

# Gathering Voices

## Embracing Diversity

Exploring the intersection of  
faith, LGBTQIA+, and ethnicity

Welcome

Inclusion

Affirmation

Embrace

Sanctuary

Welcome to Gathering Voices!



**Welcome to Gathering Voices!**

**So glad you could join us.**

Welcome Inclusion Affirmation Embrace Sanctuary

Hello and welcome to our third online Gathering Voices conference

I am Chris Whitney-Cooper chair of Gathering Voices.

Our theme this year is about embracing the intersection of faith, LGBTQIA+, and ethnicity

We will be addressing some key questions:

- What is intersectionality?
- How does intersectionality affect us as individuals?
- How do we respond to other people's identities?
- How can we raise awareness of intersectionality?

We want to make this conference a safe space



**Please do not screenshot or record any of the sessions.**

**We will record the feedback and panel discussion and make it available on YouTube after the event.**

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Some housekeeping first.

We want the conference to be a safe space so you need to know that only some sessions will be recorded.

The breakout groups will not be recorded but the panel session (the plenary) and worship will be.

To ensure you stay safe please no screen shots and keep your video off.

We will record audio but if you don't wish to have your voice recorded use the chat function on zoom and we will read out your questions

# Zoom



**Please MUTE your audio**  
**Please STOP your video**

**You will be able to use audio and video during the breakout group session**

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# Hosting team



Chris Whitney-Cooper



Jane Whitney-Cooper



Kieran Bohan



Ann Reddecliffe



Ron Newsham



Jane Newsham

Chris and Jane Whitney-Cooper


Kieran Bohan

Ann Reddecliffe

Ron and Jane Newsham



   @gatheringvoxuk

 [gatheringvoices.info](http://gatheringvoices.info)

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## So who is Gathering Voices?

# Programme – Session 1

Session 1  
14:00 – 14:55

**14:00 Welcome and information**

Session 2  
15:05 – 16:00

**14:05 🗣️ What LBT Women Feel**

Session 3  
16:00 – 17:00

**14:20 Breakout groups**

**14:55 short break**

Timings are approximate

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We have a ground breaking and challenging programme for you and we hope you will enjoy it. Our aim as Gathering Voices is to provide a safe space for all LGBTGAI+ people, to share stories and understand they are loved in an affirming Christian context. We all have had various experiences of church and Christians with a mixed experience of acceptance as part of the body of Christ. The conference today provides a thread through the key note talks, breakout sessions, plenary session and worship we want to explore how we break false binaries and helps us recognise that we each have a unique place in Christ.

The programme is clearly laid out. Just to note we will have a pre-recorded talk first and then go into our breakout groups at 1420. After that you will come back to this room and you will have a chance of a break for 10 minutes before we progress with the next section.

# Programme – Session 2

Session 1  
14:00 – 15:00

15:05 Welcome back

Session 2  
15:00 – 16:00

15:05 🎤 Identity, faith and belonging: a personal perspective?

Session 3  
16:00 – 17:00

15:20 Breakout groups

Timings are approximate

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After a short break, the second section also starts with a pre-recorded keynote talk followed by breakout groups.

# Programme – Session 3

Session 1  
14:00 – 15:00

**16:00 Feedback from breakout groups and panel discussion**

Session 2  
15:00 – 16:00

**16:40 Worship and liturgy**

Session 3  
16:00 – 17:00

**16:55 Summary and closing prayer**

Timings are approximate

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The final session is gathering feedback from the breakout groups leading into a panel discussion.

We will then share an act of worship before we finish with a prayer.



# Keynote talks




Ruby Almeida

**Ruby Almeida**

**What LGBTQIA+ Women Feel**

Gerard is co-chair of the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics

 @poonchidi

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So, I would like to introduce our first speaker Ruby Almeida...

Ruby brings a lot of experience to our conference.

She is an LGBT rights campaigner and lecturer, was born in Jodhpur, India. She was part of a deeply religious family, with her identity being both strongly Catholic and Indian from an early age. Training at the National Catholic Media and Radio Centre in North London, forming her own video production company, primarily working for clients in the community sector.

She has had leadership role with QUEST (A catholic LGBT group) and now works for Landings, a programme to support baptised Catholics who were once distance but now wish to return to their faith. She also set up Rainbow Catholics India, the first Catholic LGBT Group in India, and continues to work with the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics

Her key note today presents a personal journey of intersectionality through a very male landscape at a local and global level.



# Keynote talks



**Savi Hensman**

## Identity, faith and belonging: a personal perspective

Savi is Coordinator for  
Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care  
(CLAHRC) in South London.

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I hope you you are suitably refreshed!

I certainly found the first session really challenging as I began to think about my response to Ruby's talk.

But, we need to continue as Savi Hensman takes us on another personal journey.

Savi Hensman is an activist and writer born in Sri Lanka but moved to the United Kingdom at the age of two, growing up in Hackney. She studied chemical engineering at University College London, graduating in 1982. She worked for many years and is currently an involvement coordinator in health research.

As a member of the Christian Church, Hensman campaigns for a more inclusive community, writing on the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in religious communities.

Her key note draws on her own experience, and will explore some of the benefits and challenges of addressing issues of intersectionality from a racial, differences in LGBTQIA+ circles and beyond, in church and society.





**Recording...**

**Please be aware that the  
feedback session is going  
to be recorded!**

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Welcome back. We are now going to have few minutes to have some feedback from the breakout groups. Please can you remember we will be recording this.

# Feedback from breakout groups



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I am going to ask each of our breakout group leaders to introduce themselves and give a very short flavour of the group discussions:

Ann Reddecliffe

Gerard Swan

Augustine Tanner-Ihm

Sue Say

Nichole Grace

Jide Macaulay





## Recording...

**Please be aware that the panel session is going to be recorded!**

**If you want to ask questions – please write them in the chat window**

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There is an opportunity to ask questions or raise points with the panel. We would ask you to remain muted and put your questions in the chat box. I will bring you in if we get to raise your question though audio only

Just remember we will be recording this section.



# Panel Embracing Diversity



Chris Whitney-Cooper



Ruby Almeida



Savi Hensman



Ann Reddecliffe



Gerard Swan



Augustine Tanner-Ihm



Sue Say



Nichole Grace



Jide Macaulay

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Ruby Almeida  
Savi Hensman  
Ann Reddecliffe  
Gerard Swan  
Augustine Tanner-Ihm  
Sue Say  
Nichole Grace  
Jide Macaulay



Field questions

Thanks to the panel and those who  
have participated

# Worship and liturgy

Liturgy adapted from [enfleshed.com](https://enfleshed.com)

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I would like to hand over to Augustine who with other voices will lead us through our worship liturgy

# Call to worship

ONE: We gather in the presence of the Beloved One,  
The one who creates and promotes to glory

ALL: **Insistent that we are a community of equals.**

ONE: To all that stands in the way of right-relationship,

ALL: **The spirit of Christ says “no more!”**

ONE: God leads us in a better way:

ALL: **No spirits of domination will last.**

# Call to worship

**ONE:** No barriers to welcome will stand.

**ALL:** God has already claimed us:

**ONE:** We are children of the Divine.

**ALL:** Each of us, no more, no less.

**ONE:** Praise God, who frees us to love one another.



# Opening Prayer

Creative One,

You have shaped us in such wondrously different ways.

What gifts you have given us;

each bearing glimpses of you in how we look, how we love,  
how we move through this world together.

Make us good stewards of the riches of difference among us,

so that we might grow in empathy,

deepen in love,

and expand our understandings of justice.

[All]: Amen

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# Song: We come today to celebrate

**Lyrics**

**Steph Jenner**

**Tune**

**Amazing Grace**

**Performed by Night Clement and Nigel James**

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We come today to celebrate  
the life that Jesus gives,  
and welcome in God's loving grace  
that in the Spirit lives.

The Spirit sanctifies our lives  
and helps our darkest days;  
we hold each other close to You  
with voices joined in praise.

We celebrate diversity,  
as well as common ground,  
and will continue so to do  
while love and peace are found.

For Christ does not discriminate,  
but welcomes one and all;  
so we will seek to do the same,  
responding to God's call.



# Invitation

There are long histories of power working on our spirits every day especially the marginalised identity groups among us.

They persuade us to turn against one another, to maintain legacies of discrimination, and to protect what we have at the expense of others.

But through Christ, we experience freedom.  
Freedom to love.  
Freedom to live differently.  
Freedom to create a community of faith committed to collective well-being.

In trust that God can make it so among us, let us share what we have with one another. We are made in the image of the one who created heaven and earth.

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# Prayer of dedication

Gracious and Holy One:

Our communities are torn apart by violence,  
injustice, isolation, inequality,  
political division and hatred.

Our hearts break over all that is lost at the hands of evil.

Give your people the courage to be  
interrupters of dominance and  
healers of destruction.

May these offerings and all our efforts of love and liberation be blessed.

[All]: Amen

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# Galatians 3:26-28

So in Christ Jesus

you are all children of God through faith,  
for all of you who were baptized into Christ  
have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile,  
neither slave nor free,  
nor is there male and female,  
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

New International Version

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# Some Days - poem by James Baldwin

Some days worry  
some days glad  
some days  
more than make you mad.

Some days,  
some days, more than shine:  
when you see what's coming  
on down the line!

Some days you say,  
oh, not me never - !  
Some days you say  
bless God forever.  
Some days, you say,  
curse God, and die  
and the day comes when you wrestle  
with that lie.

Some days tussle  
then some days groan  
and some days  
don't even leave a bone.  
Some days you hassle  
all alone.

I don't know, sister,  
what I'm saying,  
nor do no man,  
if he don't be praying.  
I know that love is the only answer  
and the tight-rope lover  
the only dancer.

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# Some Days - poem by James Baldwin

I don't know, sister,  
what I'm saying,  
nor do no man,  
if he don't be praying.  
I know that love is the only answer  
and the tight-rope lover  
the only dancer.

When the lover come off the rope today,  
the net which holds him is how we pray,  
and not to God's unknown,  
but to each other - :  
the falling mortal is our brother!

Some days leave  
some days grieve  
some days you almost don't believe.  
Some days believe you,  
some days don't,  
some days believe you  
and you won't.

Some days worry  
some days mad  
some days more than make you glad.  
Some days, some days,  
more than shine,  
witnesses,  
coming on down the line!

# Questions

1. What is God saying to you?
2. Whom are you going to tell?
3. What are you going to do about it?

(time of silence)

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We come today to celebrate  
the life that Jesus gives,  
and welcome in God's loving grace  
that in the Spirit lives.

The Spirit sanctifies our lives  
and helps our darkest days;  
we hold each other close to You  
with voices joined in praise.

We celebrate diversity,  
as well as common ground,  
and will continue so to do  
while love and peace are found.

For Christ does not discriminate,  
but welcomes one and all;  
so we will seek to do the same,  
responding to God's call.

# Disciple Prayer

A modern version of the Lord's Prayer.

[All]:

God of us all,  
who dwells within and beyond,  
Sacred is your name.

May your holy vision for collective flourishing  
come to fruition among us.

May your dreams of justice, love, compassion, and  
connection be enfolded on earth.

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# Disciple Prayer

Provide us today with what we need  
to be nourished in body, soul, and heart.

Forgive us for the harm we cause  
as we seek to forgive those who have harmed us.

Lead us away from everything that destroys  
and liberate us from the hands of evil.

For you are the ultimate source of hope.

Your power-with exceeds all power-over.

Your presence incites eternal wonder.

All praise to you, our comfort and strength.

Amen.



# Song: Spirit Fall

## Lyrics

Chris Jones / Nick Herbert / Susie Woodbridge

Performed by Nichole Grace

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You breathe life, You restore  
Awaken my soul, I know that I've been made for more

You speak truth, You renew  
When I'm in Your presence You show me the glory of You

Spirit fall, Spirit fall  
Fall on us for we are Yours  
Fall on us for we are Yours

You will make, all things new  
Until you return all creation cries out for you

There is power in Your presence  
Hope and healing in your presence  
There is freedom in Your presence  
Spirit fall.

# Conclusion

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I am not sure I can fully summarise what has been an amazing day where we have explored so many aspects of seeing more clearly and breaking false binaries. I have a lot to think about and celebrate as we experience being part of Gods body that accepts us as we are and breaks false binaries!

I hope you have enjoyed the day and we hope you will give us some feedback. We have put a link in the chat to the evaluation form, but we will also send this out in the next few days.

The sessions we have recorded will go up on You Tube over the next week and you should be able to find a link on our website. [GatheringVoices.info](http://GatheringVoices.info). We hope you will subscribe to the You Tube and share!

I hope you will think of joining us next year and maybe it will be F2F but if not, we will do another online event.

# Dismissal

Let us go from here assured of the power of Christ in us:  
The power to rid ourselves of all that destroys.  
The power to celebrate the gifts of difference among us.  
The power to cease discrimination in our communities.  
God does not leave us to this work alone,  
but goes beside us,  
within us,  
and before us.

Thanks be to God.

[All]: Amen

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# Thank you for joining us!

Videos will be added to the YouTube Playlist

Check the Gathering Voices website

[gatheringvoices.info/gvox22](https://gatheringvoices.info/gvox22)

for more resources

 [gatheringvoices.info/youtube/](https://gatheringvoices.info/youtube/)

   [@gatheringvoxuk](https://www.facebook.com/gatheringvoxuk)

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(The chat will stay open for a while if you want to continue the conversation)