex' marriage. Many voices were saying: 'At last!' It has been too long and with much struggle heartbreak on the way, but it has happened now. It means that those ministers of the CoS whose hearts have been longing to conduct LGBTQ+ weddings now may do so – including me! And I would be more than delighted to!

This means a lot to me as I grew up under a system that was highly oppressive against LGBTQ people. My country Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union, where being gay was not talked about and treated as a medical disorder. A lot of people couldn't be who they were, couldn't live the life they deserved. When the resistance movement I was part of (the Underground Church, the Barricades, the Baltic Chain) was successful in the end and the Baltic States became free and independent, many things changed for the better, but not enough. There is still a lot of discrimination and injustice, despite the fact that the countries have become part of the EU. Because of that I am involved in fighting for gender

justice, equality, inclusion and diversity – together with the Latvian Open Church Network and the Women Theologians' Association.

One of the best things that have happened recently as a result of this work is this:

Patvērums Baptist Church (The Refuge) is a small congregation in Latvia that is passionate about LGBTQ+ inclusion and empowering women for the glory of God. The church was founded in August 2021 and offers an alternative view for Latvian Christianity.

Our church was born out of a pressing need in the community. My wife and I were hearing more and more about our friends being isolated from their churches because of their sexuality and views. Our friends were being denied the opportunity to serve in the church in any capacity because of their same-sex relationship, and they knew that if they continued to attend church, they would keep getting angry emails from their brothers and sisters, and people would not even hide the fact that they were praying for their family to end in divorce.

My wife Kaiva was a member of a Baptist church, and while she still attended the church's youth events, there were many occasions when the organisers for their youth services could not find a preacher, a man who would preach. So my wife decided to come forward and preach, only to be told afterwards by a brother that "he couldn't hear a word because she is a woman".

Personally, I, a seminary graduate and worship leader, was

told that I would no longer be invited to preach because I had dared to say publicly that I would vote for a party that supports LGBTQ+ rights in the upcoming general election. That was the moment I realised that I would be even more ostracised in the church if I had not been “lucky” – as a bisexual man I had fallen in love and married a woman. I experienced just a little of what my LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters in the church faced on a daily basis.

And so we got together and slowly started dreaming of an inclusive and affirming Baptist church here in Latvia. We contacted people in the much more experienced St Saviour’s Anglican Church in Riga for advice and felt that this is the direction God wants to take us. I also met with the Bishop of the Union of Baptist Churches in Latvia and he made it clear that there will be no relationship between our church and the Union.

At the moment we meet weekly for our services and most of us are still healing from the traumas we experienced in previous churches. We are working to create an environment where same-sex couples can be part of the church and serve without hindrance, and where their families are celebrated. And everyone has the opportunity to preach and lead – regardless of their gender.

We see that an inclusive, affirming and egalitarian Baptist church is a great need in Latvia. Currently, the Union of Baptist Churches in Latvia is campaigning for an amendment to the Latvian Constitution that defines a family as “one man, one woman and children”. The former bishop and the pastor of the largest Baptist church in Latvia have just been published in a political advertisement newspaper promoting a party that

is also campaigning for this change in the constitution.

We plan to make our church more open to newcomers and to publish articles on our website about the Bible verses that are so often used against people from the LGBTQ+ community and women in leadership positions. We are only a small group of people, but I believe that God has called us to show His love for all people in a loud, meaningful and healing way.

(Jānis Uplejs)

There are many Christian churches which are inclusive and welcoming here in Edinburgh: Augustine United & Your Tribe: <https://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/lgbt-community-groups-scotland/trans-community-groups>, St Andrew's St George's West, Broughton St Mary's, Greyfriars Kirk and of course the Chaplaincy here at the University of Edinburgh, for all religions and none. Everybody is welcome, everybody is loved. You are wonderful just the way you are!

Urzula (she/her)

Associate Chaplain

Officially a proud member of the Rainbow Enterprise Network

This is to certify that the University of Edinburgh is a proud member of the Rainbow Enterprise Network.

By joining, they have pledged to actively and positively promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Everyone is very welcome to use their spaces and services, including LGBTQ+ and intersectional communities. This is a safe place and they will treat all people with kindness while promoting the value of compassionate inclusion to others.

Shared Parental Leave: Another Perspective

IDAHOBIT 2022 (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, & Transphobia) is coming up next week.

The Staff Pride Network are marking the date with an online event:

IDAHOBIT: Becoming and Being Gay Parents

Tues 17 May, 17:30 – 18:30 BST

Register to attend via Eventbrite / find out more

See below for a blog post from Nicola Osborne, Programme Manager in the Bayes Centre, with an important perspective of Shared Parental Leave.

This blog was originally posted by the Bulletin staff newsletter – see the original post [here](#).

Shared Parental Leave: Another Perspective

I was so pleased to see Shared Parental Leave highlighted in the last issue of Bulletin, and it was good to see men's mental health month as part of the Shared Parental Leave experience, but I was disappointed that there were other parents who take Shared Parental Leave missing from the piece.

Shared Parental Leave isn't just for fathers, it's for partners of any gender whose partners are expecting a baby, or who have a child coming into their lives through adoption. Parents who benefit from SPL include all kinds of people including queer, lesbian, gay, trans, and non-binary people, not just heterosexual men and not just families with two biological parents.

I'm one of those whose experience wasn't captured in that piece: I'm the non-birth mum of our wonderful three-and-a-half-year-old daughter Carys. I am listed on the birth certificate of my daughter, because although I'm not her birth mum, I am in a civil partnership with her birth mum and UK law recognises me as her legal parent. The University also recognises me as her legal parent and eligible to take SPL, something I am delighted I was able to do – taking over her full-time care when my partner Heather curtailed her maternity leave after six months.

Like all couples looking at SPL, it was a joint decision with lots of factors coming into play. We wanted to be equal parents in our daughter's life, we both wanted to have time to spend with her in those early months, and we looked at the practicalities of our respective employers' policies. For us, the decision was financially simple: the University had an SPL period of 16 weeks full pay, whilst my partner's employer

offered statutory maternity pay (six weeks at 90per cent of pay then down to ~£145 per week). My partner did an amazing job of our daughter's first months, then after two weeks where we were off together, I took sole care of her until she started nursery at 10 months.

The world of parenting is often quite heteronormative – I remember cringing at NHS ante natal sessions at the highly gendered portrayal of roles and responsibilities. I rarely see representation of families that look like ours: our daughter has her two mums but also an extended family of people who care for her, whether their connection is biological or not. Making a non-traditional family takes time, planning and often complex communication and I think it is therefore not surprising that whilst I know many couples with children, my experience is that the queer families I know have all taken SPL under equitable terms.

When the University originally introduced and still when it talks about SPL and SPL experiences, a lot of that communication focuses on 'fathers' not 'parents' and that has always felt excluding for me. I know that men (across the UK) have been notoriously poor at taking SPL – when negotiating the terms of my own SPL (in 2018) I learned that the uptake had been terrible (both in terms of number of people and number of weeks taken). At that time the SPL policies at the University were well intended but problematic in terms of the timeline in which partners could take their SPL – making it difficult for partners to take fully paid SPL as full-time carer of their child, which meant it was being treated by many as an extension of paternity leave, taken only whilst the 'lead' parent was also on leave. That policy was, thankfully, changed in time for me to take the fully paid SPL entitlement when my partner returned to work after six months. I'm extremely pleased that non-birth parents (of all varieties) are now taking advantage of the University's generous SPL policy more often, and enjoyed reading those experiences

shared in Bulletin last time.

For me SPL was a wonderful and challenging time. I got to know and bond with my daughter intensely; I learned a lot about where my own parenting skills excel (memorising calming stories to recount at nappy changes) and where they are terrible (remaining calm in the face of crawling and climbing missteps). I particularly gained a new level of appreciation of just how amazing my partner had been in those first months and how hard that must have been whilst I was at work. I did also have a chance to step away from my day-to-day work – something that was both challenging and helpful for my own mental health, and which ultimately led to a change of role to my current (wonderful) job. It wasn't time off, but SPL was a rare opportunity to focus purely on being a parent for a while and I wouldn't have missed those months with my daughter for anything. I hope parents of all types remember that they have that same opportunity – fathers of course, but also all the other many diversities of parents eligible to take SPL to take care of their newly born or adopted children.

Colleague Heartstopper

Review:

Margaret Blake shares some thoughts on the new LGBT+ coming-of-age series.

Hi, I'm Margaret and I work at the School of Informatics.

I was just speaking with Jonathan (Staff Pride Network co-chair) about 'Heartstopper', a new series that is available

on Netflix, which I've been watching with my 14 year-old daughter. She'd mentioned it to me recently, as she'd binge watched it all in one night, has since watched it all again, and asked me to watch it with her.

It's a brilliant, feel-good teen drama. The story is set in two schools – an all-boys school and an all-girls school. The main character is Charlie, an openly gay teenager who has to sit next to Nick in his form class. Nick is an older boy, enjoys rugby, has a group of boisterous mates and lots of girls fawn over him. Charlie really likes Nick but thinks there is no chance of anything romantic happening, so makes do with becoming Nick's best friend, until a party changes all that.

Meanwhile, Charlie has a group of really good friends including Tao, Isaac and Elle. Elle is a trans pupil and has recently moved to the all-girls school. SPOILER ALERT: She has a positive experience at the all-girls school.

This is classed as a coming-of-age series, and that perfectly describes it. I've still got two episodes to watch and I'm really looking forward to watching them with my daughter. It makes me happy to watch, and I think it's brilliant that things have come on so far in television that such a series even exists, as it wouldn't have when I was growing up in the 80s.

Did you enjoy Heartstopper? What other LGBT+ media are you enjoying? Let us know in the comments or via socials: Twitter | Instagram

e: staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk

Grace Lavery at the University of Edinburgh

She's the *enfant terrible* of Trans academia, described in her book as "the David Bowie of Californian English professors." Grace Lavery is at the University of Edinburgh to promote her memoir, *Please Miss: a heartbreaking work of staggering penis*, and like Bowie, the book constitutes in its diversity of styles and switches of voice a marmite quality you'll either love or be bewildered by. This is not to question the book's value; it is in parts beautiful, hilarious, and poignant, as well as sometimes oblique: a mould-breaking series of self-reflections in other words, unlike the other, 'straighter' memoirs that largely make up the trans biographical canon. Prepare, then, to disorientate and depart from the linear trans life-story, and so too the cagily respectable one-woman show. Grace, unlike *Please Miss* with its multiple metaphors, is an open book and a brilliantly responsive improviser to her audience.

At the UoE talk, shared with the laid-back suaveness of the chair Lindsay of the Lighthouse Books team, the auditorium is full and the carefully be-spaced audience laugh and applaud Grace's free-flowing sharpness and self-deprecating humour. This includes her fabulously kinaesthetic reading of the 'Trans-Woman-As-Alien' homage from her book, and her rapid onset of spinning good yarns. Grace and Lindsay bond quickly over their mutual inability to summarize the book in a few short words, with Grace waving her hand, "My complete failure to describe the book in fact is not a bad descriptor of the book." Perhaps if there is a guiding theme it is of the memoir as partly a response to the media narrative of trans people hating their bodies. The playfully constructed *Please Miss* is

Grace's rejoinder, with its focus on the sex and sexiness of the trans body, as a celebration of "trans joy." Another driver is the desire to create a queer text – and therefore a convention-busting one – that switches font and tone because transition is all about such switches. The body of the text, then, as trans female body, one that captures the ethos of Oscar Wilde, never settling on one thing but expressing itself via complex and contradictory multiplicities, and doing so with Wildean élan.

As both an organizer and an increasingly seduced audience member, I sit and watch Grace Lavery in awe and with love as the talk continues. Rarely does a 60-minute talk go so quickly, a good and bad thing. Grace's sincerity, channelled through her hyperactive mind and charismatic conversation, rewards us early with her tale of a robbery of an Edinburgh McDonalds hashbrowns gone wrong, before she gets down to analysis and shares her counter-narrative about the 'transition' story: "Everything that's interesting and worthwhile and worth affirming about transitioning ... takes place in the strangeness of transition, not in its capacity to harmonize or normalize or neutralize our feelings of intensity or antagonism." The strangeness and surrealism include a darkness too, of course. An audience member asks Grace for her survival strategies in the face of online abuse that Grace is well-known for bearing. The online campaigns against her have included sex photos of her and her husband hacked from her account and sent to her boss and to her mother. "I'm sometimes scared," Grace confides. With this fear, though, is her recognition that what happens online is a distortion of the real world, in which the hate and hostility are generally absent. She came to the UK uncertain what to expect, she says, expecting a Beatlemania of 'gender-critical' hatred, but all she has seen so far is a single woman handing her a piece of paper in a Manchester book-signing talk, asking her if 'woman' is being erased by the existence of people like Grace. Judging by the number of women in this UoE audience who are loving

Grace with every passing minute, the absurdity of the notion is never clearer.

In the blink of an eye, the talk ends, and concerning *Please Miss*, there are some parts of the book which shall remain a mystery (the book's recurring clown scenes, what do they mean? I think I might know, though I'm not even sure if Grace knows, or whether she wants to know). We all leave this warm and electrifying space with its unsolved plethora of mysteries and maybe a single shared sentiment left to offer the wonderful Grace Lavery: *Please Miss*, give us more.

By Gina Maya

Grace's talk, organized in a collaboration between the UoE's Staff Pride Network and Lighthouse Books, can be seen at the Lighthouse Books youtube channel:

Originally posted:
<https://www.ginamaya.co.uk/theatre/grace-lavery-at-the-university-of-edinburgh.html>

Edinburgh LGBT+ Medics Society Event: 'Tell Me About It'

Edinburgh LGBT+ Medics Society invite you to our first event of LGBT+ History Month – 'Tell Me About It'.

Meet us in Room G.01, 50 George Square at 7.30pm on this Monday 7th.

This is a great opportunity to meet members of our society and build connections with LGBT+ people and allies across the year groups. It's a very casual and no-frills event providing a safe space for people to meet and talk about anything and everything.

We'd love to see you there,
Many thanks
Zac

Zac Finch (he/him)
Secretary
Edinburgh University LGBT Medics

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This year's theme in Scotland is **Blurring Borders: A World in Motion**.

Please consider using our Philadelphia flag logo version in your email signature this month.

Some event details will be updated throughout the month. Please check the SPN member SharePoint for the most up-to-date calendar of events. Information and updates can also be found here at the SPN News Blog.

Date	Time	Venue	Event
02.2.2022	13:00-14:00	Zoom [Register here]	Lunchtime Social
04.2.2022	17:30-00:00	The Royal Dick Bar at Summerhall [RSVP]	Evening Social

10.2.2022 17:00-18:00	Zoom [Register here]	What is Queer Theory? – Panel exploring queer theory, what it is and why it matters!
11.2.2022 12:15-13:15	Zoom [Register here]	Poetry reading with Andrés Ordorica – Co-hosted with Edinburgh Race Equality Network (EREN)
23.2.2022 17:00-18:00	Zoom [Register here]	Bi+ Histories – Panel of bi+ UoE staff members sharing their unique stories.
24.2.2022 18:00-20:00	Zoom [Register here]	“Coming In – Being Out” with OurStory Scotland – Tell us your own LGBT+ History of ‘Coming in and Being Out’ in Edinburgh.

Other HE staff networks’ LGBT+HM Events around the UK

Webinar – Supporting transgender students in Higher Education 23/24 Feb

Good afternoon everyone,

I have just completed my doctoral research with the Open University. My research looks at the experiences of transgender students in Higher Education in the UK. I am running 6 webinars. All will be the same, just a variety of times over two days to allow for choice, and they are free to attend. My presentation will give an overall view of my research as well as identifying how you can support transgender students.

Wednesday 23rd February @ 09:30 GMT

Wednesday 23rd February @ 12:00 GMT

Wednesday 23rd February @ 14:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 10:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 13:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 15:00 GMT

(To put the event into your Teams/Outlook calendar click on the .ics file attached to the confirmation email)

Kind regards,

Lynne

Lynne Regan

Co-Chair LGBTQ+ Staff Network University of Kent

Pronouns: She/Her

LGBTQ&A

LGBTQ+ representatives from Lancaster University

and University of Cumbria are collaborating to host an open discussion to answer your questions in honour of LGBT history month on 25th February. For more information and to access your free ticket please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lgbtqa-registration-241128320297>

Please feel free to share with your wider community and networks, the event is open to all and will take place over Zoom ☐

We hope to see you there

Best wishes

Lee

LGBTHM/EDI Festival events

The Universities of Amsterdam & Birmingham are hosting the virtual EDI Festival 2022 from 3rd February to 3rd March as part of our strategic partnership on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This year's webinar series has the theme of "Somewhere to Belong" – exploring progress on EDI in higher education, LGBT+ refugees, disability & global mobility, legislating conversion therapy, and financial inclusion. Students and staff from both universities put together five international panels with contributors from the University of New South Wales and the University of Hong Kong among the U21 network and over a dozen organisations in Australia, Belgium,

Canada, the Netherlands, and the UK.

LGBTIQ+ Students with a Refugee Status

Date: Thursday 10 February 2022

Time 19:00 – 20:00 GMT

Enabling Global Mobility for Disabled Students

Date: Thursday 17 February 2022

Time 15:00 – 16:00 GMT

Legislating Conversion Therapy

Date: Thursday 24 February 2022

Time 13:00 – 14:00 GMT

Financial Inclusion for Social Mobility

Date: Thursday 3 March 2022

Time 09:00 – 10:00 GMT

Thanks and best wishes

Pete

Peter Collins

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Student Equality & Diversity Officer

Student Services

Brunel University London event

All are welcome to join us for The Buddhist Centre and the Ballet Class: LGBTQ Inclusion in Education, a virtual talk on inclusive education research by Dr Anna Carlile, Head of the School of Professional Studies, Science and Technology, Goldsmiths University. The event is Thursday, 17 February at 3pm and is free to all interested students, staff, alumni and friends. For further details and registration for the event, please book through the [Eventbrite page](#).

All the best,

Jessica

Jessica Kath

Prospect Development & Special Projects Officer and LGBTQ+ Staff Network Coordinator (she/her)

Brunel University London

LGBTQ+ History Month at Oxford Brookes University

*The LGBTQ+ Staff Forum at Oxford Brookes University has been busy organising events for LGBTQ+ History Month and we are delighted to confirm that we will be welcoming **Sara Ahmed**, feminist writer and independent scholar, as the speaker for our flagship event, **Complaint as a queer method**, on 16 February at 6.00pm. I thought this event may be of particular interest to this network. It is free and open to everyone, so feel free to share more widely.*

Best wishes,

Jayne Stuart

(She/her – see www.mypronouns.org to learn more)

Graphic Designer, Learning Resources

Chair, LGBTQ+ Staff Forum

Oxford Brookes University