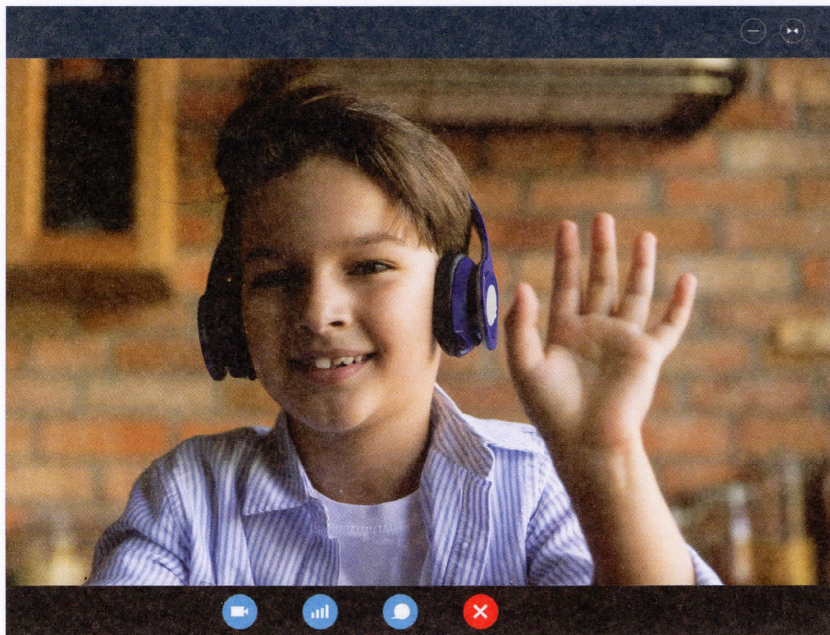


# Face-to-face communication



Lord, teach me to feel your energy, to know that it is directed towards me, and that your face shines upon me. Help me to radiate that shining love in the world. Amen.

Heather Smith *reflects on* Psalm 67

There's really no substitute for face-to-face communication. An email can be easily misinterpreted, as can a phone call. The development of video communication tools shows how important we think it is to actually see someone's facial expressions and be able to look them in the eye. It brings a connection that is otherwise much harder.

Today's psalm reprises the blessing from Numbers 6 in the words: "May God... make his face to shine upon us". It is just as important that our relationship with God is face to face as it is for human communication. God's shining face shows pleasure – we can imagine, perhaps, a kindly parent beaming with pride and love at their children. But, you might say, "We can't actually see God, so it isn't really face-to-face communication at all." The blogger Lioness Oyinbo, who is blind, offers a helpful insight. Although she can't see the look on a person's face she explains that people underestimate the physical energy between two people in face-to-face communication. Among other cues, she talks about the energy that exists between two people, and the fact that she can more easily pick up on non-verbal information from someone she knows well.

God's energy is all around us – it sustains the world. We might think of God's shining face as that energy directed especially towards each of us. And the better we know God, the more attuned to it we will be. 🙏

## Walking with Rosie

### Shifting sand

by Gillian Cooper

Rosie and I have come to the beach. Access is down a concrete ramp with a steep drop onto boulders at the bottom. But today the drop has gone, and so have the boulders, and we step from the ramp onto firm damp sand. Further down the beach there is a ridge of white rock we have not seen before, and there are shells and sea glass in abundance. Recent strong tides

and fierce winds have changed the shape of the beach, moving heavy stones and depositing sand and treasures.

While Rosie charges around on the extra sand, I am feeling disconcerted. Something I know well has unexpectedly changed, and I don't know it any more. I'm forcibly reminded that my little world is insecure. I must place my trust in God, the rock who does not move, with whom I am forever safe and in whom is my home. 🙏

“The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.”

Psalm 24:1

## LGBTQ+ Church

### Part 3 – the declaration

by Jayne Ozanne

If you could bring hundreds of senior religious leaders together to make a statement to support LGBTQ+ people around the world, what would it say?

The Global Interfaith Commission on LGBTQ+ Lives spent some time debating this. We believed it was imperative that we started with affirming that all LGBTQ+ people are a precious part of God's creation. We acknowledged the harm that certain religious teachings have

caused and asked for forgiveness from those whose lives had been damaged or destroyed on the pretext of religious teaching. We went on to call for an end to criminalisation on the grounds of sexuality and gender identity, and for violence towards LGBTQ+ people to cease. Finally, we called for a global ban on conversion practices.

Over four hundred senior religious leaders signed this declaration ahead of its launch on 16 December 2020 at Westminster Abbey. You can read the full declaration at [www.globalinterfaith.lgbt](http://www.globalinterfaith.lgbt) 🙏