



ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT FOR CHURCHES

3RD EDITION, 2010

**BY
CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD, Ph.D.
AND
THE REV. DR. DEVORAH GREENSTEIN**

**PREPARED FOR UMCOR HEALTH
GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

© Copyright 2010 United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

A publication of UMCOR, the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

You may copy and share the audit checklist in its entirety (Chapter II). You may not publish the Accessibility Audit in a newsletter or book, or post it on a website, without permission. To request permission, contact UMCOR, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10115.

All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION	4
Who Are People with Disabilities?	4
Faith Community Resolutions	6
Accessibility Issues	9
Attitudinal Access	11
Access for People Who Are Blind, Are Partially Sighted, or Have Low Vision	13
Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing	14
Access for People Who Have Environmental Disabilities	17
Access for People Who Have Mobility Disabilities	19
Chapter II: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT	21
The Process	21
Getting to Our Church	22
Arriving at Our Church	22
Getting Into Our Church	25
Inside Our Building	29
Our Grounds	48
Church Life Beyond Our Grounds	50
Chapter III: ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES	52
Agencies, Associations, Organizations, and Societies	52
Manufacturers (Listed by Subject)	53
Print and Online Resources	63
Glossary	67
Photo Index	74

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Children and adults with disabilities have gifts and talents to contribute to their communities. Many of them want to go to church, and have services to offer to God.

Our faith community has been working for some time to improve the accessibility of its churches. What a blessing it would be if we could progress to the point where there were no longer any churches inadvertently excluding people with disabilities: no more architectural barriers preventing anyone with a disability from entering or fully participating; no more attitudinal barriers keeping persons with disabilities from feeling welcome; all churches offering accommodations and supports to remove communication barriers for individuals with sensory disabilities; and all people with disabilities who want to worship at the United Methodist church of their choice, feeling welcomed and included, but most important of all—feeling valued!

People with disabilities, as all people, long to feel valued. In order for this to happen, our congregations must not stop at being welcoming and accessible; they must go beyond that, for it is when people with disabilities are provided opportunities to participate in their churches in meaningful ways that they experience inclusion.

Since the 2nd edition of the *Accessibility Audit for Churches*, newer accessibility guidelines have become available from federal agencies committed to accessible design. Congregations have shared fresh stories about the use of creative accessibility accommodations and of model programs of inclusion. This 3rd edition of the audit continues to provide basic information regarding disabilities and accessibility, recommendations on barrier removal, and an audit checklist and listings of some manufacturers offering information as well as accessibility-related products. This audit also features sidebars with glimpses of model programs at the parish and conference level, material on new print and online resources, and an updated audit checklist with expanded areas of coverage (e.g., library, kitchen, and children's play area). In numerous places this audit adds references and links to the [2004 Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) guidelines](#), and it explores further dimensions of accessibility solutions and opportunities for including, supporting, and empowering people with disabilities.

WHO ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

A total of 54 million Americans are people with a disability, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.¹ That is one in five persons.

People with disabilities comprise a diverse population. Disability is experienced by all racial, social, economic, gender, and age groups. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336 as amended,² defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities...major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.”³

¹ From Office on Disability, US Department of Health and Human Services (2007). *What is disability and who is affected by disability?* Washington, DC: author. Retrieved September 2008 from http://www.hhs.gov/od/about/fact_sheets/whatisdisability.html

² ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Public Law 110-325, www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm

³ www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm#12102

Types of Disabilities

The term “physical impairment,” more appropriately called “physical disability,” includes a tremendous range and variety of conditions. It covers spinal cord injuries, Spina Bifida, and other congenital malformations. It also includes amputations, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, and additional musculoskeletal conditions. Many physical disabilities can take the form of a mobility disability, a highly visible type of disability. An estimated 10 percent of people with mobility disabilities use wheelchairs, and others use walkers, canes, braces, or crutches.

The ADA term “mental impairment” covers such disabilities as chronic mental illness, or one of the developmental disabilities which include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy or seizure disorder. An increasingly frequent type of neurological disability is traumatic brain injury (formerly called head injury), most often caused by accidents.

And a disability can be sensory, such as the disabilities experienced by people who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision, and people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Disabilities Are Not Always Readily Apparent

Among the less readily apparent disability types are learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and chronic illness. A chronic illness can persist for months or even years, and its severity may require persons to be hospitalized during periodic flare-ups. The various types of chronic illnesses include diabetes, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, disorders of the kidneys, multiple sclerosis, sickle cell anemia, asthma and other severe allergies, Lupus, gastrointestinal disorders, cardiac conditions, osteoporosis, chronic back pain, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and chemical sensitivities. Being consistently medically fragile also falls into this category.

A Wholeness of Spirit

In what has become a classic book on inclusion,⁴ we find the belief articulated that God sees in persons with disabilities a wholeness of spirit, where our imperfect vision may see only brokenness of body or mind.

Let us pray that as we journey on our individual paths toward welcoming and inclusion, we see in persons with disabilities a wholeness of spirit rather than only their disabilities.

The Uniqueness of Each Person

The diversity and value of each human individual in the sight of God is an age-old teaching from the scriptures. One modern author with a disability has written, “Our disability is only one of the many differences that make up our identities.”⁵ People with disabilities are also people with abilities. Just as all people, they have gifts to share—gifts that differ according to the grace given each of us.

In our faith communities when we speak or write about accessibility accommodations and inclusion opportunities, and we acknowledge the individuality of persons with disabilities and how they define

⁴ From Thornburgh, Ginny (Editor), (2005). “This We Believe.” In *That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities (Revised Edition)*, p. 5. Washington, DC: National Organization on Disability.

⁵ From Enston, Mark (2004). “Take Me as I Am.” In *Reflections from a Different Journey: What Adults with Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew*, by Stanley D. Klein and John D. Kemp. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 30.

themselves, instead of making generalizations about them, we are showing what a well-known early leader of our field referred to as a “mark of a caring congregation.”⁶

FAITH COMMUNITY RESOLUTIONS

“What barrier is there that love cannot break?”

—Mahatma Gandhi

The enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990⁷ represented a momentous advancement in breaking barriers that prevent the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

As people of faith, we are guided not only by laws, but also by moral mandates of love and justice. And as articulated in UMC church policy:⁸

“...people all around us, including the church, are in need of God’s transforming love for living in this world and can be changed whenever we bring Christ’s love and truth working within our church...”

Faith communities have long been working to improve the accessibility of their churches for persons with disabilities. But since the ADA’s passage, the religious community has renewed efforts and taken new initiatives to break down barriers in the church that prevent inclusion of people with disabilities—barriers of attitude and communication, in addition to architectural barriers. For example, a policy statement entitled *Disabilities, the Body of Christ and the Wholeness of Society*⁹ was adopted by the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ. A collaborative effort of leaders of a variety of faiths was led by the National Organization on Disability to produce the publication *Loving Justice: The ADA and the Religious Community*.¹⁰ And different faith communities, our own among them, have passed national level resolutions affirming the tenets of the ADA and calling for the voluntary compliance of their churches.

The following resolution¹¹ was adopted in 2004 by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church:

UNITED METHODIST IMPLEMENTATION OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

WHEREAS, our human rights as stated by the United States of America Constitution are God given, and we can set priorities unto ourselves apart from the rest of His creation, and

WHEREAS, these priorities are applied to our life and what it means to us, how we live it, who we are and to become, and *anyone* can have an attainable priority to direct their life, and

⁶ From Wilke, Harold (1980). *Creating the Caring Congregation*, p. 72. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

⁷ <http://www.ada.gov/statute.html> and <http://www.access-board.gov/about/laws/ada.htm>

⁸ From Resolution #46, adopted 2004. *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church. Readopted 2008*. See *The Book of Resolutions 2008*, p. 182, ¶3003. Copyright © 2008 The United Methodist Publishing House. Nashville, TN. Used by permission. <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=4&mid=6558>

⁹ See NCC Policy Statement adopted 1998. *Disabilities, the Body of Christ and the Wholeness of Society*. <http://www.nccusa.org/nmu/mce/dis/#policy>

¹⁰ Available from the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), Interfaith Initiative, 1629 K. Street NW, Suite 503, Washington, DC 20006. Phone: 202-457-0046. <http://www.aapd.com/Interfaith/Interfaith.html>

¹¹ From The United Methodist Publishing House (2008). *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*, p. 182, ¶3003. Copyright © 2008 The United Methodist Publishing House. Nashville, TN. Used by permission. <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=4&mid=6558>

WHEREAS, by applying the use of our love with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength in our time, money, and attitudes we can perceive our priorities within ourselves and others, and

WHEREAS, God's grace is with us throughout our lives: birth, disease, accident, crime, and aging, yet, not realizing it till it's been revealed, and

WHEREAS, we *all* are instruments of God's grace in other people's lives when we are open to His grace, and

WHEREAS, we are all priests—the whole church is the holy priesthood, those called to be a mediator between God and a needful world representing Jesus Christ—where *all* are to share God's love and salvation with other people, and

WHEREAS, God's love for us is unconditional; God loves us for who we are—not what we are or how we look; Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, and this great love moves us to accept this gift in our hearts of a living relationship with God as a priority for *all* our lives, and

WHEREAS, we are consciously living our lives in relationship with God that can be nurtured through the spiritual discipline of living in God's presence, and these lives are courageous and joyful—not tragic or brave, and

WHEREAS, study brings our minds to Christ like lives, equips us to fulfill the highest calling of *all* of us, and

WHEREAS, Christian study brings *all* to a knowledge of God and knowledge of the world to serve God, and

WHEREAS, sacred moments and practices (through services and discipline) bring us to know, experience, and live in the presence of Christ through the church (*meaning everyone*), including the serving and receiving of the sacraments, and

WHEREAS, baptism and Holy Communion are upheld by all Christian traditions and have been given to us so we may live on growing as disciples in every part of our life, and

WHEREAS, showing Christ as being real and important for others, we *all* must live authentically as our serving Christ gives our hands to Christ by making a friend, being a friend, and introducing our new friend to the friend of all friends—Jesus Christ, and

WHEREAS, through the Resolution of the "Annual Accessibility Audit" (#43, adopted in 1992), Social Principles, ¶ 162I "Rights of Persons with Disabilities," and the section in the *Book of Discipline* on inclusiveness (¶ 139) gives the opportunity for *each person*, and congregation to make a plan for serving Christ, and

WHEREAS, even with God's gift of grace and a new life in Christ, we can still sin in many forms, yet there is still forgiveness, realizing and admitting our sin (physically and spiritually) in our lives as the first step to overcome them, and

WHEREAS, through prayer, repentance, surrendering anew, counseling, and creating a new plan to reevaluate and prioritize to God's direction in *all* our lives, and

WHEREAS, by becoming disciples, we can reply to the call of Christ with *all* our hearts, minds, souls, strengths, hands, and feet as we are able to walk with Jesus and grow into His likeness as our highest priority; to share Christ and to learn to love as Jesus loved, and

WHEREAS, people all around us, including the church, are in need of God's transforming love for living in this world and can be changed whenever we bring Christ's love and truth working within our church, family, work, social environments, and our private times, and

WHEREAS, we are edified by God's grace for growth in our relationships as we live in obedience to His call, the Holy Spirit teaches and empowers us to love as Jesus loved and to mature in the likeness of Christ as children imitate their parents, to be focused upon our call in humble service, and

WHEREAS, the body of Christ is the gathering of *all* disciples who offer their lives to proclaim Christ in the world, and *every member* of the body of Christ has been given special gifts for ministry that need to be sought and exercised to build up the church, to form healthy, living communities, and to show Christ's life of love in concrete ways "that the world may believe," and

WHEREAS, we are called to persevere in grace for the rest of our lives by weekly attendance, commitment to share support, accountability, and guidance, and

WHEREAS, *all* are sent out by Christ's Great Commission, to be Christ's apostles in today's world in the midst of obstacles that can be overcome through Christ and other Christians, and

WHEREAS, there are 56 million disabled citizens at any one time in the United States, and

WHEREAS, disabled persons are real people, with real voices and real choices whose lives have been stolen within ALL cultures within America comprised of young, middle-aged, seniors, veterans, parents, husbands, wives, children from all races and all ethnic backgrounds, and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities constitute a discrete and insular minority, subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment and placed in a position of political powerlessness in American society and within the church, and

WHEREAS, prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities based on unjustified stereotypes continues, with disparate treatment and disenfranchisement, and

WHEREAS, such discrimination and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to pursue opportunities in society and within the Church on an equal basis, to live in their own homes so as to be close to family, friends, work, school, church, recreation, social stimulation, libraries, theaters, community centers, museums, and medical facilities, and

WHEREAS, accommodation for our disabled people (parishioners and visitors alike) are part of our reaching out through the provisions of *The Book of Discipline* through Church and Society empowers and frees us to advocate for personal assistants, accessibility in public and private areas, housing, transportation, and technology to do so, and

WHEREAS, through Church and Society we have a duty to bring justice and fairness in our civil responsibilities (like voting or serving in civil government) for our people with disabilities for Medicaid, Medicare, vocational rehabilitation, housing, education, job training, in-home services, and transportation—all of which are *everyone's* civil right, and

WHEREAS, this inability to participate fully in American society and within the church robs people with disabilities of the opportunity to claim any degree of independence and costs the United States (including the church) billions of dollars annually in unnecessary expenses from enforced dependency and nonproductivity, and

WHEREAS, the body of Christ, the church, need to be vigilant as consumers, advocates, and legislators to reserve funding and accountability to promote choice for persons with disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by George Bush in 1990 to, in his words, "in the unjustified segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of American life," and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court promoted community living through its OLMSTEAD decision, which urges all 50 states to *plan* for people living in the community over institutional placement, and

WHEREAS, the ADA's primary goal is to promote access to *all* aspects of social interaction including education, employment, commerce, recreation, government, and transportation, and

WHEREAS, the ADA provides the means for full implementation of the Act and legal recourse to redress discrimination on the basis of physical disability, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has brought closely within itself to help people as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ those who are hungry, thirsty, sick or in prison,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the assembled delegates to this General Conference of The United Methodist Church 2004 affirm our support of the full implementation of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and

Be it further resolved, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church urge all our congregations to implement and enforce the provisions of the ADA and all disability-related programs within every area that members of The United Methodist Church reside with the same vigor and interest as they would any other law affecting their able-bodied constituency.

Through the years many significant resolutions related to accessibility and inclusion in our churches have been passed at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. And once a resolution is adopted, it becomes church policy. *The Book of Resolutions* contains all current social policies adopted by the General Conference. A resolution entitled "Accessibility Audit"¹² was adopted at the 1992 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. This resolution underscores the denomination's commitment to becoming an accessible and barrier-free church, and advises that "...all United Methodist churches shall conduct an annual audit of their facilities to discover what barriers impede full participation...Plans shall be made and priorities determined for the elimination of all barriers including architectural, communication, and attitudinal barriers..."

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Some people think of accessibility as being entirely concerned with removing architectural barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from entering church and participating fully. But accessibility for people with disabilities has many dimensions, and to address it fully requires examination of other issues also. Among these critical issues, in addition to barrier removal, are: welcoming, inclusion, costs, and accessibility for historic churches.

Being a Welcoming Church

We can safely assume any church wants to be thought of as welcoming to all people. But being truly welcoming to people with disabilities and their families requires more than a warm greeting, friendly people, and inviting snacks in the fellowship hall.

An accessible parking space, an accessible route to the main entrance, and doors that are wide and easy to open provide a good start in helping people with mobility disabilities feel welcome in a church. To some individuals with hearing loss, the availability of an assistive listening device and a text copy of the sermon can be important signs that they are in a welcoming church. And having worship materials in large print, for people with some kinds of vision loss, can also send positive signals. Conducting quality disability awareness programs and involving people with disabilities as trainers are important for fostering the positive congregational attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Such attitudes often are readily apparent to persons with disabilities and may add to their overall impression about whether or not they are in a welcoming church. Providing accommodations covering the areas of architectural accessibility, communication accessibility, programmatic accessibility, and attitudinal accessibility, are all important objectives for a congregation striving to be a welcoming and accessible church.

Being an Inclusive Church

As noted earlier, our congregations must not stop at being welcoming and accessible, but must go beyond that to make their church truly inclusive. For people with disabilities, inclusion means providing opportunities

¹² See *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 1992*, p. 184. Copyright © 1992 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Nashville, TN. Used by permission.

to participate in meaningful ways in their church. But it also involves having arrangements in place that allow people with and without disabilities to enjoy activities together. And it helps family members of people with disabilities to enjoy church activities also. Some people with a family member who has a disability may spend much of their time caretaking, and need some respite. Churches have addressed this need in various creative ways.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET WOODWARD

Creative Solutions to Dealing with Costs

The idea of possible high costs for a church's architectural barrier removal can be somewhat daunting; however, there are a number of creative solutions that can be considered. Some have been described in publications.¹³ Others have been shared by annual conferences. For example, in the North Central New York Annual Conference, the United Methodist Men held workshops for church leaders on how to build ramps. Then, these newly trained volunteers went to churches that needed ramps and built them.

Accessibility for Historic Churches

A congregation may hesitate to consider making architectural accessibility accommodations when its church building is historic. However, help is available and in many cases will enable a congregation to make such accommodations.

The 2004 ADA guidelines specifically address this issue in a section about *alterations* to historic buildings and facilities at <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a2025>. They advise about the role of state historic preservation officers, explaining these are state-appointed officials who carry out responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act. One of their responsibilities is to consult on providing access while protecting significant elements of historic buildings and facilities.

Congregations can find useful information in the online materials developed by Heritage Preservation Services,¹⁴ which works to protect and preserve historic properties. In an important resource entitled *Accessibility Considerations*,¹⁵ Heritage Preservation Services offers five actions that are not recommended, and five that are, as follows:

The Church of the Resurrection UMC, Leawood, KS, supports, empowers, and enables persons with disabilities through its "Matthew's Ministry" program. Named for a student with a developmental disability, this comprehensive program trains the congregation in disability awareness and offers a variety of inclusion opportunities. A sibling workshop is one part of a "Family Night Out" project. Here, a sibling of a Matthew's Ministry participant plays Bingo with a volunteer from the church.

¹³ See *More Than Fifty Ways to Make Your Parish Accessible with Little or No Cost* (June 2009). By the Rev. Barbara Ramnaraine and Charlotte Hawkins Shepard, Ph.D. <http://www.umdabilityministries.org/2005.html>, and *Money and Ideas: Creative Approaches to Congregational Access* (2001). National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.). <http://www.congregationalresources.org/MoneyAndIdeas.pdf>

¹⁴ A unit of the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps>

¹⁵ www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve_access.htm

Not recommended:

1. Making changes to buildings without first seeking expert advice from access specialists and historic preservationists, to determine solutions;
2. Undertaking code-required alterations before identifying those spaces, features, or finishes which are character-defining and must therefore be preserved;
3. Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining features in attempting to comply with accessibility requirements;
4. Making access modifications that do not provide a reasonable balance between independent, safe access, and preservation of historic features;
5. Making modifications for accessibility without considering the impact on the historic building and its site.

Recommended:

1. Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss;
2. Complying with barrier-free access requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved;
3. Working with local disability groups, access specialists, and historic preservation specialists to determine the most appropriate solution to access problems;
4. Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for a person with a disability to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features;
5. Finding solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact on the historic building and its site, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts.

ATTITUDINAL ACCESS

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church tells us that we are called to the example of Jesus' ministry—that the services of worship of every local church of The United Methodist Church shall be inclusive and open to all persons. "Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the Church, the community, and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination."¹⁶ These words do not mean we are called to include every person except that little boy with autism spectrum disorder who rocks in his seat and waves his hands during the service.

The Book of Discipline calls us to "recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith."¹⁷ Full participation means that it is not acceptable to avoid greeting the woman who is blind because she cannot see you as you quickly brush past her in the fellowship hall.

¹⁶From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008*, p. 93 ¶139. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House.

¹⁷From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008*, p. 111, ¶162. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE REV. WREN MILLER

In order to make the main entrance to their historic church accessible, Huntsville First United Methodist Church in Huntsville, Alabama built a ramp. Working with the Board of Trustees and what was then called their Church Administrative Board, the Building Committee that planned the renovation took care to preserve the building's character-defining spaces and features.

The Book of Discipline calls us to observe Disability Awareness Sunday once a year to celebrate our call to full inclusion of people with disabilities.¹⁸ But we can celebrate this call every Sunday, for example, simply by inviting a young man with an intellectual disability to serve as an usher, appreciating his gifts and knowing that if he speaks out of turn occasionally during service, it could be his way of showing that he understands that he is a cherished member of our community of faith.

**For as in one body we have many members,
and not all the members have the same function,
so we, who are many, are one body....
We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.**

(Romans 12:4-6)

Architectural and communicational access can be accomplished with time, money, and materials, but attitudinal access must happen within the hearts and minds of the members of the congregation. Not only must we welcome the parishioner sitting in a wheelchair—perhaps the image that first comes to mind when accessibility is brought up—but also the person whose disability may not be readily apparent. Accessibility means welcoming a person living with mental illness, or with a seizure disorder, or with any one of the innumerable “conditions or disabilities whose particular needs...might make more challenging their participation or that of their families in the life of the Church and the community.”¹⁹

Society's attitudes towards persons with disabilities often require a restructuring of beliefs and a change of heart for the many members of a church to be one body in Christ. Unless members of the congregation have known a number of persons with varying types of disabilities, they may never have had reason to think about the key points and attitudes that make relationships with persons with disabilities easier and more relaxed.

Yet attitudinal accessibility is an absolutely vital part of a congregation's journey to full inclusion. It is only through education that a congregation can create a welcoming and relaxed environment for everyone.

¹⁸From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008*, p. 196, ¶1265. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House.

¹⁹From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008*, p. 111, ¶162. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House.

For this reason, each annual conference has a committee or other structure on disability concerns to advocate for full inclusion, to create educational programs, and “to develop ways to sensitize persons in leadership positions on issues that affect persons with disabilities and therefore the entire Church.”²⁰ Each annual conference committee maintains connectional relationships with local congregations and can be called on to help a congregation increase its attitudinal accessibility.

An essential component of any program designed to foster positive attitudes towards people with disabilities is basic training in “People First Language.” This language is an outgrowth of the self-advocacy movement “People First” that began in the US in the early 1970s.²¹ The basic philosophy of People First is that people with disabilities are people first, and their disabilities come second. This concept has led to a major change in how language is used to refer to people with disabilities. People First Language puts the person before the disability and describes what a person has, not who a person is. For example, we say “John, my neighbor, who uses a wheelchair,” “Mary, who has an intellectual disability,” and “people with and without disabilities.” Among the many excellent resources available about this language are the writings of Kathie Snow,²² a parent of a son with a disability, and a national-level trainer and consultant.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION,
NORTH ALABAMA CONFERENCE, UMC

Deborah Wade is convener of Disability Ministries, a conference-level UMC group that has held disability awareness workshops in each of the North Alabama Conference districts. At an annual conference meeting, speaking from the conference’s accessible stage, Deborah described the ministry “Bridge Builders,” through which churches can show they are active in disability ministry.

Disability Awareness Sundays, adult education forums, workshops,²³ and retreats can all be part of a congregation’s journey toward being truly welcoming to people with disabilities.

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND, ARE PARTIALLY SIGHTED, OR HAVE LOW VISION

Making our church’s ministry accessible to people who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision requires an emphasis on communication as well as building access. While the facilities need to be made into a safe and familiar environment, thought also must be given to means of communication.

²⁰From *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2008*, p. 458, ¶653. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House.

²¹The People First movement in the US began January 8, 1974 at Fairview Hospital and Training Center, in Salem, Oregon, when an articulate resident said at a meeting, “I’m tired of being called retarded; we are people first!” For the history and philosophy of this movement, which in the US grew to more than 800 groups, see the website “People First of Oregon.” www.people1.org/about_us_history.htm

²²Kathie Snow’s website is called *Disability is Natural*. www.disabilityisnatural.com

²³The following DVD is a UMC resource developed to help in conducting workshops: *Disability Concerns Workshop* (2009). By Jennifer R. Yound. UMCOR Health, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115, 800-554-8583.

Traditionally, many church-related materials are communicated visually. We rely on printed bulletins, newsletters, reminder notes, Bibles, and worship materials, and increasingly on printed materials transmitted electronically to parishioners' home computers. For people who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision, printed materials need to be changed or adapted so that they are accessible. Fortunately, computers and copy machines allow us to make these changes relatively easily.

It is not appropriate to generalize about a best method of communication; each person has preferred methods based on background, education, training, and degree of sight loss. These days, fewer than 10 percent of people who are blind read Braille.²⁴ Instead, many use computer technology to read print materials, using text-to-speech technology that converts words on a scanner or on a computer screen to synthetic voice output. For this reason it is very important for church websites and online resources to have all online information in an accessible format. (See *Improving Your Website's Accessibility* on the American Foundation for the Blind's website.²⁵)

Some people who are blind do prefer Braille materials. Many people with partial sight or low vision are able to read if the material is in large print.²⁶ For this reason, churches should make certain that large-print worship materials always are made available.

Among individuals who are partially sighted (visual acuity between 20/70 and 20/200 in the better eye, with correction) and who have low vision, there is an even greater variety of visual loss. Some may have retinitis pigmentosa (RP), which results in "tunnel vision" (loss of peripheral vision). Among persons who have RP, the degree of clear central vision varies widely from person to person. Others may have macular degeneration, which is the opposite of RP. Their central vision is lost to varying degrees, but they do have peripheral vision that allows some individuals to see enough to read and drive.

Some persons may have cataracts and their vision will be blurred until the cataracts are advanced enough to be removed, if their overall health allows. Others may have glaucoma (excessive fluid pressure inside the eye) that can lead to legal blindness. Millions of Americans have limited vision, but are able to wear glasses or contact lenses that correct their vision. For others however, glasses do not restore vision. For many who are partially sighted or have low vision, large-print materials are helpful, and except for people who also have a hearing loss, oral communication is usually appropriate. For people who have a hearing loss and low or no vision, oral communication can be supplemented by assistive listening devices. For people with no hearing and little or no vision, tactile interpreting provides them with a method of communication.

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, deaf, DEAFENED, DEAF-BLIND, OR HARD OF HEARING

People with no hearing or limited hearing are seldom considered when a church undertakes the task of becoming accessible, yet access to communication is crucial if we intend to welcome all persons into our community.

²⁴Fewer than 10 percent of the 1.3 million legally blind people in the United States read Braille, and just 10 percent of blind children are learning it, according to a report by the National Federation of the Blind.

http://www.mlive.com/news/us-world/index.ssf/2009/03/fewer_than_10_percent_of_blind.html

²⁵In *Web Accessibility*. By the American Foundation for the Blind, 2 Penn Plaza, Suite 1102, New York, NY 10121. Phone: 212-502-7600. www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=57&TopicID=167&DocumentID=2176

²⁶See *Large Print: Guidelines for Optimal Readability*. <http://www.aph.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>

Just as those who are blind or partially sighted, individuals who are Deaf,²⁷ deaf, deafened, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing experience a great diversity in their sensory loss and communicate in a variety of ways. While this section of the audit covers all these groups, there is a tremendous difference between people who use a method of sign language for communication, such as American Sign Language or a form of Signed English, and people who rely primarily on printed and oral language to communicate.

Many individuals who are Deaf or were deafened before learning language (prelingually deaf) use sign language as their primary means of communication and English as their second language. Some who were born hearing and later in life became deaf will learn a form of Signed English, while others may depend on speechreading (lip reading) and the printed English word for communication. People who are part of the Deaf culture group (Deaf with a capital “D”) think in visual terms and use a visual-gestural language. American Sign Language (ASL) is a linguistically accepted language, with a different word order than English, and is the native language of the Culturally Deaf community.

People who are hard of hearing are diverse and are found in almost every congregation in the country. Hearing losses occur in different frequency ranges. Some individuals lose high tones and have more difficulty hearing consonants, while others lose the lower tones and may miss some vowel sounds. Many factors besides degree of hearing loss affect people’s ability to hear at their individual optimum level. Background noise, lighting, fatigue, speechreading ability, and residual hearing will affect the ability to communicate easily if a person is hard of hearing.

For people who are Deaf, deaf, or deafened, communication is visual. For individuals who are hard of hearing, assistive listening devices/systems can be used to enhance residual hearing and improve sound reception in church.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTHA STOKES

Types of assistive listening systems include Induction Loop, Frequency Modulation (FM) technology, and Infrared. (*See Glossary of this audit for definitions.*) Any of these systems can be added to your existing sound system, although some can stand alone. All of the devices require that the individual have some residual hearing. The assistive listening system helps people by bringing sound directly to them, without distortion, as long as the speakers use a microphone hooked into the system.

The Rev. Elizabeth Walker, of the Virginia Annual Conference Commission on Disabilities (COD), wears an assistive listening device that was obtained with a commission grant. Such grants in the area of ministry with persons who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing also provide for ASL interpreters and Computer-Assisted Notetaking (CAN) to allow better access to conference activities and events. (COD’s overall grant program extends to ministry with persons who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision; persons with physical disabilities; and persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Grant areas include accessibility grants, program grants, camper scholarships, and respite-care grants.)

²⁷The term “Deaf” with a capital “D” refers to people who have a strong deaf identity and think of themselves as culturally deaf. Many have attended residential schools for the deaf, as opposed to people to whom the term “deaf” with a lower case “d” refers. This later term is used for deaf people who tend to have been mainstreamed, did not attend a school for the deaf, and have little or no association with other members of the deaf community. The capital “D” often is used in the context of deaf culture, and the lower case “d” is used solely in the context of hearing loss.

The assistive listening device is exactly that: “assistive.” It partners with the hearing aid or with the ear for those not using aids, to bring sound closer to the individual.

A comprehensive discussion of assistive listening systems and related issues, such as guidelines for speakers in the sanctuary, can be found in the *Hearing Accessibility Handbook: A Guide for Houses of Worship*,²⁸ by the Rochester Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). The HLAA guide can be downloaded or purchased from HLAA directly.

There are various kinds of accommodations congregations can provide.²⁹ For example, for people who are deaf and rely primarily on written English, as well as for individuals who are hard of hearing, a congregation can offer print copies of the sermon and announcements, or at least a summary paragraph. For parishioners who are Deaf and use sign language, an interpreter for worship and other ministry events can be provided, if requested in advance.

People who are Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing are most likely to contact your church through the local Relay Services, available in every state for communication between persons who are hearing and persons who have hearing loss, or speech that is difficult to understand. Relay Services, also called Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), is an operator service reached throughout the US by dialing 711. It can connect, over the telephone network, two callers who have different abilities. Voice callers can be connected to people who are Deaf, deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or who have a communication disorder or speech that is difficult to understand.

Of the different types of calls offered through Relay Services, the most common is TTY to Voice/Voice to TTY. In this type of call, the relay operator types the spoken words of the person using the standard phone to the person using the TTY, and speaks the text of the person using the TTY to the person using the standard phone. The next-most common type of call is Voice Carry Over (VCO). VCO allows a person who is hard of hearing or deaf, and wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the called party and receive responses via the relay operator’s typed text. No typing is required by the calling party. This service is particularly useful to senior citizens who have lost their hearing, but who can still speak.³⁰ Among other relay services are Internet Protocol Relay services (IP Relay) and Video Relay Services (VRS), which use webcam or videophones to voice the sign language of one caller and sign what is voiced from the other caller.

If you want to call someone using TRS, use your TTY or dial 711 on your telephone and you will automatically be connected to a TRS operator, with no charge. The 711 code is not just for use by persons with disabilities. Both voice and TRS users can initiate a call from any US telephone, without having to dial lengthy access numbers. The 711 dialing access does not work for VRS or IP Relay calls, because such calls are made through the internet. Individuals who are hearing and initiating a VRS or IP Relay call may do so by calling a provider’s 800 number. VRS allows people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, and whose speech is not easily understood to communicate over video telephones with people who are hearing, through the assistance of a sign language interpreter.

²⁸ <http://www.shhh-rochester-ny.org/Accessibility%20Handbook.doc>.

²⁹ For more information contact the United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries <http://www.umcsignsofsolidarity.org/> and the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf. <http://www.umcd.org/>

³⁰ From *Telecommunications Relay Services: FCC Consumer Facts*. <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html>

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL DISABILITIES

Providing accessibility for people who have environmental disabilities, such as chemical and/or mold sensitivities, is an issue of increasing concern to ecumenical organizations, interfaith groups, and faith communities working to make congregations more welcoming to all God's people. For example, the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) through its Eco-Justice Program, has held conferences on this topic, and has developed resources,³¹ such as *Christian Principles for a Healthy Body and Spirit* and *Made in the Image of God*, among other environmental health projects.

The United Methodist Church also has taken leadership initiatives in the area of access for people with environmental disabilities. The Rev. Nancy Dawson Firestone is a key UMC leader in this area.³² In workshops on Embodying Wellness and Accommodation, conference keynote addresses, and a major presentation on the spiritual challenges of environmental disability,³³ she has called for congregations to educate themselves in this area and develop policies that lead to accommodation, inclusion, and healing.

A notable effort in this direction was the passage of the following resolution³⁴ by the Central Pennsylvania Annual Conference:

RES-4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE CHURCHES

2005 ACTION: Approved as Amended:

Whereas, the Commission on Child Advocacy has been advocating for making every church a Safe Sanctuary for all God's children.

Whereas, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own."

Whereas, John Wesley's health education was rooted in both his sexuality and his assessment of environmental concerns, Wesley urged his readers toward a lifestyle conducive to good health. This expresses Wesley's commitment to minister to the total person.

Whereas, infants and children are entrusted to us and are unable to recognize dangers and protect themselves from harmful environmental influences.

Whereas, millions of children suffer from allergies and asthma related to environmental pollution and this rate is rising at an alarming rate with asthma and allergies being responsible for more than 10 million school absentees every year.

Whereas, the General Church in 1988 recognized the problem of indoor pollution and called for "churches and church institutions to take an audit of sources of indoor pollution and take remedial steps." (*The Book of Resolutions*, p. 78).

Therefore be it resolved that every local church consider a study of the children's nurseries and classrooms to determine the environmental safety especially considering pesticides, cleaners, and air quality.

Therefore be it resolved that every local church consider the environmental health of all toys and snacks provided to children.

³¹ Eco-justice Programs. National Council of Churches of Christ. <http://ncccecojustice.org/resources/>

³² The Rev. Nancy Dawson Firestone can be contacted through her website, www.wehearyou.org (website under construction as of this printing).

³³ See *Environmental Disability: Spiritual Challenges to Faith and Community* (2007). Presentation by the Rev. Nancy Dawson Firestone at the John Heinz Institute, Wilkes-Barre, PA. Available from HEAR: Health, Environment and Relationships, www.wehearyou.org (website under construction as of this printing).

³⁴ *Environmentally Safe Churches: Res-4* (2005). A resolution approved by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church 2005 Journal. M.A. Publishing, Mobile, AL, p. 291.

Therefore be it resolved that the Commission on Child Advocacy will provide guidelines to help every local church conduct an audit of their nurseries and children's classrooms to meet the requirements of this resolution.

Therefore be it resolved that the Commission on Child Advocacy will provide curriculum and resources for a study on environmental health issues confronting the local church and make these resources available through Discovery Place.

The environmental disability, chemical sensitivities, has been reported to affect between 12.6 percent and 33 percent of the population, according to a major review of research.³⁵ Other reports, from nine studies in the US, indicate 3.5 percent of the population is affected by severe chemical sensitivities, and at least 12 percent is moderately affected.³⁶

People who have chemical sensitivities experience reactions to combinations of low-level chemicals in the air, water, and food. Since World War II over 80,000 chemicals have entered the market, many of which have been incorporated into our lifestyles. Most of these have not been tested for health effects, nor have they been tested as we experience them, in combination and in tightly closed buildings designed for energy efficiency. This makes it difficult to determine safe limits. Sensitivities emerge as the body's detoxification system becomes stressed or impaired. Reactions to exposures vary from individual to individual and from time to time, and may occur immediately, hours, or even days after exposure. Reactions can include one or more of the following: headaches or migraines, sinus pain, fibromyalgia, joint pain, muscle weakness or spasms, other severe pain, digestive disorders, reactive airway, difficulty concentrating, mental confusion, memory loss, depression, mood changes, loss of physical coordination, hyperactivity, extreme fatigue, and malaise. Reactions may be disabling, and since continued exposure may increase the level and duration of disability, persons with chemical sensitivities must avoid all exposure to materials they do not tolerate.

The environmental disability, mold sensitivities, refers to health problems some individuals experience when exposed to indoor mold growth. While federal guidance on minimizing indoor mold growth generally is consistent, guidance on mitigating exposure to indoor mold is sometimes inconsistent about cleanup agents, protective clothing and equipment, and sensitive populations. As a result, the public may not be sufficiently advised about the potential health risks of indoor mold.

In some cases, chemical and mold damage to the body can increase to the point that an individual can no longer perform functions required for working or participating in activities of daily living. Since chemicals and mold are so embedded in our culture, people with chemical sensitivities and mold sensitivities retreat in isolation to protect themselves from further damage.

Fresh air, pure water, nutritional supplements, an alkaline and organic, protein-balanced whole-food diet, and the avoidance of chemicals become the treatment protocol, which prompts lifestyle changes that run counter to culture. These changes stress family relationships, friendships, and community and church relationships.

A community of support is essential to work through the depth and breadth of spiritual, relational, and practical challenges.

³⁵ Gibson, P.R., & Lindberg, A. (2007). *What do we know about multiple chemical sensitivity?: An overview of the research*. Presentation at the 8th International Conference of the International Association for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (IACFS) "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, and other Related Illnesses." January 12-14, Bahia Mar Beach Resort, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

³⁶ Pall, M.L. (2009). From chapter in *General and Applied Toxicology, 6 Volume Set, 3rd Edition* by Bryan Ballantyne (Editor), Timothy C. Marrs (Editor), Tore Syversen (Editor). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Hoboken, NJ.
http://www.essenceofhealthonline.com/letters/epidemic_mcs_chemical_sensitivity.pdf

The faith community's creation of sanctuary, or safe clean space for communal well-being, embodies saving grace for people who have environmental disabilities. How accessible is your church in this regard?

Suggested measures for achieving environmental accessibility have been in numerous print and online resources. Particularly useful to our faith communities are those developed by the Eco-Justice Program of the NCCC. <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/>.

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE MOBILITY DISABILITIES

The most common image associated with the word accessibility is a person sitting in a wheelchair. People using wheelchairs or scooters may be the most visible, but they certainly are not the only ones who benefit from a building that is accessible to individuals with mobility disabilities. People who use crutches, walkers, or canes and people with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, back problems, knee problems, severe arthritis—even people pushing baby strollers or pulling wheeled luggage—all benefit from buildings that are architecturally accessible.

There is a wide range of types and severities of mobility disabilities. For some people, limited mobility may be temporary, but for many it is a permanent condition and may become progressively worse. While this audit covers the range of people with mobility disabilities, there is a



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

difference between someone with knee problems and someone who is using a wheelchair. Even among those who use wheelchairs, some may have balance problems, others may have paraplegia (paralysis from the waist down with total function of the arms and upper body), and still others may have tetraplegia (also called quadriplegia), paralysis of all four limbs. Some people with one of these conditions have limited use of their

In Bethesda, Maryland, at the Shalem Institute on Spiritual Formation, members of an interfaith group entered into a covenant of sacrifice so that the Rev. Nancy Firestone, a UMC pastor who has chemical sensitivities, could join their weekly meetings. They said, "We cannot control the building or the ventilation system, but we can control what we bring into this room. As we prepare to come next week, let us become aware of the many fragrances we wear, and leave them at home."

Asbury United Methodist Church, in Phoenix, Arizona, installed a vertical platform lift some years back to provide chancel accessibility to an elderly liturgist, Grace Hamilton. A wheelchair user due to severe arthritis, Grace used the lift for many years to share her gifts with her congregation. The lift remains in use for anyone else needing an accessibility accommodation to the chancel.

upper and/or lower limbs, so that they walk with mobility aids. Involve the people who use wheelchairs in your planning, because the abilities of each individual parishioner need to be taken into consideration as you try to make your church fully accessible.

Our audit contains items about providing bus or van transportation for people in wheelchairs, when there is no accessible public or other transportation available. It is critical, however, that if this is done, appropriate safety measures be taken so the wheelchair and its passenger are safe and secure. See the online article on wheelchair transportation safety in Chapter III: “Print and Online Resources—Access for People Who Have Mobility Disabilities” of this audit.

While many of the audit items focus on the space required to maneuver a wheelchair, there are other items that deal with people who have minor mobility disabilities. We strongly encourage churches to make their facilities accessible for people who use wheelchairs. If your church feels it cannot possibly add a ramp because the steps are too many and too steep, but it couldn't possibly afford an elevator either, don't give up. There are less expensive solutions, such as platform lifts and limited-use/limited-application elevators,³⁷ that can make the church building more accessible for mobility and other disabilities.

³⁷ See information in Chapter III: “Elevators and Lifts.”

CHAPTER II

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

[ADA-ABA \(Architectural Barriers Act\) Accessibility Guidelines of 2004](#)¹ set forth technical requirements for accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act. In this audit you will find specific checklist items drawn from these guidelines. Where appropriate, the guidelines' language has been made less technical and more user-friendly. Often, you will find a link that refers to the related section in the 2004 guidelines.

It is important to check both local and state building codes and the [2004 ADA guidelines](#) before beginning any project. In some situations, the code requirements are more demanding than the minimum requirements set forth in the [2004 ADA guidelines](#); in other cases they fall short. Using the higher standards will ensure maximum accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In the area of church accessibility, however, there are additional needs to be addressed. Guidelines for these will not be found in government materials.

Over the years, faith communities such as The United Methodist Church, along with ecumenical and other faith-based organizations, have worked independently and together to identify unique barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter in church, and to develop guidelines aimed at eliminating those barriers.

Drawing from all these resources, the audit items are designed to address attitudinal, communicational, and programmatic accessibility, as well as special architectural challenges that houses of worship may need to confront.

THE PROCESS

A leading source of information and technical assistance, the United States Access Board has offered the following suggestions for beginning the accessibility audit process:

"When you begin the audit or survey, bring:

- a clipboard with a pen or pencil
- a flexible measuring tape
- a stick of chalk for marking distances on surfaces.

You may also want to bring:

- a line level or other device to measure ramp slopes
- an accurate fish scale for determining door pull force."

Each item in this audit has a space for you to place a check if your congregation has taken that action. The audit is organized as though you are visiting the church for the first time. To begin, you will approach the church building and examine curb ramps, street signs, etc. You will park and follow the accessible route into the church building, enter the church, and make a thorough assessment of accessibility. At the end, you will assess the grounds.

¹ Published in the Federal Register July 23, 2004 and amended August 5, 2005. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm>

Note: Do not use the original ADA Guidelines, known as "ADAAG," published in 1991 and amended through 2002. Use The ADA-ABA Accessibility Guidelines of 2004, referred to by the Access Board and throughout this audit as "the 2004 ADA guidelines" in your accessibility work.

Now, let's get started!

Place a check by the actions you have taken.

GETTING TO OUR CHURCH

- ___ Our staff and volunteers can give driving directions and accessible public transportation information when asked.
- ___ Our staff knows how to communicate with a caller who is using a relay operator to ask questions and directions. *(See information in Chapter I: "Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing" of this audit.)*
- ___ Our church has arrangements in place to transport people with or without disabilities who otherwise cannot attend services and other events.
- ___ Our church has a van that will accommodate passengers who use wheelchairs. *(See resource on wheelchair transportation safety in Chapter III: "Access for People Who Have Mobility Disabilities" of this audit.)*
- ___ Our church is within easy distance on an accessible pathway (safe, broad, level sidewalks, the recommended 60 inches wide) from wheelchair-accessible public transportation.
http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/guide/PROWGuide.htm#3_2
- ___ Street lighting is bright enough so that people with disabilities feel safe and can find their way from public transportation to our church.
- ___ There are curb cuts, audible traffic signals, and safe crossings all the way, at each intersection, from public transportation to our church. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a406>

ARRIVING AT OUR CHURCH

- ___ Street and/or road signs in our church's neighborhood are in good condition and easy to read at night.
- ___ We have at least one accessible route from the public streets and sidewalks, and from the public transportation stops to our church's accessible entrance.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f206>
- ___ Our church's signs are clear, well-lit, and easy to read from the street and sidewalk.
- ___ We have clear signs that direct people to each of our accessible entrances.



<http://www.ada.gov/images/entrysign.gif>

Parking

It is recommended that this parking facility information <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a502> be read very thoroughly. You also will want to consult with your state and local regulations. Creating a safe parking area includes details that must be considered carefully. Persons who use wheelchairs must be able to park safely, unload to an access aisle, and reach a safe accessible route to the building.

- ___ We have an appropriate number of accessible parking spaces provided for the total capacity of the parking lot.

Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility	Minimum Number of Required Accessible Parking Spaces
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1,000	2 percent of total
1,001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction thereof, over 1,000

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f208>

- ___ Accessible parking spaces for cars are at least 96 inches wide.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5022>
- ___ Accessible parking spaces for vans are at least 132 inches wide.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5022>
- ___ For every six accessible parking spaces, we have made one a van parking space.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a20824>
- ___ Since wheelchair lifts are typically installed on the passenger side of vans, where a van and car share an access aisle, we have placed a van space so that the access aisle is on the passenger side of the van space. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a50234> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.3.4.)
- ___ From the access aisle next to their parking spaces, persons using wheelchairs or scooters can safely connect with accessible routes that connect accessible parking spaces to accessible entrances. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5023> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.3.)
- ___ We have planned our parking facility so all accessible parking spaces are located on the building side of auto traffic, and the accessible route does not have to cross streets, driveways, or parking lot entrances.

- ___ If our parking facility requires the accessible route to cross auto traffic lanes, we have clearly marked crossings to enhance safety for pedestrians and persons using wheelchairs and other mobility aids. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5023> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.3.)
- ___ All accessible parking spaces are identified with a freestanding metal sign (which can be seen even when a vehicle is parked in the space) displaying the international accessibility symbol. The sign is 60 inches minimum above the ground surface, measured to the bottom of the sign. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5026> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.6. See photos and information in Chapter III: "Parking Space Identification" of this audit.)
- ___ All of our accessible parking spaces, access aisles, and accessible routes are paved.
- ___ For loading and unloading, each accessible parking space has a clearly marked adjacent access aisle, which is at least 60 inches wide. Two accessible parking spaces share one common access aisle as seen in the photo that follows. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5022>



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Accessible parking lot, Sun Lakes UMC, Sun Lakes, Arizona

- ___ We have wheel-stop parking blocks (painted white for safety) to prevent vehicles from pulling in too far and extending over the accessible route. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5027> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.7.)
- ___ All accessible parking spaces are located as close as possible to the accessible building entrance(s).
- ___ Access aisles are at the same level as the parking spaces they serve. Our slopes for drainage are not steeper than 1:48. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5024>

- ___ All accessible parking spaces, access aisles, and the adjoining accessible route are on one level surface without any curbs, steps, or ramps. If there has to be a curb in front of the access lane, curb ramps (curb cuts) are provided to connect the access lane and accessible route. *(See prior photo.)* <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a406>
- ___ If there is a controlled entry to the parking lot, the gate controls are easy to reach and easy to operate from a vehicle.
- ___ If we have a parking garage, the parking spaces have a minimum of 98 inches of ceiling clearance for adapted vans or buses. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5025>
- ___ Lighting in our parking lot and on our paths is bright enough so that people with disabilities feel safe and can find their way from the parking lot to our buildings.

GETTING INTO OUR CHURCH

Passenger Loading Zone

Getting in and out of a vehicle and transferring to a wheelchair can be a slow process that feels even longer in bad weather. For new construction, consider including a covered passenger loading zone as an architectural feature that will say “You are welcome!” to people with mobility disabilities.

- ___ Our church has a space provided where cars and vans can pull up to the building’s main accessible entrance to load and unload passengers. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a503>
- ___ Our passenger loading zone does not obstruct traffic, nor does it obstruct pedestrians and persons using wheelchairs. It adjoins an accessible route. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5033>
- ___ Our passenger loading zone is at the main floor level of our building. The area is flat. The slope for drainage is not steeper than 1:48. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5024>
- ___ If our loading area is sheltered from the weather by a roof/canopy, there is at least 114 inches of vertical clearance for all components of the loading area, including vehicle pull-up spaces, access aisles serving them, and vehicular routes between loading zone and entrance. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5035>
- ___ Our loading area is at least 96 inches wide and 240 inches long. Access aisles serving our loading zone are 60 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5032>
- ___ The area for the passenger loading zone is marked to discourage parking in it. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a50333>

Accessible Route

All accessible “elements” should be connected by an accessible route, so that your church’s accessible buildings, your loading zone, accessible building entrance(s), accessible parking spaces, streets, public sidewalks, and public transportation stops are all safely accessible to one another.

- ___ Our staff or volunteers make sure that in any adverse weather condition, the entire length of our accessible route remains usable, safe, and clear.
- ___ Our accessible route is paved and 60 inches wide with an even surface. There are no steps, and all sidewalk joints or changes in surface are no more than ¼-inch high to avoid tripping hazards. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a303>
- ___ Our accessible route is 60 inches wide. If it is narrower than that, but at least 36 inches wide, (the width of a wheelchair), we have placed passing spaces at 200-foot intervals so that one wheelchair can go around another. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a403>
- ___ We have white stripes painted at the edges of our accessible paths for visibility at night.
- ___ Our accessible routes are well lit so persons with disabilities can navigate well.
- ___ All parts of our accessible route are finished with a non-slip texture. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3021>
- ___ The accessible path does not have drooping tree limbs or signs that project into it.
- ___ The accessible path does not have adjacent trees that drop twigs, nuts, fruits, or seedpods on it. Plants next to the accessible route do not have spikes or thorns.
- ___ We have consulted with persons who are blind about accessibility specifics and protruding objects, because when a cane is used a person needs sufficient time to detect the element with the cane before there is body contact. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a307> (Scroll down to Advisory 307.2.)
- ___ To be barrier-free to people who are blind, our accessible routes have nothing protruding over 4 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3072>
- ___ On our accessible route all running slopes are flatter than 1:20 and all cross slopes are flatter than 1:48 (one inch rise in 48 inches of run). <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4033>
- ___ The accessible route in our parking lot has been configured to reduce the risk of danger associated with passing behind parked vehicles. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5023> (Scroll down to Advisory 502.3.)



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Accessible route that does not lead people behind parked vehicles

- ___ If the path between our parking lot and our front entrance is long, we arranged for seating areas or benches along the way for people to rest. The benches are situated so they do not narrow the accessible route. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30572>
- ___ Planned herbicide or pesticide treatments are announced in advance to the congregation, and conspicuous signs are posted advising people of the date that lawns and/or grounds will be treated.
- ___ After outdoor herbicide or pesticide tree, lawn, and/or grounds treatments, notification signs are prominently displayed.

Accessible Entranceway

- ___ There is a continuous accessible route from our parking facilities to our accessible building entrance. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402> The main entrance to our building is accessible. Persons with mobility disabilities do not have to use a separate side or back entrance. The main entrance and the passenger loading zone are sheltered from the weather.
- ___ The front doorway opens outward and there is a level area beyond the accessible entrance that extends at least 60 inches from the building.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404241>

404.2.4.1 Maneuvering Clearances at Manual Swinging Doors and Gates			
Type of Use		Minimum Maneuvering Clearance	
Approach Direction	Door or Gate Side	Perpendicular to Doorway	Parallel to Doorway (beyond latch side unless noted)
From front	Pull	60 inches (1,525 mm)	18 inches (455 mm)
From front	Push	48 inches (1,220 mm)	0 inches (0 mm) ¹
From hinge side	Pull	60 inches (1,525 mm)	36 inches (915 mm)
From hinge side	Pull	54 inches (1,370 mm)	42 inches (1,065 mm)
From hinge side	Push	42 inches (1,065 mm) ²	22 inches (560 mm) ³
From latch side	Pull	48 inches (1,220 mm) ⁴	24 inches (610 mm)
From latch side	Push	42 inches (1,065 mm) ⁴	24 inches (610 mm)

1. Add 12 inches (305 mm) if closer and latch are provided.
2. Add 6 inches (150 mm) if closer and latch are provided.
3. Beyond hinge side.
4. Add 6 inches (150 mm) if closer is provided.

- ___ Smoking is not allowed near our entranceway.
- ___ If pesticides have been used inside the building, there is a sign prominently displayed (for a month after treatment) at all entrances to the building notifying people of the location and the date of the application.

Outdoor Ramps and Handrails

Sometimes a congregation, in its eagerness to be accessible, focuses its attention on a single project that seems to symbolize accessibility. The congregation is energized, raises funds to construct a ramp and after the ramp project has been completed, feels that their church now is accessible. But having a ramp is not all that is needed. There are many other aspects of accessibility that a congregation must include in its journey toward becoming a welcoming and inclusive church. Although this section describes outdoor ramps as a part of the accessible route from parking or public transportation all the way to our church's entrance, indoor ramps have the same guidelines.

- Our ramp is as flat as possible. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4052>
- To accommodate the widest range of users, our ramp has the least possible running slope and our ramped entrance also has stairs for use by persons for whom distance presents a greater barrier than steps (e.g., people with heart disease or limited stamina).
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4052> *(Scroll down to Advisory 405.2.)*
- Any of our ramps with a rise higher than six inches, or horizontal run more than six feet, have handrails on both sides and curbs that are at least two inches high on both sides.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4058>
- The clear width of the ramp between the handrails is no less than 36 inches. The top of our handrails is between 34 and 38 inches above the ramp.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4055>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5054>
- Our ramp is at least 36 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4055>
- There are landings at the top and bottom of the ramp and landings after each 30 inches of ramp rise. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4056>
- These landings are the full width of the ramp and at least 60 inches long. If a landing is at a place where the ramp changes direction, it is 60 inches by 60 inches.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4057>
- The floor or ground surface of our ramp run or landing extends at least 12 inches beyond the handrail. This prevents wheelchair casters and crutch tips from slipping off the ramp surface.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40591>
- Since outdoor ramps are subject to wet conditions, landings are designed to prevent water from accumulating. Our ramp has a cross slope or slant that is no more than 1:48.
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40510 *(Scroll down to Advisory 405.10.)*
- Our handrails have rounded edges. If they are circular in cross section, they have a diameter between 1¼ and 2 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a50571>
- The ramp handrails are continuous and uninterrupted at landings, and they extend horizontally for 12 inches beyond the top and bottom of ramp runs.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a505101>

- ___ Part of our ramp is more than 30 inches above the ground, so our ramp has guards that follow our local building code and the International Building Code (IBC 1013.1).
http://www2.iccsafe.org/states/2009ICodes/Building/Building_Frameset.html (Scroll to Chapter 10.)

Entrance Doors

Because the main entrance ways into churches are such important architectural features, it is sometimes tempting to use a side entrance as your accessible door, keeping the “front door” unchanged. However, having to enter through a side door gives persons with mobility disabilities the message that they are second-class citizens. In fact, there are many ways to have a main entrance be accessible. Before making the assumption that the accessible entrance will be a side door, make every effort to create an accessible front entrance. You will want to confer with your local building inspectors because entrance doors must comply with local fire codes. Also see information in Chapter III: “Doors” of this audit.

- ___ All of our entrance doors are at least 36 inches wide. The absolute minimum clear opening is 32 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404>
- ___ All door thresholds (inside and outside) have a beveled-edge height of no more than ½ inch. If there is no bevel, the threshold is no higher than ¼ inch.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3033>
- ___ All entrance doors require no more than five pounds of pressure to push or pull them open.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40429>
- ___ If any of our entrance doors are so heavy that they would require more than five pounds of pressure, we have installed automatic door openers.
- ___ All of our entrance doors have accessible handles (e.g., door pulls, U-shaped handles, push bars or plates, lever handles) and can be opened with a closed fist or loose grip. Our emergency exits have panic exit bars. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427>
(Scroll down to Advisory 404.2.7.)
- ___ Our church has an airlock or weather vestibule (two doors in series), and the distance between the sets of doors is at least 48 inches plus the width of the doors swinging into the space.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40426>

INSIDE OUR BUILDING

Doors and Halls

- ___ All our inside doors are the recommended 36-inch width. Absolute minimum clear opening is 32 inches. (See information in Chapter III: “Doors” of this audit.)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40423>
- ___ All our inside doorway thresholds are no more than ½-inch high.
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40425

- ___ All our inside doors require no more than five pounds of pressure to push or pull them open.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40429>
- ___ Our inside doors have glazing panels, or safety glass vision lights in them. The bottom of at least one glazed panel is no more than 43 inches above the floor, making it low enough to see children and wheelchairs on the other side of the door before opening.
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404211. (Also see information in Chapter III: "Doors" of this audit.)
- ___ Our doors have 12-to-16-inch-high kick plates so that persons in wheelchairs and scooters can push them open without scuffing the door.
- ___ All of our doors in all of our buildings have accessible handles (e.g., door pulls, U-shaped handles, push bars or plates, lever handles) and can be opened with a closed fist or loose grip.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427>
- ___ All parts of our halls and all circulation paths are at least 60 inches wide. If any hall is 36 inches wide (absolute minimum) there are passing spaces every 200 feet.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40353>
- ___ All interior walls have a smooth finish to prevent injury in case of a fall.
- ___ All objects that protrude more than 4 inches into the corridor are detectable by a cane.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3072>
- ___ All protruding objects are located no higher than 27 inches above the floor.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3072>

Floors

- ___ Floor surfaces are finished in low-luster rather than highly reflective floor finish. Our church is conscientious about having environmentally safe carpet, padding, and glue, especially in areas where children spend a lot of time.
- ___ We use environmentally safe floor and carpet cleaning methods.
- ___ Our carpet is low-pile, no higher than ½ inch, and the under-carpet padding is thin and firm so that persons using mobility aids can maneuver more easily.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3022>

Moving Between Different Building Levels

INTERIOR RAMPS

Ramps inside buildings have the same measurement standards that outside ramps have, although they are not exposed to weather elements and frequently they are carpeted. An interior ramp is often designed as an integral design element, for example, to bring accessibility to the chancel area. In older churches, where adjacent buildings or wings have been combined into one, often there are changes in levels that require a ramp to join the two sections.

INTERIOR STAIRS

- ___ All steps in a flight of stairs have uniform riser heights between 4 inches and 7 inches, and uniform tread depth of at least 11 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5042>
- ___ None of our flights of stairs have open risers. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5043>
- ___ We have a strip of contrasting color on the leading edges of stair treads so that they are more visible for people with low vision. We find that white or yellow works best. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5044>
- ___ We have handrails on both sides of our stairs. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5052>
- ___ The top of the handrail gripping surfaces is between 34 inches and 38 inches above the stairs, and they extend 12 inches past the top and bottom of the flight of stairs. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a505102>

ELEVATORS—STANDARD AND LU/LA

There are several types of elevators and lifts, and these are best explained in Chapter III: “Elevators and Lifts” of this audit. Standard elevators are larger than Limited-Use/Limited-Application (LU/LA) elevators. Older (pre-ADA) and newer (post-ADA) elevators have different standards. You will want to refer to the 2004 ADA guidelines for the very specific details. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a407>

- ___ If we have an elevator, we keep it in working order so it is accessible and usable by persons with disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4071>
(Scroll down to Advisory 407.1.)
- ___ If our elevator is kept locked, there is always a staff person or volunteer available who can obtain the key.
- ___ The call buttons and keypads comply with 2004 ADA guidelines by being at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, being flush or raised, and located no more than 54 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40721>
- ___ We make certain the floor space around the elevator is free of obstructions and there is wheelchair-maneuvering space of at least 48 inches in front of the elevator. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a305>
- ___ Our elevator’s door has a reopening device that stops, reopens the door gently and automatically if obstructed by an object or person, and stays open for at least 20 seconds after reopening. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40733>
- ___ Our elevator door’s clear opening is 36 inches wide or 42 inches wide depending on the elevator’s dimensions. See table below. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40741>

407.4.1 Elevator Car Dimensions (Minimum Dimensions)				
Door Location	Door Clear Width	Inside Car, Side to Side	Inside Car, Back Wall to Front Return	Inside Car, Back Wall to Inside Face of Door
Centered	42 inches (1,065 mm)	80 inches (2,030 mm)	51 inches (1,295 mm)	54 inches (1,370 mm)
Side (off-center)	36 inches (915 mm) ¹	68 inches (1,725 mm)	51 inches (1,295 mm)	54 inches (1,370 mm)
Any	36 inches (915 mm) ¹	54 inches (1,370 mm)	80 inches (2,030 mm)	80 inches (2,030 mm)
Any	36 inches (915 mm) ²	60 inches (1,525 mm) ²	60 inches (1,525 mm) ²	60 inches (1,525 mm) ²

1. A tolerance of minus 5/8 inch (16 mm) is permitted.

2. Other car configurations that provide a turning space complying with 304 of the ADA Guidelines, with the door closed shall be permitted.

- If we have a smaller LU/LA elevator, the door positioned at the narrow end of the elevator car has a 32-inch minimum clear width. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40841>

PLATFORM LIFTS—VERTICAL AND INCLINED

Described in Chapter III: “Inclined Platform Lift” and “Vertical Platform Lift,” and in the Glossary of this audit, these are designed for short-distance vertical transportation.

- If we have platform lifts, we keep them in working order so the equipment is accessible and usable by persons with disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4101> (*Scroll down to Advisory 410.1.*)
- If our platform lifts are kept locked, there is always a staff person or volunteer available who can obtain the key.
- Our staff and volunteers know how to operate the platform lifts.
- There is adequate maneuvering space at the top and bottom of the platform lifts. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a305>
- We do not allow any obstructions to be in the designated clear area. We do not allow cartons, janitorial equipment, or other items to be left inadvertently at the top or bottom of the platform lift’s trajectory.
- Platform lifts have end doors and gates with a clear width of 32 inches minimum and side doors and gates with a clear width of 42 inches minimum. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4106>

INCLINED STAIRWAY CHAIRLIFT

The 2004 ADA guidelines incorporate the standards of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) (<http://www.asme.org>). Its standards address the design, construction, installation, operation, inspection, testing, maintenance, and repair of lifts that are intended for transportation of persons with disabilities. The ASME Advisory document cautions that it “does not permit the use of inclined stairway chairlifts which do not provide platforms because such lifts require the user to transfer to a seat.” <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a105> (*Scroll down to Advisory 105.2.2.*)

General Indoor Concerns

- We have purchased an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and we have placed it in a visible, unobstructed place out of the reach of children, but easily available to adults.
- Our staff and church officers are trained to use our defibrillator, and a staff member has been assigned to check the equipment periodically.
- All signs are in large print with visible and tactile raised numbers and letters to identify all rooms, offices, and places that might be hazardous.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703>
- Our fire alarm system has flashing lights, flashing exit signs, and other visible as well as audible warning signals. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f2151> (*Scroll down to Advisory 215.1.*)
- We have clearly marked all accessible emergency exits.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f2162>
- Our staff and volunteers, such as greeters and ushers, have had training to assist persons with disabilities in case of emergency.
- All staff and maintenance personnel have been trained how to purchase and use environmentally safe cleaning products as well as the importance of using them.
- Our church is adequately ventilated to eliminate the buildup of harmful fumes.
- All remodeling materials are chosen with regard to low outgassing qualities and environmental concerns.
- Advance notice (in bulletins, signs, announcements) is given when chemicals such as floor waxes and pesticides are going to be used in the building.
- Work with chemicals is confined to times when the building is least likely to be occupied, and the building is ventilated thoroughly after chemicals are used.
- A person or committee has been designated to monitor concerns about the air quality of our buildings.

Drinking Fountains

- We have two drinking fountains, one for standing persons, one for children and persons using wheelchairs. (*See information in Chapter III: "Drinking Fountains" of this audit.*)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6027>
- Our accessible drinking fountain is mounted with the spout no higher than 36 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6024>
- Our drinking fountain has controls that can be operated without complicated hand movements and with no more than five pounds of pressure. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3094>
- If our drinking fountain is in an alcove, the alcove is at least 32 inches wide.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6022>

- ___ If our drinking fountain is wall hung it does not protrude more than 4 inches into the pathway.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3072>
- ___ If we do not have an accessible drinking fountain, we have a paper cup dispenser next to our higher drinking fountain.

Accessible Restrooms

It is recommended that this restroom information be read very carefully. Too often we hear about what is supposed to be an accessible restroom, but that restroom turns out to have incorrect dimensions and it remains inaccessible to a person using a wheelchair or scooter. Please include persons who use wheelchairs and/or scooters as part of your accessibility team, and please use the 2004 ADA guidelines as you plan. Also see information in Chapter III: “Restrooms” of this audit.

- ___ Our church has at least one accessible restroom. In fact, if our building is multi-storied, we have at least one accessible restroom provided for each sex on each floor.
- ___ We have directional signs, with the International Symbol of Accessibility, showing the location of our accessible restrooms. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703721>
- ___ If it was infeasible to provide an accessible restroom for each sex, we made sure to have at least one accessible unisex restroom provided on each floor within the building.
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a213
- ___ We have the International Symbol of Accessibility clearly marking the door of our accessible restrooms. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703721>
- ___ The restroom door is at least 36 inches wide. (The minimum clear opening is 32 inches.)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40423>
- ___ All restroom doors and toilet stall doors swing out to allow sufficient clear floor space for maneuvering of canes, crutches, wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40423>
- ___ There is an accessible route of travel around any privacy partition inside the restroom door.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>
- ___ The floor space within the restroom has at least a 5-foot-diameter turning radius for wheelchairs.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a304>
- ___ The full-length mirror in the restroom is mounted with its top edge 74 inches above the floor. The facial mirror above the washbasin or sink is mounted with the bottom reflecting edge no higher than 40 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6033>
- ___ All paper towel dispensers, towel racks, paper waste disposals, soap dispensers, and electric hand dryers are mounted 48 inches or less above the floor.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>
- ___ There is an accessible coat hook located within reach—approximately 48 inches above the floor (depending on whether the hook is accessed from a person’s front or side.)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>

- ___ The lighting level in the restroom is bright enough for people with partial sight or low vision to feel safe and be able to see themselves in the mirror.
- ___ The trash receptacle is placed so that it does not obstruct accessibility.
- ___ At least one restroom is free of perfumed or chemical air fresheners/deodorizers, scented soaps, and scented hand lotions.

TOILET STALLS AND URINALS

There are many toilet stall configurations. You will find all necessary information in the 2004 ADA guidelines.

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60481>

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60482>

- ___ The size of the ambulatory-accessible toilet stall is between 35 and 37 inches wide and 60 inches deep. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60482>
- ___ The size of the wheelchair-accessible toilet stall is at least 60 inches wide and 56 inches deep (if the toilet is wall hung) or 59 inches deep (if the toilet is floor mounted).
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604811>
- ___ All handles on doors of accessible toilet stalls are lever-type.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604812>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427>
- ___ The toilet compartment door does not swing into the minimum required compartment area.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604811>
- ___ The height of the toilet seat (measured to the top of the seat) is between 17 inches and 19 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6044>
- ___ All flush controls are easy to operate with one hand (lever, push, touch, electronically controlled).
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6046>
- ___ Toilet paper dispensers are mounted to provide front or side access.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6047>
- ___ The urinal is at least 13½ inches deep measured from the outer face of the urinal to the back of the fixture. If it is a wall-hung urinal, it is mounted with the rim no more than 17 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6052>
- ___ The urinal's flush control is mounted between 40 inches and 48 inches above the floor, depending on the angle of approach. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>

GRAB BARS

- ___ The grab bars in our restroom's toilet stalls are installed according to the 2004 ADA guidelines.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a609>

- The grab bars in our restroom are round and their diameter is between 1¼ inches and 2 inches.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60921>
- Our grab bars do not rotate within their fittings.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6096>
- There is 1½ inches between the wall and the grab bar.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6093>
- Horizontal grab bars are between 33 inches and 36 inches above the floor, measured to the top of the gripping surface. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60934>
- The grab bar on the side wall of the wheelchair-accessible toilet stall is at least 42 inches, and extends 54 inches minimum from the rear wall.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60451>
- The grab bar on the rear wall of the wheelchair-accessible toilet stall is at least 36 inches long and extends 12 inches minimum on one side and 24 inches minimum on the other side.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60452>
- There are two side-wall grab bars in our ambulatory-accessible toilet stall.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a60482>

SINKS AND LAVATORIES

- Lavatories and sinks are installed so that the rim or counter surface is no more than 34 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a606>
- There is at least a 30-inch wide clear space under the lavatory or sink for knee and toe clearance for a person using a wheelchair. Depth is 11 inches minimum and 25 inches maximum for knee clearance. Depth is 17 inches minimum and 25 inches maximum for toe clearance.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30632>
- All hot water pipes and drain pipes are insulated to prevent them from burning the legs of wheelchair users. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6065>
- Faucet controls are lever or blade type. Faucet controls are color coded (red=hot water; blue=cold water.)

Narthex or Vestibule

Your church may call this area a narthex, a vestibule, or even a foyer. Whatever its name, this is your welcome space, and so the goal is for this part of your church to be accessible, showing your commitment to welcoming and including persons with disabilities.

- There is at least 36 inches of clear path throughout this area so persons with mobility disabilities can navigate comfortably. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>

- ___ This area is well lit so that persons with low vision coming into our building from outside daylight do not feel that they are coming into the dark.
- ___ If this is where we have welcoming brochures, information for visitors, and devotional booklets or guides such as *The Upper Room*, we include large print versions of them.
- ___ If we have shelves or holders for brochures and informational materials, they are no higher than 48 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30821>
- ___ We have a large print sign that contains the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss to inform persons who are hard of hearing where assistive listening devices are available. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703724>
- ___ We also have a large print sign to inform persons who are deaf or hard of hearing where they can pick up a text copy of the sermon.
- ___ We have a large print sign to inform persons who have partial sight or low vision where they can pick up large print hymnals and other worship materials.
- ___ We normally do not have floor mats, runners, or throw rugs that can bunch, slip, or have edges that are tripping hazards.
- ___ If we do have floor mats, runners, or throw rugs to catch snow being tracked into the building, for example, they are flat, less than ½-inch thick, with beveled or tacked edges, and carefully placed so they will not be tripping hazards. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3022>

Worship Area

- ___ There is an accessible entrance into the worship area.
- ___ We have trained greeters in disability etiquette and they are stationed at the door to welcome people to worship and to assist them to their seats if so desired.
- ___ All aisles in the sanctuary, including the side aisles, are at least 36 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>
- ___ All aisles and spaces where people move around during worship are at least 60 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a304>
- ___ There is an appropriate number of wheelchair-accessible spaces with accessible viewing angles provided in the worship seating space. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a221>

Number of Seats	Minimum Number of Required Wheelchair Spaces
4 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 500	6
501 to 5,000	6, plus 1 for each 150, or fraction thereof, between 501 and 5,000

- ___ Wheelchair-accessible spaces with accessible viewing angles are dispersed throughout the nave seating area. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a22123>
- ___ The floor is level (flat) under wheelchair-accessible spaces with accessible viewing angles. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a80211>
- ___ Pew cuts have been created by shortening the ends of several pews so users of wheelchairs or scooters can sit within the main body of the congregation, as seen in the photo that follows. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a80212>



One of four pew cuts at First UMC Huntsville, Alabama

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE REV. WREN MILLER

- ___ We have pew cuts in our fragrance-free area for people with mobility disabilities as well as chemical sensitivities.
- ___ If our church uses chairs rather than pews, we have shortened a few of the rows to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a80211>
- ___ All floor finishes are uniform. To avoid tripping hazards there are no carpet runners or uneven joints/places in the floor surface greater than ½ inch. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a303>
- ___ We have a designated fragrance-free area (in a well-ventilated area of the sanctuary) for use by persons who have chemical sensitivities.
- ___ If there are steps into the chancel area, there are handrails provided on both sides of the steps. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5052>

- There is a ramp or a vertical platform lift that makes our chancel area accessible to persons with mobility disabilities, if it was not accessible originally.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f20671> (See information and sidebar photo in Chapter I: “Access for People Who Have Mobility Disabilities” and information in Chapter III: “Elevators and Lifts” of this audit.)
- Communion is served so that it is accessible to all persons. If communion is served to people kneeling at the rail, there is a written and oral announcement that persons are welcome to come and stand or kneel as they partake of the elements, or that someone will serve them in their seats if that is desired.
- We purchase or bake gluten-free wafers or bread and announce their availability before every Communion. Wafers are available from Cokesbury,
<http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/productDetail.aspx?pid=352972> and recipes are available online.
http://www.livingwithout.com/news/gluten_free_communion_host-1891-1.html
- Unnecessary barriers blocking access to parts of the chancel have been removed, such as a predella (the step or platform on which the communion table is placed), an elevated ambo, pulpit, lectern, or steps leading to a raised speaking platform.
- Our church holds occasional fragrance-free and candle-free services in an uncarpeted area with windows that open.
- We have silk flowers or organic flower arrangements as an alternative to flowers with pesticides.
- If we intend to use incense, we announce it in advance.
- We use unscented beeswax candles with lead-free wicks.
- In our church, the table is accessible to clergy with mobility disabilities so that they can celebrate communion, and to laypersons with mobility disabilities so they can act as communion servers.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#f226> (Scroll down to Advisory 226.1.)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a9023>
- The access area in front of stations for serving Holy Communion is at least 60 inches in depth for both recipients and the clergy. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a304>
- Persons with disabilities are encouraged to be liturgical leaders in the worship services.
- The choir area is accessible so that adults and children who use mobility aids can participate in choir activities.
- The sanctuary or other worship area is well lit so that people who are partially sighted or have low vision can read the bulletin and worship materials. There is adequate lighting on the speaker’s face for people who read lips.
- Worship materials are available in Braille, audiocassette, or CD recordings.
- Large print versions of the bulletin and worship materials are available.
- The worship leader invites people to rise “in body or in spirit.”

- The sanctuary has an assistive listening system (FM, audio-loop, or infrared) and ushers are trained to give out headsets when asked. (See information and photos in Chapter I: “Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing” and Chapter III: “Assistive Listening Devices/Systems” of this audit.)
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703724>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a7061>
- Printed copies of the sermon, or at least a summary paragraph, are available for people who have hearing loss.
- Sign language interpreters are available on request, with advance notice. Staff knows how to contact local, qualified sign language interpreters.

Fellowship Hall

- Our fellowship hall has at least one accessible entrance and is reached by an accessible route.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402>



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Fellowship hall accessible entrance, Sun Lakes UMC, Sun Lakes, Arizona

- We know that inclusion involves more than just an hour on Sunday mornings. So, if there are persons in our congregation who are Deaf sign language users, we employ a sign language interpreter for our church's fellowship hour, and for other social activities, as well as for our worship service.
- We have seating areas in our fellowship hall so that people who have physical or mobility disabilities can sit and participate comfortably. We make certain there is space for a person in a wheelchair or scooter to situate comfortably in a seating area.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a305>
- We make sure there is at least a 36-inch-wide clear, accessible route maintained throughout our fellowship hall so persons with mobility disabilities and vision loss are able to maneuver comfortably. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>
- We have a fragrance-free area in our fellowship hall near a window that can be opened.
- There are conversation areas in the fellowship hall in parts of the room with less background noise so people who are hard of hearing can communicate comfortably.
- Our fellowship hall has good lighting so people who have vision loss can participate comfortably in all activities, and so that people who are hard of hearing can easily see the speakers' lips.
- We have held educational programs so our church members are comfortable with etiquette and communication techniques for use with persons who have a variety of disabilities. *(See the resource on communication and etiquette in Chapter III: "Awareness and Attitudes" of this audit.)*

Meeting Rooms

- Committee and administrative meeting rooms are accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. There is a clear path at least 36 inches wide throughout the meeting room so persons with mobility disabilities can navigate freely. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402>
- There is 60-inch by 60-inch turning space at several places in the room so persons with mobility disabilities can maneuver freely in the room without having to move chairs and furniture out of the way. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a304>
- Persons in wheelchairs have adequate space at tables where there are areas without chairs. Knee clearance in this space is 30 inches wide.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>
- Printed materials for meetings are available in large print or other alternative formats on request.
- To encourage persons who are sign language users to serve on committees and boards of the church, the services of a qualified sign language interpreter are provided on request.
- If requested, all written church correspondence and notification of meetings can be followed up with information provided over the telephone for people who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision.
- All minutes from meetings are made available in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, recordings) if requested and if the request is made in a timely manner.

- The upper edge of white boards or newsprint pads is 48 inches so they are accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>
- When white boards or newsprint pads are used for note-taking at meetings, as information is being written it is accompanied by verbal explanation so persons who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision can participate.
- Low-odor markers are used on white boards and newsprint pads.
- Meetings are held in rooms with little background noise so that all verbal information can be processed without interference.
- Portable or stationary assistive listening devices are available and people who attend meetings use microphones. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703724>
- If meeting rooms do not have assistive listening systems, some of our church meetings are held at a location outside the church where an assistive listening system is available.
- Less-toxic cleaning products are used in enclosed spaces such as small meeting rooms.
- Meeting participants refrain from using scented personal care products when attending meetings in small rooms.

Classrooms

Education classrooms are designed for use by adults and children, so creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that suits both adults and children with disabilities requires specific, size-related adaptations. The ages of children who will be using the rooms will determine, in part, the dimensions you will choose.

- Our education classrooms are accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. This means our classroom wing or building has an accessible route all the way from our parking facility into the classroom(s). <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>
- Classroom doors are 36 inches wide (minimum 32 inches) with lever handles. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404>
- Classroom carpeting is low pile, no more than ½-inch pile, and has a firm pad or no pad. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3022>
- Our child-sized accessible coat hooks, cabinets, and shelves are accessible to children seated in wheelchairs. Their heights have been adjusted according to the age and reach ranges of the children who use the classroom. *(See table that follows.)*

Children's Reach Ranges			
Forward or Side Reach	Ages 3 and 4	Ages 5 through 8	Ages 9 through 12
High (maximum)	36 inches (915 mm)	40 inches (1,015 mm)	44 inches (1,120 mm)
Low (minimum)	20 inches (510 mm)	18 inches (455 mm)	16 inches (405 mm)

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>

- Coat hooks, cabinets, and shelves for use by adults seated in wheelchairs are no lower than 15 inches and no higher than 48 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30821>
- Attention is paid to keeping all accessible routes clear (a clear path of at least 36 inches wide), and children are taught that no chairs, equipment, or toys are to be left in the way of persons with mobility or visual disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a403>
- Adults with disabilities are encouraged to participate in adult education, and to be teachers and leaders in our children's Sunday school classes.
- Children with disabilities are made welcome in our Sunday school classes and in our regular church programming.
- Our teachers and volunteers have had training so they can provide spiritual supports to children and adults with disabilities. *(For more information about spiritual supports see the Glossary of this audit, and related writing by Erik Carter.²)*



PHOTO COURTESY OF BETH DEHOFF

Speedway UMC, Indianapolis, Indiana, includes people with disabilities in its regular church programming through its Special Needs Ministry. Partnering with community disability service providers, it offers outreach programs, including education, fellowship, respite, and more. In one such program, led by artists from VSAI (Vision, Strength, Arts Indiana), a state organization on arts and disability, children with and without disabilities create art with the theme of generosity/helping hands. Here, one child with a developmental disability shows his finished project.

- Teachers and children have explored and discussed their attitudes toward persons with disabilities. *(See information in Chapter I: "Attitudinal Access" of this audit.)*
- Classrooms have good lighting to accommodate persons who have vision loss and enable persons with hearing loss to see the lips of speakers.
- White boards and similar writing tools are within reach of adults and children seated in wheelchairs. For adults, the upper edge should be no higher than 48 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30821>

² "Supporting Individuals and Their Families," pp. 141-142. In *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families & Congregations*. (2007). By Erik W. Carter, Ph.D., Paul Brookes Publishing Co., PO Box 10624, Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624. <http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/carter-67434/index.htm>

- ___ To accommodate persons with environmental sensitivities, chalk is not used to avoid potentially irritating chalk dust, and only unscented, low-odor markers are used.
- ___ There are adult-size, wheelchair-accessible writing surfaces and tables. For knee clearance, these all have space that is 27 inches high, at least 30 inches wide, and 25 inches deep.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>
- ___ Educational materials are stored on shelves or in cabinets that are accessible to an adult or a child seated in a wheelchair. We keep in mind children's ages when we install shelves and cabinets for them. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30821>
- ___ In children's classrooms, we have wheelchair-accessible play tables. These have at least 24-inch-high knee space, are 30 inches wide, and 17 inches deep.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a100843>
- ___ If our classrooms are in a separate building or wing, there are wheelchair-accessible restrooms for children as well as adults. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6049>.
Lavatories and sinks have knee clearance of 24 inches minimum above the floor for children ages 6 through 12. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6062>

Advisory Specifications for Water Closets Serving Children Ages 3 through 12			
	Ages 3 and 4	Ages 5 through 8	Ages 9 through 12
Water Closet Centerline	12 inches (305 mm)	12 to 15 inches (305 to 380 mm)	15 to 18 inches (380 to 455 mm)
Toilet Seat Height	11 to 12 inches (280 to 305 mm)	12 to 15 inches (305 to 380 mm)	15 to 17 inches (380 to 430 mm)
Grab Bar Height	18 to 20 inches (455 to 510 mm)	20 to 25 inches (510 to 635 mm)	25 to 27 inches (635 to 685 mm)
Dispenser Height	14 inches (355 mm)	14 to 17 inches (355 to 430 mm)	17 to 19 inches (430 to 485 mm)

- ___ If there are persons in the classroom who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision, we make certain that the classroom remains uncluttered, with unoccupied chairs pushed in against tables and the accessible route kept clear of any tripping hazards.
- ___ If our educational materials are in print, alternative forms of the material (e.g., Braille, large print, audio format) can be made available on request for teachers and/or students.
- ___ There are volunteers who are willing to read or record written material for students or teachers who cannot access the material in printed format.
- ___ Activities are chosen that are accessible for all learners, and our teachers have resources that can help them create welcoming and inclusive learning activities.
- ___ Our church knows where to hire a qualified sign language interpreter if there is an advance request by persons who use sign language to communicate.

- ___ All DVDs and other visual media resources used by our church either have open or closed captions, or are accompanied by a printed text copy of the script.
- ___ In at least one of our classrooms, we have portable or permanent assistive listening devices available (e.g., FM technology, audio-loop, infrared) for persons who are hard of hearing. *(See Chapter I: "Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing, and Chapter III: "Assistive Listening Devices/Systems" of this audit.)*
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a703724>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a7061>
- ___ We have teacher's aides or student volunteers available to help persons who may need assistance with classroom activities.
- ___ Our teachers have been trained in ways to successfully include children with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities.

Library

- ___ Books are kept shelved between 15 and 48 inches above the floor so they can be reached by a person in a wheelchair. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30821>
- ___ Children's books are shelved no higher than 36 inches above the floor.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a100842>
- ___ There is an accessible route of 36 inches clear width throughout our library, and a 60-inch by 60-inch turning space for a wheelchair. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40351>
- ___ If we have seating in our library, we have places that persons in wheelchairs can fit in a seating nook as well. Reading tables have knee space at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 25 inches deep. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a306>
- ___ Our library has publications in alternative formats, including audio books and large print copies of the UMC publication, *The Upper Room*. *(See information in Chapter III: "Access for People Who Are Blind, Are Partially Sighted, or Have Low Vision" of this audit.)*
- ___ Our librarian knows about our state and/or local library for persons who are blind, and how it can help obtain books for people who are physically unable to see, handle, or process printed material comfortably.
- ___ If our library has a collection of DVDs, the librarian has made sure that the DVDs have captioning options.
- ___ Our library has good lighting sources for persons who require brighter lighting to read printed material.
- ___ All signs in the library are in large print (at least 18-point font).
- ___ Table and floor lamps in the library have touch switches or other on/off switches that do not require finger dexterity.

Kitchens

- ___ We have wheelchair-accessible routes throughout the kitchen—clear aisles that are 36 inches wide and have 60-inch by 60-inch clear turning space.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a403>
- ___ In our church kitchen there is at least one workstation where a person can work while sitting. The sitting opening at the table should have 27 inches of knee clearance above the floor, 30 inches of width, and 25 inches of depth.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>
- ___ Accessible counter space, dining surface, and work surface in the kitchen for wheelchair accessibility is between 28 inches and 34 inches to the top of the work surface, keeping in mind the necessary 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 25 inches deep knee clearance.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a902>
- ___ We have chosen easy-grip, lightweight kitchen implements and equipment so that people with weaker grip or use of one hand can participate in kitchen activities.
- ___ Our kitchen cabinets have labels in large print.
- ___ We have large print cookbooks or recipes available.
- ___ Lighting in our kitchen is adequate for people who have vision loss.

Dining Area

- ___ When meals are served, all ingredients are clearly listed for persons with dietary restrictions and allergies.
- ___ At potluck meals, each food item (casserole, dessert, etc.) has a table-tent card with the dish's ingredients listed for persons with dietary restrictions and allergies.
- ___ Volunteers are available at buffet lines to assist persons with disabilities if they request such assistance.
- ___ Buffet tables are set up with at least 36 inches of space around them, and if possible 60 inches, in order to allow for wheelchair access. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a305>
- ___ When we have self-service shelves for tableware, dishware, condiments, food, and beverages we make certain the shelves are between table height (34 inches) and approximately 44 inches above the floor. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a90451>,
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a308>
- ___ When we serve meals at our church, the top of our church's dining tables are no lower than 28 inches, and no higher than 34 inches. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a9023>

Administrative Office

- Our church office is easy to find and accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. There is an accessible route from our parking facility to our church office.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402>
- Our church office staff and volunteers are aware of the nearby available public transportation and carpool options, and are able to give information to a person wanting to come to the church who does not drive.
- Our church publications—newsletters, directories, pamphlets, and handouts—are available in alternative formats such as large print, cassette or DVD recording, and Braille.
- Our church’s website is accessible to persons who are blind, are partially sighted, or have low vision, and who use text-to-speech software. *(See information in Chapter III: “Access for People Who Are Blind, Are Partially Sighted, or Have Low Vision” of this audit.)*
- Our church provides an initial tour through its facilities describing the décor, art, etc., so that a person who is blind, is partially sighted, or has low vision can become acclimated and feel more at home.
- All of our office aisles and passages are accessible routes—having 36-inch-wide clear space without any obstructions such as wastebaskets, unused chairs, cartons, etc.—to accommodate persons with mobility and vision disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402>
- Office staff and volunteers have explored their feelings about disability and have been trained in disability etiquette so that they are comfortable greeting church visitors and members who have disabilities.
- Office staff and volunteers have been trained in how to work with telecommunications relay service operators, and (if we have one) how to use our church’s TTY. *(See information in Chapter I: “Access for People who are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing” and Chapter III: “Telephones” of this audit.)*
- There is at least one wheelchair-accessible workstation in the office (with a minimum knee clearance of 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 25 inches deep) for staff and volunteers who use wheelchairs. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>
- There is at least one telephone in the office with volume control and large buttons.
- File and storage cabinets, shelves, etc. are within reach of persons seated in wheelchairs. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a30822>
- File drawers, storage cabinets, binders, etc. have large-print labels.
- Our church office has a display of information pamphlets and flyers about community agencies and services for persons with disabilities.

Pastor's Office and Pastoral Care

- Our pastor and other pastoral care providers are trained in counseling and disability “etiquette” so they are comfortable in their relationships with persons who have any type of disability. *(See resource on etiquette in Chapter III: “Awareness and Attitudes” of this audit.)*
- Our pastor's office is wheelchair accessible and there is a 36-inch-wide clear path throughout our pastor's office, so that persons in wheelchairs can come in, move around comfortably, and join in conversation with our pastor without anyone having to move furniture or belongings out of the way. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a402>
- Furniture in our pastor's office is arranged so that a person sitting in a wheelchair can comfortably interact with the pastor.
- If our pastor's office is not wheelchair accessible, our church has a private accessible meeting area, with a door, that can be used for pastoral conversations and counseling.
- Our pastor's office and other counseling rooms are free of mold and potentially harmful environmental chemicals that might be a problem for persons with environmental disabilities.
- Less-toxic cleaning products are used in enclosed spaces such as our pastor's office and pastoral counseling rooms.
- Our pastor has a personal assistive listening device, such as a Williams Pocketalker®, that will allow comfortable, quiet conversation between a person who is hard of hearing and the pastor.
- If requested in advance, our pastor uses a qualified sign language interpreter in pastoral care services.
- Our pastor and other pastoral care providers know how to use telephone relay services. *(See information in Chapter I: “Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing” of this audit.)*
- When making hospital or home visits, our pastor and pastoral care providers know how to adapt their listening and communication skills to persons with sensory disabilities.

OUR GROUNDS

- In our grounds we have put in accessible features that are inviting to adults and children with disabilities.
- We have an accessible route that connects our parking facility directly to the accessible features of our campus.

Children's Play Area

- Our children's outside play area has been designed for use by children who have mobility disabilities, and to be accessible to the adults who accompany them.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a1008>



Accessible children's play area

PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNN SWEDBERG

- ___ If our outdoor play area is fenced in, the gate is 36 inches wide (minimum 32 inches) to allow for wheelchair access. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40423>
- ___ The accessible route to our outdoor play area is at least 36 inches wide and is part of the accessible route that connects our parking facility to the accessible features of our campus without having to go through any of our buildings.
- ___ Our accessible route connecting play area components at ground level is at least 60 inches wide (minimum 36 inches). <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a1008241>
- ___ Our accessible route connecting elevated play components is at least 36 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a1008242>
- ___ In our outdoor play area, at least one of each type of play equipment (e.g., for rocking, swinging, climbing, spinning, sliding) provided at ground level is on the accessible route. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a24021>
- ___ Outdoor play equipment that includes a seat or entry point is designed so that a child can transfer from a wheelchair or other mobility device, enabling children with disabilities to use the play equipment independently. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a100842>
- ___ None of our play equipment is made of wood that has been treated with harmful chemicals.
- ___ We have seating along the accessible route, but it is recessed and does not protrude into the pathway. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3075>

- Our seating consists of stable, unmovable benches with seats that are between 17 inches and 19 inches above the ground, and with arms so that people can use the arms to help them get up from a seated position. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a9035>

Garden Space

- Our memorial garden is completely wheelchair accessible. We have 36-inch-wide paved accessible paths in the garden.
- We have seating along the accessible route, but it is recessed and does not protrude into the pathway. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3075>
- Our seating consists of stable, unmovable benches with seats that are between 17 inches and 19 inches above the ground, and with arms so that people can use the arms to help them get up from a seated position. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a9035>
- The accessible garden path does not have drooping, overhanging tree limbs or signs that project into the walkway.
- The accessible garden path does not have adjacent trees that drop twigs, nuts, fruits, or seed-pods onto the walkway. Plants next to the accessible walkway do not have spikes or thorns.
- All signs in our memorial garden are in large print.
<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>
- Some of the plantings in our memorial garden area are in raised beds and containers so that volunteers who use wheelchairs can participate in gardening activities.

Picnic Area

- We have studied about how to provide accessible picnic areas and made our church picnic area at least partly accessible so that persons who use wheelchairs or have other mobility devices can join us there. https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/3103/Picnic_Study_Final_Report.pdf?sequence=1
- We have put in a square paved area that is large enough for the accessible part of our picnic area. It connects to the accessible route through our campus.
- We have several accessible picnic tables. The height of these tables is 34 inches.
- We have a pedestal grill that can be easily accessed by a person sitting in a wheelchair.

CHURCH LIFE BEYOND OUR GROUNDS

- We understand that becoming a welcoming and inclusive church relies on educating our congregation so that we all have a positive attitude on this journey to accessibility.
- Our congregation has a disability concerns planning team or committee whose members include persons with disabilities. It advises and guides the congregation's accessibility efforts.

- ☐ We think about accessibility and inclusion in everything we do.

Outside Events

- ☐ Church-sponsored fellowship activities are held in places that can be reached by accessible public transportation.
- ☐ If fellowship activities are not accessible by public transportation, volunteers are available to provide transportation for participants.
- ☐ We do not hold meetings in parishioners' homes that are not accessible to persons with mobility disabilities.
- ☐ Church-sponsored picnics, retreats, camping outings, and other outside fellowship activities are held in parks and facilities that are accessible for persons with mobility disabilities.

CHAPTER III

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

Understanding the concepts of welcoming and including people with disabilities, learning about accommodations that can help them, then conducting the Accessibility Audit itself are all processes to move your congregation along its journey toward full inclusion. The next step is to remove all barriers, but where do you go for help?

For some congregations, use of this manual may eliminate the need for consultation, but if you need to know if a particular accessibility problem requires a major structural change, it would be wise to seek advice. Architects can be helpful with such issues. The Independent Living Centers throughout the nation can also help (www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm). Or, you can contact agencies, associations, organizations, or societies that offer technical assistance.

The following sections list resources that may prove helpful as your congregation looks for accessibility solutions.

AGENCIES, ASSOCIATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND SOCIETIES

Access Board

1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20004-1111

Phone (voice): 202-272-0080; (toll free): 800-872-2253; (toll free): 800-993-2822

Fax: 202-272-0081

www.access-board.gov

The United States Access Board is an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Established in 1973, the Board is a leading source of information on accessible design. The Board develops and maintains design criteria for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and electronic and information technology. It also provides technical assistance and training on these requirements and on accessible design, and continues to enforce accessibility standards that cover federally funded facilities. The Board functions as a coordinating body among federal agencies and to directly represent people with disabilities. Half of its members are representatives from most of the federal departments. The other half, a majority of whom must have a disability and be appointed by the President of the United States, is comprised of members of the public.

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

c/o Information Center

1735 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-626-7300; (toll free): 800-AIA-3837

www.aia.org

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a professional organization for architects in the United States. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the AIA offers education, government advocacy, community redevelopment, and public outreach to support the architecture profession and improve its public image.

The AIA also works with design and construction teams in every facet of the building industry. The AIA has online resources related to universal design and barrier-free design.

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)

7910 Woodmont Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301-657-2248
Fax: 301-913-9413
www.hearingloss.org/

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), formerly known as SHHH (Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc.) can be a key resource for congregations in the area of communication accessibility. Particularly useful is the “Accessibility” section on its website, <http://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy/accessibility.asp>.

National Center on Accessibility (NCA)

University Research Park
501 North Morton Street, Suite 109
Bloomington, IN 47404
Phone (voice): 812-856-4422; (TTY): 812-856-4421
Fax: 812-856-4480
www.ncaonline.org/

The National Center on Accessibility (NCA) was established in 1992 through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. Based at Indiana University, NCA provides information, training, and technical assistance related to inclusion of persons with disabilities in parks, recreation, and tourism, focusing on universal design and practical accessibility solutions.

RESNA

1700 North Moore Street
Suite 1540
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone (voice): 703-524-6686; (TTY): 703-524-6639
www.resna.org

RESNA is the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America. RESNA works to improve the potential of people with disabilities to achieve their goals through the use of technology. They promote research, development, education, advocacy, and provision of technology. RESNA’s membership ranges from engineers and rehabilitation professionals to consumers and students.

MANUFACTURERS (LISTED BY SUBJECT)

Assistive Listening Devices/Systems

Improving sound reception for persons who are hard of hearing is done mainly through a variety of technological aids known as assistive listening devices/systems that can enhance sound reception in church. For a description of the types of assistive listening systems, refer to these terms in the Glossary of this audit: “Induction Loop,” “Frequency Modulation (FM) technology,” and “Infrared.” Before you choose an assistive listening system, you must know the needs of those who will be using the system.

Two major companies that sell and install assistive listening systems are:

Listen Technologies Corporation

14912 Heritagecrest Way
Bluffdale, UT 84065
Phone (toll free): 800-330-0891
www.listentech.com

Williams Sound Corporation

10321 W. 70th Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Phone: 952-943-2252; (toll free): 800-328-6190
www.williamssound.com/

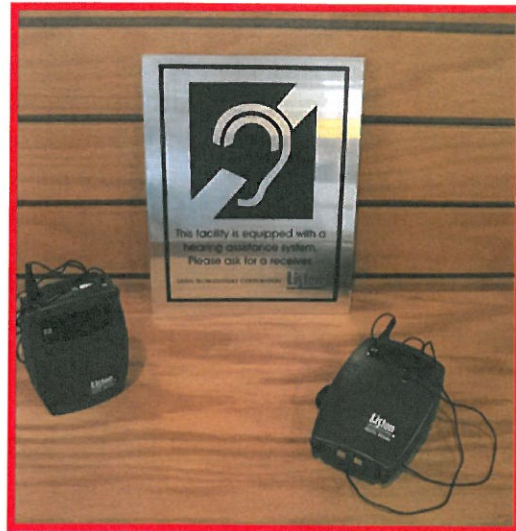


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Assistive Listening Device for FM system

Doors

The 2004 ADA guidelines specifically address doors and door hardware.

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3094

For most recommended accessible door hardware, try your local hardware store, which should carry or be able to special order what you need.

For people who have difficulty using standard doorknobs because of arthritis, a rubber “doorknob helper” that fits over standard doorknobs can be helpful.

Some companies that sell doorknob helpers are:

Sammons Preston

1000 Remington Boulevard, Suite 210
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Phone: 630-378-6000; (toll free): 800-323-5547
Fax: 630-378-6010
Email: sp@patterson-medical.com
www.sammonspreston.com/

CDS Sales, Inc.

P.O. Box 370
Hiawasse, GA 30546
Phone (toll free): 866-284-1170
Fax: 706-896-0571
Email: sales@cds-sales.com
www.cds-sales.com/

MANUALLY OPERATED DOORS

Vision panels are recommended for all manually operated doors leading to major activity areas. This is a safety feature for children and individuals who use wheelchairs. The 2004 ADA Guidelines state, under "Vision Lights," that "doors, gates, and side lights adjacent to doors or gates, containing one or more glazing panels that permit viewing through the panels shall have the bottom of at least one glazed panel located 43 inches (1,090 mm) maximum above the finish floor." www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404211

Some companies that sell doors with vision panels are:

CMI-Architectural Products

2800 Freeway Boulevard, Suite 205

Minneapolis, MN 55430

Phone: 763-560-5567; (toll free): 800-334-1533

Fax: 763-560-6399

www.cmiarch.com

Vistamatic Vision Panels

7351 Wiles Road, Unit 202

Coral Springs, FL 33067

Phone: 866-466-9525

Fax: 866-861-9135

www.vistamaticvisionpanels.com

AUTOMATIC DOORS

Automatic doors are either swinging or sliding and are opened by the use of mats, sensors, touch control, or remote control. In some cases it may be possible to convert an existing manually operated door to an automatic one. Sliding doors are safe for two-way traffic, but require major renovation if you are converting them from manual to automatic. Automatic swinging doors require a one-way flow of traffic for safety, so adding an automatic device may not be as simple a solution as it seems. Normally a sliding door may be installed only when there is a swinging door alongside it. This is a fire safety precaution, as a power-assisted sliding door would not open during a power failure or cutoff.

Some automatic doors revert to manual operation during power failures. If you have or are buying such doors, make sure to do the following: (1) Check the manual operation frequently to be sure it is functioning correctly. (2) Post clear instructions on the door for manual operation in case of power failure.

A number of manufacturers offer automatic fire doors designed to close automatically when sensors detect fire. Normally they latch when closed and can be opened only manually, which can pose a problem for a person with a disability.

Some companies that manufacture automatic doors are:

Besam USA

1900 Airport Road

US-Monroe, NC 28110

Phone: 704-290-5520

Email: marketing@besam-usa.com

www.besam.us

KM Systems, Inc.

4910 Starcrest Drive

Monroe, NC 28110

Phone: 704-289-9212; (toll free): 800-438-1937

www.kmsystemsinc.com**Stanley Access Technologies**

65 Scott Swamp Road

Farmington, CT 06032

Phone (toll free): 800-7ACCESS

Fax: 860-679-6426

Customer Care: 888-DOOR-444

www.stanleyaccesstechnologies.com**Drinking Fountains**

Drinking fountains are specifically addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines:

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a211 and www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a602.

The guidelines state that where drinking fountains are provided, there must be at least two, one being for standing persons. Drinking fountains and water coolers that are advertised as “accessible” come in a variety of styles. Bottled water coolers are also an option. In choosing your fountain, you will have to set priorities carefully, as no one fountain can fill accessibility specifications in every way.

The following manufacturer provides information about barrier-free drinking fountains:

Oasis International

222 East Campus View Boulevard

Columbus, OH 43235

Phone: 614-861-1350; (toll free): 800-950-3226

<http://www.oasiscoolers.com/>**Elevators and Lifts**

If your church is a multilevel structure, you probably will want to consider an elevator or lift. Elevators are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines: www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a407. The 2004 ADA guidelines also address lifts: www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a410. It is important to note their caution that “care should be taken in selecting lifts as they may not be equally suitable for use by people using wheelchairs and people standing.”

Elevators and lifts come in several types. Since manufacturers tend to use various terms to describe their products (e.g., “stair lift,” “wheelchair lift,”) it can be difficult to know from a buyer’s guide exactly what the manufacturers are offering. This *Accessibility Audit for Churches* uses the terms found in the [2004 ADA guidelines](#) but also includes additional basic information for each category.

Elevator: Standard commercial elevators are the elevators generally used in office and commercial buildings. They are larger than Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevators (LU/LA) (*see below*). A standard elevator should be large enough to accommodate passengers using wheelchairs. Although new standard commercial

elevators are referred to as “holeless,” they still require a 4-foot pit to be excavated. They are commonly rated to carry 2,500 pounds or more. LU/LA elevators (below) have a maximum capacity of 1,400 pounds.

Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevator (LU/LA): *(See Glossary of this audit.)* The LU/LA is designed to provide access for people who use wheelchairs or have limited mobility, but is not limited to use by people with physical disabilities. This elevator is smaller than a standard elevator, and is much less expensive. LU/LA elevators are especially suited for retro-fit in existing buildings. They are frequently used by churches. The 2004 ADA guidelines address compliance requirements for Limited-Used/Limited-Application elevators www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a408.

Inclined Platform Lift: *(See Glossary of this audit.)* The inclined platform lift is designed for use over a flight of stairs or in other places where there is not enough room for a vertical platform lift. The inclined platform lift works over almost any staircase, which makes it suitable for most indoor environments. It folds up, making room for common use of the staircase.

Inclined Stairway Chairlift: *(See Glossary of this audit.)* A stairway chairlift has a swivel seat that rides the length of the stairway on a rail and (in most but not all models) can be folded up when not in use. Some of these can be used with any type of staircase, such as a staircase with a 90- or 180-degree turn. It is useful for people with canes or crutches, but not for people in wheelchairs as such lifts require the user to transfer to a seat and a second person needs to be available to carry the wheelchair.

Vertical Platform Lift: *(See Glossary of this audit.)* The vertical platform lift can be useful in providing access to a raised chancel, choir area, or stage where there is not enough room for a ramp. There are also portable lifts that do not have to be in the area permanently.

Some manufacturers of elevators and/or lifts are:

Ameriglide Inc.

3901A Commerce Park Drive
Raleigh, NC 27610
Phone (toll free): 800-790-1635
www.ameriglide.com/

Kone Elevators

One KONE Court
Moline, IL 61265
Phone: 309-764-6771; (toll free): 800-956-KONE (5663)
www.kone.com

National Wheel-O-Vator Co.

P.O. Box 348
509 W. Front Street
Roanoke, IL 61561
Phone: 309-923-2611; (toll free): 800-551-9095
Fax: 309-923-5091
www.wheelovator.com

Otis Elevator Company

10 Farm Springs Road
Farmington, CT 06032
Phone: 860-676-6000
www.otisworldwide.com

Schindler Elevator

20 Whippany Road, Suite 225
Morristown, NJ 07960-4524
Phone (toll free): 800-225-0140
Fax: 973-397-3710
www.us.schindler.com

Tips for users with special needs:

www.us.schindler.com/sec_kg_profile_safety_specialneedstips

Some manufacturers of the Limited-Use/Limited-Application (LU/LA) Elevator are:

Access Elevator and Lifts Inc.

930 S. 48th Street
Omaha, NE 68106
Phone: 515-243-8000; (toll free): 800-397-4000
www.accesslevatorinc.com

Cambridge Elevating Inc.

1261 Industrial Road
Cambridge, Ontario N3H 4W3
Canada
Phone: 519-653-4222; (toll free): 800-265-3579
Fax: 519-653-9927
Email: info@cambridgeelevating.com
www.cambridgeelevating.com

Fire Alarm Systems

Fire detection equipment, with both visible and audible alarms, is recommended for church buildings. An additional important safety feature is emergency lighting in case of power failure. Fire alarm systems are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines. www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a701

Check local building codes concerning requirements for accessible exits in case of fire or other emergencies.

Some manufacturers of fire safety devices are:

Carpenter Emergency Lighting

2 Marlen Drive
Hamilton, NJ 08691
Phone (toll free): 888-884-2270
www.carpenterlighting.com

L.N. Curtis & Sons

1800 Peralta Street

Oakland, CA 94607

Phone: 510-839-5111; (toll free): 800-443-3556

www.lncurtis.com/**Grab Bars and Handrails**

Grab bars are essential to making restrooms accessible. The bars are mounted to walls. If you are enlarging a stall, installing grab bars along one side and the back will allow a person in a wheelchair to use either of the two chair-to-toilet transfer methods; toilet handrails allow only one. The optimum dimension for grasping a grab bar to get a good power grip all the way around ranges from 1¼ inches to 2 inches. Numbers in the 2004 ADA guidelines are based on the latest research on hand anthropometrics (the study of human body measurements), according to the US Access Board. The research indicates that too big a diameter prevents a person from getting a good grip; too small a diameter makes it difficult to get hold of the bar.

Grab bars in restrooms are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines.

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6045

Handrails are required by the ADA on both sides of ramps that have a rise greater than 6 inches, and on certain stairways and walking surfaces. Handrails are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines.

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a505.

Local hardware and building supply stores such as Home Depot and Lowe's carry these items.

Non-Skid Flooring

Most paint companies carry sand-textured or rubberized, non-skid paints or coatings useful on ramps, stairs, and other areas that may become slippery when wet. For visual contrast at intersections and other problematic areas, certain kinds of tape (available at many hardware stores) can reduce risk. Floor and ground surfaces are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines. www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a302

Parking Space Identification

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Parking identification sign indicating accessible parking space for cars



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Parking identification sign indicating accessible parking space suitable for vans

Parking space identification is addressed in the 2004 ADA Guidelines:

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5026. A free-standing metal sign with the International Symbol of Accessibility, 60 inches minimum above the floor or ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign, properly identifies the accessible parking space. Signs for van parking spaces should say "van accessible."

In many states, the Department of Motor Vehicles can explain where to obtain such signs. Many of the larger sign stores in your community are likely to have what you need. Signs should not contain terms such as "handicap," "handicapped," etc.; instead, along with displaying the International Symbol of Accessibility, the parking space identification sign should be based on the terminology and concept of "disability," as in "reserved parking for people with disabilities."

Ramps

Ramps on accessible routes are addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines.

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a405

Most ramps sold by companies are lightweight, non-permanent, and without handrails. We recommend that if you use these, you do so as a temporary convenience while considering a more permanent solution. One such solution for the entrance approach to your church building is a ramp that takes the place of stairs, or if there is insufficient space to maintain the grade requirement to the sidewalk, a ramp running along the exterior wall of the building. Permanent ramps at various interior locations also should be considered.

Warning lines, whether made with suitable tape or cut into the surface of the ramp, are advisable. Such lines also are recommended for curb cuts.

Restrooms

Restroom accessibility information, in addition to that dealing with grab bars (discussed earlier in this chapter), is addressed in the 2004 ADA Guidelines. www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a603, www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604, www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a605, www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a606

The ADA guidelines use the terms "toilet compartment," "toilet room," and "water closet." There are two kinds of accessible "toilet compartments," commonly called "stalls": wheelchair accessible and ambulatory accessible. Wheelchair-accessible stalls are those commonly found in public restrooms where there is one large stall with a horizontal side-wall grab bar and a rear-wall grab bar. Where there are a number of stalls, there should be at least one ambulatory-accessible stall, with grab bars installed on both sides. In this latter type of stall, there also should be a shelf and a coat hook, mounted at the proper height.

Accessible toilet seats in both types of stalls should be higher than standard toilet seats; they should be 17 inches to 19 inches above the floor. Although in some parts of the country local codes do not require this, it nevertheless is an important feature of accessibility and a part of ADA compliance that should not be overlooked.

Padding or insulation needs to be provided for under-sink plumbing, in order to prevent injuries to people who use wheelchairs and may have no sensation in their legs. Door and faucet handles, to be accessible, need to be operable with one hand, and not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist. Full-length mirrors and mirrors located above sinks or countertops, when mounted according to the 2004 ADA

guidelines, can be used both by people who are wheelchair users and by people who are ambulatory. In our audit, we recommend faucet controls that are color-coded: red=hot water, blue=cold water. This goes beyond ADA guidelines.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE HAWKINS SHEPARD

Color-coded faucet controls helpful to some people with intellectual disabilities

The following manufacturer can provide more information on stalls:

Knickerbocker Partition Corp.

Box 3035

193 Hanse Avenue

Freeport, NY 11520

Phone: 516-546-0550

Fax: 516-546-0549

www.knickerbockerpartition.com/

Telephones

Telephones should be made accessible to people with a variety of disabilities. Your local telephone company can help you meet some of your needs. Options available from the phone company vary from state to state.

Many people with hearing loss need to use a telephone with a volume control. If your church offers one or more pay phones, be sure that at least one of these has a volume control.

Consider having a phone with a volume control in the church office, where there may be elderly volunteers who need this accommodation.

For people who are deaf or profoundly hard of hearing, the ease of networking through emerging technologies has led to the use of computers (email, instant messaging, chat), smart phones, cell phones with texting, and videophones (such as Sorenson Videophone). However, some people who are Deaf still use a TTY, a text telephone—sometimes called a TDD by people who are hearing. TTYs are the old standard for communication, and your church may already have a TTY or may want to purchase one. If you do, be sure that the person answering the church phone knows how to use a TTY, and be sure you also have an old-style telephone that will fit into the cup on the TTY, as this machine works with the telephone to transfer signals to the display screen. In addition to the keyboard, a TTY includes a display screen and possibly a printer. If you choose not to purchase a TTY, be sure to become familiar with the Telecommunications Relay System (TRS) available in each state. (*See Chapter I: “Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing” of this audit.*)

Some companies that sell TTYs and other related devices and accessories are:

Harris Communications, Inc.

15155 Technology Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Phone (voice, toll free): 800-825-6758
Phone (TTY, toll free): 800-825-9187
www.harriscomm.com

United TTY Sales and Service (UTSS)

21004 Brooke Knolls Road
Laytonsville, MD 20882
Phone (Voice or TTY, toll free): 866-889-4872
www.unitedtty.com/contactus.htm

Vans

Some church attendees may volunteer to drive people who do not have or are unable to use public transportation. However, the needs of your particular congregation may merit the purchase or conversion of a van. If your community does not have a van service for people with disabilities, or has a service that does not operate on Sundays, consider establishing cooperative Sunday van service with other churches.

In using buyers' guides to locate manufacturers or converters of vans, keep in mind the distinction between vans designed for drivers with disabilities and those designed for passengers using wheelchairs. The latter will not require any special control for drivers, but will require a ramp or lift for passengers using wheelchairs, adequate floor space, and lock-downs to keep chairs safely in place while the van is in motion.

For more information on vans for persons with disabilities, contact:

The Braun Corporation

P.O. Box 310
1014 S. Monticello Street
Winamac, IN 46996
Phone (toll free): 800-THE-LIFT
www.braunability.com/

Vantage Mobility International (VMI)

5202 S. 28th Place

Phoenix, AZ 85040

Phone: 602-243-2700; (toll free): 800-348-VANS

www.vantagemobility.com**PRINT AND ONLINE RESOURCES****Accessible Meetings**

Equal Access Guide for Meetings, Large Assemblies and Worship (2004). NCCC, USA Committee on Disabilities, Education and Leadership Ministries Commission, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. Phone: 212-870-2267. Available online for download from website, <http://www.ncccsa.org/elmc/disabilitiesmanual.html>.

Removing Barriers: Planning Meetings that are Accessible to All Participants (PDF). North Carolina Office on Disability and Health, Center for Universal Design. Phone: 919-966-0865, <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/pdfs/rbmeetingguide.pdf>.

Access for People Who Are Blind, Are Partially Sighted, or Have Low Vision

"Improving Your Website's Accessibility." In *Web Accessibility*. By American Foundation for the Blind, <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=57&TopicID=167&DocumentID=2176>. American Foundation for the Blind, 2 Penn Plaza, Suite 1102, New York, NY 10121. Phone: 212-502-7600.

The Faith We Sing Braille Edition Three-Volume Set (2002). The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789; TTY: 800-227-4091, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=440536>.

The Upper Room (Large-Print Edition) Daily Devotional Guide (published bimonthly). The Upper Room, P. O. Box 340009, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-925-6847, http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/description.asp?item_id=12893.

United Methodist Hymnal Braille Edition Loose Leaf Binders (1990). The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789; TTY: 800-227-4091, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=445745>.

United Methodist Large Type Hymnal (1990). The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789; TTY: 800-227-4091, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=445741>.

Access for People Who Are Deaf, deaf, Deafened, or Hard of Hearing

Hymns for Signing: American Sign Language (United Methodist Hymnal) (1995). Kurt Keller, Editor. The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789; TTY: 800-227-4091, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=445749>.

Deaf Ministry: Make a Joyful Silence (April 2007). By the Rev. Dr. Peggy A. Johnson. Booksurge Publishing. Available from Amazon, <http://www.amazon.com/Deaf-Ministry-Make-Joyful-Silence/dp/141966400X>.

Hearing Accessibility Handbook: A Guide for Houses of Worship (2008). Hearing Loss Association of America Rochester Chapter. HLAA, Rochester Chapter, 240 Lake Shore Blvd. Rochester, NY 14617-1608. Phone: 585-266-7890. Can be purchased for \$1 or downloaded from website: <http://www.shhh-rochester-ny.org/Accessibility%20Handbook.doc>.

Interpreting at Church: A Paradigm for Sign Language Interpreters (2006). By Leo Yates, Jr. (The United Methodist Congress of the Deaf). Booksurge Publishing. Available from Amazon, http://www.amazon.com/Interpreting-Church-ParadigmLanguageInterpreters/dp/1419653180/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_a.

The Faith We Sing: American Sign Language Edition (United Methodist Hymnal) (2004). The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789; TTY: 800-227-4091, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=441302>.

Access for People Who Have Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, and Other Developmental Disabilities

Autism and Faith: A Journey into Community (2008). By Mary Beth Walsh, Ph.D., Alice Walsh, M. Div., and William C. Gaventa, M. Div., Editors. The Autism and Faith Task Force, New Jersey. A collaborative product of The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, The Center on Services for the Autism Community (COSAC), and The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation. Order from The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center, P.O. Box 2688, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Phone: 732-235-9317, <http://www.djfiddlefoundation.org/userdocs/Autism & Faith final-1.pdf>.

Autism and Spirituality: Information for Religious Education Teachers, Revised Edition (2007). By Charlotte Hawkins-Shepard, Ph.D. Distributed by UMCOR Health, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, Room 1520, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, http://new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/media/pdfs%20health/autism_spirituality042007.pdf.

Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders (2006). By Barbara J. Newman. Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Avenue, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560, <http://www.faithaliveresources.org/Autism-and-Your-Church?sc=13&category=8370>.

Dimensions of Faith and Congregational Ministries with Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families: A Bibliography and Address Listing of Resources for Clergy, Laypersons, Families and Service Providers (2009 edition). The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, P.O. Box 2688, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, Phone: 732-235-9300, <http://rwjms.umdnc.edu/boggscenter/products/documents/DimensionsofFaith2009.pdf>.

Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families & Congregations (2007). By Erik W. Carter, Ph.D. Paul Brookes Publishing Co., PO Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624, <http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/carter-67434/index.htm>.

Access for People Who Have Environmental Disabilities

Environmental Disability: Spiritual Challenges to Faith and Community (2007). By the Rev. Nancy Dawson Firestone. Presentation at the John Heinz Institute, Wilkes-Barre, PA. Available from HEAR: Health, Environment and Relationships, <http://www.wehearyou.org> (website under construction as of this printing).

“Environmentally Safe Churches: Res-4” (2005). A resolution approved by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. *Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church 2005 Journal*, p. 291. M.A. Publishing, Mobile, AL.

Made in the Image of God (2009). Two-sided flyer. Eco-Justice Program, National Council of Churches, 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 108, Washington, DC 20002. Phone: 202-544-2350, <http://nccecojustice.org/resources/#environmentalhealthresources>.

Access for People Who Have Mobility Disabilities

“Step-By-Step Guidance for Improving Wheelchair Transportation Safety.” In ***Ride Safe: Information to help you travel more safely in motor vehicles while seated in your wheelchair*** (2009). University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. Email: umtridocs@umich.edu, Phone: 734-764-2171, <http://www.travelsafer.org/index.shtml>.

Town Hall: Wheelchair Etiquette (2006). Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wheelchair Transportation Safety. Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology, 2310 Jane Street, Suite 1300, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15203-2212, Phone: 412-586-6908, http://www.wheelchairnet.org/WCN_TownHall/Docs/etiquette.html.

Accessibility of Historic Buildings

Making Historic Properties Accessible (1993). By Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park. Preservation Briefs, No. 32. Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief32.htm>.

Standards for Preservation and Guidelines for Preserving Historic Buildings: Special Requirements: Accessibility Considerations (2001). National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services, http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve_access.htm.

Architectural Accessibility: Technical Information

Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities: ICC/ANSI A117.1 (November 26, 2003). American National Standards Institute, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.webstore.ansi.org/RecordDetail.aspx?sku=ICC%2FANSI+A117.1-2003>.

Accessible Faith: A Technical Guide for Accessibility in Houses of Worship (2003). By Elizabeth A. Patterson and Neal A. Vogel. The Retirement Research Foundation, 8765 West Higgins Road, Suite 430, Chicago, IL 60631-4170, Phone: 773-714-8080, http://www.rrf.org/PDF/Accessible_Faith.pdf.

Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines July 23, 2004.

United States Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington DC 20004-1111,
Phone: 202-272-0080 (voice); 202-272-0082 (TTY); 202-272-0081 (Fax); 800-872-2253 (toll-free voice);
800-993-2822 (toll-free TTY), <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm>.

Guide to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas (2005). United States Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington DC 20004-1111. Phone: 202-272-0080 (voice); 202-272-0082 (TTY); 202-272-0081 (Fax); 800-872-2253 (toll-free voice); 800-993-2822 (toll-free TTY), <http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm>.

Awareness and Attitudes

Color in the Differences Coloring Book (Non-dated). National Christian Resource Center (now known as Bethesda Institute), 600 Hoffmann Drive, Watertown, WI 53094, Phone: 800-383-8743, <http://bethesdalutherancommunities.org/youth/>.

Communication and Etiquette with Persons with Disabilities (2009). By Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Shepard, Ph.D., the Rev. Wineva Hankamer and the Rev. Dr. Deborah Greenstein, Ph.D. Adapted with permission from the publication *Equal Access Guide*, pp. 24-25, prepared by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA Committee on Disabilities, <http://www.umdissabilityministries.org/2004.html>.

Disability Awareness Sunday packet (produced annually). Southeastern United Methodist Agency for Rehabilitation, Inc. (SEMAR), 4610 Fairvista Drive, Charlotte, NC 28269, Phone: 704-650-4635, <http://www.semarsej.org> (website under construction as of this printing).

Disability is Natural (website, 2009). By Kathy Snow and Brave Heart Press, PO Box 7245, Woodland Park, CO, 80863, Phone: 719-687-0735 (voice); Fax: 719-687-8114, <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/>.

The Special Needs Acceptance Book (2007). By Ellen Sabin. Watering Can Press, NY, <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/The-Special-Needs-Acceptance-Book/Ellen-Sabin/e/9780975986851>.

The View from Under the Pew (2008). Braille Edition also available. By Diane Winters Johnson. Abingdon Press. The United Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave South, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 800-672-1789 (voice); 800-227-4091 (TTY), <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=646529>.

GLOSSARY

Accessibility: *In the context of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*—a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with ADA guidelines. *In disability ministry use*—free of architectural, attitudinal, and communication barriers that prevent the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Accessible Route: A continuous unobstructed path of travel connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Interior accessible routes may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators, lifts, and clear floor space. Exterior accessible routes may include parking-access aisles, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, walks, ramps, and lifts.

ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines: Common abbreviation for *Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines, July 23, 2004*, as published in the *Federal Register*. Revised guidelines jointly updating the ADA guidelines and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) guidelines. Referred to by the Access Board and throughout this audit as “the 2004 ADA guidelines.” www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm

American Sign Language (ASL): The visual, manual language of the Deaf Culture. It is a true language with its own grammar, syntax, and lexicon (vocabulary).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): *Federal law PL 101-336, passed July 26, 1990.* This law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in public accommodations, telecommunications, employment, and public services. www.ada.gov/

Architectural Barriers: Those obstacles causing physical and/or structural inaccessibility of a building.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALD): Also known as Assistive Listening Systems. Amplification systems utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener. The assistive listening system delivers sound directly from a microphone to a transmitter, and on to an individual receiver and connector, eliminating the loss of clarity that occurs as sound travels through the air. (*See also Induction Loop, Frequency Modulation (FM) Technology, and Infrared Technology.*)

Attitudinal Barriers: Views or attitudes, held by people without a disability, that cause people with disabilities to feel unwelcome, and devalued. Often the result of fear, inadequate information, or misinformation about disabilities.

Audio Loop: A type of assistive listening device. (*See also Induction Loop.*)

Autism Spectrum Disorder: A developmental disability, known as a spectrum disorder, as it affects each person differently and with varying degrees. It begins early in life (before the age of 30 months) and lasts a lifetime. The disorder is also pervasive, as several areas of development are affected. Persons who have autism spectrum disorder typically experience trouble with verbal and nonverbal communication and social interactions.

Blindness: Having vision legally defined by visual acuity of not greater than 20/200 in the better eye with correction, or a field not subtending an angle greater than 20 degrees. A person can be legally blind, but may still have enough vision to read very large print.

Braille: A system, invented by Louis Braille, of reading by touch used by persons who are blind. Six raised dots are arranged in various patterns that communicate numbers, letters, and combinations of letters. People who use Braille move their fingertips over the raised dots and read the words created. (Not all individuals who are blind are able to learn and use Braille.)

Captions: The display of spoken words or sounds, often accompanying pictorial illustrations, such as motion pictures, videos, PowerPoint shows, and TV programs that remove the sound barrier for people who do not hear.

Cerebral Palsy: A disability resulting from damage to the brain. It is not progressive and may occur in varying degrees of severity. The most common symptoms are a lack of muscle coordination when performing voluntary movements (ataxia); stiff or tight muscles and exaggerated reflexes (spasticity); walking with one foot or leg dragging; walking on the toes, a crouched gait, or a "scissored" gait; and muscle tone that is either too stiff or too floppy. Cognitive abilities of individuals with cerebral palsy often are unimpaired.

Chancel: Refers to the area around the Lord's table or communion table. The chancel is generally raised. The communion table, pulpit, and lectern are in this area, and sometimes the organ console and choir seating. A low railing often sets the chancel apart from the rest of the room.

Chemical Sensitivities: A type of environmental disability in which there is a reaction to combinations of low-level chemicals in the air, water, and food. Sensitivities emerge as the body's detoxification system becomes stressed or impaired. Reactions may be disabling; continued exposure can increase the level/duration of the disability.

Chronic Illness: Among the less readily apparent disabilities. Among the various types are diabetes, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, disorders of the kidneys, multiple sclerosis, sickle-cell anemia, asthma, lupus, cardiac conditions, osteoporosis, chronic back pain, cancer, HIV/AIDS, chemical sensitivities, and being consistently

Circles of Friends: A term frequently associated with the concept promoted by Robert Perske in his 1988 book of that title (www.robertperske.com/Books.html). People who figuratively circle around a person with a developmental disability to form a support system for that person as needed, including being the person's friend. In recent years, a number of disability ministry groups have taken on that name.

Circles of Support: An extensive discussion of the circles-of-support concept can be found in a 2007 book by Erik Carter. www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/carter-67434/index.htm. (See **Circles of Friends**.)

Communication Barriers: These occur when the content of a message sent is not understood by the receiver. An example of such a barrier is the lack of the use of sign language or of the services of an interpreter with a person who is Deaf, whose primary language is American Sign Language.

Computer-Assisted Notetaking (CAN): A technology that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who are fluent in written language to participate in discussions, meetings, and lectures with people who can hear. The operator, a typist called a "Computer-Assisted Notetaker," uses a computer with word processing software and types summary notes of what was said. The notes are displayed on a computer monitor, or for large groups, the computer is hooked up to a projector and the notes viewed on a screen or wall.

Culturally Deaf: Identifying with the values and world view of the Deaf Culture, whose preferred language is American Sign Language. Persons who are culturally deaf associate primarily with the Deaf community.

Curb Ramp: Also known as Curb Cut. A short ramp cutting through a curb or built up to it.

deaf: A general term meaning either: (1) audiologically incapable of understanding speech through the ear, or (2) (often with a capital "D") culturally deaf.

Deaf: A specific term meaning culturally Deaf (spelled with a capital "D").

Deaf-Blind: (Variously spelled as deafblind, deaf/blind, or deaf-blind.) Used for people who are either Deaf and blind, are Deaf and have low vision, are hard of hearing and blind, are hard of hearing and have low vision, are late-deafened and blind, or are late-deafened and have low vision.

Deaf Community: A community composed of people who are culturally Deaf, as well as people with a wide variety of hearing loss and communication modes who share experiences, needs, and goals. Structurally, the Deaf community can be local or national, and in reality it is a social community as well as a political one.

Deaf Culture: A set of values, modes of behavior, and folklore common to those who were born deaf. The Deaf culture has American Sign Language as its linguistic base.

Deafened: Having lost the ability to hear later in life. Persons who grew up hearing, are fluent in English or the spoken language of their parents, and may rely on speech reading rather than sign language.

Developmental Disabilities: A continuing disability originating from birth through age 21. The term includes any or all of the following disabilities: autism, epilepsy/seizure disorder, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disability (formerly called mental retardation).

Disability: The term disability, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, or learning.

Environmental Disabilities: Includes chemical sensitivities, mold sensitivities, and electromagnetic sensitivities. Any or all of these conditions become a disability if they limit one or more major life activities.

Fragrances: Fragrances include “any product which produces a scent strong enough to be perceived by others,” such as colognes, perfumes, aftershave, hair-care products, lotions, powders, some detergents, fabric softeners, and other personal and clothing-care products.¹

Frequency Modulation (FM) Technology: An assistive listening system in which a stationary transmitter transmits a radio signal (such as a commercial FM radio) received by pocket-sized “radio receivers” using a variety of receiver-to-ear connectors.

Hard of Hearing: Refers to people who have some hearing ability, or residual hearing, and can understand speech, even on the phone, with the help of amplification or a hearing aid. People who are hard of hearing can range from those who identify more with hearing people to those who use sign language.

Inclined Stairway Chairlift: A type of mechanized lift, with a seat, that allows a person to travel up or down a flight of stairs. Differs from inclined or vertical platform lifts by not providing a platform, and so cannot carry a wheelchair.

Inclined Platform Lift: A type of mechanized lift that allows a person in a wheelchair to travel diagonally up or down a wide flight of stairs.

Inclusion: Broader than the concepts of welcoming and eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities. People with disabilities can experience inclusion only when they are provided opportunities to participate in meaningful ways in their church community.

Induction Loop: Also known as “audio loop.” An assistive listening device in which a wire is permanently installed around the perimeter of a room or building. This wire transmits an electromagnetic signal to individuals’ hearing aids or receivers.

Infrared Technology: An assistive listening device in which a transmitter beams infrared light to individuals’ receivers, usually with stethoscope-like receivers that dangle from the listeners’ ears. Only infrared receivers that have jacks can be used by people with hearing aids with a “T” switch, or by people with cochlear implants. An infrared device is unable to penetrate solid barriers, such as walls. It works best in a darkened room with light-colored walls. An infrared device does not work outdoors.

Intellectual Disability: The preferred term for what was historically called “mental retardation.” A disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. An extensive discussion of this term can be found in a publication by the AAIDD Terminology and Classification Committee.²

Large Print: Print that is set in a large type size for use by persons with low vision or limited vision. In the context of disability ministry, this term often refers to special format worship materials in 18-point type. For a comprehensive discussion of large print, see *Large Print Guidelines for Optimal Readability*: <http://www.apf.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>

¹ *The Human Ecologist*, “Fragrance control and health care facilities: An interview with Marlene Freeley, R.N., M.S., Director, Occupational Health Services, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts,” Winter 2002, pp. 13-17.

² See “The Renaming of Mental Retardation: Understanding the Change to the Term Intellectual Disability,” by Robert Schalock, et al., *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), 2007, pp. 116-124.

Learning Disabilities: Defined in the federal law, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*: "...a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia."

Lifts: For purposes of this publication, refers to an inclined platform lift, a vertical platform lift, and an inclined stairway chairlift. (See **Inclined Platform Lift, Vertical Platform Lift, and Inclined Stairway Chairlift.**)

Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevator (LU/LA): A power passenger elevator in which the use and application is limited by size, capacity, speed, and rise, and may be used by the general public.

Macular Degeneration: The leading cause of vision loss in older people. It is a degenerative eye disease that causes damage to the central retina of the eye. Because macular degeneration affects central vision, people who are affected have problems reading, driving, and doing tasks that require clear central vision.

Mental Illness: Refers to a group of brain disorders that cause severe disturbances in thinking, feeling, and relating. There are differences in the degree of their severity, and many people prefer to use the terms "prolonged mental illness," "major mental illness," or "serious mental illness" in reference to the more severe disorders. There are many different types of mental illness, and specific categories are listed in the American Psychiatric Association's standard handbook for diagnosing a mental disorder, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

Mobility Disability: (See the last half of the definition for **Physical Disabilities.**)

Mold Sensitivity: A type of environmental disability. Refers to health problems some individuals experience when exposed to indoor mold growth.

Multiple Sclerosis: A neurological disease in which plaques form on different parts of the nervous system. This causes lack of muscular coordination, weakness, and speech disturbances.

Oral Deaf: Refers to people who are deaf and communicate through speech and speechreading rather than sign language.

Partially Sighted: Having a degree of vision loss that is not severe enough to be considered blindness, but which cannot be fixed by the use of corrective lenses.

Pew Cuts: Created by shortening the ends of several pews so that users of wheelchairs can sit within the main body of the congregation, not in a designated section, and not be forced to block the aisles. Pew cuts also are helpful for people who are deaf-blind, because they need to touch their sign language interpreter's hands.

Physical Disabilities: A term including a wide range and variety of conditions. Covers spinal cord injuries, spina bifida, and other congenital malformations. It also includes amputations, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, and additional musculoskeletal conditions. Many physical disabilities can take the form of mobility

disabilities. An estimated 10 percent of people with mobility disabilities use wheelchairs, and others use such aids as walkers, braces, crutches, or canes.

Quadriplegia: Paralysis of both the upper and lower limbs; also called tetraplegia.

Ramp: A walking surface that has a running slope steeper than 1:20.

Residual Hearing: The degree of hearing that may remain when one has a hearing loss.

Resolutions: Actions or statements issued by denominations and other faith groups. Used in this publication to refer to official positions and policy statements of faith groups regarding accessibility, inclusion, and other disability issues.

Retinitis Pigmentosa: A hereditary disease of the eye characterized by atrophy of the retinal nerve layers resulting in gradual loss of peripheral vision. Because the central field of vision is clear while the periphery is blurred, this condition commonly is called "tunnel vision," and ultimately leads to complete blindness. Retinitis pigmentosa also is found with deafness in a disease called "Usher's Syndrome." It is a leading cause of deaf-blindness.

Sanctuary: The main worship room or auditorium in a United Methodist church building. Includes the chancel, nave, and choir area.

Side-Transfer Stall: An accessible restroom stall in which enough space is allowed for a wheelchair to fit both in front of and beside the toilet, so that a person with a disability can maneuver the wheelchair into a position that will permit sidewise transfer onto the commode.

Sign Language Interpreter: A highly skilled certified professional who translates speech into sign language (usually American Sign Language, or ASL) or sign language into speech. Interpreters can be found by contacting the national association of sign language interpreters, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). www.rid.org/

Signed English: A generic term that covers a variety of sign systems and manual codes of English. It can be used in conjunction with spoken English or by itself. Signed English ranges from Pidgin Signed English (PSE), which does not use spoken English and utilizes as many features as possible from American Sign Language; to a PSE that is closer to English and is signed simultaneously with spoken English; to manual codes of English that also use speech, such as Seeing Essential English (SEE I), Signing Exact English (SEE II), and Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE).

Signing Exact English (SEE II): A manual code for the deaf created to reproduce the English language.

Simultaneous Communication: Signing and speaking at the same time. Although two communication modes are existing simultaneously, two languages are not. When someone attempts to speak and sign simultaneously, the English delivery usually is fluent but the sign communication usually suffers.

Speechreading: The technical term for what most people know as lip reading. Speechreading can be difficult, as only about 40 percent of spoken English is produced visibly on the lips; 60 percent is formed inside the mouth and out of sight.

Spiritual Supports: The term refers to various relationships, opportunities, and types of assistance that allow people to participate in a faith community (or other spiritual activities and organizations), and to explore and express their faith in personally meaningful ways. Such supports might be instrumental in helping people to explore further this dimension of their lives, make connections with a community of faith, maintain their current level of involvement, or deepen and/or change their current involvement. These include supporting ways for a person to become a member in a congregation; supporting individual spiritual practices that reflect choice and tradition, such as prayer, religious holidays, grief rituals, and other life-cycle rituals, and other practices; supporting opportunities to be involved in other forms of spiritual activities, including nature, service, music, retreats or other activities, groups, or places that provide the chance to express spiritual interests.

Supports: In the disability ministry context, “supports,” in general, are kinds of formal and informal help that address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS): Also known as Relay Services. An operator service reached throughout the US by dialing 711. Over the telephone network, it connects two callers who have different abilities. The most common types of calls are TTY to Voice/Voice to TTY, and Voice Carry Over (VCO). Among other relay services are IP Relay (internet relay services), and Video Relay Services (using webcam or videophones).

Traumatic Brain Injury: Formerly called “head injury.” A type of neurological impairment most often caused by accidents.

TTY: A machine (originally a teletype machine) with which people who are deaf communicate over the telephone. The message is sent through the phone wire and converted into print so that a person who is deaf can read what is said and type a message back. TTY, as opposed to TDD, is the term preferred by culturally Deaf people for this type of machine. The use of TTYs is decreasing as people who are Deaf or hard of hearing are turning to technologies such as smart phones, cell phones with texting, and videophones, and increasingly using their computers for email, instant messages, and chats.

Vertical Platform Lift: A type of compact-mechanized lift which allows a person with or without a wheelchair to travel straight up and down between stairs or levels.

VSA: (Formerly Very Special Arts, and VSA arts.) VSA is an international, nonprofit organization founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society in which all people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Founded on the belief that the arts belong to everyone and everyone deserves equal access, VSA showcases the accomplishments of artists with disabilities, and promotes increased access to the arts for people with disabilities. Americans participate in VSA programs through its nationwide network of affiliates (for example, VSA Indiana).

PHOTO INDEX

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Matthew's Ministry, Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas.....	p. 10
Accessible historic church, Huntsville First UMC, Alabama	p. 12
Disability Ministries speaker, North Alabama Annual Conference	p. 13
Assistive listening device worn by the Rev. Elizabeth Walker, Commission on Disabilities, Virginia Annual Conference.....	p. 15
Vertical platform lift, Asbury UMC, Phoenix, Arizona	p. 19

CHAPTER II ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

Accessible parking lot, Sun Lakes UMC, Arizona.....	p. 24
Accessible route where persons with disabilities do not travel behind parked vehicles	p. 26
One of four pew cuts, Huntsville First UMC, Alabama.....	p. 38
Fellowship hall accessible entrance, Sun Lakes UMC, Sun Lakes, Arizona.....	p. 40
Child with a developmental disability, Special Needs Ministry Group, Speedway UMC Indianapolis, Indiana	p. 43
Accessible children's play area	p. 49

CHAPTER III ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

Assistive listening device for FM system	p. 54
Parking identification sign indicating accessible parking space for cars.....	p. 59
Parking identification sign indicating accessible space suitable for vans	p. 59
Color-coded faucet controls helpful to some people with intellectual disabilities.....	p. 61