

‘There’s a stigma around Christianity and sexuality’

When Lucy Gorman finally admitted to herself she was gay, the first thing she did was pray to God to ask him to “make her straight”.

She was a 17-year-old Christian and it had taken her five years to admit to herself the feelings she was experiencing were not just a phase.

“I didn’t want to be gay,” said Lucy, 24. “Why would anyone put themselves in a minority group out of choice? You wouldn’t, would you? It would be easier not to be gay.”

“I prayed for God to make me straight. I got angry with him. Why was this happening to me? Why did I have to be gay? Why wouldn’t he make me straight and normal?”

“I’d grown up thinking it was wrong to be gay. No one else in my family is gay and I didn’t have any gay friends.”

“I tried to ignore it, but deep down, I’d always known.” Fortunately, Lucy, of North Cave, was given the instant support of her family and friends after taking the brave decision to confide in them, which she says came as a huge relief.

But within the church, Lucy says she faced problems. “There is still a stupid amount of stigma around Christianity and sexuality,” says Lucy.

“Being ‘out’ in church means a lot of people face homophobia. “There are still a lot of prejudices within the church and a big split in opinion on homosexuality. “Christians who are gay often find themselves unheard, hurt and excluded within their churches.”

Lucy decided the easiest way to “come out” in the church would be to write a blog, which would explain her feelings.

It spread like wildfire and, once the church got wind of it, Lucy says she was told it was “wrong” to be gay.

Despite the homophobia she faced, it was at that point Lucy decided to stay and fight for change.

“I have, what I believe is, a

When she revealed she was gay, Lucy Gorman had to reconcile her sexuality with her religion. She tells **Joanna Hunter** why she stays to fight for equality within the church



SHARING EXPERIENCE: Lucy Gorman, a gay Christian, has launched the Hull and East Riding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Fellowship group. Pictures: Simon Renilson

‘I don’t have to hide who I am’

THE Hull and East Riding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Fellowship held its first meeting in a coffee shop, where seven people attended. They looked at passages in the Bible that focus on gay relationships, and discussed their meanings. Group founder Lucy said: “Going to church is about worshipping, but it is also about the friendship and fellowship after. “I wasn’t getting that. I found myself making small talk after service and I went along with what they said. “People assume everyone is straight, so they might ask if I’ve got a boyfriend. “I’d not sit there and say I was gay, I didn’t feel that was the right place to come out. “But, within the group, I’m getting the friendship without hiding who I am.” Lucy said the members want to work with congregation members, so they can all worship together. Visit www.lgbtchristianfellowship.co.uk for more information.

God-given passion, for equality for LGBT people within the church, and I will do everything in my power to gain that,” she says.

“God makes no mistakes and that includes your sexuality. “People ask me why I’m still a Christian if I face homophobia, and I say it is because of my beliefs and my trust in and love of God.

“It is not about the people at the church, I am not doing it for the church, I am doing it for God. “If you are facing prejudices in the workplace, you would stay and fight, and for me, it is the same at the church.

“It’s sad people would walk away.” Keen to meet others in her situation, Lucy decided to set up a friendship group for gay Christians.

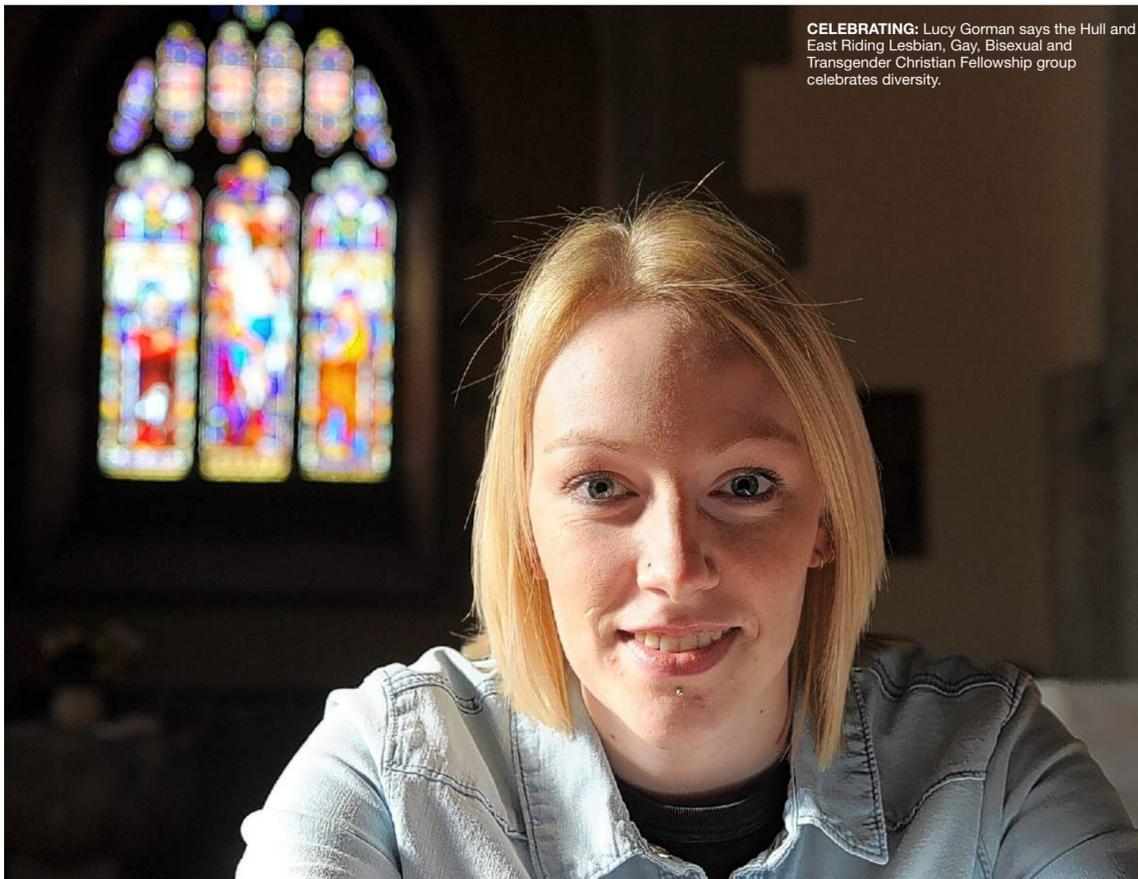
“I thought, I can’t be the only gay Christian in the area,” says Lucy. She first reached out by displaying posters in churches across the region, which invited people to join a new group.

From there, she was contacted by seven people who wanted to meet up and the Hull and East Riding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Christian Fellowship was born.

The group celebrates diversity and calls for equality, while offering support to those who have faced homophobia in the church. It also offers like-minded worshippers the chance to meet others in a similar situation.

The members meet at an East Riding church, but the venue of the meetings is not advertised for fear of reprisals. It comes as the first same-sex weddings are due to take place in England and Wales at the end of the month. However, the Church of England has confirmed it will not bless gay marriages.

“It does hurt that I can’t go to the church that I’ve been going to all my life with someone I love to ask the vicar to bless the partnership, yet the couple down the road who have never



CELEBRATING: Lucy Gorman says the Hull and East Riding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christian Fellowship group celebrates diversity.

set foot inside a church can marry there even if they aren’t religious, because they are a man and a woman,” says Lucy.

“The church is refusing to bless a union between two people who love each other, but they can bless an animal, they can bless a meal, they are willing to bless these inanimate objects, but not love.”

In their first meeting, the group discussed passages in the Bible that refer to homosexuality. “As a group, we enjoy sharing our experiences, both good and bad, in

living our everyday lives as LGBT Christians”, she says. “We don’t want homophobia to be a stumbling block to people exploring faith and the church.

“Rather than our sexuality being something that needs to be repressed or healed, we celebrate diversity in all its forms.”

“The church is refusing to bless a union between two people who love each other, but they can bless an animal, they can bless a meal, they are willing to bless these inanimate objects, but not love

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a terrified new mum on life with a little one

Eric sleeps through sights and sounds of seaside on first trip

It is natural for parents to want the best for their children, and most will sacrifice whatever it takes to ensure their offspring are not deprived of anything. What a shame this unquestioning selflessness is not reciprocated.

This week, we took Eric on his first jaunt to the seaside, thinking the sights and sounds would help his tiny brain to grow. At the same time, we hoped force-feeding him some sea air might make him sleep for more than an hour that night.

Our plan half worked in the sense Eric did sleep, although the ungrateful so’n’so chose to do this for the entire duration of our trip, which made the 90-minute drive to Bridlington seem quite unnecessary.

When you consider how long it took to pack the car up, wrap the little chubster in enough layers to stop my mum asking whether he was warm enough, unwrap him because he needed changing and then feed him again – all before we’d even set foot out of our front door – then it definitely felt like an extravagance.

It is worth noting that my mum, AKA the cardigan police, was not with us, but thanks to the power of Facebook, she still managed to note that Eric was not wearing a hat. We could be in the tropics, but she would still want the grandson wrapped up like Kirsty Allsopp.

On the plus side, my partner and I enjoyed an ice-cream in the sunshine and had a beautiful walk, taking in the Old Town, promenade and various sights in between. But for all Eric knew, we could have been in Tesco.

Sadly, our son’s readiness to sleep is a rare thing, particularly when we’re about to eat. In a previous column, I mentioned his ability to hear me pick up a knife and fork, and this skill is sharpening by the week. On Sunday, based on how he slept

with Catherine Lea



SUNSHINE: Catherine took Eric on his first trip to the seaside.

at the seaside, as well as the fact his nanna Ann and Jeff managed to stop off for a drink and a sarnie when they took him out in his pram, Glen and I took him to Larkins Bar, where I ordered my first filter coffee since before Eric was born.

As predicted, no sooner had we wheeled him into the beer garden, he woke up and started crying. Anticipating this would happen, as well as the fact I had been dosing up on serious amounts of caffeine, I’d taken some expressed milk with us.

This stopped him whingeing, though the fact I had to feed him did hamper my ability to quaff my brew. Eric did receive some admiring coos from other diners, though my efforts to palm him off on complete strangers proved fruitless, maybe because his hat fell off and the sight of his crusty cradle cap made them think twice. It certainly put me off my chunky chips.

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