



# Mennonite Church USA

## Accessibility Resolution

(Updated May 21, 2021)

### Introduction:

The purpose of this resolution is to help all members of Mennonite Church USA (MC USA), including congregations, area conferences, agencies and constituency groups recognize and seek to remove the barriers to belonging in architecture, communications and attitudes that prevent individuals with disabilities from participating in church life; and to bring wholeness to the Body of Christ as those barriers are removed, and all people are fully integrated into the community of faith.

*“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful.” 1 Corinthians 12:7, The Message.*

### Resolution:

As members of MC USA, we commit to growing as communities of grace, joy and peace without barriers so that God’s healing and hope flow through all of us to the world regardless of ability.

This resolution affirms that people with disabilities are included within priorities expressed in MC USA Journey Forward:

- Experience and bear witness to the belovedness of all creation, acknowledging that all people are made in the image of God and are children of God.
- Follow Jesus: In his life and teaching, Jesus emphasized that God’s reign includes all people, especially those who have been marginalized or excluded. As an Anabaptist community of the living word, we will listen carefully to the voices of people with disabilities, to better understand the fullness of God’s love for us and the vision of God’s reign through Jesus Christ.

- Witness to God's peace: We are called to extend God's holistic peace to all. We bear witness to Christ's gift of peace to the world by rejecting violence and resisting injustice in all its forms and in all places.
- Experience transformation: The Holy Spirit dwells in and among us, transforming us to reflect God's love in unique ways. When our worship includes all people, the Spirit gathers the whole body of Christ, where our diversity reveals God's beauty and enables us to more fully embody the grace, joy and peace of the gospel.

We, the members, congregations and organizations of MC USA, resolve to deepen our understanding of barriers for people with disabilities, to take action to make our community life and facilities accessible and welcoming to all, and to discern and affirm the gifts of each person for our common good.

**Anabaptist Disabilities Network in collaboration with Mennonite Health Services (MHS) will support MC USA congregations, conferences and organizations to remove barriers to belonging for people with disabilities by:**

- Providing assessment tools, such as the accessibility surveys offered by Congregational Accessibility Network. (Appendix 2)
- Offering events and resources for all ages to raise awareness and change attitudes about disability.
- Sharing and developing resources, including curriculum, for people with disabilities.
- Providing resources to congregations through congregational disability advocates.
- Consulting with congregations about addressing specific barriers.

**Congregations can take action by:**

- Assessing their own accessibility through an audit or inventory, and by periodically surveying their congregants to learn of any barriers to full community participation.
- Developing a plan to increase accessibility in some way(s). For example, motorized door openers or wheelchair ramps, assisted listening devices or hearing loops, large print worship materials, Sunday school classes that raise awareness and understanding.
- Calling a disability advocate or advocacy team charged with helping to assess accessibility, identify and remove barriers, share resources on disability, and call forth the gifts of people with disabilities in the congregation.

At all levels of the church, we commit to calling out and employing the leadership gifts of people with disabilities.

## Accessibility Resolution: Appendix 1

# Supplemental Information

## Context

Faith communities in the U.S. are exempt from secular mandates in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, many Mennonite congregations lag behind secular society in making facilities and activities accessible and in integrating those with disabilities into their communities.

While celebrating the many steps Mennonites have taken to become more accessible to people with disabilities, architectural barriers persist, hindering the participation of persons with mobility challenges. Communication barriers persist, hindering the participation of those with differing visual, intellectual or hearing abilities. Attitudinal barriers persist, reflecting a lack of sensitivity and denying those with differing abilities dignity and access to spiritual nurture, friendship, freedom, membership, baptism, self-expression, service, and leadership equal to and balanced by the rights of others.

## History

In 1983, the General Conference Mennonite Church General Assembly adopted a *Resolution Regarding Caring Community*, which pledged to continue to pay special attention to the needs of those with physical, emotional, and sensory disabilities, and to break down the barriers that have hindered their participation.

We interpret the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* to include all people, including those with disabilities:

- At Pentecost, God began to pour out the Spirit on all flesh and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, all Christians are called to carry out their particular ministries (Article 3).
- God has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, creating human beings in the divine image (Articles 5 and 6).
- All believers have been baptized in one Spirit into the one body of Christ, and the varieties of gifts and ministries in the church are all given for the common good (Article 9).
- The church's mission is to reconcile differing groups, creating one new humanity. The church is called to witness to people of every culture, ethnicity, or nationality (Article 10).

## Definition

People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, emotional, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (United Nations Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, December 2006).

## Implementation Resources/Accountability

Following the approval of this resolution, Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) will provide leadership to carry out the concepts and commitments in this resolution. We do this in collaboration with Mennonite Church USA agencies, and related organizations that serve those with differing abilities.

## Resolution Process

Work on this resolution began in 2014. ADN recognizes the contribution of the following to this resolution: Tim Burkholder, Christine Guth, Clare Krabill, Richard Aguirre, Sheila Stopher-Yoder, Jeanne Davies, Eldon Stoltzfus, Katherine Dickson, and Katie Smith.

At the invitation of Anabaptist Disabilities Network (“ADN”), four congregations, namely, Akron Mennonite Church, Hesston Mennonite Church, Waterford Mennonite Church, and Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship endorsed this resolution and worked in collaboration with MHS to bring it to Mennonite Church USA in 2021.

## Accessibility Resolution: Appendix 2

*Note: The Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN) was begun by Anabaptist Disabilities Network in 2007. In 2011, CAN became an independent organization with a mission to encourage congregations of all faiths to include persons with disabilities.*



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### Congregational Assessment Survey Form

Welcome to the **Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN)**! This survey form is intended to help your congregation assess its level of accessibility to persons with various disabilities, including mental illness, and to provide suggestions to increase your accessibility.



The **Congregational Assessment Survey** is at <http://www.canaccess.org>. You are encouraged to use this hard copy version to collect the information needed and then fill out the survey online. The online survey automatically registers and keeps track of your results, and you can return to update it at any time. In addition, the Assessment Survey automatically generates the CAN Accessibility Seal for use on your congregational website.

The **CAN Accessibility Seal** acknowledges and awards an emblem for congregations that meet certain criteria in any of the following accessibility categories:



**Mobility.** This indicates accessibility to the building and grounds including parking, entrances, restrooms, and worship space for wheelchair users and others.

#### Hearing and Language



**Hearing** – Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) and other aids are provided for persons who are hard of hearing.



**Sign Language** – Sign language interpretation is provided to enable communication between hearing persons and those who are deaf.



**Vision** – Visual aids are provided for persons who have low vision or are blind.



**Support** – The congregation supports inclusion of persons with disabilities through awareness-raising, education, support groups, and provision for individual differences in gifts, behavior, and learning style.



## Mobility

**Mobility** accessibility means that anyone can use the congregational building and grounds. This means the congregation provides accessible parking leading to an accessible entrance, which, in turn, leads to an accessible worship area and preferably to at least one accessible classroom. Accessibility for wheelchair users has become the criteria of measurement for many areas of mobility accessibility. Also included in this section are questions related to hand mobility, particularly in the use of door handles and water faucets.

Congregations that earn the Mobility emblem meet the criteria outlined for **Parking, Entrance, Interior, Restrooms, and Worship Area**. Congregations are highly encouraged to meet the criteria for **Classrooms** and **Social/Gathering Area** as well.

**Parking:** Accessible parking spaces are provided. All accessible parking spaces have common features. Note the slight differences between **Van Accessible** spaces and **Car Accessible** spaces.

**All Accessible** parking spaces meet all of these criteria:

- \_\_\_ Each parking space has a level, stable surface.
- \_\_\_ Parking spaces are marked with an upright sign with the universal accessibility symbol clearly visible even when a vehicle is parked in the space.
- \_\_\_ Accessible parking spaces are at least 8 feet wide.
- \_\_\_ A path at least 36 inches wide leads from the parking space aisle to an accessible entrance. Path is level or at a grade of no more than 1:12 (for 1 in. of rise, 12 in. of length).

**Van Accessible** parking spaces meet these additional criteria:

- \_\_\_ A smooth level aisle 8 feet wide is marked beside each parking space for wheelchair accessibility. (Two spaces may share an aisle.)
- \_\_\_ A sign reading "Van Accessible" is alongside the universal accessibility sign.

**Car Accessible** parking spaces meet this additional criterion:

- \_\_\_ A smooth level aisle 5 feet wide is marked beside each parking space for wheelchair accessibility. (Two spaces may share an aisle.)

**The number of accessible parking spaces** needed is based on **the total number of spaces**.

Check	Total Spaces	Van Spaces	Car Spaces
___	25 or less	1	0
___	26-50	1	1
___	51-75	1	2
___	76-100	1	3
___	101-150	1	4
___	151-200	1	5
___	201-300	1	6
___	301-400	1	7
___	401-500	2	7
___	Over 500	2% accessible with 1/8 of those van spaces rounded up to the next whole number and the rest car spaces	

## **Entrance**

\_\_\_\_\_ A covered drop off area with 114" vertical clearance for vehicles to discharge passengers. (Recommended)

Entrance to the building is accessible to people who use wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, as well as others who have difficulty using stairs. **Note:** This question only pertains to the method of building entry. A later question will address accessibility within the building.

### **All methods of accessible entrance meet the following criteria:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible from accessible parking spaces via a smooth path at least 36 inches wide at a grade of no more than 1:12 (for 1 in. of rise, 12 in. of length).
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is clear signage indicating the accessible entrance. (If a main public entrance is not accessible, there should be a clear sign pointing to the accessible entrance.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is at least a five-foot level platform at the entry door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The doorway entrance into the building is at least 36 inches wide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doorway has a level threshold of no more than ½ inch.

Accessibility can be via **Ground level**, a **Ramp**, or an **Elevator or lift**.

**Ground level** accessible entrances meet all of the above criteria

**Ramps** also meet the following criteria:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ramp maximum incline of 1:12 (for 1 in. of rise, 12 in. of length), preferably 1:20.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ramp minimum width is 36 inches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Handrails are provided – on at least one side for shorter ramps (except curb ramps) and on both sides for rises of more than 6 inches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After each 30 feet of ramp (measured horizontally) at a slope of 1:12 to 1:16 (or 40 feet for a slope of 1:16 to 1:20), there is a level landing.

**Elevator or lift.** Accessible entrances that include an elevator or lift also meet all of the following criteria:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Elevator or lift is certified by the company for intended use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elevator or lift is able to be easily used by standing or wheelchair user.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elevator or lift is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair (preferably, along with a standing attendant).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elevator or lift is able to bear the weight of a power wheelchair with person in it.

**Doors** are of two types:

- **Automatic doors** are recommended wherever possible since they provide the greatest amount of independence to the most people.
- **Manual doors** can also be made more accessible.

**Manual doors** should meet the following criteria:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Able to be opened by a wheelchair user without forcing the wheelchair off of the surrounding level surface.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a handle easy to grasp with one hand without the need for tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doors are light and easy to open (less than 5 lbs. pressure) by a wheelchair user.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Highly recommended) Have an usher or greeter stationed at the door to help persons with mobility challenges.

**Automatic doors** should meet the following criteria:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Marked with the universal wheelchair access symbol and in good operating condition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plainly visible push buttons at comfortable height for person in a wheelchair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Buttons at sufficient distance from any door that opens toward the user.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Doors open at moderate speed and give sufficient time for user to pass through.

**Interior.** Hallways and other interior sections of the building are accessible to people who use wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, as well as others who have difficulty walking. **Note:** All of the criteria are required unless otherwise indicated.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Hallways.** Hallways are level or have an incline of no more than 1:12, have a barrier-free width of at least 48 inches (60 inches preferable) to allow one wheelchair and one person walking to pass each other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Coat Racks.** At least one section of coat racks is low enough to be accessible by persons in wheelchairs and small children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Stairs.** All stairs have at least one handrail mounted 34-38 inches above the step. (This should include the podium platform; please see the Worship Area section.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Carpets and rugs.** Carpets and rugs are securely attached with a firm backing and have a pile level no more than 1/2-inch thick.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Door handles.** (Required for doors on restrooms, worship area, and classrooms labeled accessible and highly recommended for others.) Room doors are able to be opened and closed with minimum effort and have handles that do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist (generally lever handles).

**Restrooms** At least one restroom accessible to users of wheelchairs and others with mobility issues is available for both men and women. Restrooms may be of two types:

- **Family/companion restroom.** At least one is highly recommended. This makes it possible for a spouse or attendant of a different gender to assist the person with the disability.
- **Restroom stall within the standard facilities for each gender.**



**Accessible family/companion restrooms** meet the following criteria.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have signs clearly marking them as accessible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have entrance doors with lever door handles that do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist to operate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have entrance doors at least 32-inches wide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have entrance doors that either swing into the hallway, or, if swinging into the room, allow sufficient room beyond the radius of the door to turn a wheelchair. (See next point.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restrooms are at least 60 inches wide (beyond the radius of the door; see previous point) and 59 inches deep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wall-mounted grab bars are 33-36 inches high next to and at the back of the commode.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The toilet seat is 17-19 inches high.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sink counter is no more than 34 inches high, has a knee clearance of at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide and 19 inches deep, and hot and cold handles that do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist to operate.

Restroom accessibility provided by a **stall within the standard facilities** for each gender meets the following criteria. **Note:** Accessible stalls in standard restrooms are recommended even if an accessible family/companion restroom is also provided. In situations where accessible stalls are the only accessible options, entrance doors to the restrooms must be wheelchair accessible (highly recommended in any case).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance doors into the restrooms are at least 32 inches wide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance doors are operable by a person in a wheelchair and any door handles provided do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist to operate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance doors either swing into the hallway, or, if swinging into the room, allow sufficient room beyond the radius of the door to turn a wheelchair. (See next point.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ The restrooms have at least a five-foot wide turning radius (beyond the radius of the door; see previous point).
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least one sink is provided with a counter no more than 34 inches high, a knee clearance of at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide and 19 inches deep, and hot and cold handles that do not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting wrist to operate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible restroom stalls are clearly marked with the universal accessible sign.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance doors into the accessible stalls swing into the room, not into the stall.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible restroom stalls are at least 60 inches wide and 59 inches deep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible stalls have secure, wall-mounted grab bars 33-36 inches high on the side and at the back of the commode.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accessible stalls have a toilet seat 17-19 inches high.

## **Worship Area**

### **All methods of accessible entrance meet the following criteria:**

- \_\_\_ Have an accessible building entrance and hallway leading to them.
- \_\_\_ At the entrance, the presence of greeters, a clear view, and/or clear signage indicates the way to the accessible entrance to the worship area.
- \_\_\_ There is at least a five-foot level platform at the entry door.
- \_\_\_ The doorway entrance into the worship area is at least 36 inches wide.
- \_\_\_ Doorway has a level threshold of no more than ½ inch.
- \_\_\_ Ushers are available at the doorway to help persons find seating.

Accessibility can be via **Floor level**, a **Ramp**, or an **Elevator or lift**.

**Floor level** accessible entrances meet all of the above criteria:

**Ramps** also meet the following criteria:

- \_\_\_ Ramp maximum incline of 1:12 (for 1 in. of rise, 12 in. of length), preferably 1:20.
- \_\_\_ Ramp minimum width is 36 inches.
- \_\_\_ Handrails are provided – on at least one side for shorter ramps and on both sides for rises of more than 6 inches.
- \_\_\_ After each 30 feet of ramp (measured horizontally) at a slope of 1:12 to 1:16 (or 40 feet for a slope of 1:16 to 1:20), there is a level landing.
- \_\_\_ There is five-foot level platform at top and bottom of ramp and at any switchbacks.

**Elevator or lift.** Accessible interior paths to worship area entrances that include an elevator or lift also meet all of the following criteria:

- \_\_\_ Elevator or lift is certified by the company for intended use.
- \_\_\_ Elevator or lift is able to be easily used by standing or wheelchair user.
- \_\_\_ Elevator or lift is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair (preferably, along with a standing attendant).
- \_\_\_ Elevator or lift is able to bear the weight of a power wheelchair with person in it.

**Worship Area Seating.** Seating is provided so that a wheelchair user can sit beside family members. Please indicate the number of spaces provided. **Note:** A space is defined as an area able to accommodate one wheelchair with at least one additional seat by its side.

- \_\_\_ Front (No. \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_ Rear (No. \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_ Middle (scattered site cutouts with considerations for drafts, temperature, sound, light, view) (No. \_\_\_\_\_)

**Leadership area.** The leadership area (chancel, platform, bimah, minbar) is accessible so that persons with mobility issues can function in leadership roles.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Stairs to the leadership area have at least one handrail mounted 34-38 inches above the step.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A ramp or lift is provided for wheelchair accessibility (highly recommended), or provision is made for an alternative accessible speaking location for a person in the wheelchair to be seen and heard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A 27-inch table is provided as needed as an alternative to a short podium.

**Classrooms.** At least one classroom is accessible to wheelchair users. **Note:** All of the criteria are required.

- \_\_\_\_\_ An accessible path at least 36 inches wide leads from an accessible entrance to the classroom door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is a five-foot level platform at the classroom door.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The doorway entrance into the classroom is 36 inches wide with a level threshold of no more than ½ inch.

**Social/Gathering Area.** The area where the congregation gathers for social activities is accessible to wheelchair users. All of the criteria are required.

- \_\_\_\_\_ An accessible path at least 36 inches wide leads from an accessible entrance to the door of the social/gathering area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is a five-foot level platform at the door of the social/gathering area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The doorway entrance into the social/gathering area is 36 inches wide with a level threshold of no more than ½ inch.

**Additional Recommendations** to enhance accessibility are recommended.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Accessible telephone.** A telephone is provided with the top of the controls no more than 48 inches from the floor and with a knee clearance of 27 inches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Fire alarms,** both visual and auditory are installed 48 inches from the floor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Evacuation plan.** An evacuation is in place for persons who are in wheelchairs, are blind, have an intellectual disability or mental illness, or who otherwise need help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Special seating** is provided with seat 19 inches from floor, arm rests, foot stool, and extra wide leg room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Fragrance free section.** Seating is provided in a separate environment which is kept fragrance free for persons with chemical sensitivities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Bookstands or lapboards** are available for persons unable to hold hymnals or scriptures.

# Hearing and Language

Please read this section carefully. It contains important background material for the next two sections.

In this category, it is important to distinguish between three descriptive terms.

- **Hard of hearing** – persons who have a hearing loss but can still hear with a hearing aid or Assistive Listening Device. Some may also use sign language.
- **deaf** (with a small “d”) – persons who have very little or no hearing and rely on the English language, an alternate sign language, speech reading (sometimes called “lip reading”), print, and/or other visual materials as their primary means of communication.
- **Deaf** (with a capital “D”) – persons who use a distinct language, American Sign Language (ASL), and identify themselves with a cultural group (North American Deaf Culture). These individuals may have some hearing.

Two separate emblems are possible in this category.



**Hearing.** Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) and other aids are provided for persons who are hard of hearing.



**Sign Language** interpretation can help remove barriers in communication and participation between hearing persons and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Qualified interpretation into the particular sign system that the person uses should be provided. Interpretation into **American Sign Language** should be provided to enable communication between Deaf and hearing persons.

In addition, under the **Vision** section is an important recommendation on “Lighting for speakers” Persons who rely on speech reading (sometimes called “lip reading”) also require proper lighting on the face of speakers.



## Hearing

Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) and other aids are provided for persons who are hard of hearing.

Congregations that display this emblem will have a good sound system along with individual ALD. A roving microphone or acceptable alternative is important, especially for congregations who have announcements, a time of sharing, prayer requests, etc. Several additional items follow that are highly recommended.

The main worship area of the congregation has a good sound system along with individual ALD.

**Note:** All criteria required.

- \_\_\_ **Sound System.** A clear audible sound system, equipped with at least one microphone, is regularly used in the main worship area during the worship service.
- \_\_\_ **ALD.** The sound system in the main worship area includes individual ALD for people who are hard of hearing.
- \_\_\_ Ushers are educated on the location of ALD and how to assist persons wishing to use them.

**A roving microphone or acceptable alternative** is necessary for Hearing Accessibility.

**Note:** One out of three is acceptable.

- \_\_\_ **Roving microphone.** A roving microphone is available for sharing time, prayer requests, etc.
- \_\_\_ **Alternative 1.** When a roving microphone is not available, an accessible microphone is available at the front of the room.
- \_\_\_ **Alternative 2.** When a roving microphone is not available, the worship leader summarizes each comment over his/her microphone so that all can understand.

**The following are recommended.** Please check any that are available.

- \_\_\_ **Phone with volume control.** At least one hearing aid compatible phone with volume control is available.
- \_\_\_ **Taped services.** Sermons or complete worship services are made available on audio and/or videotape.
- \_\_\_ **Sermon texts.** Paper copies of sermon texts are available.
- \_\_\_ **Closed captioning** or another visual language option is available.
- \_\_\_ **Background noise eliminated.** Background noise has been eliminated as much as possible.

In addition, most persons who are hard of hearing or deaf can read, so the visual aids under **Vision Accessibility** are also recommended.



## Sign Language

Sign language interpretation is provided.

Congregations meet the criteria for displaying this symbol by providing a qualified interpreter to assist with communication between persons who are deaf and those who do not know sign language. This typically means interpretation between American Sign Language (ASL) used by the Deaf community and spoken English but may also be met by providing interpretation into another sign system typically used by persons in that local community.

\_\_\_ **Sign language interpretation** is provided. Please indicate the sign language system used.

\_\_\_ **ASL.** Interpretation in ASL is provided.

\_\_\_ **Other sign system.** Interpretation is provided in the following signed English systems. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign language interpretation** is provided in the following **contexts**:

\_\_\_ **Worship.** Sign language interpretation is provided in at least one main weekly worship service.

\_\_\_ **Classrooms.** Sign language interpretation is provided in educational settings for persons who need it.

\_\_\_ **Social Functions.** Sign language interpretation is provided for informal social activities.

\_\_\_ **Other** \_\_\_\_\_



## Vision

Aids are provided for persons who have difficulty seeing. Most of these aids are in the form of some kind of large print.

Basic standards for visual accessibility are met when there is **adequate lighting** in the worship area and there are at least two accommodations to make **large print** available either through **printed materials or visual projection** of words. Additional recommendations are also made to both accommodate those with low vision or to use visual means to make possible other accessibility features.

\_\_\_ **Adequate Lighting** is provided throughout the worship area (sanctuary). This includes the elimination of glare from windows and lights. **Note:** See the Visual Aids question below for an additional consideration.

\_\_\_ **Large Print** worship materials are provided, and ushers are educated on their location and use. **Note:** Large Print should be at least 14-point type, but may need to be larger, depending on the font used as well as the individual person.

\_\_\_ Large Print **Bulletins**.

\_\_\_ Large Print **Hymnals**.

\_\_\_ Large Print **Song Sheets**. For non-hymnal music used by congregation.

\_\_\_ Worship materials are **projected** on an **overhead screen**. **Note:** This can be a suitable alternative for many people to large print materials.

\_\_\_ **Worship Order** projected.

\_\_\_ **Worship Readings** projected.

\_\_\_ **Announcements** projected.

\_\_\_ **Hymns** projected. An alternative to Large Print Hymnals.

\_\_\_ **Worship Songs** projected. An alternative to Large Print Song Sheets.

The following **auditory accommodations** are recommended as helpful for persons with low vision:

\_\_\_ **Announcements**. Verbal announcements are given using a microphone.

\_\_\_ **New Hymn Introduction**. New hymns/songs are introduced prior to the worship or in such a way that people with low vision can participate more fully during the worship.

The following are also essential visual aids to accompany other accessibility features. (Highly recommended.)

\_\_\_ **Exterior signs visible**. Signs are easily visible near the building entrance indicating location of accessible parking spaces and entrances.

\_\_\_ **Interior signs visible**. Interior signs are easily visible noting the location of any available accommodations, i.e., accessible restrooms, elevators, Assistive Listening Devices, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Lighting for speakers.** Lighting for the area which speakers use is directed to the front of speakers, toward the face, not from behind the person. This is important for persons who are hard of hearing or who rely on speech reading.

The following are also essential to aid persons who are **blind**: (Highly recommended.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Greeters and Ushers.** Greeters and ushers are available at building and worship area entrances and are trained to orient new persons who are blind to the environment and guide them as necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Doorway lettering.** Raised letters and Braille signs are provided at doorways to rooms, including classrooms and restrooms.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Braille material.** Bulletins, signs, and other written material are available in Braille.





## Support

The congregation supports inclusion of persons with disabilities and mental illness through awareness-raising events, educational materials and activities, support groups, and provision for individual differences in gifts, behavior, and learning style.

This emblem will be awarded by meeting the criteria in any of the following areas. All are recommended.

\_\_\_\_ **Mission Statement.** The congregation has language in its mission statement, covenant, or other foundational document addressing its intention to provide access to, and inclusion of, people with disabilities and mental illness.

**Awareness and Education Activities.** At least one of these awareness-raising activities has been carried out within the past year.

\_\_\_\_ **Disabilities awareness.** Disabilities awareness is promoted by the observance of annual awareness events in the worship or education program of the congregation. Example: Disabilities Awareness Week (Disabilities Awareness Week (second week in March in the U.S.).

\_\_\_\_ **Mental health awareness.** Mental health awareness is promoted by the observance of annual awareness events in the worship or education program of the congregation. Examples: Mental Health Month (May), Mental Illness Awareness Week (first week in October in the U.S.)

\_\_\_\_ **Sermons.** At least one sermon relating to disabilities and/or mental health issues has been preached.

\_\_\_\_ **Educational events.** At least one workshop, seminar, or educational series has been held in the congregation.

\_\_\_\_ **Individual and Family Needs Questionnaire.** Members and attendees have been surveyed within the last three years about disabilities and mental illness present in their families and how the congregation may become more inclusive, supportive, and accessible to them. (This questionnaire is available on the CAN website and is adaptable to any congregation.)

\_\_\_\_ **Library Resources.** Educational materials on disabilities and mental illness are available in the congregation's library, office, or other space open to attendees.

**Training.** The following training opportunities are provided and promoted.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Leadership knowledge and training.** Congregational leaders have been educated in general terms on the differences between diagnoses of mental illness, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, etc. Those who work directly with persons with disabilities have received specific instruction or training on those disabilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Companion training.** Training has been held in the past two years for persons who serve as aides or companions to persons with disabilities and/or mental illness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Hospitality training.** Specific training is provided to greeters and ushers so they can better help individuals with mental illness and other disabilities feel welcomed, accepted, and included in the congregation.

**Special Education Services.** The following special education services are offered:

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom Integration.** Children and adults with developmental, intellectual, and learning disabilities and differences are welcomed in the regular education program of the congregation through the use of special materials, teaching methods, behavioral supports, and classroom aides as necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Special education classes.** Classes are provided for adults with developmental disabilities which support their abilities to learn without treating them like children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Individual Spiritual Formation Plan (ISFP).** An ISFP is on file for children and adults who need special considerations in order to be included in worship, spiritual education, and/or other aspects of congregational life.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Referrals.** Congregational leaders have a working knowledge of counseling professionals and appropriate agencies in the community to whom they can refer people with questions or needs in the area of mental health or disabilities.

**Gift discernment.** The congregation's gift discernment process includes consideration of persons with disabilities, including mental illness.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Mission and Service.** The congregation has ministry and service opportunities (e.g., choir, teaching, ushering, elder, etc.) open to persons with disabilities, including mental illness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Discernment Process.** The congregation has a gift discernment process whereby persons with disabilities, including mental illness, are asked to share their abilities in the congregation and community outreach.

**Individual and Family Supports.** The following services are offered and promoted.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Benevolence fund.** A benevolence fund (or other financial support structure) is available through the congregation to provide financial assistance for expenses incurred above and beyond insurance coverage for members, including those who have a mental illness or other disability.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Respite.** The congregation has designated individuals who can provide respite care to family members who have dependents with disabilities and/or mental illness.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Facility availability.** The congregation's facility is available free of charge to community support groups on issues involving disabilities, mental illness, addictions, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Support groups.** The congregation organizes support groups or caring circles for people who have disabilities (including chronic mental illness) and their families.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Special Diets.** Special diets (e.g., diabetic, gluten-free) are considered when food is served.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Other congregational supports.**

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