

The header graphic features a dark green background with a blue gradient on the right. On the left, there is a white line-art icon of a church with a cross and a rainbow arching over it. To the right of the icon, the text "Inclusive Church" is written in white, and "Newsletter" is written in a larger, bold, light green font.

Inclusive Church Newsletter



Inclusive Church newsletter September 2026

Our regular Inclusive Church Newsletter brings you stories, news, and updates from across Inclusive Church and our partner organisations. You are welcome to share it with others.



Time flies when...

I'm sure we've all heard, and probably said, the saying, "*time flies when you're having fun.*" The boring stuff drags, the exciting stuff disappears in a flash, and somehow the calendar keeps moving regardless.

I've been pondering this lately, as I try to work out how it is already mid-September when I'm fairly sure we've only just had Easter.

I'd love to say the last six months have flown by because I've been having such a simply fabulous time. There have certainly been some beautiful, "*I wish I could bottle this up*" moments. But there has also been plenty of stress, worry, exhaustion and anxiety. And I've realised that all of those things can make time behave strangely too. Sometimes it flies. Sometimes it seems completely stuck.

As someone with ADHD, this is very familiar. When I first came across "*time wizard*" as a playful description of time blindness, I felt as though someone had been documenting my life. I have, more often than I'd like to admit, set a timer for a quick five-minute task, only to be utterly astonished when it goes off. Apparently my five minutes and everyone else's five minutes are not always the same thing!

Which may explain why it feels like years since I last wrote a newsletter, when in fact I've only missed one month.

It has been a very full season: General Synod, AGM, Greenbelt, the national Inclusive Synod campaign, *We Are Here*, recruiting an administrator, and all the ordinary work of Inclusive Church, alongside recovering from some significant health complications. Greenbelt was a huge amount of work and went really well, although exhaustion sometimes made it difficult to be as present as I would have liked.

And perhaps that is part of what I've been learning, or re-learning, as we prepare for our much-anticipated conference on neurodiversity: **different doesn't mean lesser.** Neither does needing to stop mean failing. Sometimes delays even allow the Holy Spirit in.

I don't naturally do nothing. Rest doesn't come easily, and there has been a particular wrestling between recovering and the pull of everything that needs doing. But now school is back and a little more rhythm and routine is returning, I'm finding myself grateful that God is faithful. Not just faithful to give us strength to *do the thing*, but faithful to meet us when we can't.

We can be exhausted *and* joyful. Struggling *and* grateful. Needing support *and* still having much to offer. Perhaps faith isn't about making everything balance neatly, but discovering that God is present in all of it: the flying, the stuckness, the joy, the muck, the rest and the doing.

Timey-wimey though living life may be, God remains faithful all the time, providing both strength for the journey and those utterly gold-dust sparkle moments of joy, affirmation and contentment right there in the mud and muck.

Both/and. Messy grace. And, somehow, it is well.

One way or another, we'll get where we're going.

Rev'd Chantal x

[Donate to Inclusive Church](#)

Events + Training
opportunities





Conference Booking

Autism & Theology Podcast



Inclusive Church

[illegible]

In conversation with Fiona Macmillan

Paul Coleman, an inclusive Methodist musician based in Leeds, caught up with Fiona MacMillan to talk about the conference and also the motion put to General Synod in July 2026, on neurodiversity. Excerpts of their conversation are below, but you can read more on the link...

In July, the Church of England's (CofE) General Synod held its first-ever debate on neurodiversity, unanimously passing *All Kinds of Minds: affirming neurodiversity in the life of the Church*. The motion recognised neurodivergent people, lay and ordained, as "lovingly and purposefully made" and as a blessing to the Church and wider society. It called for the national Church to identify changes to structures and processes which offer barriers preventing neurodivergent people from flourishing, for neurodivergent-led training, for a national network of diocesan (regional) Neurodiversity Champions and for local churches to listen to the experience of neurodivergent people in their own communities

I spoke to Fiona MacMillan, a former Inclusive Church trustee who chairs the CofE's Neurodiversity Working Group and who presented the motion. Much of our conversation came back to the **language** at the beginning of the motion. **Fiona described neurodiversity as a "positive paradigm" and a "strength-based approach" – one which moves away from a focus on what minds cannot do.** For Fiona, it's important that the CofE has endorsed neurodiversity, working for a Church in which "all kinds of minds can flourish".

As Fiona put it, "It's about thinking differently about God and about church and about worship and about community."

The conversation then moved towards the upcoming conference where Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people can come together and resource one another, then go back and resource their own churches and communities. Fiona hopes people will leave "having learned to love our own minds a bit more".

[Read more](#)



Refresh: Young Adults retreat

Young adults **retreat** at Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales. Offering good food, conversation, log fires and board games. It sounds pretty perfect to me!

November 20th-22nd

£100 per person for the weekend - this includes food, accommodation etc

There are also still some spaces available on the All Age/Families retreat I'm co-leading in February - but that will be a tad more chaotic!

[Events Page](#)

Inform & Inspire

Resources, blogs, stories, music, publications etc



These are just some of the things happening - do follow our Facebook page for others.



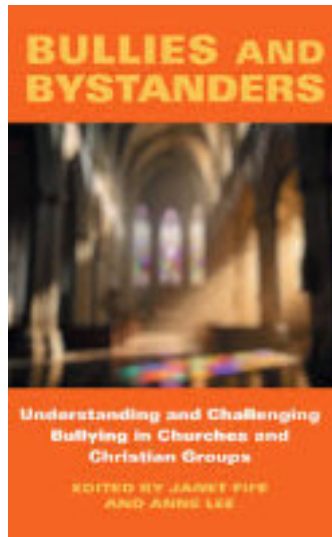
AGM & follow up

It was **great to see and hear from so many of you at our July AGM**, thanks to all who joined us! My deepest apologies that I have not yet sent you the follow up materials I promised. Unfortunately I have had some rather serious and unplanned health complications over the summer which have impacted IC somewhat. I'm not yet fully recovered so things are still taking longer than is ideal, but I'm getting there. You are still **very** welcome to email us directly if there is something specific in the meantime!

Which leads nicely on to:

My enormous gratitude to **Emma Bennett** for the invaluable support, assistance and plate-spinning she has taken on voluntarily behind the scenes at IC since last November. And the stepping up when I was unavailable. We are going to really miss you being so involved but you go to theology college with our love, blessings and prayers!

Our gratitude is also extended to all those who took the time to respond to our recent advertisement for a **permanent admin**. We were very impressed with the quantity and quality of applicants and appreciate your patience with the delays. We look forward to being able to share further news soon!



Book Review: Bullying & Bystanders

Reviewer Catherine Shelley says: "Having been a target of bullying in more than one context in my church life and having also been advised of Anne Lee's work during one of those times, I was looking forward to reading this book. It did not disappoint.

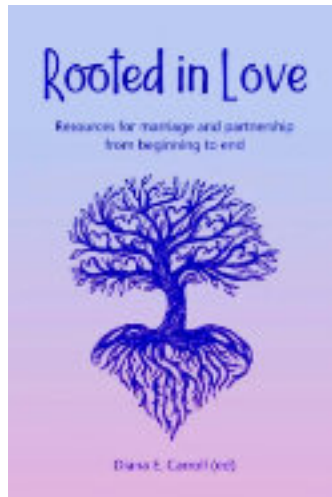
Anne Lee's introduction lays out the context of bullying in the UK, framed by the fact that there is no legal definition of bullying and the consequent challenges of seeking redress, particularly in a church where clergy are office holders not employees...

Overall the book provides a comprehensive, informative and challenging overview of bullying in the life of the Churches. It is also, rightly, a call to join the campaign to tackle it."

NatCo adds: Bullying and the impact of inaction is obviously a highly relevant topic for members of Inclusive Church, so do check out the review & book itself!

[Full Review here](#)

Reviewed by Rev Dr Catherine Shelley, Member of General Synod, Leeds Diocese. Vicar of Inclusive Church St Mary's Todmorden, St Peter's Walsden and St Michael's Cornholme. Adviser for Women's Ministry Huddersfield Episcopal Area and NADAWM Secretary



Rooted in Love: Book Review

IC Trustee Andrew Dotchin describes this resource for marriage and partnership from beginning to end as **'a smörgåsbord of holy living to make a feast for growth and joy.'**

He recommends the book 'as a gift not only for new couples but also for all those who find a need for ritual to mark the homely corners of life and those who encourage others in their call to live life together'.

Even from the very brief perusal I have had, I would echo this. Definitely one to look out for! Read more of Andrew's review on the link below.

[More here](#)



Direct Debits are a go-go!

If you're a **registered member** or named church contact you should have received an email about our new Direct Debit facility. If you haven't, do please let us know!

We're aware some mailings have not been getting through... You can email us on office@inclusive-church.org so we can check for you!

You do not have to be part of an affirming church to be an individual member.

New posters and leaflets are available on the public pages under 'resources'. Church contacts should also now have login details for the **Members pages** on the website giving access to additional resources. Again, please let us know if not.

Sign me up!

Is it Y@U they're looking for?



Church or Community-based vacancies. **Do send us yours!**

Note: We only share vacancies from places known to us but please do your own research and explore local nuances.



Vicar St Laurence Frodsham

Full-time incumbent wanted for this modern Catholic church in Cheshire. Chester Diocese.

They have a community focus, a growing ministry with schools and families and are keen to build on their historical roots alongside developing a programme engaged with contemporary culture, arts and hospitality.

Closing date **October 11th**
Apply through Pathways

[More Info](#)

Get involved!



Invite



Include



Inform



Involve



General Synod elections

The voting period opens **next week** in the Church of England General Synod elections. We have a record **270+ candidates** standing who are publicly signed up as committed to prioritising inclusive and accessible values.

ALL readers, please do share our social media posts on the subject, make sure you encourage those who have a vote to vote, and let's get our voices heard! You don't need to be CofE to pray for the elections, help spread the word or care about the outcome :)

Further information, including a full list of inclusive candidates, will be released later this week - keep an eye on your inboxes and our Facebook page.

A campaign reel

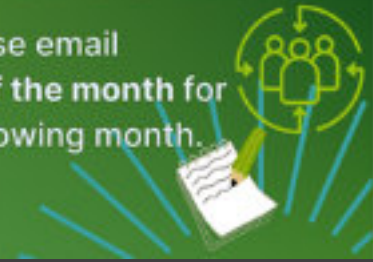


Digital Upgrade

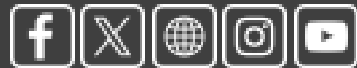
As you may be aware, we are working on an overhaul and upgrade of both the IC website and the online Church Directory. If you would like to contribute any feedback or suggestions you are most welcome to! It would be especially helpful to know what you **want**, what's currently a **challenge**, what works **well**. Scan the QR for the survey

Contributions welcome!

To share something in the Newsletter, please email NatCo@inclusive-church.org by the **25th of the month** for publication around the first week of the following month.



office@inclusive-church.org (admin)



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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.

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