

Your Summer 2021 Newsletter



From TORCH TRUST

Welcome to our newsletter. In the midst of summer holidays, it seems strange to be thinking about the autumn, but it will soon be upon us – and, with it, Sight Loss Sunday. We're really excited about this new initiative from Torch and there's much more information about it further on in this newsletter. We also have information about our next "Focus On ..." sessions.

Sight Loss Sunday

As advertised in our last newsletter, we're encouraging churches to set a Sunday aside this autumn to celebrate the unique gifts and talents that are offered by the people with sight loss in their congregations.



Sight Loss Sunday is taking place on Sunday 17 October, to coincide with World Sight Day, and we'll be making a plethora of text and audio/visual resources available free of charge on our website to help you observe it, including:

- Suggested readings
- Prayer resources and hymn/worship song suggestions related to the readings
- Sermon ideas
- Resources for children's groups
- Videos of people with sight loss demonstrating how they play their part in church life
- A reflection from a person with sight loss (video and text)

Our suggested readings will also be available to order in hard copy in braille and large print. If someone in your church

would like to do a reading, but has never had the opportunity before, we hope these hard copy readings will allow them to do so on Sight Loss Sunday.

You don't need to use all of the resources, and indeed we would encourage you to be led by people with sight loss in your congregation. If one of them would like to preach a sermon, for example, or give testimony, you might not need to use the sermon materials or the videos. Our aim is for Sight Loss Sunday to appeal to all denominations and church practices.

Resources will be added gradually throughout August and September. For more information, visit the dedicated "Sight Loss Sunday" page of our website: www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk/slsunday



300 Churches!

We are thrilled to announce that we have recently achieved our 300th sign-up to Sight Loss Friendly Church. Over 300 churches are now making the commitment to be more sight loss friendly, more inclusive, and more aware of how they can provide a vital and welcoming community to blind and partially sighted people. Thank you for joining us.

Sight Loss Sunday Top Tip

People with sight loss have as much to contribute to church life as people who are sighted. If someone with sight loss in your church expresses a wish to read Scripture, lead prayers, preach, be part of the musical life of the church, arrange flowers, lead a homegroup, offer prayer support or otherwise play an active part in the life of the church, don't discount it, but try to find a way to make it happen.



New “Focus On ...” sessions

Our first three “Focus On ...” sessions have been extremely well-received, and we are working towards uploading these recordings to our YouTube channel.

Our sessions for September, October and November will be as follows:

Homegroups: this session is mainly for leaders, but participants are welcome as well. We'll explain why people with sight loss might be reluctant to join a homegroup and how you can overcome this. In particular, we will cover transportation to and from the homegroup, social and environmental factors, and how to ensure members with sight loss have the right material at the right time.

Braille: not all people with sight loss read braille; but for those who do, it's a vital lifeline. In this session, we will explain how braille compares with print, where to obtain braille resources and how you can produce your own. We will



also discuss things to consider when working with braille resources.

The Environment: as the days get shorter, it's more important than ever to think about how people with sight loss move around your church building. We will cover how to determine the type and quality of lighting that works best for someone with sight loss, how to indicate steps (both inside and outside), making doors safer and the placement of chairs. We will also discuss how long canes and guide dogs help people with sight loss and the differences between the two approaches.

See “Dates for your Diary” for the specific days, and if you have any ideas of topics you'd like us to cover in a future session, please get in touch.

Support Us

We would not be able to sustain our ministry without individual and corporate prayer, volunteer and financial support.

We would really appreciate it if you would consider supporting Torch financially via a regular, occasional or one-off gift from your church. Just £90 per year will enable a client to have full access to our library of Accessible Christian Literature.

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

Think, Ask, Act



Think: is someone with sight loss particularly good at something, or have they expressed a wish to do something?



Ask: whether they would like to play a more active part in the life of the church and what help they will need.



Act: work with Torch Trust and others in your church to implement the requested help and enable the person with sight loss to flourish.

Dates for Your Diary



To book onto any of these events, please email slfc@torchtrust.org

Training

Tuesday 21 September 2pm
Thursday 4 November 7pm

Focus On ...

(all at 12:30pm)

Homegroups: Tuesday 7 September

Braille: Tuesday 5 October

The Environment: Tuesday 9 November

Catch Ups (all at 7pm)

Tuesday 7 September

Thursday 7 October

Thursday 11 November

Sight Loss Sunday

17 October

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

