



Welcome to the May 2020 newsletter from Inclusive Church!

May 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.

From the National Coordinator

Hello everyone, and welcome to your monthly newsletter.

This month, we have a reflection from IC trustee, Andrew Lightbown (below), so I won't say anything except a big apology from me that the new website isn't live yet. We had originally hoped for an Easter launch, but it turns out bringing over website content from one website to another is very time-consuming, and Covid-19 has robbed me of a full day of work (I have to do more childcare now)! It will be live very soon, I promise.

Thank you for your continued support. Enjoy the newsletter!

Ruth Wilde. National Coordinator

Reflection on St Brendan, the Navigator

The 16th May is the feast day for Brendan the Navigator, one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland. Brendan is reputed to have travelled around the coastal islands of Ireland and Scotland and perhaps even as far as Iceland (and, in Catholic legend, the USA). In these troubled and difficult times many, perhaps most of us, might be feeling that we are in need of little navigation. Many of us, for different reasons, are feeling all at sea. These feelings are, of course, quite natural. It would be strange if we weren't feeling anxious and worried. It would be odd if we weren't feeling the pain of separation from loved ones or, the craving for a little bit of peace and quiet from overly noisy and permanently occupied homes. Our metaphorical boats might be very different as we feel all at sea. What we all need, more than anything else is, perhaps, a navigator.

The Gospel set for the Eucharist in the Church of England's lectionary for the 17th May is John 14, 15-21 in which Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Truth, who 'will be with you for ever,' (verse 16). The gift of the Spirit, the leader, the advocator, the navigator, is however a conditional gift and the condition is love. Jesus in this passage promises the gift of the navigator to the Apostles on the basis that they 'love' Him (verse 15). And so it is for us: love, the radical love of Jesus, the love that covers all people, in all places, at all times, must underpin all that we believe, think, pray and do. If our lives are characterised by the radical and all inclusive love of Christ, we will receive the gift of the Navigator, and hopefully one day we will both see and experience the 'goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,' (Psalm 27, 13).

Written by Andrew Lightbown, IC trustee.

St Mark's CRC Online

We're sad to tell you that one of Inclusive Church's partners, St Mark's CRC (Centre for Radical Christianity) based in Sheffield since 2003 has decided to close down because of factors such as changes in the church locally and nationally, and a declining membership. Over its lifetime CRC mounted many interesting and stimulating day conferences and smaller evening seminars.

However, over the last two years, and thanks to a grant from the Jim Cotter Trust, CRC has been able to build and launch an insightful and inspirational [new website](#) of theological and spiritual resources (accessible on PCs, tablets and smart phones). The website operates under three major groupings: Questioning Church; Deepening Spirituality; World of Diversity. Please take a look at what's there. Contributions are also welcome – follow the Submit a Resource drop down tab.

Check out the new website [here](#).

Blogs and News

New IC blog

There is a new blog by Simon Woodman from Bloomsbury Baptist Church, an inclusive church. It is called 'What does your God look like' and you can read it [here](#).

Other news and blogs

One of our supporters and a member of the Disability Conference planning team, Naomi Jacobs-Lawon has written an article for the Church Times which is well worth reading. It is entitled 'Disabled people say welcome to our world' and [here](#) it is.

Stonewall have information and advice about how Covid-19 and lockdown is particularly affecting LGBT+ communities. You can read 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 Herefordshire ambassador, Susannah Peppiatt:

On April 22rd, Hereford Diocese Inclusive Church Forum hosted an informative online event discussing transgender issues and taking FAQs from people within our diocese. This follows a very successful event we held at St. Martin's Church, South Wye in March. Theo Newnham (intern at St.

Martin's Church) gave a talk about his experiences being transgender in church which was followed by a Q&A with him and Benjamin Southwick, a choral scholar at Hereford Cathedral. This was broadcast on YouTube and remained available for a fortnight, receiving a lot of appreciation and engagement from a much broader audience than would have been possible in person in such a rural diocese.

The discussion was thought-provoking and interesting and answered questions about how to make the church an inclusive place for transgender and gender non-conforming people by following Jesus' message. There were also general questions about how to talk to transgender people, what their life experience is like and how best to support them.

From this, and the previous in-person event, a booklet was created by Benjamin Southwick which contains some helpful information for those who feel completely clueless around transgender issues. It provides resources for further research alongside short answers to general queries, and even an on-theme wordsearch! We hope you find [this resource](#) useful.

From Liverpool ambassador, Warren Hartley:

Open Table Network 5th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday 13th June 2020, 10.30am to 1.00pm

It's time for a celebration! We are holding a national (virtual) gathering to celebrate the 12th anniversary of the first Open Table community and the 5th anniversary of Open Table becoming a network.

On top of that, the Open Table Network is moving to the next phase of its growth by registering as a charity and appointing new Patrons and Trustees. It would be fantastic to have you there with us so we can share all our news and updates!

As well as giving you a 'State of the Network' address and a chance to meet our new Patrons and Trustees, there will be the opportunity to pray and worship together as we continue to encourage each other in our journeys of faith.

We also would like your help! A range of discussion groups will be offered during our time together to swap ideas, hear what other groups are doing and to consider the future shape of the Network. Unfortunately we can't promise a piece of rainbow birthday cake!

PLACES LIMITED to 100 - Don't miss out! Click here to register now:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZPRTOa4bSZeJDkBpq3eYEQ

See you there? #AllAreWelcome #ComeAsYouAre #FaithfullyLGBT

Events

IMPORTANT NOTE: We can no longer advertise things which were due to take place in person, because they most likely won't go ahead. However, as and when we hear of interesting things taking place online, we will let you know by adding them to the listings below.

HeartEdge 'Living God's Future Now' Festival of Ideas

Throughout May, HeartEdge are hosting a programme of events 'designed to equip, encourage and energise church leaders, laypeople and enquirers alike'. Read more about it and join in here.

Space to Be: an online service for LGBT+ Christians

Space To Be is an online collaboration from Diverse Church, House of Rainbow, Open Table, OneBodyOneFaith, and Two:23. We know the challenges experienced by many LGBTQ+ Christians, and how difficult it can be to find a safe space to worship as our true, authentic selves. Space To Be will provide a reflective, prayerful space for LGBTQ+ Christians to gather online during this time of lockdown.

Space To Be will go live on the 22nd May, from 7-8pm BST.

To register your interest in attending this free service, please go to the Eventbrite page - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/space-to-be-tickets-105233787090>

Inclusive Church AGM and Annual Lecture

The AGM and Annual Lecture has been cancelled this year. However, we may be able to bring you something online instead- watch this space.

Welcome #Home2020 !

A message from our partner, SCM: This is an event exclusively for SCM members who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Not a member? We've reduced membership to just £1 for the year, so it's never been easier to join! Home 2020 will be taking place online on 25th July, from 1pm - 5pm. Full details TBC, but please join us to reflect on belonging as an LGBT+ person of faith. Bookings close on Wednesday 22nd July: <https://buff.ly/3alBagA>

Supporting the work of Inclusive Church

Are you a church with money to spare for mission and causes you believe in?

Are you a person looking for a charity to give to monthly?

Are you someone with a great story to share about how Inclusive Church changed you and/ or your church?

We would love to hear from you. Please get in touch with Ruth: office@inclusive-church.org

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

You can donate quickly and easily by following [this link](#).

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