

Autistic Christians Support Community

Humour, Faith and Autism

Presenter: Jonathan McNabb

Chair: David
Chat Monitor: Sue

18 July 2026

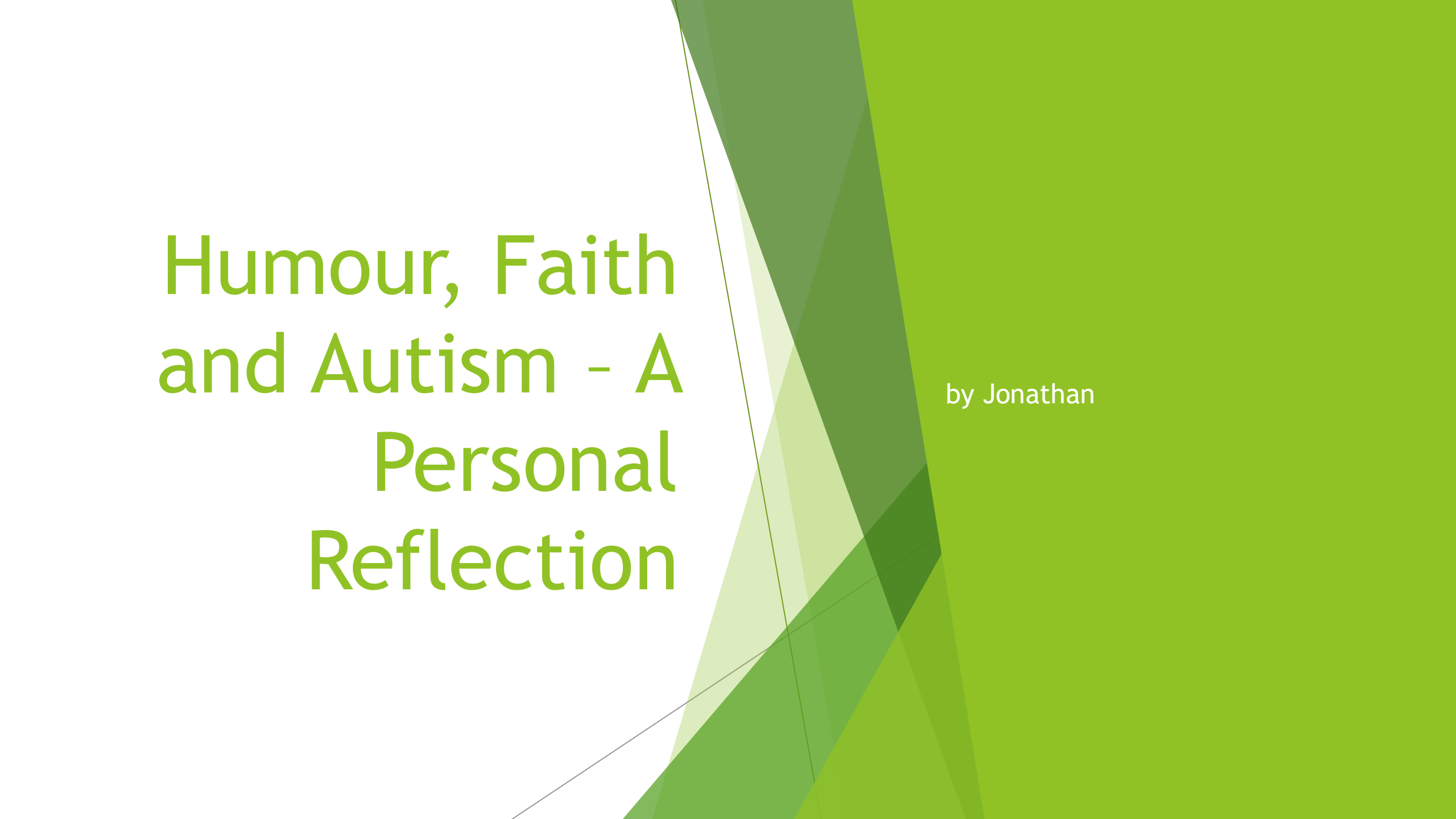
AGENDA

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. 11.00 – 11.05 | Welcome and Introduction |
| 2. 11.05 – 11.15 | Jonathan: Humour, Faith and Autism |
| 3. 11.15 – 11.45 | Discussion (30 mins) |
| 4. 11.45 – 11.55 | Community Update |
| 5. 11.55 – 12.00 | AOB |
| ----- | |
| 12.00 - 12.30 | Social time |

Autistic Christians Support Community

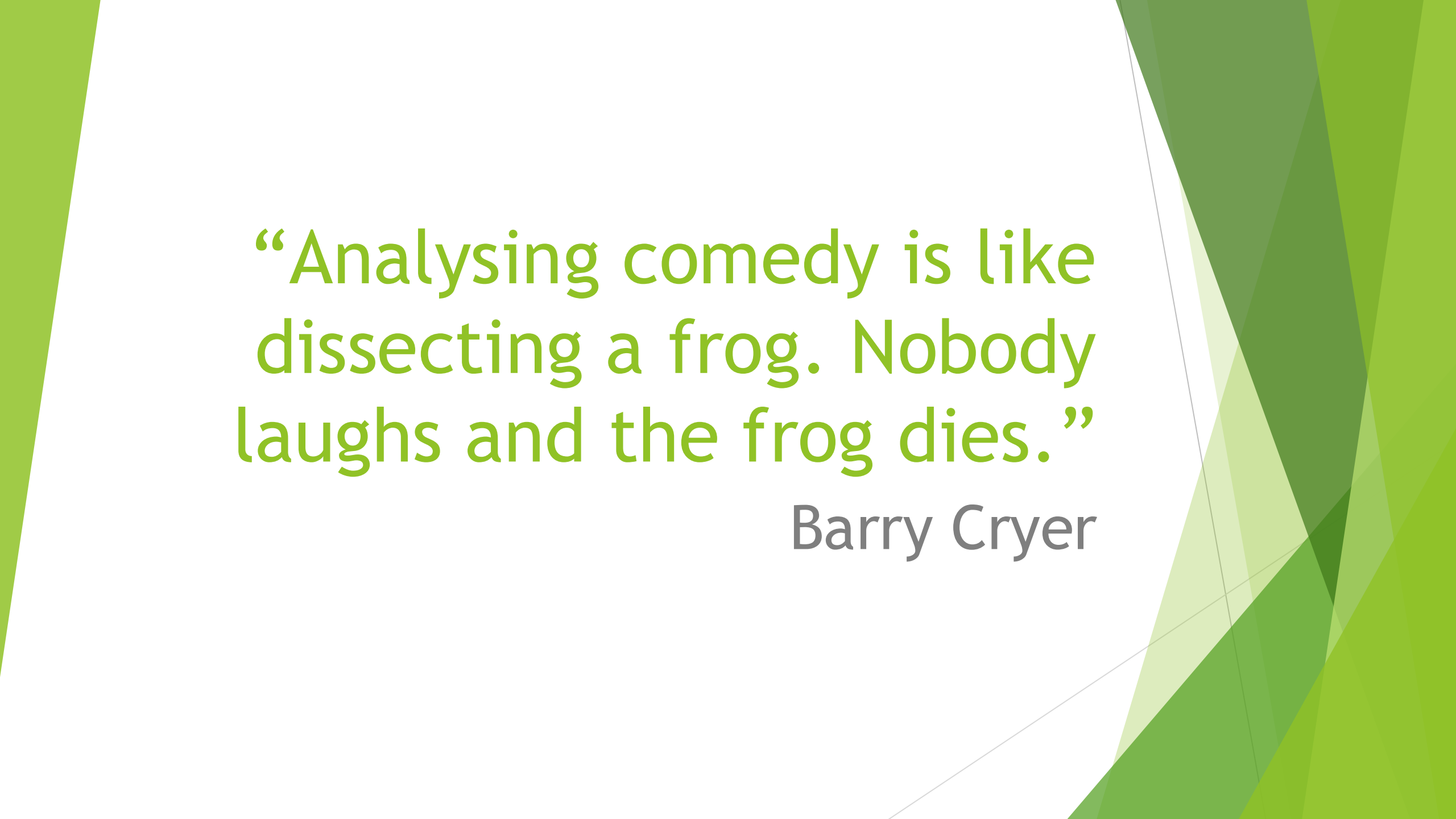
Humour, Faith and Autism

Jonathan McNabb



Humour, Faith and Autism - A Personal Reflection

by Jonathan

The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides, framing the central white area where the text is placed.

“Analysing comedy is like
dissecting a frog. Nobody
laughs and the frog dies.”

Barry Cryer

The talk is a reflection on humour, faith and autism based on:

- ▶ Exploring comedians who have been diagnosed as autistic
- ▶ Exploring comedians who have a sense of humour similar to autistic comedians
- ▶ Exploring comedians who are Christians
- ▶ The experience of humour in church and other Christian communities

Common traits in autistic comedian humour

- ▶ Analytical - examples how language works; thinking with autistic brains; interacting with our bodies; the experience of being other
- ▶ Detachment from faith apart from Ashley Blaker (former observant Jew) they reflect on faith from a cultural Christian perspective
- ▶ Pushing language to the limits
- ▶ Humour rooted in sadness and pain

The benefits of using humour in relation to faith from an autistic perspective

- ▶ Cathartic - unloading negative thoughts and experiences and making them positive
- ▶ Liberative - humour can expose bad theology or praxis and guide us to better theology or praxis
- ▶ Joy - humour can bring joy
- ▶ Memory - humour can help in remembering the point being made

The dangers of using humour in relation to faith:

The tongue can be dishonouring to God - some forms
of humour may not be appropriate.

Offence - we may cause offence through our humour.



Questions

- ▶ Is there a joke that captures the importance of humour in understanding your faith that you can share?
- ▶ Is a sense of humour important to your faith?
- ▶ Do you think autism has helped you shape your humour?
- ▶ Do you like it when preachers' make jokes when preaching?

COMMUNITY NEWS

CFE Discussion Schedule – 2026 (Provisional)

DATE	DAY/TIME	CFE-Autism DISCUSSION TOPIC	SPEAKER	CHAIR	CHAT
19 Sept	Sat/11am BST	Deconstructing and Reconstructing you Faith	David	TBC	TBC
17 Oct	Sat/11am BST	Sleep and Insomnia	Stewart	TBC	TBC
21 Nov	Sat/11am GMT*	Autistic Shame	Sue	TBC	TBC
12 Dec**	Sat/11am GMT	Review of the year – where next?	Stewart	TBC	TBC

* The UK changes from BST to GMT on 25 October 2026

** Earlier to avoid Christmas

CofE General Synod: All Kinds of Minds

Recently (10 July), the CofE General Synod discussed the issue of Neurodiversity in the Church.

This discussion was based on the document: 'All Kinds of Minds'

The links below take you to the document and to a recording of the discussion:

Find the document here:

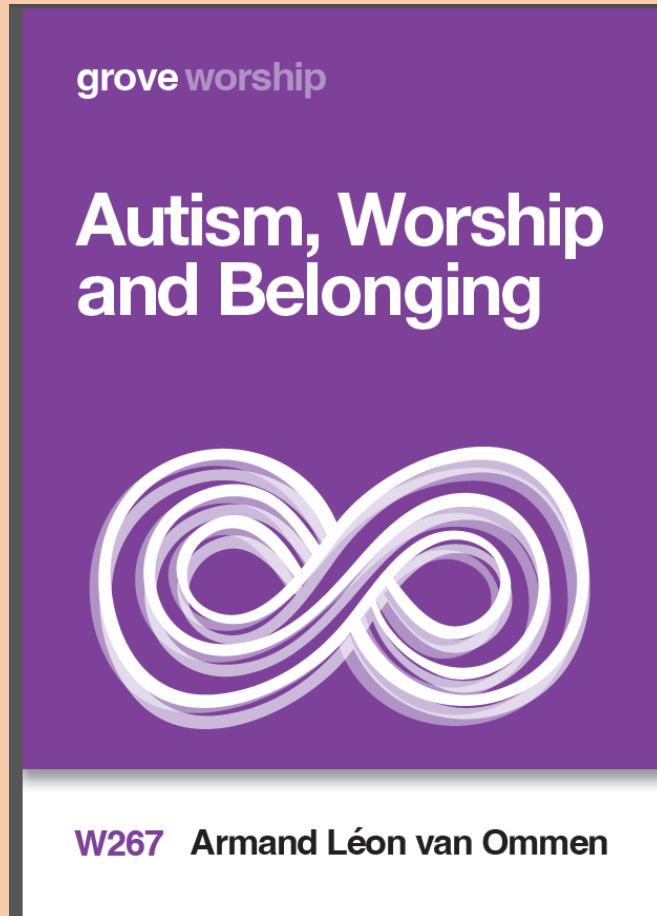
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2026-06/gs-2444-all-kinds-of-minds-affirming-neurodiversity-in-the-life-of-the-church.pdf>

Find the recording of the debate here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/GRfDVqis-pY?si=gruNUKC5JPwPzxyP>

(Timing: Runs from 1h 37min to 2h 58min)

Grove Booklet



An excellent resource for use in churches. Covers:

- Understanding Autism, Worship and Belonging
- The Cult of Normalcy
- Worship as Sensory, Social and Wordy
- Embodying Belonging – Attitudes and Practical Tips

Grove Publishers

<https://grovebooks.co.uk/product/w-267-autism-worship-and-belonging/>

Amazon

<https://amzn.eu/d/09cypHTs>

Price &5.95 (hard-copy), £4.95 (digital copy – not sure if the download option is available from Amazon)

David Derbyshire Blog



David has recently started a blog. You can find this and follow David at:

<https://medium.com/@davidderbyshire2>

Some of David's recent posts

