



SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

May 2018



Thoughts from our Chairman, Rev. Dan Harper

On my desk there sits a to-do-list. Every day this list has completed items crossed out and new items added. The list is full of small, discrete tasks and larger items that are made up of multiple parts, and the list grows and shrinks, but is never complete. I am sure that all of us have lists like that, either in our heads or written down somewhere.

The thought of the never ending to-do-list got me thinking. I like the fact that I have a full and variable list, one that fluctuates and engages with people at all points in life, but that is not where my thoughts found their resting place. It is the very never-ending nature of the list where my thoughts settled.

I think, by its very nature, that trying to live in accordance with the teachings of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit means that, whatever our job or whatever our role within the Church, we are going to have a never completed to-do-list. And, of course, this applies to groups like our own. As we all know, there is always more that can be done to make an activity or a building more accessible, and there is always more that can be learned about each other and the challenges we all face in life.

This never ending to-do-list is, I think, primarily a function of living out our Christian faith. We are called to respond to God in all things that we do, and seek to live out our faith in all we do and there is no magic words or special deed we can do to get our faith sorted. It is about an ongoing and always developing relationship with God and our response to that. If we are to respond in love and acceptance in all circumstances, then each day will of course give us more loving and accepting to do.

I find the never-ending nature of the list is a wonderful and freeing thing, and I find the ongoing and forever developing relationship with God an exciting and liberating thing. The knowledge that the end point is in God's hands frees us to realise that it is the journey that matters. If it is the journey that matters, then it is the everyday encounters and how we live day to day that is the outworking of our Christian faith.

Simply put, it is often said that "the ends justify the means", however, I think we should shift our focus. Rather than worry about "the ends", we should simply focus on "our means" and making our means as loving and inclusive as possible.

Spreading the news at the Heart and Soul Festival

SCDG members welcomed visitors to our stand at the Church of Scotland's annual Heart and Soul Festival in Princes Street Gardens during the General Assembly in Edinburgh. This was a splendid opportunity to tell how SCDG can help churches which want to be more inclusive. This was also the first outing for our new banner. Do you like it?



Keeping in touch with you

We love to keep in touch with our members. Without your input there would be no newsletter. The way that we keep in touch with you is changing, however, due to new data protection laws. This means that we need you to confirm that you wish SCDG to keep your contact details for the purpose of sending you our newsletters and invitations to our events. If we do not receive this, we shall have to remove you from our mailing list.

The people who will hold your contact details securely are:

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

On the last page of this newsletter you will find a form on which you can consent to receive further information from SCDG. Please complete this and return it:

- by copying it and sending it to the Secretary's e-mail address;
- or
- by completing a print copy and posting it to Scott Gillies at 35 Moira Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 6TD.

We appreciate your help with this legal requirement. Please keep in touch!



Dates for your diary



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 their next gathering.

When? Thursday 28 June 1 - 4pm

Where? Meadowbank Church of Scotland, 83 London Rd, Edinburgh EH7 5TT.

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

Tim Wood, of the Through the Roof charity, will introduce a course called **Enabling Church**. This course of 8 sessions helps churches to find out more about being truly inclusive. Tim's presentation could be followed by discussion about how the resource could be best used locally.

Learning Disabilities Conference

On **16th June** the Church of Scotland's Learning Disabilities Group will hold a conference in Perth. Full details can be found at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/events/learning_disabilities_conference_2018_-_being_communities_of_belonging.

You can also ring the Church of Scotland at tel. 0131 225 5722 extension 2316.

SDCG Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on **Saturday, 22nd September**, at Pilrig St Paul's Church, Edinburgh. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Jeremy Balfour, MSP, who is Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Disabilities.

Booking details will be available in the summer, but please reserve this date.

Resources for your book-shelf



Through the Roof resources

'All Welcome - A best practice guide to including disabled people in the life of the church' Cost: £5

This resource offers useful ideas on including disabled people in various aspects of church life, such as Communion and worship. It considers what disability is and how we view disability. Other topics cover access, disability etiquette, communication, diversity, looking beyond church walls, mission, baptism, worship, including disabled children, practical support, discipling and leadership.

Reviewer's comments: "This guide is short (25 pages) and comprehensive. I found it informative and compelling. It is accessible, with pictures throughout. It says everything I would want it to say, and is very well expressed. It mentions several different disabilities, including dyslexia. "

'Removing Barriers - A resource to help churches welcome and fully include disabled people' Cost: £3 + £2.50 postage and packing

This self-assessment questionnaire helps readers to check how inclusive their services, activities and programmes are for disabled people. It includes a sample policy statement, a questionnaire and an action plan template.

To order these resources, contact Through the Roof:

1. tel. 01372 74 99 55
2. email info@throughtheroof.org or
3. by post / cheque to PO Box 353, Epsom KT18 5WS

Through the Roof offers a range of its own resources and resources by others. You can browse them all at <https://www.throughtheroof.org/shop> .

Enabling Church - a Resource Book by Gordon Temple with Lin Ball

Gordon Temple is Chief Executive of Torch Trust, a Christian charity which supports people with sight loss. This book helps churches to understand what the Bible says about inclusion and involvement of disabled people in church life.

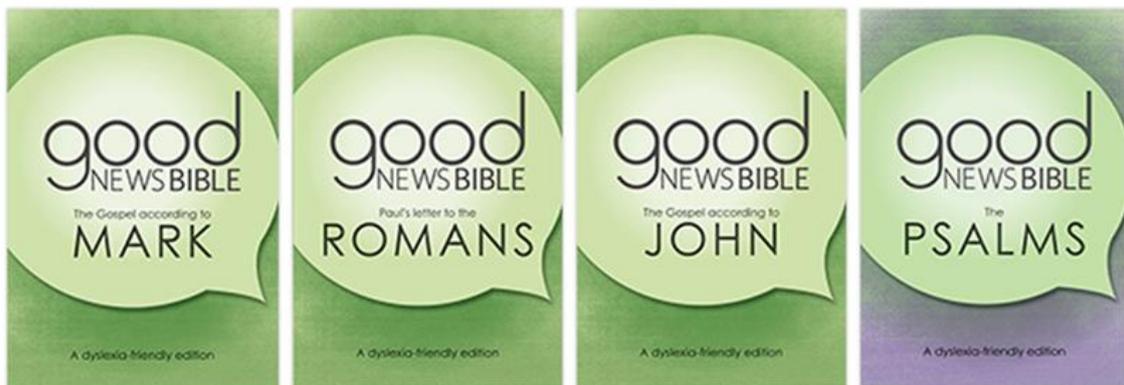
It's packed with discussion material, prayer, worship and hands-on activities, as well as the voices of disabled people commenting on issues which affect them. Theologian Roy McCloughry, who knows what it's like to live with the disability of epilepsy, has written the Foreword and described the book as 'creative and timely.'

Published by SPCK, May 2012. Cost £7.99 The book is available in braille, large print and audio from Torch Trust at info@torchtrust.org or tel. 01858 438260.

Dyslexia Friendly Bibles

Are you or someone you know living with dyslexia? If so, explore the Bible Society's dyslexia-friendly books of the Bible! These books have the following features:

- Format recommended by the British Dyslexia Association.
- Increased line spacing
- Larger type face
- Cream coloured paper rather than bright white
- Paper has high opacity so very little text shows through from the next page
- Paper has matt finish rather than glossy paper limiting reflection



See the comments of satisfied readers:

'My son is delighted with his two books of the Bible in a form he can read easily... You have no idea how much this means to him! Thank you.'

'It was a relief for me and I could read large amounts at a better speed.'

'I bought these for a friend with severe dyslexia – and she was very excited to have them. She said that the format, layouts and fonts were perfect for her. One of the best things was that she felt included and special by finally having something that was designed with her in mind.'

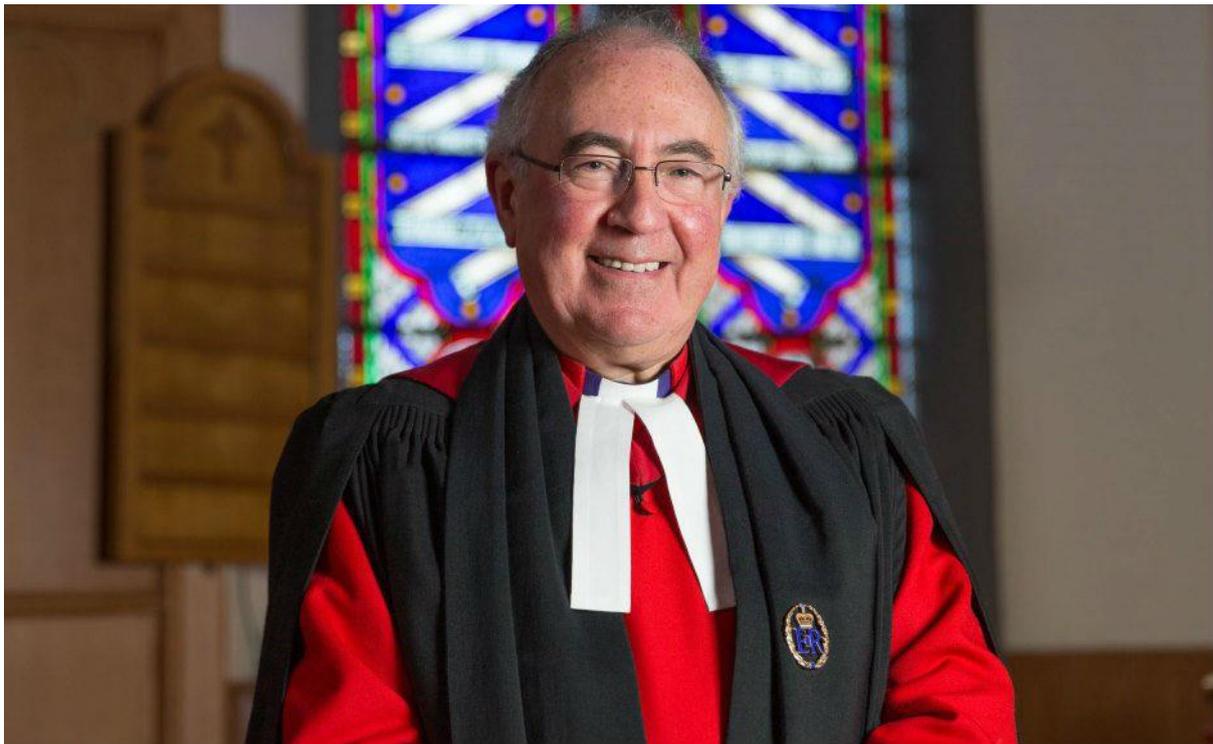
The books range in price from £4.49 to £7.99. They are available from The Scottish Bible Society at info@scottishbiblesociety.org or tel. 0131 337 9701.

Honour for SCDG President

Former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison, will be awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow. "For the University to award me a Doctor of Divinity degree is a deep joy and one for which I feel profoundly grateful." The honorary doctorate will be awarded at the University's annual Commemoration Day on June 13.

The University of Glasgow cited his contribution to championing Gaelic, refugee and asylum seekers and changing attitudes within the Church to inclusion of people with disabilities and those in same sex relationships.

A Gaelic speaker, Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the Queen and President of the Scottish Churches Disability Group, Dr Morrison is currently a parish minister at Orwell and Portmoak Parish Church in Kinross-shire.



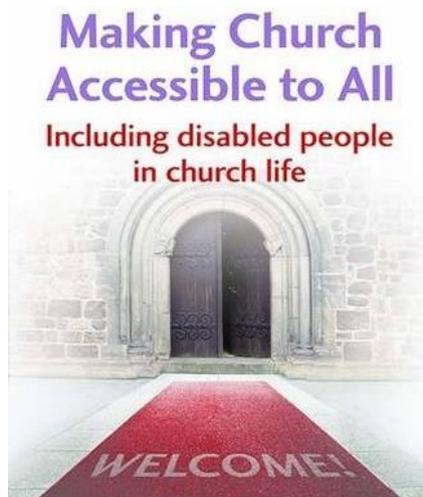
Keep in touch via our website - <http://scdg.org.uk/> We welcome feedback so that we can improve it. Please encourage your friends to visit the website, which is being developed not only for people with disabilities, but also for churches which want to be more inclusive.

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
or 42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ. Tel. 01563-522108

**Finally, help us to contact you by completing
the consent form on the last page!**



**Scottish Churches Disability Group
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SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP

Keeping your information safe

When you give your contact details to the Scottish Churches Disability Group, we shall use this information to send to you newsletters and details of our events and those of related organisations.

We shall not pass on your contact details to other individuals or organisations without your specific consent.

To allow us to contact you, please complete this form and return it to our Secretary, Scott Gillies:

- by e-mail at rowantreeass@outlook.com ; or
- by post to 35 Moira Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 6TD.

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Please tick the boxes below to give your consent.

- I agree that the Scottish Churches Disability Group may record my contact details in order to send me SCDG newsletters and information about relevant events.
- I understand that my contact details will not be passed on to other individuals or organisations without my specific consent.

You may contact me as follows. Please tick the methods to which you agree:

- e-mail
- post
- phone

Name:

Address:

E-mail address:

Telephone: