



**Accessibility**  
at  
**Trinity Methodist Church, Codsall.**



“Let us build a house where love can dwell  
And all can safely live,  
A place where saints and children tell  
How hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
Rock of faith and vault of grace,  
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions,  
All are welcome in this place!”

Marty Haugen

*Singing the Faith, Hymns Ancient and Modern, London, 2011*

## Our welcome statement

We welcome you from newborn until after you have received your telegram from the King.

We expect you to wriggle and take part - and ask questions if you are unsure.

We welcome those who feel 'organised religion' is not for them (It's not for us either).

Come and find a place here with us.

We welcome those who have been hurt elsewhere.

We won't always get things right, but we will always try and learn together.

We welcome those whose bodies no longer work as they once did, or perhaps never worked as we would have liked.

Come and make yourselves comfortable.

We welcome those keeping everyone else together, and those trying to keep themselves together.

We welcome those who have a job and those who are looking for one.

We welcome school go-ers and school leavers.

We welcome the retired and the retired-but-still busy.

We welcome questioners and thinkers, creatives and scientists.

You're welcome whether you've got it all sorted, or everything's a mess.

We welcome those needing friends and those whose friends bring them along.

We welcome those who walk or drive past, and those who heard there were biscuits.

We welcome those who didn't know we were here.

Whether you're a regular, a wanderer, or just passing through.

All are welcome here

You are welcome here

## **How does this impact what we do, here?**

At Trinity (and beyond) we are trying to provide a safe and inclusive space for the whole community. This means that we take decisions, and provide resources, to enable as many people as possible to find ways to access our space and our services – on a Sunday and beyond. We aim to offer a safe space for all, including people from the LGBTQ+ community, those living with disabilities or life limiting conditions, and those who are otherwise marginalised from society.

The building is divided into three zones – the Sanctuary, the Lounge, and the Hall. The nature of the community building means some of our resources are kept in the Sanctuary area. Some of these (like the AV system) are permanently housed there, but there are other items which you are welcome to move around and borrow. It would help us continue to help other people who use our building if things are put back where they are taken.

We do not have everything right, and we are always happy to hear about how we can make people's experience with us (and with God) a better one – so if there is further work that we can do, please feel free to help us. The things in this booklet represent where we have got to so far. There is much more that we can do, and we keen to hear people's stories of encounter with us and with God in this place.

Access and inclusion means different things to different people. We are offering a space, relationships, and tools, to help as many people as possible find a safe space. Some of the language that you see in this booklet (and perhaps even heard), is contested language. Some people find the term 'disabled' helpful – others a label of limitation, preferring 'living with a disability.' Some people consider their learning and access needs to be a private and hidden matter and find their own ways of managing and coping in social situations. Some people are happy to share their stories, others are not.

With this in mind, when you join a Church based event, we commit to the following, whilst acknowledging that external groups will have their own way of working:

- We will ask “how are you?” – we will not ask “what is wrong?”
- If we are unsure, we will ask if there is anything else that we can help with (such as “Where would you like to sit? Is there a chair I can move to help you?”)
- Please ask if there are things that you need, or any support that you may require. We won’t assume that you need the same thing all the time, unless you tell us.
- All the tools and resources mentioned here are available for everyone to use. Please do so without judgement or awkwardness.
- We want to ensure that our actions in church also impacts wider society. It is often society which dis-ables people, not the individual. To this end, we will campaign for justice and we will listen to the lived experience of each other in order to frame our work.
- There are times when we associate ourselves with various campaigns or projects – such as the Dementia Friendly Church. We will make sure that these events, resources, and principle are made available to everyone, although if we know your story, we might ask specifically if you would like to be involved. There is no pressure, and no expectation that participation labels any of us.
- We all have mental health. Some of us have poor mental health. Sometimes that is a permanent feature of our lives. We will try and talk about wellbeing rather than mental health.
- If you are here for a Church service, the sermon part of the service can last around 25 minutes, which can be a long time to sit and concentrate. If you need to move around please do so. As is noted later in this booklet, there are also resources available for your use. They can be found throughout the building.

- During the service we are likely to invite people to stand to sing. If today isn't a day that you want to do that, for whatever reason, we don't mind you staying seated.
- Our healing ministry is important to us, because we believe that God meets us in our need. We do not treat diagnoses as a direct prayer request. We will offer simple prayers of blessing, and the opportunity to share your prayer requests with those you trust. We believe that everyone is called to participate in God's adventure – just as they are.
- We are learning. We won't always get it right, but please help us to do better.
- Because we don't always get things right, all members of the leadership team and those who are trustees of the building are committed to undertaking EDI training, safeguarding training and annual updates.
- We are committed to a journey of inclusion, and to that end we are actively engaging 'Through the Roof' to help us consider if any of our leadership team might become a 'Roofbreaker Champion' in order to further embed our work.



**So what can I expect around the building that helps welcome and include everyone?**

## **Lighting**

The Sanctuary is lit by sunlight, and by dimmable LED lighting. Please ask the person on the sound desk if you need the lights adjusting – we can do that in sections. Where the sunlight from our skylight causes difficulty, sunglasses are highly recommended.



The Hall space has a range of lighting options, so please find the one that best suits your requirements.

At Christmas we use fairy lights on the trees – these are set to remain on, rather than flicker.

At our Memorial services and Carol services, we use dimmed lighting, and candles. Please make yourself known to a steward if this is likely to cause you any problems or if you will need any assistance.

## **Audio-Visual**

We expect everyone presenting in the Sanctuary to use a microphone. We have a variety of microphones to ensure clarity of sound and consistency of use. There are currently no permanent AV provisions in the Hall or the Lounge areas.





We have a Loop system in the Sanctuary for those who need it. Our sound system in the Sanctuary is compatible with most digital hearing aids. If you lipread, please feel free to seat yourself wherever is best for you. Some preachers may use the lectern, others may move around during the service.



All of the words to prayers and hymns are shown on the 3 screens around the Sanctuary. This helps those who cannot hold a hymnbook, as well as meaning we have less paper around our ministry. We

have large print hymnbooks and Bibles available if the screens are too bright or unclear. We are also able to print out the content of PowerPoint slides, should you require them. Usually, words which are in **bold type** are to be read aloud by everyone who feels able to do so.

When videos or tactile resources are used in worship, we try and provide a clear explanation of what is happening for those who cannot engage easily. Please let the stewards know if you would find this support helpful as we do not always know in advance what those leading will be including in their presentation.

We are gradually updating our website and our social media presence. Where there are images posted online, we will add visual descriptions of what is shown. Our website is compatible with many accessibility apps that are available.

There are members in the congregation who have both basic BSL and/or Makaton. We do not sign our services, but they can be available to you if that would help.

## Large Print

We have a small number of large print Bibles, Hymnbooks, and Worship Books available. These are kept in the foyer area of the church, where you arrived, so please help yourself or let us know if we can help.



We have a pack of coloured filters available for those who find a different colour to read, easier to do so. Please use the colour filter which best supports your needs.

## Noticeboards

Our noticeboards contain information from around the community, so we cannot guarantee that the notices are always easy to read.

Our regular notices are emailed out using a Word Document (which can be interfaced with additional software in order to be listened to). When we send out a letter, this will always be using a dyslexia-friendly font, and in at least 12pt font.

Emergency information is available in all three zones in the building.

All exits are clearly marked and lit with emergency lighting.

We will continue to try and implement the advice provided by <https://signdesignsociety.co.uk/> and the National Dyslexia Association in our productions.

## Sensory resources

Some of us need to keep our bodies busy in order to concentrate. Each of our three zones have a box of sensory resources for you to use whilst you are in our building.



In the Sanctuary, this is an open wooden box.

In the Hall and Lounge, this is a labelled plastic container. Both contain similar tools as those listed below.

In this box of resources you will find things that:

- Spin
- Stretch
- Squeeze

as well as a pair of headphones for when the music is too loud, a pair of sunglasses for when the light is too bright, and some copies of mindfulness colouring for those who like to be creative.

## Sensory Kit: Contents list

(Colours may vary)

Please help yourself to what you need, and then return it when you're done, so that we can help other people too.

If there's something you'd find useful, but it's not here – please let us know.



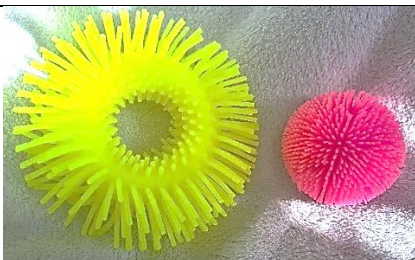
### Loop Fidgets

A variety of tangle-style tools to help keep fingers busy and minds engaged



### Infinity fidgets

A variety of infinity-style tools to help keep fingers busy and minds engaged. (Note: the cube tools include "clicker" options which can be noisy for some people)



### Stretchy, squeeze fidgets

Sensory fidgets which can be held, or placed around the wrist.



### **Stacking stones**

For busy minds, this can aid focus and concentration.



### **Buddha Board**

**\*\*You will need a little water for this to work\*\***  
Draw a picture or write using the brush, and then watch as it disappears. Can be used, alongside breathing techniques, to help centre someone in deregulation and overwhelm, or as a way of creatively engaging with the event.



### **Popper Fidgets**

Popping style fidgets in various sizes to help keep busy hands and minds connected.



## **Headphones**

Child and Adult size noise cancelling headphones for when the room becomes too full of noise.



## **Body fidget**

Jointed body fidget, for general busy-ness, or in overwhelm as a way of identifying pain, discomfort, or focus.

We have a Lego table (located in the Sanctuary) for those who like to build things (or deconstruct things). There are additional boxes to put Lego in, if you would prefer to have a small kit near you rather than moving elsewhere.



In the backs of some chairs you will find 'twiddlemuffs' – these are wool-based tools to help you if you need help staying centred or concentrating. The design will keep your hands warm, for those with circulation problems, and all contain some stitched items which can be used to fiddle and fidget with. Please feel free to find one of these before or during the service if they would be helpful, and leave them in the back of a chair at the end of the service.

## Broadcasting

Attending church can be difficult for all sort of reasons. We aim to broadcast all our services through Zoom – the link can be requested from [codsallmethodist@gmail.com](mailto:codsallmethodist@gmail.com). In addition, edited versions of the service are available on our YouTube Channel. All our services have closed captions available for those online through both Zoom and YouTube. These are configurable by the end user. They are auto-generated, and may not always be accurate, especially when religious terms are used.

We are able to present or record our church meetings using transcription software. Please let us know in advance if this would be useful to you either “live” during the meeting, or afterwards.



For people in the Sanctuary, there is a safe-zone protected from the cameras at the back left of the church. These are clearly marked. Please use these seats if you do not want to appear online for any reason at all. If the cameras are in use, moving beyond the safety zone will mean that you might be seen on camera and

thus online. Please alert a steward on duty if that puts your or someone you are with, at risk.

## Parking

There are marked accessible parking spaces near the front and the rear entrances to the building.



If all the marked bays are taken, please feel free to drop people at the nearest exit. The one way system around the car park enables enough flow of cars even when there are stationery vehicles.



## Communion

Everyone is welcome to receive bread and wine.

The bread is gluten free, and the wine is non-alcoholic – all to ensure that our celebration together is as inclusive as possible.

The wine is provided in compostable single use paper cups, which are easy for everyone to handle.

If today is difficult to come to the front to receive, or standing up for any length of time is difficult for any reason, we are able to come to you in your seat. Please indicate that you would like this during the communion distribution, and we will serve you where you are.

Occasionally you will be asked to 'share the peace' with people around you. If you are uncomfortable shaking hands, or need more space today – please feel free to stay where you are, or use the British Sign Language "peace". We will try to use language around this part of the service which provides you with different options about how you respond to people around you.



### PEACE

*Both open hands, with fingers apart, held in front of body. Hands move apart while index finger and thumb on both hands move together to touch at tips.*

Hand sanitiser remains available in each of the 3 sections of the building. Please help yourself if you need it.

## Doorways and Entrances

All of our external doors have sensor opening mechanisms. If this is not enabled, please let us know (occasionally some of our users need to shut it off for safeguarding purposes).

Our internal doors can be heavy, and as fire doors they need to be kept shut during some safeguarded activities and when the building is not in use. They all, however, have magnetic locks on them which means they can (and should) remain unlocked whilst the building is in use.

During the week, part of our building is designated a “red zone” which means that only the staff of the user organisation are allowed in it, for security and safeguarding reasons. This restriction include Church folk, contractors, and visitors to the building. Please expect to be challenged if you are in part of the building that you are not booked in to.

## Toilet facilities

We have an inclusive and adapted toilet near the rear entrance. These have grab rails and plumbing adaptations for the taps and handles.

There are two additional toilet blocks (one at the front and one at the rear).

These are clearly signposted throughout the building.



The toilets at the front have provision for children and those of short stature. The walls are very brightly coloured. The toilets at the rear are more muted in colour.



Free period products are available in the women's toilets and the inclusive toilets. Please take what you need, or leave what you can. We sometimes also have incontinence pads for adults, and nappies for children, available in the cupboards of the rear toilet block.

Baby Change facilities are available in both toilet blocks.

## Seating

All our rooms have flexible seating options. Where chairs are set out, we will always provide spaces for wheelchair users, and those with mobility aids, and assistance dogs. If you would prefer to be somewhere other than those spaces laid out, we are happy to move our furniture to best accommodate you and your needs.



In the Sanctuary some of our chairs have arms on them – please use these if you need extra help in standing up.

## Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome in all areas of our building except the kitchen. Many of our congregation are aware that they should not touch or distract working dogs.

We also know that working dogs are a vital part of the wider community, and so the Minister may ask if there are ways to include the dog in communion – either through a blessing or offering them a treat.

## **Mobility Scooters**

We know that being active and independent is important, and we invite people to use the aids they feel most comfortable with using. This includes the use of mobility scooters inside the building.

In order to keep everyone safe, we do ask that these are kept at low speed, and that only one person rides on the scooter whilst inside the building.

## **Inclusive Language**

We are grateful to be part of a church that is teaching us all about the power of our language. For this reason, we are trying to pay attention to the Inclusive Language Guide

[https://d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net/media/documents/ILG\\_designe\\_d\\_update\\_October\\_2023v2.pdf](https://d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net/media/documents/ILG_designe_d_update_October_2023v2.pdf)

and the Inclusive Image Guide

<https://d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net/media/documents/inclusive-image-guide.pdf>

The Church hasn't been the safest of places when it comes to our language, specifically around people who may be LGBTQ+ , and we are on a journey towards more inclusive language. Our hymns and Bible translation try to use gender-neutral terms when referring to humans. When speaking about God, we use a variety of metaphors to describe God's character although we will likely revert back to historically masculine pronouns as that is a hard thing for us to un-learn.

We will ask for your preferred pronouns, and will refer to you as you ask us to. We will aim to use the most widely accepted terms for disability and race and we will not use outdated slurs. All of our leadership have undertaken EDI and Unconscious Bias training, and are committed to ongoing reflective practice in accordance with the Methodist Church policies.

## **Food preparation and provision**



We will always provide a vegetarian option when we are catering for events. Our aim is to serve the options for gluten free in our catering – including providing gluten free bread at communion.

We recognise that we need to pay particular attention to some food allergies. If you are able to let us know prior to an event we can ensure that we maintain a secure preparation environment.

If we are not informed prior to the event, we are sorry but we cannot guarantee that the preparation area will be allergen free. This is because we are proud to have a shared kitchen, which other users are able to access.

All Methodist premises are alcohol free. Please do not bring alcohol onto our premises at any time.

## **Medical incident protocol**

Having an unplanned medical emergency can be scary for everyone involved. In order to help limit anxiety and panic, we have a medical incident protocol in place.

Should anyone become seriously ill during a service, regardless of who is accompanying them, the steward on duty will ring for an ambulance. Depending if they are also the first aider on duty, they may delegate this task.

A record of the incident will be recorded in the incident file, and may be used for safeguarding or insurance purposes.

If an individual wants to refuse an ambulance or take a different course of action, then this needs to be noted and signed in the accident/incident file kept in the kitchen.

We are a diverse community, and we do not always know what the agreed duties of care are for people. We will always try to include the ambulance service in supporting and triaging a serious accident or medical incident.

### **Accessibility Audit and Action Plan**

We will carry out an annual accessibility audit and action plan, and review this through the Church Council and/or AGM. Please ask the minister if you would like to see these at any time.

We have produced a social story to support accessibility throughout the building, and host this on our website. All external users will be invited to access this through the website.

We have a named Accessibility and EDI officer, who monitors our accessibility and helps to advise on what we could do better. They are supported by paid employees of both the Methodist District and Connexional Team. Please contact them directly if we can improve our service for everyone.

## Social Story

We know that our premises are used by a wide range of groups and people throughout the week, and that it is not always easy working out where things are in an unfamiliar setting. We have a Social Story available to download, to help anyone find their way into and around our building. We hope that this helps to help you feel as welcome and safe as possible.


### Our Social Story: Trinity Methodist Church, Codsall

We know how anxiety-inducing entering an unfamiliar place can be.

Whether you are joining us for a regular service on a

Sunday, a special occasion with friends and family members, or joining one of our many clubs and events – we want to make sure that you are as welcome and as comfortable as possible.



<b>When you arrive</b>	
	There are lots of places to park, including marked accessible spaces at the front and rear entrances, for those who need to be close to the doors, and/or who need additional space for mobility aids or wheelchairs.



There are 3 different entrances to the building.

If you are attending an event in the HALL, use the FRONT entrance, marked TRINITY COMMUNITY CENTRE.



If you are attending an event or group in the LOUNGE, use the REAR entrance.



If you are attending a service or large event, use the CHURCH ENTRANCE using the DOOR with the ramp.



## When you are here

Each room has flexible seating, so find the place you find most comfortable for the activity you have come for.



**Sanctuary**

## Hall





**Lounge**



There are sensory kits available in each room. Help yourself to things that will help you stay connected to what's happening whilst you are here.

Remember to put the things back so that you can help other people too.



## Toilets

There are 2 toilet blocks.

One block is at the rear entrance. The walls are neutral in colour. There are two toilet stalls in each room.



There is an inclusive accessible toilet towards the rear of the building. This includes grab rails and adapted taps and handles. There is an alarm fitted in this room if you get into difficulty.



One block is at the front of the building. The walls are very brightly coloured, and lit by ceiling windows. There are two toilet stalls in each room. There are portable provisions in these toilets for children or those of short stature. available in these toilets, and baby changing facilities in both toilets.

All female-gender toilets, and the inclusive accessible toilet, have free period products for you to use if you need them.

## Kitchen and refreshments

Most of our groups are able to use the kitchen for drinks and refreshments.



Drinks are usually served from the serveries.

## If you are here for worship



There will be music and singing. You are welcome to sing along. The words will be shown on the screen. People will often stand up to sing. You can choose to stand up or stay seated.

There will be prayers said to God. At this point we are quiet to help each other focus. You are invited to participate in the quiet space and help those with you to listen too. There are sensory kits for you to use if that helps you.



There will be a 'sermon' or talk. There is a Lego™ table that you can use. These bricks can be noisy, so please be respectful of other people who may be participating in a different way to you in the service. If you have questions, you can ask them after the service.

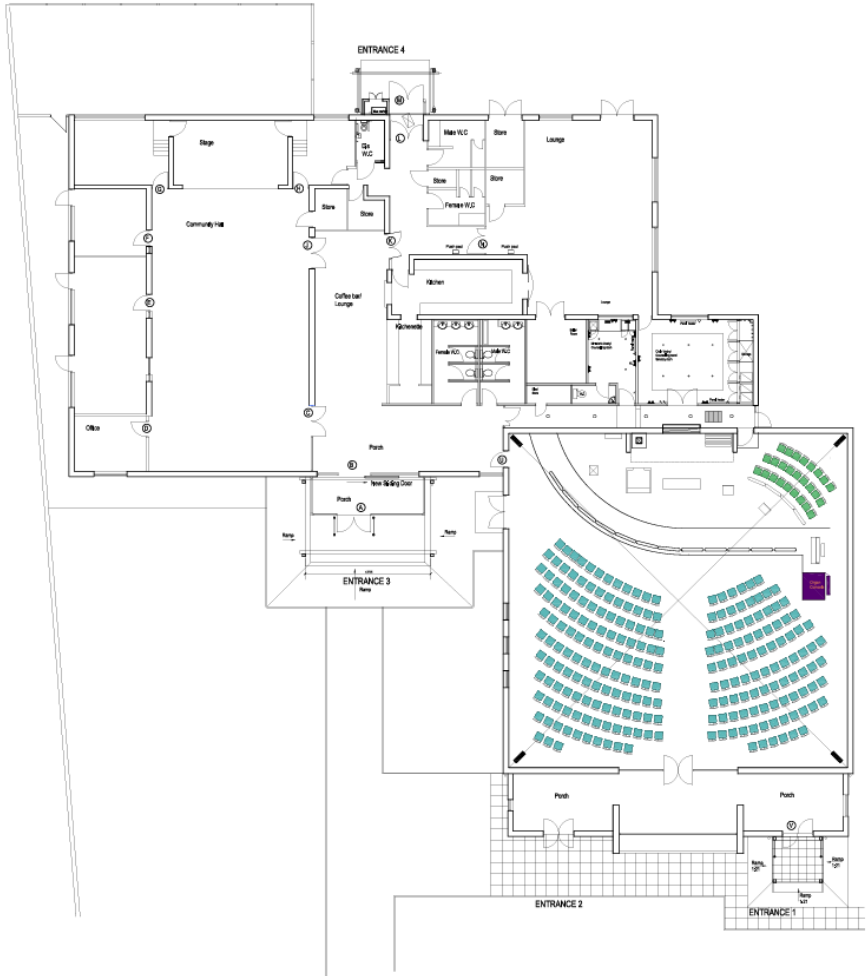


People will talk to you because they are pleased to see you.



Drinks and biscuits will be served after the service. You are welcome to help yourself to these.

We know that our building can be overwhelming. Maps like this one are at all the exits.



## **Leadership**

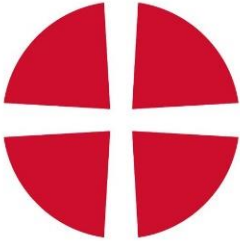
We believe in the ministry of the whole people of God, and actively encourage everyone to respond to God's call in their lives. Our leadership team intentionally seeks to include and involve those who would traditionally be marginalised. Please contact the minister if there is anything you would like to contribute to our community, or if there is anything we can do better.

## **Advocacy**

We know that it can sometimes just be a challenge to show up to a venue, let alone find the right person and the right words to communicate what you need. In addition to the provisions included in this accessibility document, we are also committed to:

- Recruiting those who are marginalised by society into positions of leadership in the Church, and helping everyone engage with a life-long vocational process.
- Ongoing training and resourcing in all areas of EDI for all of our key leaders and volunteers.
- Registering with Dementia Friendly Churches, Autism Friendly Churches, Dignity and Worth (as an LGBTQI+ inclusive church), Bereavement Friendly Churches, and Through the Roof, and other activist groups to help us keep learning and improving together.
- Engage in campaign work especially around disability. We will not publicise an event where fully accessible facilities are not provided on site, and we will advocate for fully inclusive provisions at wider community events.
- Minister and members of the Leadership Team will become active participants in the Roofbreaker Disability Champion scheme.

## What does this say about who we believe God is, and who we are called to be as a Church?



The Methodist Church is a justice-seeking, inclusive, growing, and evangelistic Church. As such, accessibility is a Gospel imperative, and a Gospel issue.

The following is adapted from a Church of England policy document.

Without good access there is, intentionally or not, exclusion of part of our community. This undermines the Church each time we say 'everybody welcome'.

Without good access, there is an implicit resignation on the part of the Church from its call to share the Good News with all people.

Without good access, there is fundamental damage done to the offer to belong to the community of Christ's disciples, and to people's ability to take up that offer.

Without good access, there is a lack of dialogue with excluded groups, and therefore the Church is disabled in understanding or addressing its own prejudices and biases.

'A Church without disabled people is a disabled Church.' Belonging to a community requires being with other members of that community. This involves bringing together the ways we view and treat people, alongside the ways we arrange our buildings physically and how we worship in them. Whenever we deny someone the opportunity to belong, the whole Church is diminished.

What do we mean by 'disabled people'? The Bible teaches that all are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). We do not categorise people and say that some bear God's image fully while others are somehow deficient..



We believe that the Image of God is present in every person, that all can say with the Psalmist: “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (Psalm 139: 13-14a)

Ability / disability is not binary, neither is it fixed. It is simply not possible to reduce our thinking to two pigeonholes, ‘able’ and ‘disabled’. We are all on a spectrum of ability/ disability for all sorts of conditions and our positions on these spectra will shift over time.

The risen Christ was recognised by his wounds, and he took those wounds into the life and heart of God (John 20: 24-29). From this we learn that woundedness and disability is part of the universal human experience. We are all embodied creatures, in bodies that are not perfect – and often seem to get less perfect as we age! We all live with challenges – physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional.. But we are also made in the image of God, all worthy of dignity, respect, inclusion and participation, and all made for each other.

We are by nature relational and interdependent, made for community. We are called to belong. We believe that the kingdom of God is one in which no-one is excluded.

In turn, the gifts of God’s grace are given freely to all people, without distinction. Everyone is called, and gifted. Just as all are made in the image of God, so all are called by God to enrich the life of the whole Church, to live out and share the Good News, and to embody God’s kingdom.

Our approach therefore becomes one of nurturing in each other the vocation and ministries to which God calls each one of us, and helps us avoid the trap of ‘othering’ people, failing to include them as fellow disciples and ministers. Traditional responses to disability tend to focus either on support to help people achieve independence ‘from’ their

disabilities, or the mere removal of hindrances and obstacles that prevent a fuller participation in society.

Both are important, but they are not enough.

It is true that there are often aspects of a disabling condition which may require medical intervention or other support, to alleviate their effects. It is also true that there are many barriers to disabled people's full participation in our common life. But focusing only on one or both of these issues makes the disabled person into the object of our thinking, not a fellow participant – and hinders engagement with the fundamental issues of personhood and relationship which are at the heart of both a Christian understanding of our identity in God, and of the call to human flourishing which flows from it.

We are the one Body of Christ, one body with many members, and all are called to play their part. We are committed to be always learning from each other, travelling together, and open to one another's wisdom and experience. The voice, the experience, the wisdom of disabled people (of all sorts), those that are routinely 'othered', and marginalised voices, needs to be at the centre of our approach. Alongside the voice of lived experience, the experience of carers and other professionals also have their part here and in wider society.



