

# Your Spring Newsletter



with TORCH TRUST

**Welcome to our Spring newsletter!** Whether you are already a Sight Loss Friendly Church or you're just starting to look into becoming one, we're here to support you and to give you lots of ideas for reaching out to your entire community and congregation.

## Being a Sight Loss Friendly Church

When you first become a SLFC, the number of things to do can seem a little overwhelming. We've come up with a handy set of prompts to help.



### THINK

Whenever a church event is being planned, either in the church building or out in your community, think about what you can do to make sure that blind and partially sighted people feel included.



### ASK

Rather than trying to second-guess people in the congregation, go and have a chat. Ask them what would help them and make them feel part of the church and its activities.



### ACT

Make changes, adjust services and layout, use the free Torch Trust resources to make sure that everyone with sight loss feels totally included.

## Spring's Top Tip

We're here to give you as much help and support as we can. Every newsletter will have a top tip for engaging with people with sight loss. Here's our tip for Spring:

When you need to leave the room let the person know you are going, otherwise they may continue to speak to you in your absence and feel embarrassed.



## Meeting the team

Matthew Horspool joined Torch in April last year as a Torch and SLFC Representative, we caught up with him this week to see how he's getting on:

"My job at Torch is to give talks and deliver training to churches who are thinking about becoming sight loss friendly. We've got over 200 churches on our database with many more asking for information, so it's an exciting place to be. I have sight loss so it's easy for me to talk about it very personally."



"The biggest cause of sight loss is old age. We have an ageing population and pretty soon, we'll have loads of blind people in our communities who want to go to church but can't. The biggest issue that I can see is that people don't realise the extent of sight loss. If they don't see a guide dog or a white stick, they think they don't have any blind people in their church. This means they can be, quite unintentionally, neglecting people with conditions such as tunnel vision or those who are in denial about their sight loss but who need large print resources. Here at Torch, we're working with churches to dispel that myth. Once we get the message across and churches realise the scope, they come on board with the SLFC programme."

# Lent resources

Lent is very nearly upon us and we've got a wealth of resources to help you ensure that people with sight loss in your fellowship can join in and get the most from this very special season.

## A Passion for Christ (Cover to Cover): Lent study guide

By Michael Baughen, £5.99



In 6 Lent studies we consider how to: share in Christ's sufferings; be a church marked by love & holiness; share the hope of the gospel; shine the light of Christ's glory; use suffering as a personal testimony, and give our lives as living sacrifices.

## You Are Mine: Daily Readings from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day

By David Walker, £8.99



At this time of Lent, David Walker explores different aspects of human belonging through the medium of scripture and story in order to help us recognise the different ways in which we are God's beloved. Daily reflections and prayers.

## Jesus' Final Week (Lifebuilder): 8 studies for individuals and groups

By Cindy Brunch, £4.99



Jesus' final week of life – Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Jesus' trial, death and his resurrection – these events are foundational to our Christian lives and to our salvation. Focusing on these events brings new understanding of Jesus and how he loves us.



All of these books are available for you to purchase in braille and large print (font sizes 17pt, 20pt, 25pt and 30pt). If you would like an audio version then please do ask. These are just a small selection of what's currently available, so do contact us to enquire for your specific needs. Call Client Services on **01858 438260** for more details or to place an order.

## Helping those with sight loss find a place to belong

Being on a sight loss journey can be lonely. We were delighted when we received this message from one of our clients: "I am so thankful to you for finding me a Torch Fellowship Group to go to. I am so blessed and excited... I can also now go to church again as you have found me a Sight Loss Friendly Church just down the road. Bless you so much." Together we can ensure that everyone in the UK with sight loss can feel at home in a church that is sight loss friendly.



### LONELINESS

Almost half of blind and partially sighted people feel **moderately** or **completely** cut off from people and things around them.

The ministry of Torch is **totally dependent on donations and legacies.**

We welcome the opportunity to share how we are enabling people with sight loss to have fulfilling Christian lives. Please consider supporting Torch's ministry as part of your giving to mission. This could be as a regular, occasional or one-off gift from your church. For example, **£60** enables Torch to provide accessible Bible reading notes to someone with sight loss for a year. Donations can be made direct from the SLFC website.

## 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** from Monday to Thursday inclusive, 10am until 4pm or email us at: [info@torchtrust.org](mailto:info@torchtrust.org).  
[www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk](http://www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk)

