

## SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

February 2020



We may not yet be out of winter, but February is a time of expectation and promise. In our spiritual life too there is refreshment in this special season between the joy of Christmas and the wonderful promise of Christ's Easter resurrection. Enjoy every moment of early spring as we travel through Lent towards Easter.

### **Meet our new Vice-Chairman**

Paul Goode introduces himself with a description of his faith journey and the reasons why the Scottish Churches Disability Group matters to him.



“I started my Christian journey as a Chorister in a Church of England Church at the age of 6. I attended a grammar school in the south of England and continued singing in many churches and Cathedrals (retiring when I was 50). I was a lay-clerk in St Albans Cathedral and deputy lay clerk at St Paul's Cathedral, London. I have a degree in Mathematics with a Teaching qualification and a degree in Business Studies.

“When I left school, I trained as a Bank Manager and then financial advisor for 20 years. I then had a career change and worked for local government in the Housing and Homeless Teams.

“I married my wife 20 years ago in Floors Castle, Kelso. Our son was born in May 1997 and was very ill with a stroke at 6 days old and became severely disabled. Our faith remained strong and Kelso Church kept us in their prayers. I became an Elder

of the Church of Scotland 10 years ago. Our son recently made his affirmation of Faith and became a full member of the Church of Scotland.

“When I lived in the South of England I was a member of the local Parish Council and served on St Albans Diocese Property Committee, looking after 250 Churches and buildings. When we moved to Scotland 10 years ago to enable our son to attend Edinburgh Blind School, I retired and was elected to be Property Convenor for Jedburgh and Kelso Presbytery. I was also the Property Convenor at Earlston Church for four years.

“I served on the Church of Scotland Learning Disability Working Group. The LDWG was busy developing networks of likeminded people and offering support and resources to them. I was a General Assembly Commissioner a couple of years ago.

“My faith has been greatly challenged, through the difficult journey bringing up my disabled son. God has always been at the centre of our lives as a family, and prayer has played an important part. My desire is to grow deeper in my faith, draw closer to God, and to serve the Church in the best way I can.”

## Events coming soon

### Edinburgh & Lothians Roofbreakers Network

Through the Roof will hold an event in Edinburgh to encourage churches to move further towards disability inclusion. There will be a British Sign Language interpreter.

Disability inclusion in churches is more than ramps and accessible toilets. It's about belonging, feeling valued and able to contribute. The programme will include real-life stories from disabled people and encourage more stories to be told. Jesus is working in and through the lives of disabled people, so let's spread the message of the importance of disability inclusion throughout our churches.

**When?** **Saturday 29 February, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Where?** **Barclay Viewforth Church**, 1 Wright's Houses, Edinburgh, EH10 4 HR  
The Church is on Bruntsfield Links, on many bus routes. Going up the hill from the King's Theatre, you will see the church on the left hand side. The level access door is at the left side of the church, next to the grass.

**Cost?** Tickets are £10 or £7.50 each (plus booking fee) if you book for two or more attendees. The price includes refreshments, but please bring a packed lunch.

Tickets can be booked at

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/throughtheroof/309473/>.

To order by phone, contact **01372 749955** or email [info@throughtheroof.org](mailto:info@throughtheroof.org).

## People with disabilities – equal in faith

The following article by Pat Blanchard comes with the permission of the Church Mission Society for which she works in Peru.



“Working with people with disabilities was not something I came to Lima to do, but God has made it something I love. My roles are diverse. I am pastor of the Shalom church and director of the Shalom rehabilitation project. You’ll find me preaching, teaching, discipling, painting, visiting, encouraging, organising and sometimes just having fun and living out my faith with others.

“It’s a profound shift to see people with disabilities not as objects of compassion, but as equals together in faith, helping to ensure they can not only access church physically, but also participate in and contribute to the life of the church. Often the Gospel narrative is very challenging as Jesus’ response is to heal and that’s difficult because in my experience people aren’t healed physically. The story in 2 Samuel 9 provides a different perspective.

“David wanted to show kindness to someone in honour of his friendship with Jonathan and he found Mephibosheth who had physical disabilities`. We get an idea of Mephibosheth’s self-worth from the question, ‘What is your servant that you should notice a dead dog like me?’.

“Two things in the passage are crucially important in terms of fully including people with disabilities. Firstly, David looked for people who could support Mephibosheth and administer resources so that he could live in a sustainable and dignified way. Ziba was there for Mephibosheth and Shalom is here in Lima for the same purpose. The second thing is the phrase ‘to sit at the King’s table’. This emphasises the full participation in Kingdom activities of the church, not solely as receivers of compassion, but instead as participators in mission and in communion – and ultimately in the heavenly banquet that awaits us as sons and daughters of the King.”

## Services for the Deaf community

Those who are deaf often miss out on the opportunity to share in worship. This includes all who have become deaf or hard of hearing over time and who are unable now to hear what is being said or sung, or indeed to join in the singing.

An increasing number of deaf Christians are able to follow worship, either by reference to a BSL Signer or and Electronic Notetaker, by logging on to the website of Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church in Motherwell. A dedicated live stream for the deaf is available each Sunday at 11.00 a.m. There is a chat box facility where feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

For those unable to worship with the congregation on a Sunday morning there is an opportunity to do so afterwards by logging in to the church website via You Tube where each week's service, plus all previous services, can be found.

If you wish to try it out, or know of anyone who might benefit from this, please have a go this Sunday. <http://www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk/> Follow the "Live" link at the church home page. Questions or comments are always welcome.

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## Resources



Have you explored the resources section of SCDG's website? You can find many helpful articles in the Hints and Tips section at <http://scdg.org.uk/hints-and-tips/>

There are suggestions for good practice in worship and church life for people who are autistic, dyslexic, deaf or living with dementia. Here are some highlights.

**Books Beyond Words** produces a series of wordless books for people with learning and communication difficulties.

**Dementia Friendly Church Buildings** gives advice on how best to support people who have dementia by simple adjustments in church sanctuaries and halls.

**Disability Adviser Guidelines** includes a job description for people who are appointed to be “disability champions” in their churches, as well as links to resources to support them in this role.

**Dyslexia Scotland** has a link from the SCDG website. There are also articles by people who have experience of what is helpful for people with dyslexia.

**Learning Disabilities: Top Tips for Congregations** is produced by the Church of Scotland’s Learning Disabilities Working Group, based on feedback from experience in churches across Scotland.

Further information on all these resources and more can be found at <http://scdg.org.uk/hints-and-tips/>. If you would like to contribute helpful items to this section of our website, please send information to [webmaster@scdg.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@scdg.org.uk) .

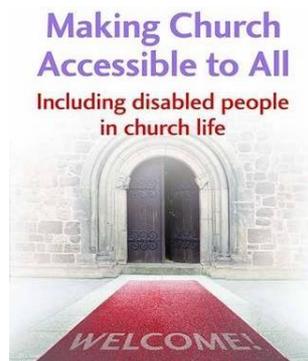
### **Church of Scotland Learning Disabilities newsletter**

If you wish to receive the Church of Scotland’s Learning Disabilities electronic newsletter, you can subscribe to it free of charge at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/newsletters>.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:newslettereditor@scdg.org.uk) or **42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ. Tel. 01563-522108**



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