



OneBodyOneFaith

Executive Director Report 2022

What have we DONE?

We've Connected:

- The Power of Partnership
- Progressive Partners Meeting
- Internationally

We've Championed:

- Authentic LGBT+ joy and spirituality
- Safety beyond the issues of today
- Positive advocacy

We've Collaborated:

- Resource development
- Conferences and gatherings
- Grant giving and small group support

What is NEXT?

Thriving, not surviving:

- Rhythm retreats
- Church membership
- Embracing leadership

Authentic Representation:

- Working group
- Our place at the table
- Privileging LGBT+ voices

The Bigger Picture:

- Communications development
- Patrons
- Global links



OneBodyOneFaith

Rhythm Report 2022

“With joy we draw living water
slaking our thirst from the deep cool wells,
the hidden springs of your love that redeems.”
Isaiah 12:3 after Jim Cotter

Rhythm grew out of an ambition of the trustees to build an intentional dispersed community that could support LGBTQ+ Christians and enable them to not only survive but thrive in their faith. There are still many challenges facing us in the Church and the world, and while we are called to prophetic activism and challenge, we are also called to flourish as dearly beloved children of God. Rhythm seeks to provide a foundation that allows that flourishing alongside, or instead, of local churches. We focus on a rhythm of accessible liturgy, prayer, silence and the seasonal rhythm of nature.

This year has focused on building our weekly rhythm of providing space for prayer and reflection on a Wednesday at 6pm via Zoom. We have built a small and loyal group of people, from the UK and abroad, with others dropping in and out. We use music, imagery, spoken word, poetry and creative liturgies that speak to our faith lived out as LGBTQ+ people.

As part of that we have begun to develop a calendar of ‘Queer Saints’, reflecting on the lives of those who can be our role models as queer Christians. And we have contributed to the pastoral care of those who meet together, and those who contact OneBodyOneFaith with questions or asking for support.

It is still our ambition to go further and develop an intentional dispersed community with an agreed Rule of Life, and to that end we are currently planning a retreat in the autumn of this year leading into regular day and weekend retreats so do look out for further details.

As we build our community, let me encourage you to dip into the Wednesday gathering. It is intentionally designed as half an hour of space, reflection and prayer to allow us to flourish and find that refreshment of joy that all of us need for our own faith and for the work still ahead.

Fr Lee Taylor
Volunteer Chaplain to Rhythm



OneBodyOneFaith

European Forum Report 2022

Last summer, the Board made the strategic decision to look to initiate connections and form potential partnerships with LGBT Christian groups beyond the UK. David Reading was thus engaged, as a volunteer consultant, to work closely with Luke to progress this agenda. David had many years of international commercial experience and is fluent in several European languages.

After an initial fact finding exercise, we decided that our first priority would be to establish connections with sister organisations in Europe. It seemed that re-building a relationship with the European Forum of LGBT Christians - an umbrella body with 43 members in 19 countries - would be an essential first step. OneBodyOneFaith had been a member of the European Forum but had left some years ago.

Accordingly, David, joined by Luke, spent much of the autumn and early part of this year talking to members of the Board of the Forum and of leaders of member groups. We made the recommendation to the OneBodyOneFaith Board that we should re-join the European Forum, a recommendation that was immediately accepted. We were nominally accepted as a new member organisation by the Board of the European Forum in February of this year but we needed to wait until the Forum's AGM in May for this to be formalised.

In February, we attended the online annual meeting of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Forum for LGBT Christians (a sub-group of the European Forum). It was good to meet some of our colleagues from that region and particularly to hear about some of the work that our hosts - Armenia - are doing in their country. We also attended some very inspiring workshops.

In May, we attended the Annual conference of the European Forum. 'See, I will gather you from wherever you are' was the call to the conference and 150 of us from 25 countries came together at the Paulus Akademie in Zurich to a very special conference: it was the first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic and also the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Forum.

We conducted a workshop - Embracing Joy & Spiritual Nourishment for LGBT+ Christians - which was attended by over 25 delegates from more than 10 countries and was very well received. There was something very magical about hearing people praying, alongside each other, in more than ten different languages as Lee led us through the Rhythm session.

At the Annual General Meeting (at the conference), David Reading was voted onto the Board of the European Forum, thus giving OneBodyOneFaith a seat at the high table of the European Forum, so to speak, and the opportunity to make a strong



OneBodyOneFaith

contribution to the the LGBT Christian cause across Europe over the next few years.

We were able to meet and bond with delegates from countries ranging from Armenia to Belgium and Norway to Malta and many countries in between. We were able to join in some profoundly moving worship (and have some great fun together). We are already looking forward to the 2023 conference in the Netherlands.

Moving away from Europe, in early March, David and Jarel had a very productive discussion in which they talked about looking to support LGBT+ Christians in the Coptic community and also in Africa. We subsequently met with Revd Jide Macaulay of House of Rainbow who gave us a lot of names of useful people to contact. We have also started discussions with an organisation called Gay Christian Africa and will be looking to outline a partnerships strategy for Africa in the coming months.

Our focus over the next 12 months is likely to be a consolidation of the relationships we have initiated in Europe - supported by our now close relationship with the European Forum - and further developing our relationships in Africa.

David Reading
Volunteer international Consultant



OneBodyOneFaith

Operations Manager Report 2022

Membership Database – Transitioning to a Smarter System

- Upgraded to Beacon CRM (Customer Relationship Management)
 - Automated
 - New members welcomed and able to access resources immediately
 - Reminder notices sent with one click
 - Accurate
 - Linked to main payment providers so made aware of any changes to payments immediately
 - Time-saving
 -
 - Secure
 - GDPR compliant

- **Accurate**
- **Automated**
- **Control**
- **GDPR compliant**
- **Secure**
- **Time-saving**

Thanks to those who have moved over to direct debits, you have saved me time so I am able to pursue other activities such as fundraising, ensured our records are accurate, automated, GDPR compliant, secure and you have control over your own membership



OneBodyOneFaith

Treasurer's Report 2022

My thanks are due again to my colleague, Katie Marsh, as I present a summary of the accounts.

The year under review has presented a range of challenges, but OneBodyOneFaith has risen to these occasions and the Lord has provided. My thanks go to you, our members, for your continued commitment to what is fast becoming the leading faith organisation representing the LGBTQ+ community.

While our membership subscriptions still do not quite cover our costs, the difference has been more than covered by anecdotal donations and gratefully received legacies. I again encourage members to seek new recruits and to consider using the benefit of a legacy to enshrine individual memories. None of us are getting younger and we need to reach out to the next generation to ensure the continuity of our great mission.

We continue to hold money for the Baptist Ministry Project which is administered by OneBodyOneFaith staff. We have formalised our reserves' policy and maintain sensible amounts to protect against adverse events. The total bank balances as of 31 May 2022 are £104,565.

I cannot end my report without paying tribute to our Chair as he stands down. It has been a pleasure to serve and work with him. I trust we will be able to draw on his wise counsel in the future. I look forward to assisting our new Chairs as they take on this work ordained by God and led by Jesus.

David Owen
Treasurer



OneBodyOneFaith

Chair's Report 2022

Those of you who have attended AGMs during my tenure as Chair will know that I have frequently spoken about the need to take a positive approach in our work. Too often the church attempts to keep us trapped as victims, treating us harshly, then offering scraps from the table before taking them away and repeating the unfair and ungodly treatment of us. This can paint us into a corner where we respond as victims for that is how we are treated. The staff and trustees recognised that this was not a good place to be, either as an organisation or as individuals.

So we set about changing our approach. OneBodyOneFaith is now a dynamic grassroots charity that empowers LGBT+ Christians and advocates for change within the church, ecumenically and intentionally in partnership with likeminded organisations. We are committed to stopping abuse and embracing positive change. Our desire is for LGBT+ Christians to thrive, not just survive.

I am proud of the changes we have made to become an organisation which seeks to call out abuse alongside empowering LGBT+ Christians through initiatives such as Rhythm, our international work and our members resources including advent and lent programmes.

I am stepping down as both Chair and Trustee at this meeting. It has been a privilege and an honour to be part of this organisation and help to transform it so that it more positively meets the needs of both its members and those in the wider Christian community, not just those who identify as LGBT+ but those who identify as Christians and need the gifts and spirituality which LGBT+ Christians bring.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Trustees who have been a delight to work alongside. Special thanks go to our Treasurer, David, who in addition to keeping me on track in terms of finance has also provided me with the challenge I needed to get things done but always with good humour. I also want to thank our Operations Manager, Katie, who ensures I have done what I need to do and that everyone who engages with OneBodyOneFaith receives the kind of welcome and help which reminds them they are loved and valued. Of course, none of what I have been talking about would have been possible without the phenomenal leadership of Luke. A man whose ability to bring others with him on a visionary journey I am in awe of, someone who has taught me so much about what it means to be positive, affirming and truly inclusive and an extremely dear friend. As an organisation we are fortunate to have him as our Executive Director.



OneBodyOneFaith

I have also stepped away from the Church of England completely. As a Vicar, Cathedral Canon and Archdeacon I sought to change the organisation for the better whilst recognising the challenge and cost of being openly gay in that institution. I coped with the abusive nature of being encouraged and welcomed and then reminded that I was not quite acceptable. I had red lines and knew that when they were crossed, I would have to walk away. Those red lines were crossed, and I realised that, for me, I wasn't bringing about change but was rather propping up a toxic institution. I have walked away and for me it has been liberating, life giving and really rather wonderful! My faith has been expressed within the Anglican church my entire life, but God has led me away from it now and I have to find a new way of expressing my faith and spirituality - at the moment I have no idea where or how that will be but Rhythm is definitely a place I shall be exploring. The desire to be positive in our faith which I have been talking about for so long isn't an abstract, nebulous concept for me but it has become a reality as I have left the negative, victim culture behind and moved to a more positive approach to faith. I'd encourage you to think about what your red lines are and remember that you don't have to put up with them being crossed.

The church offers us scraps from the table. Christ thinks we are worth so much more and so we won't settle for scraps but will seek the life which Christ offers, life in all its fullness.