

SIGNS MAGAZINE
EASTER EDITION 2026

The Last Supper
1 Corinthians 11:23-26 *NIV*



**Deaf
Anglicans
Together**

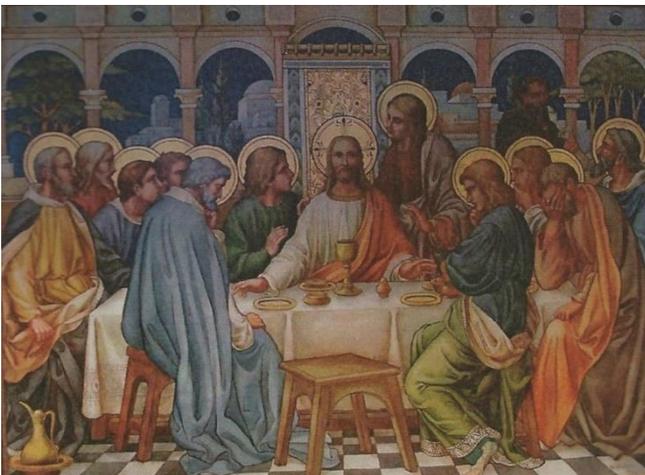
Registered Charity no. 1117313

For I [Paul] received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink

this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

“The
Last
Supper”
by
Francis
Ross
Maguire
(Source:
BDHS
website)



From the Chair, Rev'd Hannah Lewis



The theme of Signs magazine this Easter is the last supper. At the last supper Jesus, knowing he was about to die, left his friends and all who follow him an everlasting sign of his love for us in Holy Communion.

Communion means different things to different Christians. I remember when I was training to be a priest at Queens College in Birmingham alongside Christians from different denominations – Methodist, URC, and Roman Catholic. One day each group gave a presentation for everyone on how their denomination celebrated communion, and all were very different. But what was the same was that every group said, ‘Holy Communion is really important to us and that is why we do it this way.’ Despite our differences, Holy Communion is something that unites all Christians and feeds us spiritually. When we come together as DAT at spring conference, we always share Holy Communion at the end of the weekend to show that although we live all over the UK, we are united in Christ through sharing in one bread.

At the Spring conference we will be holding our DAT AGM – reports and accounts from 2025 and looking forward to the future. This is also a coming together to remember and celebrate God’s generous provision and love for us as a small charity of Deaf grassroots Christians. We will be hearing from the DAT reps about their time on the CofE General Synod – the important role of representing Deaf Anglicans in the CofE national ‘parliament’. Their terms of office end later this year so we will be electing new reps. More information about this will be sent out in June, but this is a chance to think and pray about whether God might be calling you to have a go. There is lots of support available for first timers – feel free to ask Sarah or Mary or Elaine what it’s like. I look forward to seeing some of you at Spring conference, and meanwhile wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Hannah

Important notice!

The DAT AGM will be held on
Saturday 16th May 2026
at the Spring Conference. Papers will be
sent out by email in advance.

Dates for your Diary

DAT Spring Conference 15th-17th May 2026.

Bookings have now closed.

<https://deafanglicanstogether.org.uk/>

Go! Sign BSL Fellowship Camping Weekend

19th- 21st June 2026

Bidford on Avon, Warwickshire

Contact: admin@gosign.org

New Wine Festival

28th July – 2nd August 2026

Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet

BSL interpreted/Deaf Stream

www.festival.new-wine.org

IEWG Conference, Oslo, Norway

28th September – 2nd October 2026

For more details see flyer on next page

<https://deaf-iewg.com/conference>

Go! Sign Bible Conference Weekend

16th- 18th October 2026

Cliff College, Hope Valley, Derbyshire

Contact: admin@gosign.org

IEWG



CONFERENCE 2026

VENUE: Rønningen folkehøgskole | Oslo | Norway

DATE: 28.09.2026 - 02.10.2026

THEME: The conference will focus on how Deaf and Hearing People work together in working and social environments.

More information about the speakers will be available shortly.



COST: 750 Euros, based on people sharing a room. Breakfast, Lunch and Evening Meal included in the cost.



Single rooms are available on request.

REGISTRATION: Registration form will be available shortly.



Closing date for registration will be May 4th 2026.

WEB: <https://deaf-iewg.com>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/DeafIEWG>

A message from Bishop Alastair Cutting

Bishop Alastair Cutting has recently been linked up with DAT as the bishop to help champion Deaf church. He is Bishop of Woolwich, covering the boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham, and Royal Greenwich in Southeast London within the Diocese of Southwark.



Laura Cutting, +Alastair's daughter, is a BSL interpreter, and his wife Kay is a Teacher of the Deaf. Despite his long awareness of signing and the Deaf community, his own practical BSL is rubbish! Being alongside Laura on her journey to becoming an interpreter has kept him interested, though.

His early insights into the culture included learning some basic finger-spelling at school, and as a teenager in church choir using it to 'chat' with friends during long sermons! In the early 1990s, whilst working in churches in Uxbridge, he loved seeing Hayes Deaf Church choir leading worship at Diocesan events. He was influenced by Rev Vera Hunt then, and later at General Synod, when they again overlapped for a season.

There are plans to develop The Annunciation, Marble Arch (the Deaf Carols church) as a potential hub for the Deaf community, and +Alastair has been involved with others in exploring and encouraging this. He was also honoured to be amongst those present at Leicester Cathedral for the recent service commemorating the 450th anniversary of sign language in church.

Resources for funding churches and dioceses, and Deaf provision within them, are limited, but where there are ways in which we can raise the profile of Deaf Church and Deaf Ministry, and celebrate it, +Alastair loves to help and support. *Every blessing, +Alastair*

General Synod report, February 9th-13th 2026,
at Church House, Westminster
by the DAT Synod reps, Mary Bucknall, Elaine Heath
and Sarah Tupling.

Monday afternoon

Mary: The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally, was welcomed with a standing ovation in the Assembly Hall in Church House. She introduced this group of sessions, welcoming new members and Anglican Communion guests. This was followed by the **Report by the Business Committee** and one hour of **Questions**.

Tuesday morning

Mary: The Archbishop of Canterbury gave a **Presidential Address** to Synod.

Elaine: The new **Clergy Conduct Measure** (CCM) was debated. This replaces the longstanding Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) which was criticised by many within the church as slow and burdensome for both complainants and clergy.

Mary: Many voted in favour of an amendment to the CCM (proposed by Parliament's Ecclesiastical Committee) to allow tribunal hearings to be heard in public, unless there are special circumstances.

Tuesday afternoon

Sarah: In the afternoon a presentation was made by the Archbishop of York, allowing questions to be raised about **Living in Love and Faith** (LLF), ahead of the lengthy debates on Thursday, focusing on the LLF programme and its progress. (This programme was launched by the Church of England at the end of 2020 aiming to hold discussions learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage within the Church).

Mary: There were debates on the Report from the Archbishops' Commission on **Reimagining Care**, and on **Lowest Income Communities Funding**.

Elaine: I had the privilege to be invited to have supper at Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York, with other Synod members and BSL interpreters. The Great Hall is actually an annexe to the palace, which was a former library. It was a beautiful setting and the guests enjoyed the wine generously served to us during the evening.



Wednesday morning

Elaine: During a debate on **Mental Health and the Church**, it was recommended that the clergy have training in how to support people with mental health challenges.

Wednesday afternoon

There was an update on **Church Safeguarding Structures**, followed by an item of **Liturgical Business**, regarding the introduction of two new festivals in the Common Worship Calendar (The Festival of God the Creator, and the Commemoration of the Twenty-one Martyrs of Libya).

Thursday morning

Elaine: The General Synod backed a motion on **Sustainable Church Flowers** from the Diocese of Worcester encouraging churches and cathedrals to explore ways of arranging flowers that are both beautiful and environmentally responsible. We watched a video showing flower arranging at a Cathedral.

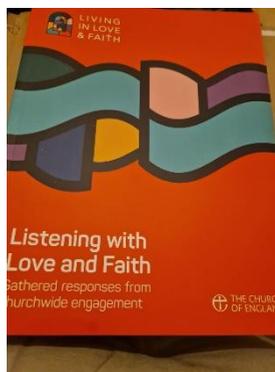


The motion highlights long established alternatives such as reusable vessels, twigs, moss, chicken wire, and metal frogs, which for centuries enabled churches to create flower arrangements without single plastics and foam.

Mary: This was followed by a debate on **Poverty and the Church**, 40 years after the ground-breaking “Faith in the City” report.

Thursday afternoon

Sarah: The afternoon session focused on **Living in Love and Faith** (LLF) with a presentation and the key points discussed were the progress of LLF, Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) and Working Groups with the aim of setting up groups to continue LLF’s work. There were very strong and powerful speeches from clergy in same-sex relationships which highlighted the human impact of the discussions. The LLF motion, aiming to end the programme by July, 2026 (the next session of General Synod at York), was passed with 65% support.



Friday morning

Sarah: After worship, the session opened with the Bishop of Amazonia, Marinez Bassotto (the Anglican Communion guest) giving her presentation in her own language, Portuguese. She highlighted her country’s concerns about nature and degradation and the steps that are being taken to combat this.

Mary: There was a lively debate on the **Parochial Fees Order 2026**, where the proposed uplift of £1,000 for burial fees was rejected by Synod. This was followed by a debate on **Working Class Vocation and Ministry** next steps.

Friday afternoon

Sarah: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, then placed on record her **Farewells** and thanks to the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner and the Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft. They were both retiring. This was followed by the prorogation (adjournment) of Synod until July, 2026 at York.

Leicester Cathedral Service in BSL

by Canon Cathy Nightingale,

Priest with permission to officiate at St Andrew's, Shifnal,
Diocese of Lichfield.

On the 6th February 1576, 450 years ago, a deaf man, Thomas Tilsye married a hearing woman, Ursula Russel in St Martin's Church Leicester, which is now Leicester Cathedral. Thomas used sign language to sign his vows to his wife and there is a description of the signs he used in the church records.

This is the earliest known documented use of sign language in Church registers in the UK and Leicester Cathedral held a service on Sunday 8th February 2026 to celebrate this unique moment in history.

The service was led in British Sign Language. The deaf-led choir from the Church of the Good Shepherd signed several songs beautifully with a solo song signed by Anne Lawrence.



Frank Sly and Anne Lawrence signed the readings, Derrick Wicks signed the Lord's Prayer.

Canon Cathy Nightingale preached in sign language and all the interpreters were CODAs (Children of Deaf Adults) - Averil Dobson, Kay Hannah and Karen Sly.



The service was very well attended with lots of Deaf people. The Bishop of Leicester, Bishop Martyn Snow, and Bishop Alastair Cutting (Lead Bishop for Deaf Ministry in the Church of England) and the local mayor were present. It was shared globally online. It was lovely to be a part of a beautiful celebration and I enjoyed preaching and seeing so many Deaf people and the involvement of the local Deaf church and community. In my sermon I signed that we are all made in God's image, including deaf people and how I found out that I was made deaf in God's image. God created everything; a world full of joy, including deaf people. I also signed that it is important that the church reflects the diversity of creation and respects everyone, the same respect that enabled Thomas to sign to his wife how much he loved her. I also signed that the deaf church in Leicester was started by deaf people themselves. The first four missionaries were deaf

(John W Pound 1884-c 1894, Arthur McDonald Cuttell 1897-1904, Joseph Bradley Foster 1905-1913, Leslie Edwards 1915-1851). Thanks to Stephen Iliffe who did some of the research. The Dean, Karen Rooms reflected on the service "It was a privilege to experience a service led in British Sign Language. This was both humbling and profound, and we hope to repeat it in the future."



Stephen Iliffe from Deaf Mosaic took the official photographs of the service. We can use some of the photos here thanks to his permission.

Bishop Alastair Cutting, Bishop of Woolwich, and lead Bishop for Deaf Ministry wrote on Facebook:

"I was honoured to be at this amazing BSL-led service celebrating 450 years of sign language in churches. Great to have the Deaf Choir and Karen Sly, and the readers all so actively involved, and with The Revd Canon Cathy Nightingale preaching.

Thanks especially to Leicester Cathedral and to the interpreters, and all involved in encouraging and enabling this to have happened. As bishop lead for championing Deaf church/ministry, it all made my heart sing."

--- Newsflash ---

Rev'd Esther Rose will be licensed as Chaplain with the Deaf Community for the Diocese of Bristol by the Rt Rev'd Neil Warwick, Bishop of Swindon on Sunday 29th March 2026. Please pray for her as she starts her exciting new ministry.

Rev'd Neil Robinson, Minister to the Deaf Community in the Diocese of Salisbury, will be on sabbatical leave from 7th April 2026 for a period of three months.

--- General Synod Elections 2026 ---

Have you enjoyed reading the General Synod report on pages 6-8 by our DAT Synod representatives? Is this something YOU would like to do?

There will be elections this year for three DAT Synod reps for the next five years (Quinquennium) of General Synod from 2026 to 2031. Nominations will be invited in the early summer.

DAT reps on Synod can sign or speak about Deaf issues and ask questions, but they cannot vote. All the proceedings are interpreted in BSL and the videos are subtitled.

There are normally two meetings a year, one in London (for 4-5 days) in February and one over a long weekend at York University in July. Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid.

If you would like more information about standing as a candidate, please contact the Chair, Rev'd Hannah Lewis,
chair@deafanglicanstogether.org.uk

Mary Bucknall

Spotlight on the Regions

News from the Diocese of London:

Penny Beschizza, a Trustee of DAT, reports that a new **Deaf Community Hub** will be set up at the Church of the Annunciation, Marble Arch, as part of its “*Sharing Our Future*” building restoration project.

This early 20th century church has been awarded £447,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as part of a total grant of £2.3 million at a later date. There are plans for holding more worship services in BSL and other events in partnership with the Deaf Church and other key organisations like the Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD). Funding has also been earmarked for a two-year activity plan for Deaf participants, in skills training and other heritage activities.

This means that Deaf people will have their own ‘Deaf Space’ in central London for the first time since the closure of St Saviour’s Acton (formerly St Saviour’s Oxford Street) in 2014. For more details see www.annunciationmarblearch.org.uk/future/

Penny Beschizza is the Southwark and London Diocese Deaf Ministry Co-ordinator and BSL Tutor.

Note on the painting of the Last Supper on the front cover of Signs. It was painted in 1916 by Francis Ross Maguire (1855-1934), a deaf and dumb man from an Irish Catholic family.

This painting hung at St Saviour’s Oxford Street until 1922, when the building was pulled down to make way for Selfridges. It was moved to the new church building at Acton in 1924.

After the closure of St Saviour’s in 2014, the painting was placed in the care of the British Deaf History Society in Manchester. For more information see the BDHS website: www.bdhs.org.uk/timeline/the-last-supper-painting-by-francis-ross-maguire/

“After Calvary”

A poem for Easter
by Irene Seager



Nail-pierced hands, sword-pierced side
Nail-pierced feet, crown of thorns
Blood flowed from your wounds a crimson tide
To free and cleanse a sin-filled world forlorn.

The tomb was dark and deep
That long lonely night
Soldiers and angels keeping watch
Then come the light.

Dawn breaking, stone rolled away
Women weeping, found you gone
Angel message at the break of day
“He is risen.” His life goes on.

Resurrection, empty tomb
After Friday’s Calvary
Never more sin’s endless gloom
Jesus lives, we are free.

Reprinted with permission from Ernest and Leslie Seager.

'E A S T E R'

by Sarah Tupling

E – gg shaped present often made of chocolate given out at Easter

A – pril flowers, yellow daffodils

S – pring is when Easter is celebrated



T – hank God for sending His Son, Jesus Christ

E – gg boiled hard and stained to symbolize the Resurrection

R – emembrance. This is the word Jesus used at the Last Supper.

'Do this in remembrance of me.'



H A P P Y
E A S T E R !

EASTER WORDSEARCH

F	X	J	E	A	S	T	E	R	B	R	L	W	G	H
D	L	H	Q	Z	V	E	F	T	H	G	I	L	Y	T
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| CHICKEN | FLOWERS | CROSS | RESURRECTION |
| EGG | SPRING | SACRIFICE | GARDEN |
| BUNNY | EASTER | STONE | GETHSEMANE |
| LAMB | LIGHT | ANGEL | CALVARY |
| CHOCOLATE | LIFE | RISEN | PASSOVER |