

SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018



At this time of year we look forward to putting winter behind us. We see signs of new life stirring in our gardens, parks and countryside. As we journey through Lent, we look forward to the joy of the Easter Resurrection. This reminds us that when in our personal lives our journey takes us through difficult times, we never travel alone because we are always supported by the promises of our risen Saviour.

SCDG news

Our Committee met in January to report progress on three main themes for 2018:

- **Making churches accessible to everyone.**

This group has drawn up questions to help churches to consider how easy it is for all people to join in their worship and other activities. They are considering how to make worship materials and church buildings accessible to all. Guidelines will be added to the SCDG website, with links to useful resources. Guidance can also be given in print form to people who do not use the website.

You can help by:

- **telling us what works well in your church;**
- **pointing us to resources which could be used to help other churches.**

- **Preparing a guide to disability theology in plain language.**

Members who are working on this topic are reviewing relevant materials and planning to contact people with experience in this field. One aim is to produce a concise summary of key themes in disability theology in simple language.

You can help by:

- **recommending books and articles which help you to understand what the Bible says about disability and the role of disabled people in the church.**

- **Reaching out to all church denominations and learning from their good practice in including people with disabilities.**

This group is compiling a list of Churches Together groups around Scotland and plans to offer speakers to explain what SCDG offers and to listen to these groups.

You can help by:

- **telling us about ecumenical groups in your area and how to contact them;**
- **offering to speak to such groups, using a presentation which has been prepared to explain what SCDG does;**
- **inviting a SCDG speaker to come and meet a local ecumenical group.**

If you can help in any of these ways, please contact either the Secretary or the Newsletter Editor and we shall pass on your comments to the working groups.

- Secretary: Scott Gillies Rowantreeass@outlook.com Tel. 0131-669-3301
- Editor: Barbara Graham barbara.graham74@btinternet.com 01563-522108



Edinburgh & Lothians Roofbreakers Network

This group helps churches to become more welcoming to disabled people. Members experiment with inclusive worship, tell stories, exchange ideas and resources, pray for one another and eat together. You are invited to come to the next gathering, which will include discussion of **Working towards a Dyslexia Friendly Church**.

When? Tuesday, 6th March. Tea and coffee from 1 p.m. Meeting at 1.30 p.m.

Where? Pilrig St Paul's Church, 1B Pilrig St, Edinburgh EH6 5AH

Contact: Claire Wilson the@wislons.fastmail.co.uk

SOUND: a Story of Hearing Loss

Author and journalist, **Bella Bathurst** began to go deaf at the age of 27. In her book she describes her personal experience. Come and meet her at a Book Event.

When? Monday, 12th March. 2 to 3.30 p.m.

Where? St Andrew's & St George's West Church, 13 George St, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

Tickets: £6 or £4 concessions.

Order at <http://www.stagw.org.uk/event/sound/> or tel. 0131 225 3847.

BSL Signing Workshop

Would you like to attend a free course on BSL Signing for the Deaf in worship? You are invited to come even if you have no previous experience in this skill.

When? Saturday, 17th March. 9.30 a.m. until lunch (which is included).

Where? Dalziel St Andrew's Church, 47 Merry St., Motherwell, ML1 1JJ

Contact: Alex Baird a.baird00912@btinternet.com
Tel. 01698 262915 or 0790-305-1970

Learning Disability Working Group 'On the road'

The Church of Scotland's Learning Disabilities Working Group is travelling around Scotland to meet people who have been appointed as Learning Disabilities Contacts in local churches. Anyone else who is interested in helping to shape the Church's response to the challenge of building communities of belonging is welcome to attend.

When? Thursday, 22nd March. 2 to 3.30 p.m.

Where? Baillieston St Andrew's Church, 2 Bredisholm Rd, Glasgow G69 7HL

Contact: Hannah Sanderson hsanderson@churchofscotland.org.uk
Tel. 0131 225 5722 extension 2316

Learning Disabilities Conference

On **16th June** the Learning Disabilities Group will hold a conference in Perth. Full details will be announced in the spring. Meanwhile, you can see their Learning Disabilities Resource Pack at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/learning_disabilities or order a copy from the Church of Scotland at tel. 0131 225 5722 extension 2316.

Prospects Annual Holiday Weekend

Prospects Scotland is holding a weekend event for people with learning disabilities and their families. The theme is **All Friends Together**. Come for the weekend or just for a day

When? 11th to 13th May

Where? Tulliallan Police College, near Kincardine

Contact Ivy Blair for a booking form. ivyb@prospects.org.uk Tel. **07827 939 520**

Postponed SDCG Conference

After the disappointment of having to postpone the 2017 SCDG conference due to a lack of bookings, the Committee has decided to operate in different ways:

- We shall invite a guest speaker to our Annual General Meeting rather than stage a full day event for which we have to charge.
- We shall contribute to events run by other organisations to raise SCDG's profile.
- We shall collaborate with Churches Together Groups around Scotland.
- We want to hear your views on what kinds of events SCDG should offer.

Useful resources

Tips on accessing the Bible for anyone who finds reading difficult by Aurora Betony

One of our members offers suggestions for dyslexic people, based on methods which she finds helpful.

"I'm dyslexic. Although I can read (decode words) fine, my dyslexia makes it difficult for me to take in what I read. So to engage with the Bible, I need to use alternative formats such as pictures or audio as well as print.

"There are many resources in alternative formats which help me engage with the Bible. Two I find particularly helpful are:

- 1) The UK Bible Society's audio dramatization '[You've got the Time](#)'; and
- 2) A website that offers free sets of Bible story images, '[Free Bible images](#)'.

There are many other things that help me engage with the Bible, including:

- 1) Gaining the gist of a passage before reading it in print;
- 2) Acting out a story; and
- 3) Discussing the Bible with others.

"You'll find more information in a free guide I've written called 'Tips on taking in and remembering Bible content'. You can download it in Word or pdf at:

<https://newroots.online/2017/07/31/top-tips-for-engaging-with-the-bible/>."

Writings of Jean Vanier

Jean Vanier is the founder of L'Arche Communities where people with and without learning disabilities share life together, living and working in a caring community. He also founded the Faith and Light movement, which offers inclusive worship. In 2015 Vanier was awarded the Templeton Prize, which is given to people “*who have devoted their talents to expanding our vision of human purpose*”.

Jean Vanier celebrating the Templeton Prize with his friends



He has written many books, the latest of which is “**Life’s Great Questions**”, published in 2015 by Franciscan Media, Cincinnati. Here he explores questions which we all ask: Who are we? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? With deep thought expressed in simple language, Jean Vanier encourages readers to delve more deeply into our own faith and spirituality and helps us to find our own answers to life’s great questions.

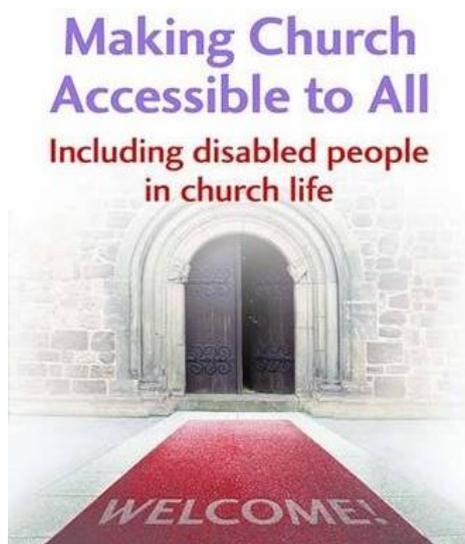


Have you seen our website - <http://scdg.org.uk/> We welcome feedback so that we can improve it. Please encourage your friends to visit the website, which is being developed not only for people with disabilities, but also for churches which want to be more inclusive.

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
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
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Scottish Churches Disability Group
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