



SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

June 2019



As we enter June, let's hope that indeed summer suns will be glowing. Whether or not we have holiday plans, we can enjoy the longer hours of daylight, the bird-song and the explosion of colour as gardens blossom with new life. Nature invites us to slow down and appreciate all that God has provided for us in this beautiful season.

Heart & Soul

SCDG members attended **Heart and Soul**, the Church of Scotland's annual celebration of all that is happening in churches around Scotland. Sharing a stand with Prospects Across Scotland enabled SCDG Committee members to tell how our charity can help churches to become more inclusive of disabled people.



Ivy Blair of Prospects Across Scotland at Heart & Soul



Lindsay Cant gave the Moderator of the Church of Scotland a leaflet about the Scottish Churches Disability Group.

If you know of opportunities for SCDG to have a stand at an exhibition in your area, contact Scott Gillies, at secretary@scdg.org.uk. Tel. 0131-669-3301

SCDG Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Scottish Churches Disability Group will be held on the afternoon of **Saturday, 21 September**, at St John's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh. Details of the guest speaker and the AGM agenda will appear in the course of the summer.

News from around Scotland

Threshold Glasgow



Crossreach, the Church of Scotland's social services provider, offers opportunities for people with learning disabilities, with specialist support for those with epilepsy, autism, and dementia. These include yoga, keep fit, creative writing, cooking, music, drama, Ten Pin Bowling, easy cycling and more. "Threshold Glasgow is led and managed by people who use the service. It thrives on its ethos – to empower you to reach your potential, live independently and have the best life possible."

For information see <https://www.crossreach.org.uk/our-locations/threshold-glasgow>. Tel. 0141-551-9204.

Pioneers Group

Kilmarnock Salvation Army supports the Pioneers Group. This is an innovative and inclusive discipleship groups for adults with additional support needs. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join the group on a Saturday morning from 11-12noon, in six week blocks throughout the year. Each block of classes has a special theme which is explored by games, singing, craft and stories. Each Pioneer has an individual carer/supporter to assist them during the lessons.



Some of the Pioneers also take part in a special timbrel group who meet on a Monday before Home League.

For information, see

<http://www.kilmarnocksalvationarmy.co.uk/pioneers-group/>

or ring tel. **01563 523052.**

Edinburgh & Lothians Roofbreakers Network

Claire Wilson reports on the Enabling Church Course held in Edinburgh during Lent.



The Enabling Church Course was produced by Christian organisations working together under the banner of Churches for All. This network of Christian disability-focussed groups collaborates on projects to help churches create an environment where disabled people can participate fully in church life for the benefit of all.

A small (5-7) group of Roofbreakers from different churches reviewed the Enabling Church material, planned publicity and how to take things forward locally. There was more editing of the material needed than we had expected, but in the process we grew to trust each other's judgement. We identified local speakers to complement or replace some of the published items, and co-opted others with technical and media skills that we lacked. Two members of the planning team negotiated with their churches to allow half the sessions to be hosted in each. An unexpected donation supplemented donations during the course to cover heating and lighting costs.

We publicised the course as widely as possible (using a modified version of the published poster) by email, hard copy, hand written cards, going to local churches and via Edinburgh Churches Together website, SCDG, and New College, as well as flagging it up in our own churches.

Having a single point of contact backfired when her internet access failed after a house move. A decision to welcome all comers rather than require sign-up worked well. Due to some re-ordering of content, it also worked well to circulate talks and presentations by email after each session rather than use participants' handbooks.

Some changes were due to our desire to model what we were talking about - so we shared introductions, started each session with an ECHO prayer led by a wheelchair user and ended with the Grace which we learned to sign, taught by a partially deaf and partially sighted person. We enacted the parable of the Great Feast (Luke 14) with two 'servants' zooming around the venue in their motorised wheelchairs inviting in people who were randomly allocated titles of 'prostitute' / 'drug addict' / 'homeless' etc. We invited friends doing inclusive activities to give 5 minute talks about what their involvement meant to them during an illustrative 'market place' activity.

After rehearsal in each venue to check public address systems and data projection requirements, we were as ready to begin. Over each of 8 weeks, there were between 20 - 30 in the room (including planning team / helpers, speakers and participants). 23 people attended between 5-8 sessions; some (including some speakers) came for one session, others all eight. Some had learning disabilities, others PhDs; a few were in church leadership or involved in theological study. Some had experienced mental health problems, others were parents or partners in families living with autism, head injury or mental illness. Some had physical disabilities, others had been born or grown deaf and yet others had no apparent disability. Unfortunately, we were unable to provide a signer for the deaf person. Several denominations were represented: Independent, Baptist, Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal, Roman Catholic. All gave positive feedback, regardless of their starting points. They enjoyed a deepening of their understanding, appreciation of one another's contributions and a sense of being part of something inspiring.

Having been uncertain of what might happen, but willing to give it a go, I feel that God has been with us throughout and will water a number of seeds that were planted. There is now a positive connection between the two hosting churches; several people have enjoyed trying a bit of signing; some want to delve deeper into theology of disability; others are looking at ways their churches can be more welcoming and thinking about how to meet conflicting needs.

The Enabling Church Pack has been re-printed with some superficial edits. As Tim Wood of Through the Roof says: *"It will never be 'the' perfect course ..., which is why we encourage local groups to use what is helpful, change what isn't and invite disabled people locally to contribute. The main thing is that it exists and is endorsed by the main Christian disability organisations, which is a minor miracle in itself! It is a 'starter for 10' to get people together to discuss the topic and things can develop from there, so the outcome from the course is the most important thing."*

There is much helpful background material about thinking Biblically about disability and healing, as well as different conditions in the Leader's Guide plus exercises and

videos of talks by speakers with different disabilities. Some of these could be used in a home group, as a series or to prompt one-off discussion.

The Enabling Church Course Pack and Download version are available at <https://www.throughtheroof.org/shop/enabling-church-course>. Claire has laid out talk transcripts more accessibly than the download version. If you want to run the course, she would happily answer questions. Contact the@wislons.fastmail.co.uk

Review of Enabling Church Course

To find out more about this course, come to the next Roofbreakers' meeting on **Tuesday 11 June** at **St John's Church hall**, 1A Lothian Rd, Edinburgh EH1 2AB. St John's is at the west end of Princes Street, about 10 minutes' walk from Waverley or Haymarket station. Many bus routes stop near to the church in Princes Street or Lothian Road. Meet Through the Roof's Deputy Church Inclusion Coordinator.

Volunteer opportunity church disability inclusion group coordinator

Edinburgh and Lothians Roofbreaker Network is looking for someone or a small team to run its meetings after its next meeting on 11 June. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Claire Wilson. E-mail: the@wislons.fastmail.co.uk

Useful resources

Connect Us Too

<http://deafscotland.org/equality/2019-mental-health-programme-connect-us-too/>

A series of related accessible video clips in British Sign Language (BSL) with subtitles and voice-over, introducing key information from the See Me Campaign about mental health and wellbeing for Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland.



Guidance to help improve the experiences of disabled children, young people, and their families

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-disabled-children-young-people-and-their-families>

A new website by the Scottish Government, published April 2019, which signposts to relevant information and organisations.

Online ministry



Making Worship Accessible, Wherever you are

Jesus said, ***“...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

For most practising Christians the routine of worship involves attending a local church building, usually on a Sunday morning. This provides the great opportunity of joining with fellow Christians in public worship. For many people, however, this option is not always realistic for many reasons:

- age or infirmity preventing attendance;
- unable to join in worship as a result of deafness;
- lack of means to get there;
- being resident overseas and not having the opportunity to worship;
- work or family commitments on a Sunday morning;
- lack of a local church building where a weekly service takes place.

This list is far from exhaustive but, thankfully, opportunities now exist for joining in worship remotely, thanks to the internet. An increasing number of congregations now transmit their weekly service online via their website. Many also ensure that the weekly service is recorded and placed on You Tube, enabling anyone who wishes to do so to catch-up with worship at a time that suits them.

E-mail exchanges plus chat boxes enable two way exchanges between the congregation and the worshiper. Some congregations find that people who have joined them in worship online occasionally travel long distances to be physically part of at least one church service annually.

Dalziel St Andrew’s Church in Motherwell has regular “viewers” all over the world, with opportunities to email to them praise and reading sheets in advance, thus enhancing the feeling of belonging to the church family. Residents of a Care Home gather on a Sunday morning in the residents’ lounge, to share in the online service.

A fully online Church of Scotland congregation, **Sanctuary First**, is developing online options with innovative ways of engagement with their increasing number of worshippers. Check it out at sanctuaryfirst.org.uk.

Jesus charged us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, with reaching the ends of the earth with the wonderful news of God’s love and salvation. The internet provides a means

of ensuring that, irrespective of individual circumstances, there is, for those enjoying online access, a route available to share in worship wherever they live.

Alex Baird (SCDG Committee Member and member of Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church) says, "If you are unable to attend a church building on a Sunday morning, do check us, or one of the other online congregations, out this week. We look forward to you sharing in worship with us."

By joining this Motherwell congregation in this way, you can enjoy weekly live streaming of services, with a dedicated stream for the deaf. This uses a British Sign Language Signer and an Electronic Notetaker to ensure that all in the deaf community can join in worship. All past services are also available on You Tube.

For more information, contact Alex Baird at a.baird00912@btinternet.com
Tel. 01698 262915 or 07903051970.
For online services see www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk .

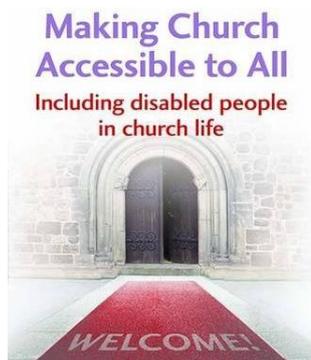
How to contact SCDG

If you want to bring something to the Committee's attention, please contact the Secretary, Scott Gillies, at secretary@scdg.org.uk .
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: newslettereditor@scdg.org.uk
or 42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ. Tel. 01563-522108



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.



Scottish Churches Disability Group
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