

Iona Community: Student Week this September with Mx Ashwin Africanus Thyssen

10 – 16 September: Students' Week (*title tbc*) A week for students to experience life in the community, to share laughter and stories, to explore the island and to reflect on current concerns.

This week is jointly led by Iona Community staff with staff and students from Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities and the Student Christian Movement. We are delighted that we'll be joined by Mx Ashwin Africanus Thyssen from Stellenbosch University for this week.

<https://iona.org.uk/visit-and-stay/iona-abbey-centre/iona-abbey-programme-bookings/?fbclid=IwAR2DhbgZdvhzn5GnSr1G8EA3XQfYKLBhqAXd5v12EIw07sCGzQWozghMZDU>

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 LGBTQ+ 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)

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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.

Colleague Heartstopper

Review:

Margaret Blake shares some thoughts on the new LGBTQ+ 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

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

Inclusive language setting in Outlook

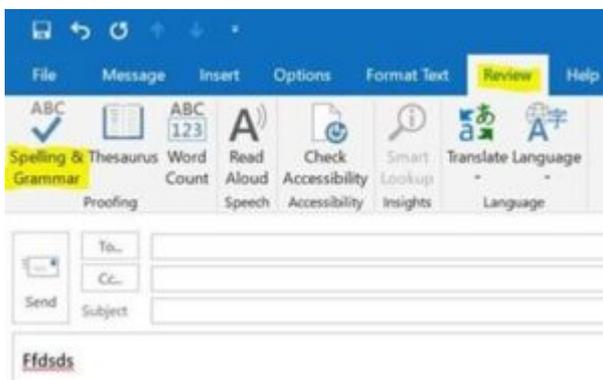
We would like to share this wonderful diversity tip regarding an inclusive

language setting in Outlook.

The setting in Outlook means you can enable checks for inclusive language when spell check runs for your emails.

Here is how to enable it:

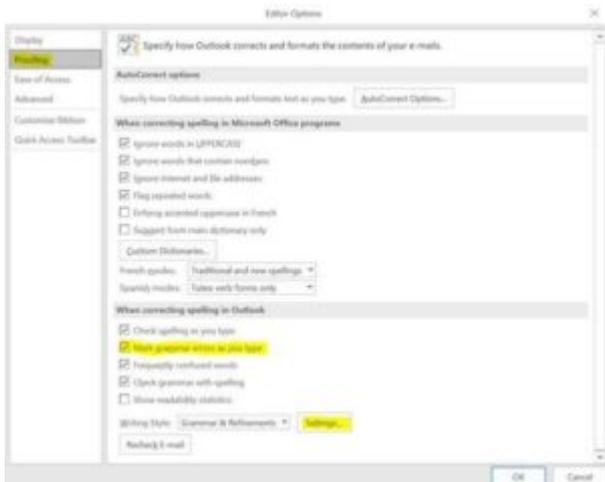
In a new email, go to 'Review', then select 'Spelling & Grammar' (you might have to misspell a word in the body of your email to get the pop-up)



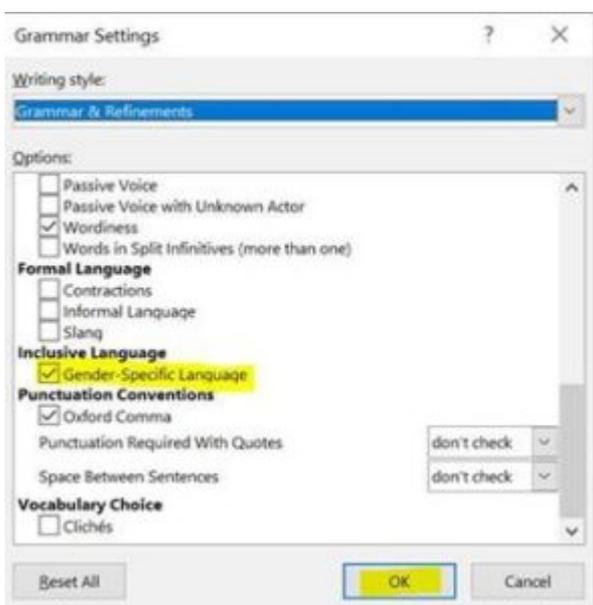
Select 'Options...' in the pop-up window



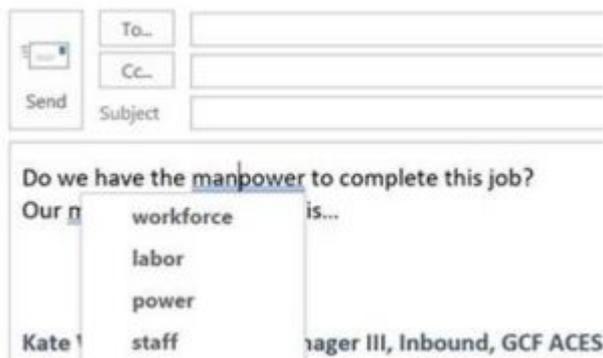
Select 'Proofing' from the left side menu, then enable 'Mark grammar errors as you type', then select 'Settings...' beside Writing Style



Under Inclusive Language (scroll almost to the bottom of the list), enable 'Gender-Specific Language', then select 'OK'



Spellcheck will now run for inclusive language, see examples below...



Examples of the change:



In response to 'Sex Matters' letter

Dear Network Members,

You may have become aware of a letter by a collective of academics operating under the name 'Sex Matters' written to the Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission demanding a "Reindorf Review" for the higher education sector. While we are once again loath to draw attention to these beliefs, we also recognise that silence does not make our position clear to those in our community most affected by these beliefs and the ways in which these beliefs are expressed. This statement is to reinforce our solidarity to those affected and that we will continue to work in ways which support our trans and non-binary colleagues and students.

This letter paints a very biased view of the current situation regarding academic freedom in UK Higher Education institutions and depicts those academics who share 'gender critical' beliefs as victims of 'trans rights activists'. There is no reflection on why students and staff might feel motivated to protest those academics actively promoting their 'gender

critical' beliefs and a failure to acknowledge the harms experienced by the trans and non-binary members of these communities as a consequence of discriminatory expressions of these beliefs. For clarity, the Staff Pride Network committee would like to make it known that we do not endorse this viewpoint of the situation. It is clear to us how harmful 'gender critical' beliefs are to the trans and non-binary members of our community, and that reductive, biologically essentialist attitudes towards sex are also damaging to everyone. No-one thrives if they are forced to adopt an identity based on binary sex characteristics, while trans and non-binary members of our community are especially and significantly harmed by this.

The letter claims that the Stonewall Diversity Champions Scheme promotes misleading information about the Equality Act which is simply false. It also criticises Athena SWAN for encouraging HEIs to monitor gender and not sex. We support the monitoring of gender and of gender diversity in our institutions because it is far more realistic to learn about how our staff live their lives and how they move through the world as their lived gender identities rather than forcing staff to select a binary sex characteristic that may be wholly inaccurate and may force trans and non-binary members of staff to disclose sensitive private information about their gender history.

We make no disagreement with the notion that a distinction can be made between sex and gender. Biological sex is a complex combination of anatomy, hormones and chromosomes that can result in a variety of sex characteristics in the human population. Gender is also a complex combination of the ways in which we experience and present our identities in a multi-gendered world. We reject the characterisation in the letter that there are UK Universities that impose a 'radical gender orthodoxy'. This appears to be an attempt to stigmatise those who do not conform to an antiquated belief system

that promotes a binary understanding of sex. We also recognise that sex is a protected characteristic. The guidance around the Equality Act as to how sex is determined is broad, it does not provide a precise definition of sex and it does not specify that sex is rooted in 'biological sex'.

We are concerned to note the names of 28 current and former University of Edinburgh staff as signatories of this letter, many of whom have a significant platform (through lectures, publications and other opportunities) to share 'gender critical' beliefs. While we recognise the freedom of those individuals to hold and express these beliefs, they should recognise that exercising freedom does have implications for other people, and that just as they are free to hold and express their beliefs, others are free to counter-argue or take other lawful action (such as protesting) in response. In particular, however, it is right to recognise that no one is free to express their beliefs, or their disagreement with others' beliefs, in ways that are abusive or discriminatory. Members of our network have been deeply disturbed by this letter, as well as members of the student community. We extend our solidarity to those affected and will continue to work in ways which support our trans and non-binary colleagues and students.

We hope that one day all staff and students are able to go about their lives feeling safe, respected and without harassment.

The Staff Pride Network Committee

Adding Pronouns in the University Systems

Please note this workaround no longer works we are currently trying to find a solution.

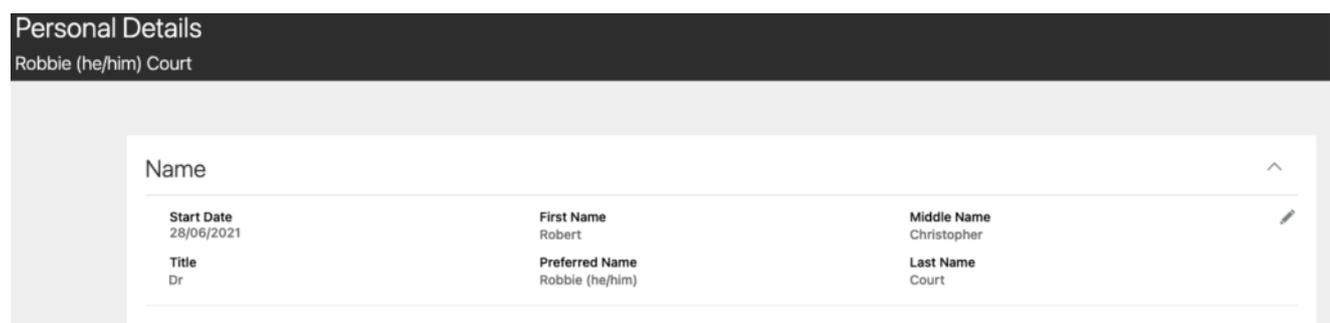
Adding Pronouns to all University Systems

The quickest and easiest way is to add to 'Preferred Name' on either MyEd (for students) or People & Money for PhD students and staff:

People & Money

<https://elxw.fa.em3.oraclecloud.com/fscmUI/faces/FuseWelcome>

Personal Information > Personal Details



Personal Details
Robbie (he/him) Court

Name		
Start Date 28/06/2021	First Name Robert	Middle Name Christopher
Title Dr	Preferred Name Robbie (he/him)	Last Name Court

Zoom

The university zoom accounts profiles support pronouns however don't use it with the 'Preferred Name' change above unless you want it twice.

<https://ed-ac-uk.zoom.us/profile>

Click edit on the right of your name:

First Name

Robbie

Last Name

Court

Display Name

Robbie (he/him) Court

Enter a name (e.g. your first name, full name, or nickname) that will be shown to others on Zoom

Pronouns 

(he/him)

How would you like to share your pronouns?

Always share in meetings and webinars

Pronouns are always visible to your contacts on your profile card

Department

**RESOURCES
PRONOUNS**

ON

PERSONAL