

***Worship: Leading & Preaching* | Overcoming challenges on the journey**

Sue's Story

My name is Sue and I have been studying *Worship: Leading & Preaching* since last autumn. My disability is from birth and I have cerebral palsy which means that I have to use a wheelchair. I did register the fact that I was disabled but I haven't actually had to use any of the additional help, because I am able to use a computer on my own and hopefully send everything off electronically at the end of the course when I have to do the portfolio. On the other hand, I have been able to use the knowledge of both my mentor and my tutor. My husband helps me actually to get to the various venues for the services and I am able to drive myself, so that helps; and my mentor has been very good in choosing the venues that I am able to get into, so that we don't have a problem with the wheelchair; and we have organized various ways of me taking the service, because I can't always get onto the higher platform, so we have organized a ramp in one church, which is very useful; and we just keep on looking for new ideas and different ways of doing things, so that it is the best it can be for me and the congregation.

I have been quite enthralled by the various interviews of people on the video clips that are very useful, so it is really worth looking at those – they do help quite a lot. From an early age I have always loved books, the first school that I ever went to when I was seven, they had a library and I was absolutely enthralled. So the reading part of this course is very good for me in that I do enjoy doing the reading, although there is quite a lot of reading to do and sometimes I get a little bit swamped, because I haven't studied for a long time and it's new to me to get back into it, but nevertheless I am enjoying that aspect of the course.

The key tips that I would give everybody is that you use your talents. When you have a disability you have many challenges to overcome but you do find the ways and means of doing that, even if they are not always orthodox, but as long as the job gets done I say “it doesn’t matter”. And so I have been able to carry that forward into the course. So that when I have hit a problem, we have been able to look at it, that’s my mentor and I, and we have been able to find another way of doing something. For instance, I found that because I wear glasses I couldn’t put the notes for the sermon in a polythene booklet, so what I have done now is I just have sheets of paper with a tag attached so that they don’t all fall on the floor and then I am able to actually read it in large print and it doesn’t glare, because the plastic was glaring and I couldn’t actually read it properly.

What I have most enjoyed so far has been that I am able to meet people from the different churches and get to know them a lot better. There are people there that have a disability other than mine. One lady is blind and there are some people that have dementia – so it is not just **you** that has the disability, a part of the congregation have it as well. And I am able to get to know them all and the way they work and how they do things differently than my church. The group of people that I am studying with has been very interesting to get to know them better, but also we have been able to have an evening together where we have shown each other what we have done for our portfolios and it was amazing to find how talented we all are, but we all had a different talent so it was really, really good to be able to have that experience. I would just say enjoy the course, enjoy it as much as you can, it is hard work but enjoy it and then make sure that you actually pray to God each day that he will strengthen you. Because in Philippians it says that “Christ will give you the ability to overcome difficulties”.