



Welcome to the December 2020 newsletter from Inclusive Church!

## December 2020

The Inclusive Church Newsletter is a digital publication produced every month. It aims to provide supporters and members with the latest news and information from around the life of Inclusive Church and our partner organisations.

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### From the National Coordinator

Hello everyone, and welcome to your monthly newsletter.

Just a quick message from me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I know that it will not be the easiest Christmas ever, and it hasn't been the easiest year ever by a long stretch. However, we can still hold on to the profound hope contained in the Advent and Christmas seasons. I pray you will all be enfolded in that hope and in the Light for the rest of the year and in the year to come.

Thank you for your continued support. Enjoy the newsletter!

*Ruth Wilde. National Coordinator*

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### Eleemosynary: Depending on Charity

Dictionary.com gives a word of the day. Amazingly today's word is eleemosynary which means 'of or relating to alms, charity or charitable donations.' It's a really useful place to start writing about fundraising, because we need your support to continue our work.

Our income is down but the need is always growing. We are a tiny charity with a tight budget but we do a lot with what we have, thanks to you. We need to raise money to do what we are already doing - and hopefully even more! We are very grateful for the financial support you give us, but we hope this will inspire you to think about giving a little more.

We've grown over the last 17 years in our members & supporters, our understanding of inclusion, our areas of work and in the resources we offer. We are proud of what we have achieved – and it's only been possible with your support and the hard work of many people around the country.

### Supporting

We have a network of regional ambassadors and individuals working hard on the ground and promoting the work of inclusion. We have many churches signed up to the network and making progress, and we couldn't do much of what we do without

the brilliant partnerships we've forged with organisations who share our aims and values. We are grateful for all those who give of their time and talents.

### **Resourcing**

We are an educational charity whose work is centred on lived experience. During this pandemic year we were able to move this online with a Black Theology Series in partnership with Prof Anthony Reddie, an Annual Lecture by Prof June Boyce-Tillman, and our 9th annual Disability Conference with St Martin-in-the-Fields & HeartEdge.

### **Strengthening**

We have been focussing on strengthening and supporting our networks, the churches and individuals who do the work of inclusion. We are working hard on a new and more accessible website linked to a new database which will make it easier for us to contact and support the 500+ churches in our network. We have begun regular training for our regional ambassadors - this year generously led by Nigel and Christopher Pietroni in the skill of Public Narrative.

### **Stories**

During 2021 we'll be sharing stories of our work in different areas. We'd love to hear your stories of how our work has made a difference to your experience, life, faith. After all, the aim of our work is to enable churches to better include those on the margins of church and faith which in turn deepens the faith and discipleship of the church as a whole. You never know when your story will be exactly what someone else needs to hear. If you would like to tell your story or the story of your church please contact Ruth at [office@inclusive-church.org](mailto:office@inclusive-church.org)

Thank you for your support. Together we will continue to work for a more Inclusive Church #InclusionMatters

*Written by Fiona MacMillan and Ruth Wilde on behalf of the Fundraising Committee.*

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## **Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Marriage**

'It is a pleasure for me as a former Inclusive Church programme co-ordinator to invite you to the [launch](#) of my first book, Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Marriage: Squaring the Circle (with Foreword by Sam Wells), which will be published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers next Monday 21st December. The book is available from 21st December from [Jessica Kingsley](#) and for pre-order from Amazon, Waterstones and Book Depository.'

*From Clare Herbert, IC's first National Coordinator.*

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## **Blogs and News**

### **IC news and blogs**

There are **two new blogs** on the IC website - both are reviews of recently-released books: '[I'm Still](#)

[Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness'](#) by Austin Channing Brown, reviewed by Susanne Griffin, IC ambassador for North London; and ['Transdeus'](#) by Paul Van der Spiegel, reviewed by Philip Hawthorn, IC ambassador for Somerset.

## Other news

You may have heard about the video 'A Beautiful Story' made by an evangelical conservative group called CEEC, which is certainly not telling a beautiful story for LGBT+ people. Well, our partners at SCM have made a far better video in response called 'A More Beautiful Story'. You can watch it [here](#).

This blog by Sarah Bessey about ['Why everything you know about the nativity probably wrong'](#) is worth a read.

The inclusive charity, [Frontier Youth Trust](#), is recruiting for a Movement Advocate. Check out the job advert [here](#).

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## Inclusive Church Ambassadors

We have a great network of ambassadors covering different parts of England and Wales. They are the representatives of Inclusive Church on the ground. You can find out who the ambassadors are - and where they are - by looking [here](#).

Details of the role description for ambassadors is available [here](#). If you want to be an ambassador for your area, get in touch with the [National Coordinator](#).

### From Liverpool ambassador, Warren Hartley:

"The Open Table Liverpool and St Bride's Christmas carol extravaganza is back Sunday, 20th December 2020! BSL Interpreted.

Open Table offers twice monthly services providing a warm welcome to Liverpool's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) community friends and family. Everyone is welcome of all faiths and none.

We can't gather in person this year, but that doesn't stop us celebrating Christmas with this popular annual service. Join live online, or watch later at your leisure, There will be music from the Liverpool Rainbow Church, West End singer Emma Dears and her daughter Iris will perform, with carols by Jen Williams and Nigh Clements with traditional and contemporary readings.

Service starts at 6.30pm Watch on [www.youtube.com/opentablenetwork](http://www.youtube.com/opentablenetwork) or on St Luke in the City Team Parish Facebook page [www.facebook.com/StLukeInTheCityLive](http://www.facebook.com/StLukeInTheCityLive)

Merry Christmas"

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## Events

*The following events are online due to Covid-19.*

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### **Open Table Carol Extravaganza**

On Sunday **20th December** at 6.30pm, Open Table Liverpool and St Bride's are hosting a carol extravaganza. You can find out more and watch [here](#).

### **Holyrood House**

On Thursday the **21st January**, Holyrood House are hosting online learning for spiritual directors and clergy, entitled 'Exploring Creatively for Healing in Covid Times'. You can find out more [here](#).

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### **Supporting the work of Inclusive Church**

If you value the work that IC does and are a member or supporter, maybe you would like to give to our work, either as a one-off donation or on a monthly basis. Why not take a collection in your church for IC?

Inclusive Church exists only because of the generous giving of our members, member churches and supporters. The more money that is given, the more capacity we have to do great things!

You can donate quickly and easily by following [this link](#). Or contact Ruth: [office@inclusive-church.org](mailto:office@inclusive-church.org)

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The content of the newsletter is drawn from a number of sources including individuals and partner organisations. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect a 'formal viewpoint' of the Inclusive Church trustees, individual members of Inclusive Church or registered Inclusive Churches. Contact The National Coordinator at Inclusive Church by phone 07935 374877 or email: [office@inclusive-church.org](mailto:office@inclusive-church.org)