



Welcome to the June 2020 newsletter from Inclusive Church!

June 2020

The Inclusive Church Newsletter is a digital publication produced every month. It aims to provide supporters and members with the latest news and information from around the life of Inclusive Church and our partner organisations.

From the National Coordinator

Hello everyone, and welcome to your monthly newsletter.

There has been a lot happening in the world recently - the coronavirus pandemic continues on, but there have also been worldwide protests organised by Black Lives Matters and supported by all who care about justice and equality for Black people. Inclusive Church stands (or, more appropriately, takes the knee) with the protestors. We will continue to pray and work for change.

In addition to the Black Lives Matters protests going on, the UK government has this month tried to quietly shelve the much-needed changes to the law on trans rights, and trans people have been at the centre of a social media storm begun by the author J K Rowling on Twitter. Inclusive Church stands alongside our trans siblings, and we will continue to pray and work for change for trans lives as well as Black lives. Never forget: it was Black, trans women who began the Pride movement which changed the world for all LGBT+ people. See more on this [here](#).

On a different note, we have some very exciting news for you this month. The Inclusive Church Annual Lecture, which has been going since 2013, will this year take place online for the first time ever! Of course, we would have loved for it to have taken place at Manchester Cathedral as planned, but Covid-19 put paid to that idea. Please read on for more on this year's lecture and how to book.

Thank you for your continued support. Enjoy the newsletter!

Ruth Wilde. National Coordinator

The Inclusive Church Annual Lecture

The IC Annual Lecture will this year be given by **Prof. June Boyce-Tillman**, a prominent academic specialising in music, spirituality and theology. June has been part of our planning team for the Disability Conference, held each year in partnership with St Martin-in-the-Fields, for 9 years now. She has written many books, is a well-known hymn writer, and is an international performer and lecturer. We are very excited that she has agreed to do the lecture and Q&A online this year.

June's talk is entitled '**Travelling On: Carnival, Chaos and the Christian Tradition**'.

There are limited places on the lecture Zoom call, so IC recommends that you book soon. There are

free places for low waged and unwaged, and everyone else can give a donation - please give generously to further the work we do! Here is [the link](#) to book and for more information.

General Synod Elections

The Church of England has postponed the elections for the General Synod by twelve months due to the Coronavirus lockdown. The current Synod will continue during that time, with the intention of it meeting in November 2020 and then in February and July 2021.

The Inclusive Church work to coordinate a response to the elections and support candidates who share inclusive values is being extended to match the new timetable. Deanery Synod elections, due to have taken place in Spring this year, will now need to be completed by the end of October 2020. The lay members elected to Deanery Synod will form the electorate for the General Synod elections, so please ensure that your church takes up all of its places and your representatives will vote next year.

Any queries about Synod elections can be directed to Nic Tall, our Synod coordinator:
synod@inclusive-church.org

Blogs and News

New IC blog

There is a [new blog](#) on the IC website - it is a book review of 'The Queer Prophets Book', which is curated by Ruth Hunt and features contributions and stories from Dustin Lance Black, Pádraig O'Tuama, Jeanette Winterson, Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, and many more.

Other news and blogs

One of our trustees, Fiona MacMillan, was involved in a HeartEdge online event this month, called 'Renewal from the Edge', exploring 'how lived experience of marginalisation can enable a call from the edge of church or society that can shape our prophetic and political thinking'. She was speaking alongside Azariah France-Williams and Helen Jacobi and you can listen again [here](#).

One of our ex-trustees, Tim Goode, has written a blog for Via Media entitled 'We Can't Go Back to Our Old Familiar Cages!' Well worth a read - you can have a look [here](#).

One of our inclusive churches - Inclusive Gathering Birmingham - has written this [open letter](#) called 'To Our Trans Siblings'.

Stonewall have a new CEO. She's called Nancy Kelly and you can read an interview with her [here](#).

Mermaids UK, the trans charity, wrote this excellent and educational [open letter](#) to J K Rowling.

Greenbelt organised an online transatlantic conversation called Black Lives Matter: Is the Church Complicit recently. You can watch it again on Facebook [here](#) (it begins at about 5 mins in).

Inclusive Church Ambassadors

We have a great network of ambassadors covering different parts of England and Wales. They are the representatives of Inclusive Church on the ground. You can find out who the ambassadors are - and where they are - by looking [here](#).

Details of the role description for ambassadors is available [here](#). If you want to be an ambassador for your area, get in touch with the [National Coordinator](#).

From Birmingham ambassadors, Ruth Yorke and David Butterworth

We asked some inclusive churches and partners for an update:

Bull Street Quaker Meeting (Birmingham City Centre)

We have been meeting via Zoom every Sunday morning and this has been very good for us - worshipping together and having a chat afterwards. Those who cannot or do not want to meet this way are contacted by email, text or phone to make sure everyone is keeping well and safe. They are with us in spirit even if we do not see them. All of us, of course, cannot wait until we are all able to be together again.

Inclusive Gathering, Birmingham

We are meeting weekly online to worship in a pre-recorded service led by different members of the launch leadership team each week. There are thoughts shared for discussion, prayers, a piece on the Bible and some weeks on a book for discussion, and a Love Feast, where people are invited to share food at home whilst people lead simple liturgy on the online service. We then invite people to go into different groups via 'zoom' for discussion and sharing. We also have a prayer and sharing page on Facebook, where members can share. Soon we will be having a book group looking at 'Why I Stopped Talking to White People about Race' and, particularly around the time of Pride and our Pride service, we have been raising money for Journey MCC's ministry in Birmingham with LGBT+ refugees and asylum seekers.

Journey MCC

We led the Pride service with The Church at Carrs Lane, which was pre-recorded and shown online, and then watched together in 2 watch parties. Journey MCC continue our work with LGBT+ refugees and asylum seekers.

The Church at Carrs Lane

We are sharing a short pre-recorded online service each week (Facebook and YouTube) and have a church Zoom group beforehand each week to chat together and to watch the service together if people choose to stay – this also means that people without the internet can phone in and hear people and take part in the fellowship and also listen to the service online from their phone. This is a way of including people without internet, which is a big concern at this time. We are noticing that online services are being seen by between approx 70 -100 people most weeks (occasionally 450 people, eg Easter day!) and we are looking at ways to still include and engage with those people when we can eventually meet in person again.

Birmingham Christians at Pride

We made a blessing film for what would have been the start of the Pride parade in Birmingham, and shared it online. We were so happy when part of it was also shown online at Birmingham Digital Pride on Pride Sunday. More than 4500 people saw the blessing just on one church's facebook and on Digital Pride, so we were really happy to get a positive message of blessing and God's love out on Pride weekend. With no Pride parade, we were obviously not able to be physically present and at the roadside with that message this year. The short blessing film can be viewed [here](#).

Birmingham Methodist Churches have been taking part in Black Lives Matter protests around the city and have met as EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) online. Whilst the agenda of EDI includes all aspects of inclusion, they have decided to begin with looking at Racism and engaging with BLM. Hearing experiences of BAME church members has been heartbreaking and also very motivating – this is the time to act. The Circuit is intending to proactively work with groups such as Black Lives Matter UK and Stand up to Racism, Birmingham, as well as looking at further training for churches and leaders on this topic.

Inclusive Church Ambassador Revd David Butterworth is working with Citizens UK Birmingham on the impact on the economy at this present time and they continue the campaign for everyone to have a Living Wage.

Events

IMPORTANT NOTE: All events listed here are online due to Covid-19.

Welcome #Home2020 !

A message from our partner, SCM: This is an event exclusively for SCM members who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Not a member? We've reduced membership to just £1 for the year, so it's never been easier to join! Home 2020 will be taking place online on **25th July**, from 1pm - 5pm. Full details TBC, but please join us to reflect on belonging as an LGBT+ person of faith. Bookings close on Wednesday 22nd July. Book [here](#).

Inclusive Church Annual Lecture

We've been enjoying the important U-Turns recently from the government, so we decided to join in with them and un-cancel our Annual Lecture (lol). We are now organising an online lecture with our original lecturer for this year, **June Boyce-Tillman**. It will be on Zoom at 7pm on the **27th August**. You can book [here](#).

Supporting the work of Inclusive Church

Are you a church with money to spare for mission and causes you believe in?

Are you a person looking for a charity to give to monthly?

Are you someone with a great story to share about how Inclusive Church changed you and/ or your church?

We would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with Ruth: office@inclusive-church.org

Inclusive Church exists only because of the generous giving of our members and supporters. The more money that is given, the more capacity we have to do great things! If you value the work that IC does and are a member or supporter, maybe you would like to give to our work, either as a one-off donation or on a monthly basis. Why not take a collection in your church for IC?

You can donate quickly and easily by following [this link](#).

To ensure that you continue to receive this newsletter, please make sure you let us know if you change your email address.

The content of the newsletter is drawn from a number of sources including individuals and partner organisations. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect a 'formal viewpoint' of the Inclusive Church trustees, individual members of Inclusive Church or registered Inclusive Churches. Contact The National Coordinator at Inclusive Church by phone 07935 374877 or email: office@inclusive-church.org