



INVITING A PREACHER WHO IS A BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) USER

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES

Before the service/event

Be clear what you are asking your visitor to do. Preaching alone? Preaching and leading the service? Will there be children or young people? Will there be Communion? Will there be refreshments/ lunch after the service?

Nominate one person to be the point of contact between your church and your speaker/interpreter. Keep your written communications reasonably simple and straightforward – remember that your preacher's first language may be BSL rather than English.

You can communicate using text, Skype or other video-chat if you have a BSL interpreter to help you.

Your preacher will bring at least one BSL interpreter for his/her use during the service. It is always **up to you** to provide interpreters for the deaf/deafened people in your congregation. It is not appropriate to expect your preacher's interpreter to provide a service for your congregation.

To be really effective, BSL interpreters need to see what they will be interpreting **in advance**. Your preacher will obviously want to participate in the rest of your service and so you will need to send a copy of all scripts, song lyrics, Bible texts and everything else that will be said in the service (as far as possible) to the preacher and interpreter **at least 5 days** before the event.

Ask the preacher what s/he needs; do not take things for granted.

Get hold of a photograph of the preacher, so that you can greet him/her warmly when they arrive!

You can arrange reasonably priced online deaf awareness training for leaders and volunteers through

[Open Hands Signing Church, Stafford](#)

[Action on hearing loss](#)

[BSL courses](#)

At the service/event

It helps if one or two people are ready to greet the speaker and interpreter and confirm final details. These should include:

- Who's doing what during the service/event, where people are standing/sitting.
- Emergency exits and arrangements for evacuation of the building
- Location of toilets
- IT and sound check for interpreter. Remember that the interpreter will need to be well lit

Remember that the interpreter that comes with the preacher is the preacher's interpreter and not for all the deaf/deafened people attending!

Your preacher and interpreter will both need a lectern for notes. Many interpreters appreciated a monitor/laptop in front of them with song words etc.

You should always the congregation and participants for their permission before filming or recording a service or event and that includes asking the interpreters.

After the service/event

Please provide a preaching gift, remembering that your preacher will probably need to pay his/her interpreter at an hourly rate (£35.00) and may not be able to claim that fee from anywhere – they may be paying to preach the Gospel to you!

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Inviting BSL preacher June 2019.