

## SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017



### GREETINGS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN Reverend Dan Harper



As I write to introduce myself and share a little of my thoughts, I am faced with the familiar sight of my computer screen being covered in wavy red lines. Whilst these wavy red lines can be frustrating I find them most helpful, as someone who is really quite dyslexic, the ability to see some of the mistakes I've made and have suggestions as how to correct them is welcome.

Of course when it comes to admitting our mistakes to ourselves or worse still to others, or even simply highlighting the areas where we or they need assistance, can be difficult. This is a particular challenge in a Church context, where sometimes the ways things have always been is very important and talk of change is viewed as possibly being heretical.

As the SCDG I believe we have a unique and exciting place within the interdenominational church life within Scotland. We have an opportunity to be a voice that advocates change, and supplies insight and understanding to help make that change. We have an opportunity to be a voice that can provide the wavy red lines for Churches, pointing out where mistakes have been made and seeking to give suggestions as to what the best way of correcting the mistake has been.

As your new Chair I have a lot to learn and I am keen that we can each offer the wisdom of our own experience and frustration as to how we can advocate for a church that is more inclusive and outrageously loving.

Of course, we must all remember that evolution is a more stable and secure way forward than revolution, but let me be clear, that we should not wait around for something to happen. We are in the position to pool our resources and make the change together.

Some of you will be interested in knowing who I am. I am the Parish Minister at Bridge of Allan Parish Church, and I have been for the last couple of years, where I live most happily with my wife and daughter. I am sure in time we will get to know each other better.

God's blessing on you.

Dan

## NEW FACES

Our Committee welcomes new members:

Chairman: The Reverend Dan Harper  
Secretary: Scott Gillies  
Treasurer: William Walker  
Webmaster: Ian Boe  
Member: Paul Goode

Other Committee members continue to offer their services:

The Rev. Rosie Addis, Alex Baird, Ivy Blair, Marion Blake, Helena Cant [Events Organiser], Lindsay Cant, Barbara Graham [Newsletter Editor], David Nicholson, Shona Paterson [ACTS], Judith Roebuck [CARTA], Denis Shovlin [Vice-Chairman], Tom Sutcliffe, Barbara Walker.

The larger Committee will concentrate on three main themes:

- Providing worship materials which everyone can use.
- Preparing a guide to the theology of disability in plain language.
- Looking for good practice on meeting special needs in all church denominations.

We depend on your input on all of these areas. What works for you? What can you share through the SCDG newsletter and website?



Have you seen our new website - <http://scdg.org.uk/> We welcome your feedback so that we can improve it. Please encourage your friends to visit the website, which is being developed not only for people with disabilities, but for churches which want to be more inclusive.

## Celebrating Advent in British Sign Language

Dalziel St Andrew's Church in Motherwell ensures that people with hearing loss are included in all their services. Alex Baird reports on their latest initiative.

"Following a successful Workshop in spring 2017, an Advent Signing Workshop was held on 25 November at Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church. Around 20 delegates attended each workshop, with new faces participating in the later event.

Facilitated by Rev Rosie Addis of the Church of Scotland, the Workshop was very interactive, allowing all to try out signing skills to familiar Advent hymns and carols.

Each week our service of worship is live streamed on the internet, with a separate opportunity to link into a screen showing a BSL Signer and a box with spoken words typed in by an Electronic Notetaker. Encouraging "viewer" numbers are recorded from the live streaming and from the upload to You Tube which allows catch-up later. Around 10 countries have recorded viewers accessing the site to share in worship.

Recordings can be accessed by following the link to You Tube on the home page of the church website, <http://www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk/> ."

## Making the Bible accessible

Urban Saints (formerly called Crusaders) is a charity which aims to introduce young people to Jesus. This is a challenge, as 20% of children and young people in the UK have an additional need or disability of some kind; that's roughly 2.5 million! Many of these children and young people and their families feel excluded from various social and other activities, including church. So how does the church reach out to and meet their needs?

Urban Saint and other partners responded by helping Biblica publishers to produce the NIrV Accessible Bible. This edition of the New Testament is suitable for people with learning disabilities, moderate sight loss, lower levels of literacy and English as a second language, but it can be used by any reader wishing to explore God's Word.

Helpful features are:

- short sentences and simple language
- specially designed (16point) font
- illustrations which aid understanding
- single column setting.

New Testament



 NIrV  
Accessible Edition

The NIrV Accessible Bible is available in Christian bookshops and can be ordered online at <https://www.urbansaints.org/stories/466> .



“Going to Church” is the latest in the series of wordless books produced by Books Beyond Words, helping people with learning disabilities to access places of worship and the wider communities offered by churches.

People with learning disabilities helped to create Beyond Words books by assessing pictures, to ensure the story can be clearly understood. “Going to Church” was prepared by Professor Sheila Hollins and Professor John Swinton, Aberdeen University’s Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies, working alongside people with learning disabilities.

This book can be ordered from Books Beyond Words, tel. 020 7492 2559.

## Prospects News

### Courses for speakers with learning disabilities

Ivy Blair reports on exciting developments.

“We have been planning it for a while, but in September it became a reality!! We ran the first 2 day course aimed at helping people with learning disabilities to develop skills as speakers so that they can fully contribute to talks about Prospects in churches and other settings.



Here is what the participants said about the course.

“Best training ever”

“A good help to me.”

“Nice relaxed atmosphere”

“I’ve enjoyed it”

“Good exchange of ideas”

“Learned something different”

“Awesome course”

We have 2 more courses planned in the spring – in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Please contact Ivy Blair if you would like details or are interested in attending.

Tel. 07827 939 520 or [ivyb@prospects.org.uk](mailto:ivyb@prospects.org.uk)

## Prospects Annual Holiday weekend at Tulliallan Police College 11-13<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Our theme is **All Friends Together**. If you would like to join us for the weekend or just for the day we'd be delighted to send you a booking form – just ask.”



### Dementia friendly churches

CARTA, the Church of Scotland's Committee on Art and Architecture, has produced a helpful guide on how to make churches more welcoming for people with dementia. Practical tips include:

- providing strong lighting
- removing trip hazards
- bold signs at eye level to identify rooms such as toilets

This guide and other useful leaflets on access issues can be found at [http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/art and architecture resources](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/art_and_architecture_resources) or requested by ringing 0131-225-5722.

### Torch Fellowship Groups

Torch Fellowship Groups are non-denominational Christian groups for blind and partially sighted people. They are organised and led by local Christians. Group meetings are supported by song books and other literature in giant print, braille and audio formats. Usually food and refreshments feature in the meeting!

Groups depend on volunteers: drivers to transport members, people to prepare and serve refreshments, others who plan and lead the programme - and those who simply accompany a visually impaired person.

There are groups in Aberdeen, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Inverness and Motherwell. For contact details ring **01858 438260** or visit <http://www.torchtrust.org/smartweb/Groups%20and%20Fellowship/group-directory> .

### How to contact us

If you want to bring something to the Committee's attention, please contact the Secretary, Scott Gillies, at [rowantreeass@outlook.com](mailto:rowantreeass@outlook.com)  
Tel.0131-669-3301 or 07584-139587.

If you want to advertise events or invite people to join you for a chat, please send your news to the Newsletter Editor, Barbara Graham: [barbara.graham74@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.graham74@btinternet.com)  
or 42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ. Tel. 01563-522108

# Making Church Accessible to All

Including disabled people  
in church life



**Scottish Churches Disability Group**  
**A registered Scottish charity, No. SCO39567**