

Downing Place United Reformed Church and Open Table Cambridge

7th February 2021

Holy Communion for LGBT History Month

- Presiding Ministers – The Revds Nigel Uden and Diana Johnson; Preacher – The Revd Alex Clare-Young; Prayers – Peter Sarkies, Alison Binney and The Revd Felicity Couch; Readers – Ben George and Jess West; Musicians – Jennifer Bastable, Mark Dawes and Ian de Massini
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Prelude

Waltz, from the *Serenade for Strings* Opus 48 (1880)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840-93

arranged for Organ and Accordion.

Opening Words

Nigel

Good morning, my name is Nigel Uden, and on behalf of Downing Place United Reformed Church and Open Table Cambridge, I welcome you to this communion service for LGBT History Month. We also welcome all those taking part, and not least, our speakers for today, The Revd Alex Clare-Young, vice Chair of the Open Table Network trustees, and The Revd Diana Johnson, Assistant Curate of Trumpington Parish Church. You may like to join in communion at home, having some bread and wine available. The service is being recorded, and if you would prefer not to be appear on the screen, we quite understand if you have your screen turned off. We will, however, do everything we can to ensure that the recorded version has as few of us on screen as possible. Please do remain on ‘mute’ unless you are speaking. Our first hymn celebrates the all-embracing nature of God’s love and tells of our aspiration that the church be similarly welcoming.

Hymn CH4 198

Two Oaks

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
*all are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God’s children dare to seek
to dream God’s reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God’s grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground,
where peace and justice meet.
here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
*all are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

4 Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

Words and Music: Marty Haugen 1950-

Prayer

Peter

Lord, we are so fortunate to find ourselves immersed in the wonders of the Universe and we give thanks for its diversity; the different types of stars and galaxies; the variety of landscapes that surround us here on Earth; life on our planet, with its “endless forms most beautiful”; and especially today we give thanks for the diversity of humankind, and the incomparable richness of each individual lived experience.

Yet we know that sometimes we seek to tear up, to divide and to build walls around ourselves; to put others into boxes that we create for them and thus diminishing your creation. And as we recognise this we seek your help to heal these fissures and open all creation to the forgiveness of your unbounded love, given to us through Jesus Christ. Amen

Reading I Corinthians 9.16-23

Jess

If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe betide me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. ¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Sharing Together

Alex

A colourful labyrinth journey

Me

Good morning everyone. For those who don't know me, my name is Alex. Today we are thinking about our stories, and our journeys. I would like to use our sharing together time to tell you a little bit of my story, to tell you a bit about the story of the pride flag, and to take you through a labyrinth journey.

When I was a child, I literally thought I was an alien. I felt so isolated, so different from everyone else, that I thought I didn't belong in this world. I went to an all-girl's school, and there was no-one there like me. So, I couldn't work out who I was. When I was a teenager, I moved to a mixed school, and that helped a little bit, I knew that I felt more like one of the guys than one of the girls, but I didn't know that that was possible, so I kept it to myself, which made life difficult. One of my struggles back then was with church. I was eventually asked to leave my church, because they were not comfortable with who I was becoming. That hurt, and I thought for a while that I would never go to church again.

When I went to uni for the first time, I finally met other trans people, and understood something about who I might be. I also found an inclusive church and began to explore how my story was interwoven with other people's stories, and God's stories. Eventually, I began to transition, and to explore a call to ministry. Neither journey was easy, and I have experienced some horrific abuse, but eventually I was able to transition, and to train for ministry at Westminster College in Cambridge.

Fast forward a bit, and now I live on the North Yorkshire coast with my wife Jo and our dogs Digger and Dharma. I identify as non-binary, and together we identify as a queer couple. This is an identity that we have reclaimed after years of wrestling with queer-phobia, and given our genuine desire to live in creative, fair, kind, and unusual ways. I am doing a PhD, looking at trans and non-binary people's identities, experiences, and understandings of God and of humanity as well as ministering to a social media-based church called Churspacious.

That was a short version of my story! If you would like to read about my story in more detail, I have a website, where I blog, and I have also written a book. But, for now, I would like to think a bit about the history of LGBTQ+ folks, and particularly our flags.

Pride Flags

Now, flags can be divisive and dangerous, but they can also be helpful and healing. In the case of LGBTQ+ people, flags have helped us to feel less isolated, and to recognise where we might find other people who share some of our identities and experiences, allies, support, and safe spaces. Here are some of the flags that people find helpful today. The pride flag has evolved over the years, but let's look at its initial design.

In 1978, Gilbert Baker designed the LGBTQ+ pride flag. The colours used in the original flag were not random. They had meanings, and those meanings are worth thinking about, whatever your identity. They are pink for the physicality of identities and relationships, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony, and violet for spirit.

Labyrinths

If the pride flag has been an important symbol for LGBTQ+ folks, labyrinths have been an important spiritual symbol for people of all faiths and of none. They help us to remember that life is a journey, and they encourage, inspire, and enable us to stop on our journeys and take some time to reflect, meditate and pray.

When we go on a labyrinth journey, you have to go into the centre, and then back out to the edge. Perhaps this can remind us that we have to journey into ourselves, to love ourselves, to reflect on our own journeys and experiences, before we can go out to others, to love others, to reflect on other people's journeys and experiences...

Because many people can't access physical labyrinths to walk around, finger labyrinths are becoming increasingly popular. These are mini labyrinths, that you can follow with your eyes, or finger, or a computer mouse. We're going to spend a few moments now looking at a labyrinth, with some music, and some prompts. You might like to follow it with your eyes or finger or computer mouse, or just to spend some time looking and reflecting.

As you follow the path into the centre of the labyrinth,
work on loving yourself.
Who are you?
Where is your journey taking you?
What do you need and desire?
And, as you follow the path back out, work on loving the other.
Who are they?
Where is their journey taking them?
What do they need and desire?
What needs to change so that all might be loved?



Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you,
and you in me?

2 Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare,
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

3 Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

4 Lord, your summons echoes true
when You but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

Graham Maule 1958-2019 & John Bell 1949-.
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What's Open Table?

Alison

Open Table is a national network of churches that offer safe sacred spaces for LGBTQ+ Christians and their allies. It all began in St Bride's Church in Liverpool in 2008. Now, there are 17 worshipping Open Table communities across England and Wales, including this one, Open Table Cambridge, which is based at Downing Place United Reformed Church.

Open Table Cambridge was launched in July 2018. We meet twice a month – once for worship on the 3rd Sunday of each month, and once for an informal discussion on the 1st Sunday. A smaller group of us also meet every fortnight for Bible study. At the moment, all our activities are taking place via Zoom, but we're really looking forward to gathering together again in person. Our membership is diverse, representing the full range of LGBTQ+ identities, and allies play a valued role too. You can see this diversity reflected in the leadership of today's service. At its heart, Open Table offers a safe space to explore what it means to be both LGBTQ+ and Christian. Whatever your starting point on that journey, you will be sure to receive a warm welcome here. If you're interested in finding out more, or in joining us for one of our events, type your email address into the Chat, or send me an email via the Downing Place URC website.

Story

Diana

Because my open eyes could see no other way

Tell them in England, if they ask
What brought us to these wars,
To this plateau beneath the night's
Grave manifold of stars -

It was not fraud or foolishness,
Glory, revenge, or pay:
**We came because our open eyes
Could see no other way.**

Cecil Day Lewis

Once, by friends who were part of the lesbian community in Cambridge, I was asked what I would like people who aren't transgender to understand about the experience of people who are transgender that they often don't understand?

An abject fear of rejection is something that I suffer from perhaps more than many. I do believe, from my experience, that it is shared with many who are transitioning. We have set off from one shore and left behind many apparent certainties. It is a matter of faith that when we get to the other shore we will find a place for ourselves. Let me explain that metaphor about 'shores' a bit...allow me to tell it as a story.

I grew up in London as the child of an Irish mother and we learned to call the village of Dundrum in Co. Tipperary 'Home'. There was a time, when I was very young, when I called that place 'Home' and yet had never been there. So what would it be like, this Home? Would I speak the language? How would people relate to me? Would I be accepted when first I travelled there? Would I be 'one like us', for the people who had always dwelt at Home? Well, it *was* all right. We took the ferry from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire and I was welcomed - even by the customs people - and welcomed again in Dundrum as I stepped off the train. I was considered a bit strange because I had a funny accent. But I was one of the family. All was well; when I went Home to Dundrum.

Consider the comparison. Transition is as though I were the child of an ex-patriate worker in the country they call Men; I must sail the sea of transition. I must take the ferry across that uncertain, chaotic sea; setting out from the shore of what has been. There is, simply, no other way - if I wish to travel home to the far shore. I *have* to do it, as others (thankfully) have done before me. The question for each individual who takes that journey is, though, will I be welcomed when I travel for the first time to the shores of this other country called Woman, a country I have my life long regarded as Home, but in which I have not yet dwelt? I'll tell you the ending of this story in a moment, but first, may I peel away a layer to consider one aspect, one level of meaning, that is relevant to how the journey is told in our community?

For my ferry from one shore to another is a metaphor whose meaning can be extended now. We *could* ask:

- How do we treat immigrants? or...
- Are there people who commute back and forth?

These are good questions to ask, in time. Yet there *is* a metaphor within the metaphor of my story that is worth dwelling on now, if briefly. Think of it as a footnote to the story of my particular and personal journey between the countries of this parable. For there are people who set out from one shore across the sea of transition; people who come to feel so at home on the ship that they sign up as crew and spend years, maybe the rest of their lives, sailing the sea. People who *define themselves* as transitioning. I have to say that that is not me. I set out from one shore and have arrived Home at the other. I am not some third gender. I am a woman. Even if I, for half a century, didn't properly comprehend my own identity; even if I needed others to help my understanding. I did not *become* a woman. I *am* a woman. And I have always been a woman, even if society did not always relate to me in that way. And, *because my opened eyes could see no other way*, I took the ferry of transition. As Cecil Day Lewis wrote, on another topic, yet speaking truth to me and my arrival in this country I call Home, he wrote:

It was not fraud or foolishness,
Glory, revenge, or pay:
**We came because our open eyes
Could see no other way.**
Cecil Day Lewis

For me, you see, that transition is not an individual, one-sided decision; no, it is rather the consequence of a social contract. For the pain of charting my way through the voyage of transition – past the medical, legal, family, social and psychological shoals of the transition voyage – that undoubted pain of charting my way through the voyage of transition was worth enduring for a time, for a season, because it was the way to put right the social contract that all individuals have with society. It was the way to persuade society - to persuade people – that it is safe and right to relate to me in this different way. As a woman.

Yet even though I have arrived Home, in the country they call 'Woman', I have been very nervous indeed when approaching all-female gatherings, not least because I am aware that there is lively debate around

whether male to female trans people – people who are social and physical migrants from male to female - can be regarded as ever being fully woman.

I was at a Christian festival the other Summer and they were experimenting in having a women-only space for talks, worship and safety – they called it the Red Tent. Normally, I would have been incredibly hesitant about going in for fear of being rejected. The organisers chose, thankfully in my view, to say that events were for all who identify as women: this choice of words gave me the confidence I needed that it could be a safe place for me, too.

And, it turned out, I **was** welcome. The fear that I recounted as I started this story today, was not realised. I was not rejected. I was accepted; *just as I am*. Amen.

Reading Mark 1.29-39

Ben

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. ³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' ³⁸He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.' ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Sermon: A Narrative Journey

Alex

Pray with Me

God, open our hearts to each-other, open our minds to your transformative word, open our hands to reach out. Amen.

Four Paths

The journey that I want to talk about, to take you with me on, is a journey with four interwoven paths. **The path** that takes us from individualism to individuality, **the path** that takes us from uniformity to diversity, **the path** that takes us from structural power to narrative power and **the path** that takes us from words to actions. **All** of these paths are important, and I hope that you get an opportunity to walk them, but one might speak to you more strongly than the others today.

The Path from Individualism to Individuality

First, let's look at the path from individualism to individuality. When I spoke earlier, about the labyrinth, I mentioned that we need to love ourselves so that we can love others. That love of self is sometimes criticised as an unfortunate part of postmodern individualism. But perhaps learning to love ourselves is less about individualism, and more about the path to individuality.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, we heard Paul saying that he had to become all things to all people to communicate effectively with them. Does that mean that Paul doesn't believe in individuality? No. A few chapters later, Paul tells the Corinthians that the Church is like a body with many different parts and talks about the importance of the unique identity and role of each of those individual parts. Paul is taking his community on a journey from individualism - in their case based on the idea that they are only as important as whoever their leader is, or whatever religious or social system they are a part of - to individuality, a healthy understanding of their unique identities and roles as part of their wider community.

That is a journey that many of us have been on, time after time. It is tempting, when you have been hurt by others because of your sexuality or gender identity, to walk away from both them and yourself. To be cruel to those who think slightly differently from you, or are on a different journey, or a different part of the journey, to you. Or to simply not be able to access community with others at the same time as being yourself.

For me, the time that stands out is when I was a child. My whole life was individualistic, simply because I had no way to access social connections with others. I was incredibly isolated. I felt alone. I felt like an alien. Adults labelled me as dramatic, attention seeking, naughty but, in reality, I was hurt, confused, and, I think, clinically depressed and extremely anxious. It wasn't until I met other trans and non-binary people, when I started at music college in Manchester, that I was able to start to love myself and, only then, to love others. This was also the start of my journey towards ministry. You see, it is incorrect to label LGBTQ+ people as individualistic. Like the Corinthians, we are each trying to work out our individuality, our unique identity, and to learn how to connect it into the identities and stories of others. Our individuality isn't just about us, it is part of our connections with each-other in multiple and diverse communities. One of the reasons that LGBTQ+ kin, colleagues and friends meet at open table groups and services around the country is because, as groups of unique individuals, our individuality relies on each-other. **We need community**, not over and against individualism, but in support of our individuality.

The Path from Uniformity to Diversity

That unity must never become uniformity though. Paul doesn't become someone else, he simply journeys out towards the unique identities and experiences of others to reach out to them, whilst owning his authentic journey and story. He is on that second path, the path from uniformity to diversity. He is trying to recognise that everyone has their own story, their own identity. Paul sees that all Christians are not the same. We must recognise that all Christians are not the same, and also that all LGBTQ+ people are not the same. We each have our own experiences and understandings. And those matter. When we try to be the same as everyone else, our communities lose something. When I arrived in Cambridge at the beginning of my training for ministry, in 2015, I wanted to just be seen as the same as everyone else. I remember a long conversation with Nigel, hinging on the fact that I was frightened that I might be treated differently, when I just wanted to be seen as the same as any other guy training for ministry. In my first year, I tried to avoid talking at all about being trans. I thought that, in order to be a good minister, I needed to be the same as everyone else. It wasn't long, though, before I stopped trying to be just like everyone else and started being myself. I want to encourage each one of you here today to be yourself. That may be a long journey, and a difficult journey, in which self-care should be prioritised. No one should ever be forced to come out. But it is a journey that holds value, and that value is you - the amazing, unique, different, broken, whole, transformed, transformative, loving, angry, justice-seeking, help-needing person that you are matters. You matter. You are precious. You are loved. **You are enough.**

So often in churches we hear the words 'Of course LGBTQ+ people are welcome here because they are just people just like everyone else'. I'm sorry, but that is not good enough. Paul recognised the diversity of Jesus's followers and we should too. I have learnt, throughout my studies and my ministry, that we are not all the same as each-other. Each of us has a unique journey and a unique story and it is that journey and that story that makes us uniquely able to help others. All churches and denominations need to urgently work on how we might welcome and centre the experiences of people not just because they are human, **but because** they - we - are diverse, and in our diversity we hold wisdom, and that wisdom matters.

The Paths from Structural Power to Narrative Power and from Words to Actions

And that takes me to the final two paths **the path that takes us** from structural power to narrative power and **the path that** takes us from words to actions. **Every single person**, including every single LGBTQ+ person has their own unique story and is on their own particular journey. Those journeys are inherently diverse, and that diversity matters. It should be affirmed and celebrated, not hidden, ignored, or merely tolerated. But those diverse stories and journeys are also part of a collective story. A story about what it means to be human and how we, as humans, should treat each-other. And I believe that a kind of template of that story is held within Jesus's story.

Jesus has structural power. He is male, he is a member of a relatively powerful religious body and he is a teacher of that religion. That's a fair amount of power. What's more, he is, so people say, the son of God. That is a lot of power. He should be able to say or do anything and get his way. He is at the tippy top of the hierarchy. But Jesus refuses to claim or use that structural power. Our reading today tells us that Jesus would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. He didn't want to use his power. Instead, he sits with those who have no power at all, and teaches them the power of stories and journeys, using that narrative power to overturn tables of injustice and wealth. Jesus tells his story through his actions, as well as with words. Sitting with, listening to, helping out those who others see as untouchable, those who are marginalised and oppressed simply for being themselves. **Jesus doesn't just use words** to welcome them, he shows that welcome through his actions.

Downing Place and Cambridge Open Table do that work and you do it well. You don't only welcome people through your words, **you show** genuine welcome through your actions. LGBTQ+ people are at the centre of your church, not just the margins. But maybe there is room to journey farther together, as LGBTQ+ people and allies, to use our stories and our journeys together to help each-other to make a difference. Much of the church in the UK and around the world is not where you are yet. Much of the church is still more concerned with words and doctrines and labels than with people and lives and justice and action.

It's time to let go of our structural power, to stop expecting Christianity to be the norm, and, instead, to learn the power of telling stories, of lifting up the voices and stories of those who are oppressed and marginalised in this society particularly, I would suggest, at the moment, trans people. We are the centre of heated religious, public, and political debate at the moment that causes real pain, real consequences. Just a few months ago I experienced threats to my home, my vocation, and my life - as did other members of my church - because a powerful institution chose to use my story against me. Trans people are on the verge of losing our rights to safety and to medical care. We need your help, church. It is time to stop speaking about people and start walking alongside them, listening to them, and telling better stories. As we share together around our tables, following Jesus's journey and story, it is about time that we, as church, used our power to bring LGBTQ+ people to the centre of our gatherings. To walk alongside people on their unique journeys, where they are. And then to lift up the voices of our companions on those journeys out in the public, religious, and political worlds, so that together our stories might gradually shape the narrative of what it means to be human.

As Charlotte Elliot wrote in the final verse of her vulnerable hymn, which we will sing in a few moments. 'Just as I am, your love unknown, has broken every barrier down'. **May it be so, Amen.**

Music for Reflection

The Crown of Roses Opus 54 No 5 (1883) by Tchaikovsky for voice and piano.

1. When Jesus Christ was yet a child,
He had a garden small and wild,
Wherein He cherished roses fair,
And wove them into garlands there.

2. Now once, as summer time drew nigh,
There came a troop of children by,
And seeing roses on the tree,
With shouts they pluck'd them merrily.

3. "Do you bind roses in your hair?"
They cried, in scorn, to Jesus there.
The Boy said humbly: "Take, I pray,
All but the naked thorns away."

4. Then of the thorns they made a crown,
And with rough fingers press'd it down,
Till on his forehead fair and young,
Red drops of blood, like roses sprung.

Original English Text form 1856 by Richard Stoddard 1825-1903
translated into Russian by Aleksey Pleshcheyev 1825-193
and back into this English version by Geoffrey Dearmer 1893-1996

Creator God, we thank you that you have created us and love us exactly as we are. We thank you for the freedom we have to worship you in whatever way we choose and pray for those who don't enjoy such freedom.

As we celebrate LGBT+ history month we remember those who have been abused and hurt by the Church, those who have felt invisible or not had their ministries recognised. We pray for all those working for change in the Church so that every person may be celebrated and we become truly inclusive.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Loving God, we pray for your world which is ours too, we thank you for the beauty of creation and pray that we may each take our responsibility towards the world seriously.

We pray for those in parts of the world where their sexuality or gender identity puts them at risk. We thank you for those who campaign for laws and practices to change, and pray that we can build a world where everyone is safe.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Compassionate God, we pray for all who are suffering as a result of Covid 19, those who are ill with the virus, those who have lost family or friends to it, and all those health workers who are struggling to keep going in impossible situations. May you give them strength and courage to keep going.

We pray too for those who have lost income as a result of the pandemic, and those who are finding the whole situation is negatively affecting their mental health. Help us to be alert to the needs of those around us, and to act to support those in need.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Loving God we remember all those whom we love who have died, we thank you that we have had the joy of knowing them, and pray that you will give us strength to carry their love into our lives. We pray for those LGBT+ people who have died in the past whose lives have inspired change.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

The Peace

Nigel

On this day of celebrating welcome to all people, in the richness of our diversity, we now share the peace with each other. We cannot do that by shaking hands, but we do invite you to offer a similar gesture. If, with whatever medium, you have made something depicting a rainbow, please do hold that to your camera. And if you prefer to offer the peace with your hands, maybe the Namaste of Indian spirituality would be good,



Just as I am, without one plea,
but that your blood was shed for me,
and that you call us, 'Come to me',
O Lamb of God, I come.

2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

3 Just as I am, you will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

4 Just as I am - love unknown
has broken every barrier down -
now, to be yours, and yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

5 Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliott 1789-1871 altd



Non Binary Flag



Transgender Flag



Pride Flag colours

AN ACT OF COMMUNION TOOK PLACE AT THIS POINT IN THE LIVE SERVICE

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

*'Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,' said he,
'and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance,' said he.*

2 I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John
— they came with me and the dance went on.

3 I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and stripped and they hung me on high,
and they left me there on the cross to die.

A Final Blessing

The blessing of God be with us,
Father and Mother,
Sustainer of our earth,
Source of all that is and that shall be.

The blessing of God be with us,
the Universal Christ,
the Risen and Glorious Loved One,
and our friend.

The blessing of God be with us,
Spirit spreading love and joy in our hearts,
giving hope to the battered ones,
inspiring justice and peace for the little ones.

**May this rich blessing be with us,
with all humankind living and departed,**

Postlude

The 2nd movement *Allegretto vivo e scherzando*
from the String Quartet No. 3 in E flat minor Opus 30 (1876)
by Tchaikovsky
arranged for two keyboards and percussion.

4 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black
— it's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on.

5 They cut me down and leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never, die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Sydney Carter (1915-2004) © Stainer & Bell Ltd

**with all the creatures
of land and sea and air.
May our days be long on this good earth.**

**For we have been nourished
by the Bread of Life,
we have been quickened
by the Life-blood of the Universe.
With courage and hope
let us continue on the journey.
Amen, Thanks be to God.**

with Amen based on the opening of
Somewhere over the Rainbow
from the 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*
by Harold Arlen 1905-70 - music
and Yip Harburg 1896-1981 - words



*Pride Progress flag
designed by Daniel Quasar*

All crochet images worked by Jess Uden