



Welcome to the January 2021 newsletter from Inclusive Church!

January 2021

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.

From the National Coordinator

Hello everyone, and welcome to your monthly newsletter.

Welcome to 2021! Hoping and praying that this year will be a positive year for all of you, your churches and the world. Also praying that Inclusive Church will go from strength to strength, helping to change Christianity into the inclusive religion it needs to be now and in the future. Read my talk to the Swedish churches about why the church needs to be inclusive below.

Our IC stories kick off this month with Dan Barnes-Davies, IC trustee. I hope you enjoy reading Dan's story. If you feel inspired to tell others what your IC story is, please get in touch: office@inclusive-church.org

Thank you for your continued support. Enjoy the newsletter!

Ruth Wilde. National Coordinator

Dan's Inclusive Church Story

I think my first involvement was an invite to Young Inclusive Church in Waterloo back in 2012. Then I somehow became YIC liaison on the board before being persuaded to stand for election at the next AGM.

Those 8 years have included my entire process of ordination from first exploration to post-curate; but through becoming part of the Disability Conference team, I've also had my disabilities diagnosed, which has had massive impact on my self-understanding and on the approach I have to intersectional inclusion. Recognising that I'm privileged in every other possible way, I hope I've developed much more empathy and solidarity along the journey.

There's nothing like IC! I really think we are genuinely a Spirit-filled and -led movement. We have a well-deserved national reputation for robust and consistent engagement with inclusion across several different 'streams'. I'm really pleased when I think over the past 8 years that we have always been ambitious and hopeful. I think that's still the core attitude we share as a network, and it's how we're facing the next 8 years too.

Yes, please! This movement has lots of room for all kinds of God-given gifts. Even as a long-serving

trustee, I'm sure I don't know even a fraction of the talent we already have, and there's always need for more. In whatever ways God is calling you to serve her in the causes of inclusion, we'd love to work with you. Any financial contributions you can make are really appreciated and carefully deployed in order to sustain and build our powerful, prophetic, progressive network. Thank you!

Written by Dan Barnes-Davies, IC trustee.

Supporting IC: If you would like to support IC in any way, please just send Ruth an email:

office@inclusive-church.org

You can also [Donate here](#)

Inclusion and the Church of Tomorrow

'If there is one thing I know about the church of the future, it's that it *must* be inclusive. It must be inclusive in order to survive, and there's been some good research into this, including a report by the Methodist Church called 'Leading Together in Growing Methodist Churches'. Arguably even more importantly, the church of the future must also be inclusive in order to build the Kingdom of God. This is, after all, the church's primary calling.'

Ruth gave a 30 minute talk to a network of churches in Sweden earlier this month, to kick off a series they have organised looking at our books. You can watch the video on IC's YouTube channel [here](#) or read the transcript on the IC blog [here](#).

You can also read more about the series [here](#) (the website is all in Swedish though!)

Blogs and News

IC news and blogs

There are two new blogs on the IC website - both are by the National Coordinator this time. The first is about Ruth's recent diagnosis of ADHD and the second is a transcript of Ruth's talk to the Swedish churches network on 'inclusion and the church of tomorrow. You can check out both blogs [here](#).

Other news and resources

There are two programmes of interest on disability on the BBC this month. The first is on Radio 4 on 'Word of Mouth' and is called 'Talking Disability'. You can listen to that [here](#). The other is called 'Silenced: the hidden story of disability' and you can read more about it [here](#) and watch it [here](#).

We also came across a YouTube video called 'Dear White Church', which we recommend to you. You can watch it [here](#).

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 North-East ambassadors, Neal Terry and Jacqui Tyson:

Newcastle and Sunderland ambassadors have combined energies and resources to focus on working for inclusion across the North-East together. Get in touch with them now if you want to get involved. See [here](#) for contact details.

From Birmingham ambassador, Ruth Yorke:

"Inclusive Churches in the City centre continue to offer online worship and fellowship.

Bull St Quakers have been meeting online and discovering new people joining with that platform being available.

The Church at Carrs Lane:

As since the start of lockdown in March 2020, we continue to send out a paper copy of the order of service each week to those who are unable to join online. We've been delighted to find that some members without internet have joined zoom by phone in order to listen to the service together. The printed sheets are put up online which enables those who struggle to hear computer sound, to still follow the service.

On Christmas Eve we led a midnight service on zoom for the first time, which enabled people to join in the service and light a candle/shine a torch/phone light together at midnight in their own homes. Inclusive Gathering members also joined for this service and shared in the leading.

2 church folk have started a zoom story group, which involves them reading a story to people of the church who phone in to a zoom group. The nice thing about this is the 'leveller' that everyone is on the phone and just listening, so those who are without internet, and those who are less confident with online chat, can join with those already used to zoom, all on the phone and hear a story which hopefully inspires, comforts and reduces isolation.

We have asked the church to read 'Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race' by Reni Eddo-Lodge and are currently planning some sessions where people will be asked to discuss what they learnt from the book and how they plan to act on that learning. We are keen to tackle any racism in church life and also be anti-racist. All our services in February will be about racial justice and our Lent theme is 'Open to God, Open to justice'.

Inclusive Gathering Birmingham continue to share online worship on facebook and youtube at 4pm every Sunday. All aspects of inclusion are important and there is a particular focus on LGBTQIA inclusion. They have used the opportunity of online worship to invite speakers from all over the country (and were delighted when Nadia Bolz-Weber 'dropped in' to their after-service meeting on the week when her book 'Shameless' was being discussed!). After the service each week there are zoom groups which people can join to share in fellowship together in real time. There are also

fellowship groups via zoom on weekday evenings and inspiring activities like 'unorthodox walks' which sends prompts to people walking near wherever they live to notice particular things in their surroundings.

Churches have been delighted to welcome people who have found us as a result of this website even during lockdown and are now worshipping and sharing in fellowship."

Events

The following events are online due to Covid-19.

Two 23 Online Meeting

On Saturday 23rd January at 2.30pm, Two23 are gathering online for worship and prayers. You can find out more and join in [here](#).

Church, LGBTI+ Equality and the Priesthood of All Believers

On Monday 22nd February at 6pm, Open Table, St Bride's and HeartEdge are hosting an event with Savi Hensman called 'Church, LGBTI+ equality and the Priesthood of All Believers' - a St Bride's Liverpool Public Theology Lecture for LGBT History Month. You can find out more and sign up [here](#).

To ensure that you continue to receive this newsletter, please make sure you let us know if you change your email address.

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