

Your Winter Newsletter



with TORCH TRUST

Welcome to the Winter edition of our SLFC Newsletter. It seems as though Christmas has only just finished, but we're already looking ahead to Lent and Easter. The news of the first Coronavirus vaccines late last year was very welcome, but we know that churches will still be doing things differently for some time to come, especially in light of new COVID variants and added pressures on the NHS over winter. We hope this newsletter inspires you to continue to include people with sight loss in church life.

SLFC Catch-Ups

Often, the best ideas come from churches. That's why, in July last year, we held our first Catch-Up session for SLFCs on Zoom. We've held one once a month since then and it's been a privilege to see a mixture of new and familiar faces in attendance.

Participants have greatly valued the opportunity to talk directly to others working tirelessly to include people with sight loss in their local churches.

The monthly catch-ups have been really valuable in engaging with people from other churches around the UK, sharing ideas about worship in lockdown as well as learning about initiatives to help those with sight loss deal with COVID-19 measures.

Sue Exon, St Mary Magdalen Church, Coventry.

Sessions last around half an hour and generally take place at 7:00 pm on a Tuesday or Thursday. There's usually a short update or story from Torch, with plenty of time for people to ask questions or share advice.



Previous topics have included:

- Virtual SLFC training introduction
- How we adapted SLFC training for chaplains in care homes
- Guiding people with sight loss in a COVID-secure way
- Experiences of people with sight loss participating in church during lockdown and their return to church

We are working hard on content for 2021 and hope to cover:

- How Accessible Christian Literature is produced
- The support we can offer directly to blind and partially sighted people
- Braille and large print introduction

Please see the "Dates For Your Diary" section for upcoming Catch-Up dates. For more information or to book your place, please email slfc@torchtrust.org

Team news

Happy new year!

As a result of some changes at Torch, we now have slightly different job titles: Becky Davies is now SLFC Coordinator, Matthew Horspool is SLFC Advisor and Mandy Blow is Head of Services. We're all still here though, along with our fantastic volunteers, and we'd love to hear from you!

Elsewhere in Torch, we are very pleased to say that after a period of reflection, prayer and formal interviews, the Trustees have unanimously decided to confirm Tim Jeffery as permanent CEO.

Late last year we published a new resource, "Virtual Church Top Tips". You can download it from www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk/resources

Finally, we will be continuing our open Training and Catch-Up sessions this year and we'd love to see you there. In addition, please feel free to contact us at any time if you need advice or support with any aspect of being sight loss friendly, or if you'd like to arrange bespoke training for your church. Our email address is slfc@torchtrust.org



Winter top tip

We are eager to hear from you about what resources you will be using this Lent and beyond so that we can produce them in braille, large print and audio. These could be devotionals, reflections, study guides, daily Bible reading notes or any other title that you are recommending to your congregation. Thanks to our robust processes and excellent relationships with Christian publishers, we can generally transcribe new titles within 2-3 weeks.

Please call us today on **01858 438260** or email info@torchtrust.org and help us serve your congregation better.



Resources

The New International Reader's Version (NIRV) is a translation of the Bible which, through the use of simpler language and shorter sentences, is designed to be more accessible to children and people who have difficulty reading English. It was fully revised in 2014 and, thanks to a partnership with Biblica (formerly the International Bible Society), Torch has recently transcribed this version in large print.

It is available in 20pt, 25pt and 30pt, and can be purchased in individual volumes, the complete Old Testament, the complete New Testament and the entire Bible.

We also have lots of other resources available for purchase in braille, DAISY audio and large print (17, 20, 25 and 30pt). Call **01858 438260** or email info@torchtrust.org for more information.



Think, Ask, Act



Think: what homegroups will you be running this Lent?



Ask: is it easy for people with sight loss to join in?



Act: work with us and your congregation to make them sight loss friendly.

Support us

We would not be able to sustain our ministry without individual and corporate prayer, volunteer and financial support. Our latest Prayer Diary is enclosed – please pray alongside us for the ongoing mission of Torch.

In addition, would you consider supporting Torch financially through your Lent appeal? Just £90 per year will enable a client to have full access to our library of Accessible Christian Literature. Alternatively, please consider a regular, occasional or one-off gift from your church.

Donations can be made via www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk/donate or to the bank account below:

The Torch Trust for the Blind

Sort Code: 40-52-40 (CAF Bank)

Account Number: 00017072

Finally, if you'd like to join Torch as a volunteer, please get in touch. You can call **01858 438260** or email info@torchtrust.org

Contact us

This newsletter as a PDF is accessible; however, if you do need it in braille, large print or audio CD, please ask. Our friendly team are here to help you with all your queries. You can call us on **01858 438260**, 9:30am-4pm on Mondays, 9am-4pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and 10am-4pm Thursdays; or email info@torchtrust.org

www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk

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