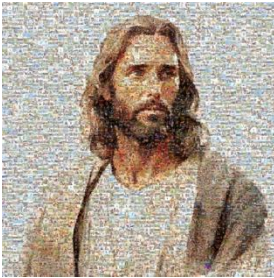


CELEBRATE:



One Body, Many Parts

CTK Believe Out Loud Education Series

Session 1: Why do the welcoming process if we're already a
welcoming parish?
and Understanding the Acronym LGBTQIA2+

"For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."
(Galatians 3:26-28)

Welcome is something we do well at CTK. Between greeting, hospitality, and helping people to feel connected, we have a warm and inclusive atmosphere for folks joining us for the first or first few times. So why do a welcoming process and why specifically for welcoming LGBTQIA2+ people?

In vs. Out:

- 300's: Women are banned from church leadership as the household churches became more organized as a Christian Religion.
- 351: The Imperialized Church is called to council at Nicea, where Orthodox belief is established. The early church, characterized by following the way of Christ and living in community, is now conformed to imperial court models of hierarchy. Heterodox belief is banned.
- 16th and 17th Centuries: Racial exclusion (African Slave Trade), and exclusion/persecution of Gay men (1533 Buggary Law, England) begins in the Church.
- 1804: Absalom Jones ordained as the first Black Priest in the Episcopal Church. Conversations on race begin in General Convention and continue through and after the Civil War.
- 20th Century: Criminalization of lesbians (England, 1921) and Same Sex attraction is named and labeled as a mental illness (US, 1954). Lesbians and Bisexuals are also banned from church.
- 2012 General Convention finally recognizes LGBTQIA2+ people as full members and eligible for all orders of ministry in the Episcopal Church

While we in the Episcopal Church have spent considerable time over the past 200+ years since Absalom Jones was ordained as the first black priest in the Episcopal church working on racial inclusion, and we've similarly spent considerable time and effort over the past near-half-century, since the Philadelphia Eleven were ordained as the first women priests, working on our inclusion

of women in church leadership, we've only just begun to start undoing the harm done for five hundred years by the church's progressive and systematic exclusion of LGBTQIA2+ people. Put simply, this means that without overt signs of welcome, people like Austin, John, Bonnie, and Patrice don't have any implicit hope of being welcomed in any given Christian community.

Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality

- Our construction of gender and sexual relationships has its roots in Roman culture and is defined by a number of binary characteristics.
- Romans were tolerant of same sex relationships so long as they followed those binary characteristics and power relationships. Marriage was considered a property contract.
- This attitude largely persisted in Europe until the High Middle Ages. It changed mostly due to complex socio-economic and cultural factors including: the consolidation of Catholic canonical law, new theological interpretations, and the consolidation of power by the nobility and the church. Same sex relationships and gender nonconformity were labeled unnatural. These legal changes lasted until the Napoleonic period.
- Attitudes changed again in the modern era with the rise of secularism and the empirical sciences. Same sex relationships and gender nonconformity were medicalised and labeled mental illness.
- The acceptance of same sex relationships changed again in the 20th century due to the gay liberation movement and homosexuality was no longer viewed as a mental disorder by the medical and psychiatric community.
- This does not hold true for transgender people who still have to navigate the medicalization of their own bodies. This is due in large part to the fact that transgender people do not obey the binary concepts of gender that western civilization defines as normal.

LGBTQIA2+ Defined:

- (L) Lesbian: A person who identifies as a woman and experiences attraction to the same sex and/or gender
- (G) Gay: A person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender. Gay can include people who identify as either men or women and refer to those who identify as men only.
- (B) Bisexual: A person who experiences attraction to both men and women.
- (T) Transgender: A person whose gender identity does not correspond with the gender and/or sex assigned at birth.
- (Q) Queer and/or Questioning: This term has a history of being used as a derogatory, homophobic, and transphobic slur but has been reclaimed by some LGBTQIA2S+ communities as a term of pride and positivity, and diversity. It is used to encourage a broad spectrum of identities related to sex, gender, and attraction.
- (I) Intersex: Refers to individuals for whom chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics combine in a variety of ways that fall outside of medical and social classifications of male and female.

- (A) Asexual: A person who does not experience sexual attraction or has little or no interest in sexual activity.
- (2 or 2S) Two-Spirit: An English umbrella term to reflect the many words used in different Indigenous languages describing the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its interconnectedness to community and spirituality. (This term can only be used in describing indigenous people.)
- +: Means that we acknowledge that there are other expressions of gender, sexuality, romantic attraction, etc. that are not yet included in this acronym. Twenty years ago, we just had LGBT and before that, it was just LGB, so as language develops, so too does the acronym.

Study Questions: How does your own history/belief either affirm or contradict broader patterns of social understanding over the past century? How does CTK's history mesh with patterns throughout the Episcopal Church?

Additional Resources:

Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century, John Boswell, University of Chicago Press.