



Featuring  
Workshop news



Summer School  
2025 information



Featuring  
Comments and stats



Congratulations  
Ordination news

# NEWSLETTER

Greetings from Signs of God - welcome to our 2024 Autumn edition



## Signs of God

*British Sign Language in Christian Settings  
Training and Exploration*

<https://www.signsofgod.org.uk>

### Greetings from the Trustees



As the seasons go by, our world is ever changing but our Trustees and volunteers keep working to ensure the Signs of God ministry continues.

We provided several workshops with more planned in the future. We filled many interpreting requests at numerous events throughout the UK. At present, we are working hard for our next Summer School in 2025 and we look forward to seeing many of you there. In our daily work and everyday lives we ask ourselves, "how do we keep anxiety at bay and stop it from robbing us of our strength? Where do we find courage to get through those difficult times whilst continuing our work for Signs of God?" Our courage, determination, and strength come from knowing the One who is bigger than whatever we face. He is in control of it all. And He is with us. May the peace of God's presence be with you all as you face each day with renewed strength.

To you, our supporters, thank you to each and everyone of you for keeping us in your prayers. God bless you.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever" - Psalm 118:1

*Sarah Tupling - Chair of Trustees*

## Christian Interpreter Network

by Judith Hillary, CIN Coordinator



Earlier this year we changed our database and emails are now sent via our iKnow database system. If you have not received any of our requests but are, as far as you are aware, on our Interpreters' Network list, please check your junk box, or drop me a line. Back in July you should have received an email asking you to create a password to log onto iKnow. By creating a log-in you can update your details: mobile number, email address, qualification/BSL level, and address. It also allows you to provide optional details like date of birth, male or female if you would like to.

I want to say thank you for understanding that some things are now different, you no longer click 'reply' to the email to respond. The email usually includes the name and a link to the email address of the person dealing with responses so please use those details to respond. Only click the reply button if you need to contact myself at CIN.

Just a reminder that we at Signs of God do not get involved with any financial arrangements (we do not charge for contacting our network) so please discuss finances directly with the person requesting interpreter(s), as well as check or confirm if co-workers are in place if needed.

We continue to receive a high number of requests and with the festive season fast approaching I am sure everyone will be very busy again. We really appreciate your continued support and commitment to support this ministry. It makes a big difference to those requesting and we are so very grateful for you.

If you have any questions you can always contact me directly by emailing [interpreting@signsofgod.org.uk](mailto:interpreting@signsofgod.org.uk). Once again, a massive big thank you.

Not yet registered with our network? Open to qualified interpreters/translators or regulated Trainees (TSLI). Those who have achieved Level 6 Certificate in British Sign Language (or equivalent) and interpreting in a Christian setting are also welcome to join by clicking the link [Join CIN](https://www.signsofgod.org.uk/cin-info) or copy and paste:  
<https://www.signsofgod.org.uk/cin-info>



## Ordination news

by Sara Head



Sometimes God surprises us by a change of direction or pushes us into a call we weren't expecting. I have been doing my day job as a Teacher of the Deaf in different schools since 1988. My first preaching experience was on a Scripture Union holiday for Deaf and Hearing young people (towards the end of the 1980s) and, since then, I have occasionally preached in both Deaf and Hearing churches and events.

Despite several people suggesting I might train as a Reader in the Church of England, I was so busy with the 'day job' I had strongly resisted. However, I discussed ministry often with my close friend, Rev Sr Susan Bloomfield, delighting in her call to ordination. However, when she suggested I might also explore that calling I think I laughed!

After Susan passed away I had a strong feeling that her ministry needed to continue; another Deaf Priest was going off to train so I was relieved God had raised up someone else to do the work. However, the call on me was growing and I finally started to explore the possibility of Reader Training; I was told I was too old to consider ordination.

Cont'd...

## Ordination news

by Sara Head cont'd



During lockdown I had a strong sense that I needed to commit to what God was calling me to, or there was a danger I would pull away. I decided to commit to the selection process and began an online Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) Foundations course. Towards the end of that year I was selected for Readers training and began evening classes in St Albans, also with ERMC. We had a large cohort of Readers and smallish group of Ordinands training together. The diocese funded local interpreters to support my evening classes and they too became a valued part of the cohort. However,

out of the blue I received a very unexpected email from the Bishop of Hertford, asking me to meet him because the Readers selection panel had felt I should explore the possibility of ordination.

The selection process is intense with lots of paperwork and meetings. There was one memorable evening, deeply aware of my failings, when I was telling God that I wanted to pull out of the process. I attended an online Deaf church zoom meeting. This group of faithful older Christians didn't know I was exploring ordination and certainly didn't know that I was considering leaving the process. But one by one they started to talk about the difficulty of finding priests who could sign, of no one being able to take over the deaf churches from them and the issues of not being able to take communion. I felt God was clearly telling me he wanted me to stay in the process. And so, towards the end of my first year of Readers training, I found myself selected as an ordinand.

The central church then took over funding the interpreters for the course, which added summer school and residential weekends to the training remit. I was extremely blessed to have interpreters, who were Christians and had theological training, experience, and biblical knowledge, join me for the residential events. This was an enormous help; I also found that interpreters who worship as they were interpreting, led me into worship in a way that wasn't quite the same as when interpreters simply sign the words. I had four different interpreters who accompanied me through the two years of residential events and online zoom teaching where we covered subjects such as Spirituality, Pastoral Care, Church History, Advanced biblical studies to name but a few. There were LOTS of essays but I enjoyed the study.

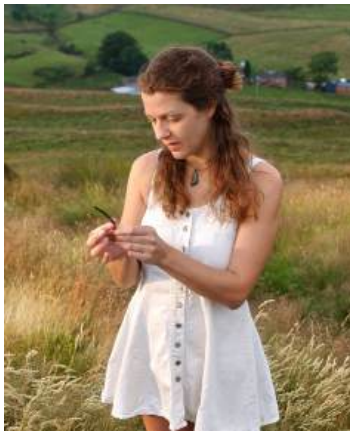
I was ordained Deacon at the end of June this year, and as I walked into the Cathedral where the first few rows were reserved for deaf friends, there was a strong sense that I was in the right place at the right time and felt overwhelmed by the grace and beauty of God. My plan had been to stay at my hearing church for curacy, (as I had been teaching them to sign and we had two deaf children in the congregation). However, God had other plans. In line with the policy of the diocese, I have been moved to a different hearing church where I will get a very different experience. By the grace of God he has provided a training incumbent who used to be a Communication Support Worker, so can sign, and the church is in the next village, 7 minutes' drive from my house. Only God could arrange that!!

I continue as an Assistant Headteacher in a Deaf school full time and am a part time, self supporting curate on Sundays (and one evening a week.) My aim is to become a Chaplain for the Deaf, but through it all I feel that I need to just trust God 'one step at a time', so I wait to see where the next steps take me. I'm still trying to get my head round how I can possibly be a Reverend!

I give thanks to God for everyone who supported me through the training, and I value your prayers as I juggle the challenges of full time work in school, Initial Ministerial Education phase 2 training and curacy work part time. 🙏

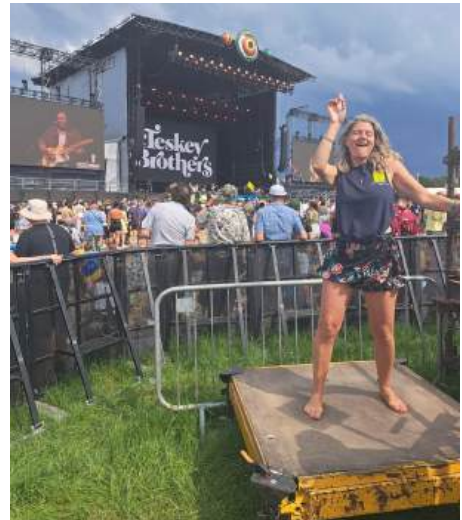


## In memory of Charli Brough by Lucy, Martin, and Claire



Sadly, on 27 December 2023, Charlotte Brough, known as Charli, died suddenly at the age of 50. Anyone who had met her could quickly see her passion for God, her devotion to her family - husband Martin and sons Leon and Caleb, and heart for empowering others - particularly members of the Deaf and Deafblind community. Many have said Charli had the amazing gift of instantly connecting with people. This was certainly my experience when we met as part of the Signs of God team for Spring Harvest. As well as being a wonderful team interpreter and woman of prayer, she was super encouraging on a personal level as we shared parenting experiences. Charli worked with Deaf people for over 25 years, first at Derby School for the Deaf and then with Staffordshire County Council in schools with children with sensory loss. Charli had an enthusiastic nature and a big sense of fun, which meant she established strong relationships with students of all ages and abilities. She became excellent at Braille and spent hours making Braille resources available whenever asked. In 2016 Charli joined ASSIST and trained as a BSL interpreter, qualifying in 2017. She loved working across Staffordshire and beyond, in many domains. Charli was very involved in church life and Christian events, always going the extra mile, giving her time and services for free to churches and community groups. A Deaf colleague and friend who worked closely with Charli at Holy Trinity Brompton described her as having a “Deaf heart” and an amazing passion for sharing the good news, enabling Deaf people to access scripture.

Charli set up a local charity in Stoke on Trent called The Rehoboth Project providing furniture, clothing and food to anyone in need. Being a free spirit and a lover of music and dance meant that interpreting at Glastonbury 2023 was a huge bucket list tick for Charli! This dream booking saw a very happy Charli making performance artists accessible for Deaf attendees, and she was due to be there again in 2024. The huge number of people and clients whom she formed strong friendships with was evident on the 2nd February 2024, at the Thanksgiving service in Stoke on Trent; the church was filled to bursting. Charli spent her life tearing down barriers and we thank her so much. Although it is a tremendous loss, we take comfort in knowing she is now dancing free with Jesus. 🙌



## In memory of Naomi Oldham



“Naomi was a skilled and compassionate interpreter and volunteered many hours of her time pro bono for the Deaf Community. She was taken suddenly very ill at the VLP Conference on Saturday 21st September and passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 24th September 2024. Naomi was much loved and her kindness, compassion and dedication to the community she served will be greatly missed by all who knew her or worked with her.” *INet Interpreting Ltd and everyone at Leicester Deaf Centre.*

“It is so difficult to summarise everything you want to say about a person and what they meant to you. Words cannot describe the immense sadness we felt saying farewell to our wonderful friend and fellow Christian interpreter Naomi. So much has been said about her over the last month in her memory both before and during her funeral and celebration of life. So much of Naomi's kindness and generosity has been revealed through family, friends, and acquaintances; so many hidden stories of loving kindness shown to everyone she met. Hidden from other people's eyes but not our heavenly Father who saw it all.

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“Even this very week we found out she had been attending a knit and natter group at the church next door and just blessing people there. We knew nothing about it. It defines who she was, doing good wherever she went. Serving her Jesus and others in a quiet gentle loving way. Naomi will be sadly missed by us all; her example is one for all of us to follow.”  
*Close friends Averil and Karen.*

We were all very sad to hear that Naomi Oldham has passed away. Naomi was a supporter of Signs of God, serving on numerous interpreting teams over the years. As you can see from this photo in April 2014, our interpreting teams always get stuck in; Naomi was no exception. Trustees and Core Team members miss her deeply. The above moving tributes echo our deep felt sadness at her unexpected passing. 🙏



### **Embracing the Moment: My Journey as the First Deaf Presenter at Spring Harvest by Rev Susan Myatt**

When I received the invitation from Spring Harvest chair, Martin Young, to present at Spring Harvest, a wave of emotions washed over me—excitement, pride, and an overwhelming sense of responsibility. As the first deaf presenter at this established Christian festival, I knew I stood on the shoulders of many who had come before me, but I was also forging a new path. The weight of history pressed down on me, mingling with the thrill of this unique opportunity.

The festival is known for its vibrant atmosphere, bringing together thousands of individuals eager to engage in worship, teaching, and community. My role was to lead one of the evening celebrations, a task that felt monumental, especially as I was responsible for communicating such a profound theme of Vision, Courage and Shining from the book of Ephesians 4 to a diverse audience of around 400 people. The thought both exhilarated and terrified me.

As I prepared, the theme struck a deep chord within me. Reflecting on my own journey, I recognised the parallels between my experiences and the message I hoped to convey. My path has not always been easy. For twelve years, I have walked through valleys of uncertainty and doubt, yet through it all, I have learned to trust in the Lord. It was this light at the end of the tunnel that I wanted to share with others, particularly those who might feel lost or disconnected from their faith. In the days leading up to the event, I found myself grappling with nerves. The prospect of being a trailblazer felt daunting. I remembered countless moments in the past when I'd wished to retreat to the comfort of my own space, preferring to indulge in the simplicity of pudding rather than stepping into the spotlight. Yet, the message I carried was too important to ignore.

The day of the presentation arrived, and as I stood with a group of people praying before the worship started, I could feel the buzz of anticipation from the audience. It was a reminder of the significance of my role—not just for myself, but for the deaf community as a whole. I had the opportunity to demonstrate that deafness is not a barrier to spiritual leadership or expression. I was ready to sign, to share my voice in a language that resonated deeply with my identity.

As I stepped onto the stage and saw the sea of faces illuminated by the soft lights, I took a deep breath. The moment felt surreal. I was both nervous and empowered, knowing that I was not just representing myself, but also those who had come before me and those who would follow. I began my talk, signing passionately, my hands moving rhythmically, conveying the depth of my faith and the essence of my journey. I would like to say a big thank you to the Signs of God team who worked tirelessly and did an amazing job making sure my presentation went smoothly. In that space, I felt a connection with the audience that transcended words. As I shared my story of trust and perseverance, I could see people nodding in acknowledgement. Each gesture was a bridge, inviting others into my world and allowing them to see the light I had found along my path.

After my presentation, the warmth and positivity that flowed from the audience was overwhelming. People approached me with gratitude and encouragement, sharing their own stories of struggle and faith.

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### Embracing the Moment: My Journey by Rev Susan Myatt cont'd



It became evident that my experience resonated with many, creating a shared understanding of what it means to navigate life's challenges. Being the first deaf presenter at Spring Harvest was not just a personal achievement; it was a moment of collective significance. It highlighted the importance of representation and the need for diverse voices within our faith communities. The experience reminded me that our differences can enrich our collective worship and understanding of God's love. As I reflect on this journey, I am filled with gratitude. I am thankful for the opportunity to share my story, to break down barriers, and to encourage others to embrace their unique journeys. I hope to inspire deaf and hearing individuals to pursue their passions without fear, knowing that their voices—whether spoken or signed—are valid and valued. This experience has ignited a passion within me to continue advocating for inclusion and representation within the church. I envision a future where everyone, regardless of ability, can find their place at the table, sharing their gifts and stories in the spirit of unity and love.

As I move forward, I carry with me the lessons learned from my journey and the hope that this moment at Spring Harvest is just the beginning. With faith as my guide and the support of a vibrant community, I am excited to see where this path leads. Together, we can illuminate the way for others, proving that, indeed, there is a light at the end of every tunnel. 🙌

### A stunning representation of Susan's preach, by an artist at Spring Harvest



### A Message from Martin Young - Chair of Spring Harvest

It was very significant that Susan Myatt preached at Spring Harvest 2024. For several years now there has been a great team of British Sign Language Interpreters from Signs of God and speech to text operators who have made the event accessible to those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Which has then created a strong deaf community within Spring Harvest which is always a delight to be a part of.

Nevertheless, the ministry on stage has been led by hearing people and given in spoken English. Susan was the first deaf person to preach at a celebration in BSL. The use of the BSL Interpreters made the presentation accessible to those whose first language was not BSL. Susan communicated beautifully and powerfully and so there were layers of the Holy Spirit's ministry at work. She had a great message that was personal and highlighted, which gave people an insight into the Bible. Also, the signing was a stunning thing to watch for the audience. It was very profound that someone without hearing and with a different language was communicating with such authority and clarity.

Accessibility has always been an important part of Spring Harvest's ministry and will continue to be. However, having Susan preach was not just about accessibility for the deaf contingent in the room, it was also about the way the Pentecostal Holy Spirit anoints all people and communicated in all languages. Spring Harvest received ministry rather than simply provided for others and this is a significant way of Jesus - to encourage those who feel they have, to receive from those who are often made to feel that they have not. 🙌

## Becoming a Core Team Member of Signs of God

by Wendy Everingham



I have been involved with Signs of God for many years. I have worked on Teams, lead Teams at Spring Harvest and other events where there has been a Signs of God presence. I have also participated in Workshops in different parts of the country.

I had never known how to become a Core Team member. But last year at Summer School someone asked me why I had not been at the AGM. They were surprised to learn that I was not a Core Team member, so the supplementary question was asked 'Why not?' I had never been asked to be a Core Team member was the simple answer. I missed being included last year as the questions were asked after the AGM but finally this year my time arrived! I was nominated and seconded by two Signs of God trustees and later received a last-minute invitation to the AGM in Oxford, thankfully there was a remote option (thank God for Covid hey!) so I was able to attend remotely.

The process was quite simple .. I was introduced to everyone at the meeting both in the room and remotely. One of the Trustees ran through my experience and explained my desire to become part of the Core Team. I am pleased to say that I was unanimously accepted into the Core Team membership. I am now looking forward to how I can support Signs of God as a Core Team member, to make sure that Deaf Christians are well supported and also Deaf people that do not know Jesus have the opportunity to come to know Him.

To the right is a recent picture of me on my hike through Spain on part of the Camino del Santiago. Highly recommended if you want to get completely 'off-grid' for a while and meet people from all over the World! 🙌



### Newshound advert

The Trustees are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Newshound - do you have the time, skills and desire to create our newsletter? Have a look at the description and pray about this. Maybe you feel it is something you as a supporter, can take on or maybe join us in prayer that the right person from within our Core Team responds.

#### *Role Description*

Create a newsletter x3 a year (spring, summer, autumn/winter), x4 if it is a summer school year. You will receive support from a dedicated Signs of God trustee, who you will liaise with, to agree content ideas. When the newsletter is created and edited, you will return the draft to trustees to discuss edited versions.

#### *Tasks*

- Consider events/news items for the newsletter and write articles if necessary
- Contact 2-3 relevant people to ask them to write an article, between 800-1,200 words (depending on the topic) and provide a suitable deadline
- Edit returned articles
- Format newsletter – source copyright free images (from Unsplash, Canva, etc) relevant to articles/news items (always credit images as per source website requirements)
- Write adverts for Signs of God events, eg. Summer School or workshop events
- Liaise with trustees for adverts/items of interest
- Collect photos (and consent) of the article authors

#### *Skills required*

- Creativity for the visual aspect of the newsletter
- Be innovative to create ideas for content - trustees will help with this
- Be confident to produce/edit occasional videos in BSL for social media (desirable but not essential)
- Computer literate to be able to create the newsletter. Current template is from iOS but person could use an MS template if more familiar with other software.

Please prayerfully consider this role and get in touch if you feel you are able to offer or would like more information, thank you. 🙌

## Workshops

We are glad to regularly receive glowing feedback from our wonderful participants as they enjoy a day of BSL learning, worship, fun and friendship. The beauty of a workshop is it gives an opportunity for a wide range of people - Deaf and hearing, of all levels of BSL and none, from whatever perspective or background to come together. Signs of God workshops in 2024 included Newcastle, Chalfont St Peter, Derby and Chippenham. Our final in-person workshop of the year will be in York on the 23rd November. [Come and join us in York if you can!](#)

Would you like to host a workshop in your area? Are you passionate about being more accessible to your local Deaf community? Could you link with local churches to organise an event? Yes? Just choose a date, a venue, provide refreshments, and encourage people to come. Many hosts find that if they have enough paying participants it means their costs to Signs of God are covered. Email [workshops@signsofgod.org.uk](mailto:workshops@signsofgod.org.uk) to find out more.

We are always looking for more team members for our workshops; as tutors, interpreters, digital hosts or in support roles. There will be shadowing opportunities and support if you are new to it. If you feel you have skills to offer our Signs of God workshops team [please get in touch](#). 🙌



## Summer School 2025

We could shout about Summer School 2023 from the rooftops. But don't take our word for it, here are some quotes and statistics about how it truly was:

- Thank you, thank you, thank you- would be my first comment. I have learnt lots of things at summer school
- Very helpful to have a 1-1 tutorial to be able to ask about specific aspects of BSL and have personalised feedback on how to do that
- 96% of respondents felt there was a good balance of formal and informal worship
- 93% of respondents felt their group was right for them
- 96% of respondents rated their own accommodation excellent or good
- Meals were excellent and dietary needs well catered for
- Things learnt in the week included: staying calm, not expecting perfection, carrying on! Be prepared, think on your feet.
- Chance to reflect on my skills
- I thought the week - my first time - was absolutely brilliant!
- I learnt so much, grew in confidence in signing and made new friends.
- Everyone was so kind and supportive.
- Thanks again to an amazing team. A brilliant summer school. My most enjoyable to date!!

## Summer School 2023 comments



Book for 2025 here: <https://tickets.myiknowcharity.co.uk/gb/ODAyNy0z/t> 🙌