

# **ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION FOR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCHES**

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Check out these “Ten Top Picks” – an assortment of accessibility resources including an assortment of useful information sheets, mini-audits, children’s activity sheets; accessible meetings; fundraising; disability activities, etc.

<http://www.uua.org/accessibility>

<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Accessibility Begins in the Heart.....	1
Understanding Ableism and Accessibility .....	1
Becoming an “Accessible Congregation”? .....	2
Understanding Disability .....	3
Disability Etiquette .....	3
Information About Specific Disabilities .....	9
Blindness / Visual Disabilities.....	9
Deafness / Hearing Disabilities .....	11
Mobility Disabilities.....	12
Multiple Chemical and Electrical Sensitivities.....	12
Psychiatric Disabilities.....	13
Hidden or Invisible Disabilities.....	14
<b>CHAPTER II: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT .....</b>	<b>16</b>
The Process.....	16
Getting to Our Church.....	17
Arriving at Our Church .....	17
Parking.....	18
Getting Into Our Church.....	20
Passenger Loading Zone .....	20
Accessible Route .....	21
Accessible Entranceway .....	23
Outdoor Ramps and Handrails.....	24
Entrance Doors .....	25
Inside our Building .....	26
Vestibule .....	26
Doors and Halls.....	27
Floors .....	28
Moving between different building levels.....	28
Interior Ramps.....	28
Interior Stairs.....	28
Elevators – standard and LU/LA.....	29
Platform lifts – vertical and inclined .....	30

Inclined Stairway Chairlift .....	31
General Indoor Concerns .....	31
Drinking Fountains .....	32
Accessible Restrooms .....	33
Toilet Stalls and Urinals .....	34
Grab Bars .....	35
Sinks and Lavatories .....	36
Worship Area .....	36
Fellowship Hall .....	39
Meeting Rooms .....	40
Class Rooms .....	41
Library .....	45
Kitchen .....	46
Dining Area .....	46
Administrative Office .....	47
Ministers' Offices and Pastoral Care .....	48
Our Grounds .....	49
Children's play area .....	49
Garden space.....	50
Picnic area .....	51
Church Life Beyond Our Grounds.....	51
Outside events .....	51
<b>CHAPTER III: ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Agencies, Associations, Organizations, and Societies.....	53
Manufacturers (Listed by Subject) .....	55
Assistive Listening Devices/Systems .....	55
Doors .....	55
Besam USA.....	57
Drinking Fountains .....	57
Elevators and Lifts.....	58
National Wheel-O-Vator Co.....	59
Cambridge Elevating Inc. ....	60
Fire Alarm Systems.....	60
Grab Bars and Handrails.....	61
Non-Skid Flooring .....	61
Parking Space Identification.....	61
Ramps.....	63

Restrooms .....	63
Telephones .....	64
Vans .....	65
Print and Online Resources .....	66
Accessible meetings .....	66
Access for people who are blind, partially sighted or have low vision .....	66
Access for people who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing .....	66
Access for people who have autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities and other developmental disabilities .....	67
Access for people who have environmental disabilities .....	68
Access for people who have mobility disabilities .....	68
Accessibility of historic buildings .....	68
Architectural accessibility: Technical information .....	69
Awareness and attitudes .....	69
<b>CHAPTER IV: GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>70</b>

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION AND INFORMATION**

### **Accessibility Begins in the Heart**

In 1996 the UUA Accessibilities Task Force told our Board of Trustees that:

“Unitarian Universalists have a history of fighting for justice. Ableism is yet another issue in which we are called by our faith to seek justice, to deepen relationships, to break the barriers that exist in society at large, in our congregations, and in ourselves.”

The Accessibilities Task Force set as goals that “by 2000 all of our congregations will have an understanding that accessibility is a theological issue, and will have begun the work of dismantling the architectural, attitudinal, and communications barriers that exclude so many people from full participation in our religious communities... By 2020 half of our congregations will be fully accessible.”

In support, the UUA Board of Trustees moved, “that the UUA commits itself to work toward the removal of all barriers – attitudinal, physical, and programmatic – that prevent the full participation of person with disabilities in the life of our Association.”

In 1997, a resolution (<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14236.shtml>) was passed at the 1997 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association to undertake “an aggressive plan to address accessibility within the Association for people with disabilities.”

### **Understanding Ableism and Accessibility**

(this section is taken from Rev. Laurie Thomas’s curriculum “Perspectives on Disability: A Curriculum for Liberal Religious Adults”<sup>1</sup> Session 2)

“Just as it is hard for people to name racism in themselves, the same may be true of ableism. Ableism is the term used to describe the discrimination against and the exclusion of individuals with mental and physical disabilities from full participation in available community options, such as employment, housing, and recreation. Ableism affects those with disabilities by inhibiting their access to and power with institutional structures that fulfill needs, like health care, housing, government, education, religion, the media, and the legal system.

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<sup>1</sup> This curriculum, made possible by the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program and the Unitarian Sunday School Society, can be purchased directly from Rev. Laurie Thomas: [revlauriet@gmail.com](mailto:revlauriet@gmail.com) or (517)203-0206

Social construction means that society tends to divide people into arbitrary groups (e.g., black/white, able-bodied/non-able bodied). These categories become so taken for granted that it is assumed that they represent absolute reality. The categories created can divide groups into those viewed positively and those negatively stereotyped...

It's not skin color, the shape of our bodies, or whom we love that's the issue. The attitudes and long-held stereotypes are the real barriers. It's not deafness that's the issue; it's the lack of American Sign Language (ASL) literacy and the availability of interpreters. It's not the people who use wheelchairs that are the barrier; it's the lack of ramps, curb cuts, and elevators. It's not that people aren't qualified for jobs or motivated to work; it's the prejudice and discrimination that employers bring to the hiring process, resulting in a more than 70% national unemployment rate."

There is an extensive body of literature on ableism. A good place to start is by reading "Social Movement Left Out" by Marta Russell

([http://www.soaw.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=828](http://www.soaw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=828))

### **Becoming an "Accessible Congregation"?**

Few congregations, if any, have achieved total accessibility. This is a journey toward wholeness, like our other journeys toward a culture of hospitality – so we call "an accessible congregation" one that acknowledges barriers to full participation of people with disabilities and makes a commitment to begin removing some of them<sup>2</sup>. An Accessible Congregation commits to three principles:

- Our congregation believes that all people, including people with disabilities, are valued as individuals, having inherent worth and dignity.
- Our congregation encourages people, with and without disabilities, to practice their faith and use their gifts in worship, service, study and leadership.
- Our congregation is making an effort to remove barriers of architecture, communications and attitudes that exclude people with disabilities from full and active participation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) exempts religious organizations because of the separation of church and state. But denominations have chosen to voluntarily comply with ADA regulations. Chapter II is a comprehensive accessibility audit that will guide you through a visit to an accessible UU church campus. You will be able to assess how accessible your own campus is – and the items are directly linked to individual online ADA guidelines.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the definition used by the National Organization on Disability

## Understanding Disability

The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines a disability as a "...physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity." Examples of major life activities include seeing, hearing, walking, thinking, breathing, speaking, and learning, among many others. There are visible disabilities in which a physical disability is obvious (someone is using a wheelchair, canes, or an oxygen tank, for example) or invisible (someone has a learning, behavior, or psychiatric disability, diabetes, heart disease, chemical sensitivities, or epilepsy, among many others).

Nearly 50 million people (1 in 5 of the U.S. population) in the United States have a disability. As the baby boomer population ages, the numbers are expected to climb to 100 million or 40 percent of the population. People of all ages, races, sexual orientations, cultures, economic and social backgrounds, and religions may be born with or acquire a disability at any point in their life. Fewer than 15% of disabilities occur at birth; over 85% are acquired over a lifetime as a result of illness, accident, war, trauma, age, or genetics, just to name a few of the causes of disability.

One in eight Americans is 65-plus. In 2030, one in five will be. People who reach 65 can expect to live an average of 19 more years. The fastest growing group is people over eighty. As members of the general population grow older, they are discovering that aging and disability are inextricably linked. Over half of all disabilities occur after 60 and 75 percent of people over 70 have some kind of disability.<sup>3</sup>

Many people with disabilities are able to use devices to reduce the limitations resulting from their disability; wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, language boards, computers, medications and insulin, and oxygen tanks all increase the level of freedom and independence for people with mobility, speech, systemic, and breathing limitations. For many people with invisible or learning, behavioral, or psychiatric disabilities, social and environmental "devices" may increase freedom and independence such as assignment of a buddy, sound systems, proper lighting, social cueing, and use of non-toxic cleaning products. These are only a few examples. For everyone, though, whether having a disability or not, the environment in which we live, learn, play, sing, work, and meditate, reflect, and pray must feel "welcome" in order for everyone to grow and thrive.

### Disability Etiquette

Etiquette may seem a rather formal term to portray the give and take of our interactions with other people. And yet, etiquette really feels like the right word to

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<sup>3</sup> from People with Disabilities Magazine, October 2003, p. 3.

use to describe the thoughtful, considerate behavior that we expect to receive from others and give to them.

Until you know someone with a disability, you may never have had reason to think about the key points that make relationships with someone who has a disability easier and more relaxed. With the intent to create a welcoming and relaxed environment for everyone, here are some basic ground rules we should all keep in mind.

**When you are with a person who is blind or has vision problems:**

- Speak directly, not through an intermediary. Use a natural conversational volume and tone.
- When you are greeting a person who is blind or visually impaired, use their name and don't forget to identify yourself. For example, "Hi Sam, it's Joe."
- When the person enters a room, be sure to greet them, using your own name (as above).
- It is really okay to use say things like "See you soon." Feel comfortable using everyday words relating to vision like "look", "see", "watching TV".
- During a conversation, give verbal feedback to let them know you're listening. They may not be able to see the expression on your face.
- Do not take care of tasks for a person that they would normally do. First ask if they need help, then offer to assist, and be guided by the person's response to your offer.
- If you see someone about to encounter a dangerous situation, be calm and clear about your warning. For example, if they are about to bump into a pole, calmly and clearly call out, "Wait there for a moment; there is a pole in front of you."
- Never hold a person's arm while walking. Let the person hold your arm. This will let them walk slightly behind you, and the motion of your body will tell them what to expect. Offer verbal cues as to what is ahead when you approach steps, curbs, escalators, or doors.
- When you leave, say you are leaving. Never leave a person who is totally blind or severely visually impaired in an open area. Instead, lead them to the side of a room, to a chair, or some landmark.

- Never distract, pet, or offer food to a guide dog without permission from the owner. The dog is working and must not be petted without permission.

**When you are with a person who is deaf or has hearing problems:**

- Look directly at the person you are speaking to. If you are working with a sign language interpreter, talk directly to the person who is deaf, not to the interpreter. While working, the interpreter is not a participant in the conversation, but a transmitter for the person who is deaf.
- Don't cover your mouth, and don't create shadow on your face by standing with your back or side to a bright light or window.
- Speak at a slow to moderate rate and don't use exaggerated lip movement. Some people's voices are easier to understand. Women with soft voices can be more difficult to understand.
- If there is a misunderstanding about something you've said, repeat the same idea using different words.
- Keep paper and pen nearby. If communication is difficult, feel comfortable resorting to writing key words or brief phrases—and writing phone numbers or addresses is often a good idea.
- Don't shout—it won't help. Hearing aids make sounds louder, not clearer.
- To get a person's attention, gently tap the Deaf/hard of hearing person on the arm or elbow and make sure they are looking at you before you speak.
- Be aware that being able to hear conversation in a crowd and/or with background noise is most difficult.

**When you are with a person who has a mobility disability:**

- Look at and talk directly to everyone with whom you converse.
- Be at eye level with everyone with whom you speak, if possible.
- Ask how you can best help when assisting a wheelchair user to go up or down a curb.
- Move crutches, walkers, canes, or wheelchairs only with the permission of the user. Return the devices as soon as possible.
- Ask if and how you can help in buffet lines.

- Respect everyone's individual space. Do not lean on someone's wheelchair.
- Allow children to ask questions and allow the person being questioned to answer.
- Ask "May I help?" when wanting to be helpful. And if given permission to do so, ask "How may I help?" Unsolicited assistance is rude and intrusive.
- People who use wheelchairs are "wheelchair users", not "confined to a wheelchair".
- Grasp the push handles tightly so that the chair does not go too fast when helping to guide a wheelchair user down an incline,
- When assisting a wheelchair user go up or down more than one step tilt the wheelchair back at all times while descending or ascending the stairs.
- Learn the location of wheelchair-accessible ramps, rest rooms, elevators, doors, water fountains, and telephones.
- Relax and smile! Very few people (even those with mobility impairments) bite! (That's a joke.) Everyone responds to a smile and a warm "hello".

**When you are with a person who has an invisible disability:**

- Don't refuse to believe what you cannot see by doubting a person's truthfulness.
- People do not like to always have to identify themselves as a person with a disability. When planning an event, add a note about accessibility needs with a direct number to a real person. That opens the door for the person to reach out and not feel like they are imposing.
- The best tactic is to simply talk to a person and ask what they can and cannot do.
- Always assume there is a person with a hidden disability in a group. So always say "Rise if you are willing and able," and always plan quick stretch breaks every 30-45 minutes.
- If a person says they cannot do something, don't try to coax or cajole or convince them to try anyway.

- Invite partial participation, and ask what you can do to make participation possible.
- A hearing impairment is a hidden disability; always assume there is a person in your group with hearing loss so face your audience.
- Don't judge another person's pain or limitations; accept as true what the person tells you.

**When you are with a person who has a learning disability:**

- Understand that the term learning disability is broad and covers many types of learning styles and behavioral differences.
- Ask a person what accommodation will be most helpful. Then, with the person as partner, try different strategies.
- Recognize that a person with learning disabilities has limitations, as we all do, and be patient, flexible, and realistic, as we should all be with each other.
- Ask if they have understood specific information or if the information needs to be communicated in a different way. Ask what works best.
- Offer encouragement and support...and patience.

**When you are with a person who has a psychiatric problem:**

- Use an open, caring, accepting manner; find some common ground on which to interact
- Be genuine; like anyone else, a person with mental illness can pick up on a false or demeaning approach
- Try to understand what is being said from the person's perspective; be comfortable even if you feel this person's mind is working in a way that is different from yours.
- Stay calm, keep eye contact and retain a calm facial expression and body manner; what is most important is to communicate that you care.
- Use sentences and words that are short, simple and uncomplicated. If something you say is not understood, repeat the message, using other words.

- Be a good listener. Don't criticize, lecture, or argue. Try to be supportive. Treat the person with respect.
- If the person is angry, don't take it personally, and don't approach or touch the person without his or her request or permission.
- If the person is willing or indicates a need, offer to get the help of a friend, relative, clergy, or qualified professional.
- Focus on the person's strengths and what has been accomplished, and treat this in a positive way.
- Structure limits, behaviors and responses in an appropriate way. Ask for advice about how to handle limit-setting. In a non-judgmental and confidential way, ask your minister, Accessibility or Disability Committee, or Caring/Pastoral Care Committee.

**When you are with a person who has multiple chemical sensitivities:**

- Choose personal products that are fragrance-free. Be aware that there are hidden, long-lasting fragrances in detergents, fabric softeners, new clothing, deodorants, tissues, toilet paper, potpourris, scented candles, hair sprays, magazines, hand lotions, disposable diapers, and dishwashing liquids.
- Use only unscented soap in restrooms, and carefully wrap and dispose of chemical air "fresheners"
- Designate fragrance-free seating sections for church and community events
- Designate smoking areas away from buildings so people don't have to pass through smoke when entering, or have smoke waft in through doorways or windows
- Adopt a policy of using fragrance-free cleaning products
- Provide adequate ventilation; clean furnace filters frequently
- Make sure toxic substances are labeled, tightly sealed, and stored in a separate safe area
- Post herbicide or insecticide application schedule in your newsletter. Post signs of treatment dates prominently. Use integrated pest management best practices

- Avoid wearing scented personal care products in public places. Improve indoor air quality simply by not wearing fragrance. Fragrance, like second-hand smoke, affects the health of those around you
- Unscented beeswax candles are often well-tolerated by people with sensitivities. Use them, as an alternative to scented or paraffin candles
- Learn what an individual is sensitive/allergic to and make accommodations respectfully

**When you are with a person who has an intellectual disability:**

- Use simple sentences—not baby talk—and please speak in a normal tone of voice—but don't use complex words where simple words will do. Talk to the person as a person; talk to adults as adults, not children. Do not be condescending.
- Find commonalities to talk about—TV shows, movies, church events, families
- Make instructions clear and concise. Don't combine many steps into one instruction.
- Talk with the person even though they may not be verbal enough to respond. If they cannot respond, at the very least, introduce yourself, tell them who you are and that you are pleased to meet them. Shake hands if that is appropriate.
- Give clear, non-judgmental feedback when behavior is not appropriate. If you are unsure about how to respond or handle a situation, ask your minister, Accessibility/Disability Committee, family member. Be non-judgmental and patient.
- Be generous, but appropriate, with compliments when behavior is appropriate—or when the person has accomplished a task, or taken initiative.

**Information About Specific Disabilities**

**Blindness / Visual Disabilities**

More than 1 million Americans 40 and over are blind. An additional 2.3 million Americans have low vision or are partially sighted. Seventeen percent of Americans who are 45 or older report some type of vision disability even when

wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses. This percentage rises with age, to 26% of people age 75 and older.

Many people who are called "blind" have some vision. Some people may be able to read large print and move about without use of a white cane or guide dog in many or all situations, may be able to perceive light and darkness, and perhaps see some colors. Some people may have better vision one day than another, or see better in certain lighting conditions.

People use different techniques to do things, according to their preferences, skills, and needs. For example, to access printed material, some people may use Braille; others may use large print, magnifiers and telescopes, closed-circuit TVs, computer-generated text-to-voice, or audio-publications on tape or CD.

Eliminating tripping hazards; painting white strips on sidewalk edges; pruning low-hanging branches adjacent to sidewalks; having Braille and large print signage, hymnals, meeting agendas and minutes, newsletters and orders of service; painting a strip of white or yellow on the edges of steps; having lighting with no glare or dark areas, are some examples that create an atmosphere which is environmentally welcoming and accessible to someone with visual limitations.

Your local Independent Living Center (<http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm>) may be able to answer your questions and/or help assess your campus. These resource organizations on the internet may be useful. These are advocacy organizations of blind folks, rather than organizations "for the blind" (as was explained by a Unitarian Universalist consultant who is blind):

- American Council of the Blind (<http://www.acb.org/>)
- National Federation of the Blind (<http://www.nfb.org/>)

Remember, each person is unique, whether or not they are blind or have vision problems. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will enable us all, in our diversity, to be welcomed through accommodation. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

If you have any uncertainty about what is and is not courteous, tactful behavior toward a friend, relative, or stranger who is blind or visually impaired, the American Foundation for the Blind offers helpful guidelines:

- Tact and Courtesy  
(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2263>)
- Communicating Comfortably  
(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=194>)
- Being a Sighted Guide  
(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2104>)

- Giving Directions  
(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2105>)

## **Deafness / Hearing Disabilities**

Hearing impairments affect people of all ages and range from mild to severe. Many older people (at least 25% of people over 80) have a significant hearing loss. Wearing hearing aids can help some, but not all, people who have a hearing loss. We tend to think that hearing aids "solve" the problems of hearing loss. Not so. Unlike glasses, which make things clearer, hearing aids make sounds louder but not really clearer. Most hearing loss interferes with a person's ability to understand speech, so people who are hard-of-hearing often also rely on lip reading (speech reading) to help them understand spoken language. Because of this, people have been heard to say "Let me put on my glasses so I can hear you."

People who consider themselves Deaf (with an upper-case 'D') regard Deafness as a culture with its own language—American Sign Language (ASL)—rather than as a disability. ASL is a visual language with its own grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. It is a complete language, related to French Sign Language, but not to English or other spoken language. It is based on spatial body movements, especially a person's hands and arms, and on facial expressions.

Assistive listening systems ([http://www.devices4less.com/Pktr.html#anchor\\_39](http://www.devices4less.com/Pktr.html#anchor_39)); personal listening devices for meetings, small groups and individual conversations (not to recommend a particular vendor, but the description is good); qualified sign-language interpreters (contact your local Independent Living Center, <http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm>); printed texts of sermons; TTYs; computers and email; relay operators; are some examples of accommodations that create an atmosphere which is welcoming and accessible to someone with hearing limitations.

Your local Independent Living Center may be able to answer your questions and help find qualified sign language interpreters. Local colleges, interpreter training programs, and deaf schools are also good interpreter sources. Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA, <http://www.hearingloss.org/>) is a national organization of people who are hard of hearing. There are local chapters and support groups, experts and advisors. A state-by-state listing of HLAA chapters (<http://www.hearingloss.org/chapters/>) will help you find help in your area. Remember, each person is unique, whether or not they are deaf or have hearing problems. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will enable us all, in our diversity, to be welcomed through accommodation. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

## **Mobility Disabilities**

As a result of spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, polio, aging, and a variety of disabling conditions, 1.4 million people in the U.S. use wheelchairs or scooters. Other people with mobility impairments such as paralysis, muscle weakness, low stamina, poor coordination, nerve damage, or stiff joints, use crutches, walkers, braces, or canes to help them get around. People may use different mobility aids at different times. Someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter may also be able to move about without assistance—another person may not be able to. Someone who uses a cane or walker one day, may use a wheelchair on another day. Do not make assumptions about a person's mobility.

Ramps, elevators, automatic doors, lowered (or raised) desks, tables, or countertops, lowered (or raised) water fountains, curb cuts, and parking that is flat and close to the entrance are some examples that create an atmosphere that is environmentally welcoming and accessible to someone with mobility limitations.

A complete accessibility audit of your congregational campus will help you decide how to welcome people with mobility limitations. Your local Independent Living Center (<http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm>) may be able to answer your questions and/or help assess your campus.

Remember, everyone whether they live with a disability or not, is unique. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will feel completely welcoming to everyone. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

## **Multiple Chemical and Electrical Sensitivities**

Over time, living organisms can adjust to gradual changes in their environment. But in recent years changes to habitat have been so rapid that the human organism, among others, can only strain to keep up. For certain vulnerable people, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), Electrical Sensitivity (ES), and other Environmental Illnesses (EI) can be disabling medical conditions initiated by acute or ongoing exposure to one or more chemicals, molds, electrical fields, or medications.

Following sensitization, subsequent exposures at even very low doses can exacerbate the person's sensitivity. Eventually, symptoms are provoked even by unrelated substances, foods, and electrical fields. Symptoms can be debilitating, sometimes life-threatening, and commonly include severe dizziness; headaches; fainting; tiredness; burning/itching of skin and eyes; flu-like symptoms; emotional disturbances; and seizure disorders. In addition, any chronic neurological disorders, asthma, and autoimmune disorders (such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis) can also be aggravated by exposures.

Commonplace exposures that trigger symptoms for a sensitized individual include chemical emissions from new carpets, building materials, and furnishings; scented personal care products; maintenance, cleaning, disinfection and pest control chemicals; solvents; dyes; soft plastics; molds and mildew; animal dander; scented or petroleum candles; soaps, shampoos; detergents; wood and tobacco smoke; gas stove and furnace fuel and emissions; vehicle exhaust. Eventually, reactions can be triggered by noise, temperature, the sun, fluorescents, flashing lights, and any electrical equipment such as transformers, cell phones, or overhead power lines.

Remember, each person is unique, whether they live with a disability or chronic health condition, or not. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will enable us all, in our diversity, to be welcomed through accommodation. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

### **Psychiatric Disabilities**

The terms psychiatric disability, mental illness, mental health condition, and brain disorder all describe a wide range of conditions that affect the way a person thinks, acts, and feels. Although the cause of mental illness is not fully understood, these conditions can have intertwined biochemical, psychological, and environmental roots. Many people recover from mental illness, other people have ongoing difficulties, and some people continue to experience periodic episodes that require acute treatment. The intensity and durations of symptoms differ from person to person and can generally be controlled by medication and/or psychotherapy.

Mental illnesses are complex; diagnostic labels and treatment modalities change with each publication of the American Psychiatric Association's official manual. Our goal is to encourage you to be involved with a person rather than to be concerned with a diagnostic label. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and one of the most effective ways we can act on that principle is to treat people as individuals. Each of us is more than the sum of the labels that society may place on us.

There are over 40 million Americans with some form of mental illness, including an estimated 3 million (one in twenty) youth. One in five American families are affected. Yet these numbers are hidden by the powerful stigma of mental illness that causes individuals to hide their own and families to hide a family member's mental illness, often isolating individuals and families when they need community connection most. Support from their faith community can make the difference between life and death.

A valuable resource for Unitarian Universalists is Rev. Barbara Meyers' UU Mental Health Ministry (<http://www.mpuuc.org/mentalhealth/mentalintro.html>). Information can be found on the Mission Peaks website. The series of programs

available from the “Mental Health Matters” TV show (<http://www.mpuuc.org/mentalhealth/mentalTVshow.html>) and the Caring Congregations curriculum (<http://www.mpuuc.org/mentalhealth/caringconcurr.html>) are valuable resources as is the entire website.

Remember, each person is unique, whether or not they have psychiatric problems. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will enable us all, in our diversity, to be welcomed through accommodation. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

### **Hidden or Invisible Disabilities**

"But you don't *look* disabled!" How typical of human nature that we seem to think that people with visible disabilities have greater limitations than they really have, while at the same time we think that people with invisible disabilities have fewer limitations than they really have.

Here is a partial list of disabilities and chronic conditions that you may see no signs of on the outside—they are inside a person, affecting muscles, bones, cells, nerves, or cognition: allergy; arthritis; asthma; back injury; brain injury; Crohn's disease; chronic fatigue syndrome; diabetes; epilepsy; fibromyalgia; hearing loss; heart disease; irritable bowel syndrome; knee injury; lung disease; lupus; multiple chemical sensitivities; multiple sclerosis—this alphabetical list from "A" to "M" is only half an alphabet's worth of invisible disabilities. There are many more.

So how do people know? And what do people do? It is natural to assume that because someone appears to be in good health, that he or she can walk just as far, work just as hard, sit just as long, as everybody else.

Here are some very helpful comments by a Unitarian Universalist lay leader who has an invisible disability:

"One of the biggest things that I encounter all the time is having to always identify myself as a person with a disability. I can't stress enough how nice it is to pick up a brochure for a conference, meeting announcement, or any other sort of event and see a note about accessibility needs with a direct number to a real person. This opens the door for me to reach out and not feel like I'm imposing.

"Another way I try to approach groups as a leader is to always assume that there is someone in the room who has a hidden disability. This reminds me to always say things like 'if you're willing and able,' to make sure there are stretch breaks every 30-45 minutes (even if they are only for a minute) and to be very diligent about where I host meeting in terms of spatial relations.

"I will not host a meeting in a room without at least one table (unless it's a worship service). Also, I try never to turn my back on the audience. If I need to write something I ask for a scribe. Studies are showing that hearing loss is starting to be one of the most undiagnosed disabilities and by always facing my audience I hope to ensure that they don't miss anything.

"If I had to pick out of all of these suggestion, the first one is the most important to me. Not feeling like I'm an imposition is critical to me."

Remember, each person is unique, whether they live with a disability or chronic health condition, or not. Therefore, it is impossible to make universal statements about what will enable us all, in our diversity, to be welcomed through accommodation. As with all reciprocal relationships, it is always important and appropriate to ask the people being welcomed what will work for them.

## CHAPTER II ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

The ADA-ABA Accessibility Guidelines of 2004<sup>4</sup> 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. Wherever possible, 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 your local and state building codes as well as the 2004 ADA guidelines before beginning any project. In some situations, local and state code requirements are more demanding than the minimum requirements set forth in the 2004 ADA guidelines; in other cases local and state codes fall short. We advocate using the higher standards to ensure maximum accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Additionally, in considering church accessibility, there are additional needs to be addressed. Guidelines for these will not be found in government materials. Faith communities, working with ecumenical and other faith-based organizations, have worked independently and together to identify unique barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter in churches, and to develop guidelines aimed at eliminating those barriers.

Drawing from all these resources, our audit items are designed to address attitudinal, communication 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 the pull force required to open a door

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

Each item in our audit has a space for you to place a check if your congregation has taken that action. We have organized our audit 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. 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. Our staff knows to dial 711 to reach a relay operator. <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html>

Our church has arrangements in place to transport people with or without disabilities who otherwise cannot attend services and other events.

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](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 road, 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.

<b>Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Required accessible Parking Spaces</b>
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 1000	2 percent of total

Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility	Minimum Number of Required accessible Parking Spaces
1001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction thereof, over 1000

<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>

Because 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.)

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.

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a5022>

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.

<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 our church's accessible buildings, our loading zone, accessible building entrance(s), accessible parking spaces, streets and 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. Should it be less than that, but at least 36 inches wide, (the width of a wheelchair), we have placed passing

spaces at 200 feet 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 bushy branches 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>

All slopes on our accessible route have running slopes flatter than 1:20 and cross slopes 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.)

If the path between our parking lot and our front entrance is long, we have arranged 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)
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.			
From front	Pull	60 inches	18 inches
From front	Push	48 inches	0 inches <sup>1</sup>
From hinge side	Pull	60 inches	36 inches
From hinge side	Pull	54 inches	42 inches
From hinge side	Push	42 inches <sup>2</sup>	22 inches <sub>3</sub>
From latch side	Pull	48 inches <sup>4</sup>	24 inches
From latch side	Push	42 inches <sup>4</sup>	24 inches

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.)

Our ramp is at least 36 inches wide. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a4055>

Any of our ramps with a rise higher than 6 inches, or horizontal run more than 6 feet, have handrails on both sides and curbs that are at least 2 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 – 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>

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>

Because 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](http://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 –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](http://www2.iccsafe.org/states/2009ICodes/Building/Building_Frameset.html) (Scroll to Chapter 10.)

## **Entrance Doors**

Because our main entrance ways into our churches are such important architectural features, it is sometimes tempting to use a side entrance as our 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 our audit’s Chapter III: “Doors.”

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 air lock 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

### Vestibule

Our church may call this area a narthex, a vestibule or even a foyer. Whatever its name, this is our welcome space, and so we want this part of our church to be accessible, showing our 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 deal with 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>

## **Doors and Halls**

All our inside doors are the recommended 36-inch width. (Absolute minimum clear opening is 32 inches. See information in our audit's Chapter III: "Doors.") <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](http://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](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404211). (Also see information in our audit's Chapter III: "Doors.")

Our doors have 12-16 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 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 stair treads 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 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 our audit's Chapter III: "Elevators and Lifts." 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 always 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 ¾ 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
1. A tolerance of minus 5/8 inch (16 mm) is permitted. 2. Other car configurations that provide a turning space complying with 304 with the door closed shall be permitted.				
Centered	42 inches (1065 mm)	80 inches (2030 mm)	51 inches (1295 mm)	54 inches (1370 mm)
Side (off-centered)	36 inches (915 mm) <sup>1</sup>	68 inches (1725 mm)	51 inches (1295 mm)	54 inches (1370 mm)
Any	36 inches (915 mm) <sup>1</sup>	54 inches (1370 mm)	80 inches (2030 mm)	80 inches (2030 mm)
Any	36 inches (915 mm) <sup>2</sup>	60 inches (1525 mm) <sup>2</sup>	60 inches (1525 mm) <sup>2</sup>	60 inches (1525 mm) <sup>2</sup>

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

**Platform lifts – vertical and inclined**

Described in our audit’s Chapter III: “Inclined Platform Lift” and “Vertical Platform Lift” and in the glossary, these are designed for short-distance vertical transportation. They can sometimes be used instead of a LULA if they do not have to go through a floor. They are often installed in stair-wells. Check out the possibility – contact a vendor.

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 (<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 evacuation.

All staff and maintenance personnel have been trained in how to purchase and use environmentally safe cleaning products and 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 off-gassing 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 our audit's Chapter III: "Drinking Fountains.") <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 5 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 a supposedly accessible restroom but turns out to have incorrect dimensions and therefore remains actually 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 our audit's Chapter III: "Restrooms."

Our church has at least one accessible restroom. In fact, if our building is multi-storied, we have at least one accessible unisex restroom on each floor. [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a213](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a213)

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>

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 without trash containers, janitors' equipment, etc taking up part of the allotted space. <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 mirror above the wash basin or sink is mounted with the bottom of the 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 13-1/2 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 1-1/4 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 1-1/2 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.)

### **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>

<b>Number of Seats</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Required Wheelchair Spaces</b>
4 to 25	1

<b>Number of Seats</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Required Wheelchair Spaces</b>
26 to 50	2
51 to 150	4
151 to 300	5
301 to 500	6
501 to 5000	6, plus 1 for each 150, or fraction thereof, between 501 through 5000

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>

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 is a handrail 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 our audit's Chapter I: "Access for people who have mobility disabilities" and information in Chapter III: "Elevators and Lifts.")

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 [www.cokesbury.com/forms/productDetail.aspx?pid=352972](http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/productDetail.aspx?pid=352972) and recipes are available online. <http://www.livingwithout.com/features/feature-wheatfreeworship.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, or 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 both for 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, audio cassette 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 our audit's Chapter I: "Access for People Who are Deaf, deafened, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing" and Chapter III: "Assistive Listening Devices/Systems.") <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>

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 in our fellowship hall.

<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.")

## **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, 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, 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.

## **Class Rooms**

Education classrooms are designed for use by children and adults, 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 class room. (See table that follows.)

<b>Children’s Reach Ranges</b>			
Forward or Side Reach	<b>Ages 3 and 4</b>	<b>Ages 5 through 8</b>	<b>Ages 9 through 12</b>
High (maximum)	36 in (915 mm)	40 in (1015 mm)	44 in (1120 mm)
Low (minimum)	20 in (510 mm)	18 in (455 mm)	16 in (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 Glossary and related writing by Sally Patton.<sup>5</sup>)

Teachers and children have explored and discussed their attitudes toward persons with disabilities. (See information in our audit's Chapter I: "Attitudinal Access.")

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>

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, and 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 6 through 12 years. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6062>

### **Advisory Specifications for Water Closets Serving Children Ages 3 through 12**

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<sup>5</sup> "Welcoming Children with Special Needs" by Sally Patton. Published by the UUA and available in the UUA Bookstore.

	<b>Ages 3 and 4</b>	<b>Ages 5 through 8</b>	<b>Ages 9 through 12</b>
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, 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 tape-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, infra-red) for persons who are hard of hearing. (See our audit's Chapter I "Access for People Who are Deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing, and Chapter III: "Assistive Listening Devices/Systems.") <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 15–48 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 60 inches by 60 inches space for turning 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 our audit's Chapter III: "Access for people who are blind, partially sighted or have low vision.")

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.

## **Kitchen**

We have wheelchair accessible routes throughout the kitchen – clear aisles that are 36 inches wide and 60 inches by 60 inches clear space for turning. <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a403>

In our church kitchen there is at least one work station 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 cook books 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 pot-luck 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, 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 options, 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 hand-outs -- 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, partially sighted or have low vision, and who use text-to-speech software. (See information in our audit's Chapter III: "Access for people who are blind, partially sighted or have low vision.")

Our church provides an initial tour through its facilities describing the décor, art, etc., so that a person who is blind, partially sighted or who has low vision can become acclimated and feel more at home.

All of our office aisles and passages are accessible routes -- 36 inches 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, to use our church's TTY. (See information in our audit's Chapter I: "Access for People who are Deaf, Deafened, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing" and Chapter III: "Telephones.")

There is at least one wheelchair accessible workstation in the office (minimum of 27 inches knee clearance, 30 inches of width, and 25 inches of depth) 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.

### **Ministers' Offices and Pastoral Care**

Our minister 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 our audit's Chapter III: "Awareness and Attitudes.")

Our minister's office is wheelchair accessible and there is a 36 inch wide clear path throughout our minister's office, so that persons in wheelchairs can come in, move around comfortably and join in conversation with our minister 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 minister's office is arranged so that a person sitting in a wheelchair can comfortably interact with the minister.

If our minister'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 minister'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 minister's office and pastoral counseling rooms.

Our minister 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 minister.

If requested in advance, our minister uses a qualified sign language interpreter in pastoral care services.

Our minister and other pastoral care providers know how to use telephone relay services. (See information in our audit's Chapter I)

When making hospital or home visits, our minister 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>

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>.

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>

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 that have 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 seedpods on the walkway. Plants next to the accessible walkway do not have spikes or thorns.

<http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3063>

All signs in our memorial garden are in large print.

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](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 grille 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 members' 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. Other who can help are the Independent Living Centers [www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm](http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm) throughout the nation. 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](http://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 for 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, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006

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

[www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is a professional organization for architects in the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., 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/](http://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

Phone (TTY): (812) 856-4421

Fax: (812) 856-4480

[www.ncaonline.org/](http://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; Phone (TTY): (703) 524-6639

[www.resna.org](http://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 Utah 84065  
Phone (toll free): (800) 330-0891  
[www.listentech.com](http://www.listentech.com)

#### **Williams Sound Corporation**

10321 W. 70<sup>th</sup> Street  
Eden Prairie, Minnesota 55344  
Phone: (952) 943-2252; Toll free: (800) 328-6190  
[www.williamssound.com/](http://www.williamssound.com/)

### **Doors**

The 2004 ADA guidelines specifically address doors and door hardware.  
[www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404) [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a40427) [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a3094](http://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 door knobs because of arthritis, a rubber "door knob helper" that fits over standard door knobs can be helpful.

Some companies that sell Door Knob Helpers are:

#### **Sammons' Preston**

1000 Remington Blvd., Suite 210  
Bolingbrook IL 60440

Phone (toll free): (800) 323-5547  
Phone: (630) 378-6000  
Fax: (630) 378-6010  
E-mail: [sp@patterson-medical.com](mailto:sp@patterson-medical.com)  
[www.sammonspreston.com/](http://www.sammonspreston.com/)

**CDS Sales, Inc.**

P.O. Box 370  
Hiawasse GA 30546  
Phone (toll free): (866) 284-1170  
Fax: (706) 896-0571  
E-mail: [sales@cds-sales.com](mailto:sales@cds-sales.com)  
[www.cds-sales.com/](http://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 maximum above the finish floor."

[www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404211](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a404211).

Some companies that sell doors with vision panels are:

**CMI-Architectural Products**

2800 Freeway Blvd, Suite 205  
Minneapolis, MN 55430  
Phone: (763) 560-5567; toll free: (800) 334-1533  
Fax: (763) 560-6399  
[www.cmiarch.com](http://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](http://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  
E-mail: [marketing@besam-usa.com](mailto:marketing@besam-usa.com)  
[www.besam.us](http://www.besam.us)

### **KM Systems, Inc.**

4910 Starcrest Drive  
Monroe, NC 28110  
Phone: (704) 289-9212; (toll free): (800) 438-1937  
[www.kmsystemsinc.com](http://www.kmsystemsinc.com)

### **Stanley Access Technologies**

65 Scott Swamp Road  
Farmington, CT 06032  
Phone (toll free): (800) 7ACCESS  
Fax: 1.860.679.6426  
Customer Care: (888) DOOR.444  
[www.stanleyaccesstechnologies.com](http://www.stanleyaccesstechnologies.com)

### **Drinking Fountains**

Drinking fountains are specifically addressed in the 2004 ADA guidelines [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a211](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a211) and [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a602](http://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 Blvd.

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](http://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](http://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. Our **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 (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 four foot pit to be excavated. They are commonly rated to carry 2,500 pounds or more. LULA elevators (below) have a maximum capacity of 1,400 pounds.

***Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevator (LU/LA):*** (see Glossary.) 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](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a408).

***Inclined Platform Lift.*** (See Glossary.) 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.) 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.) 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/](http://www.ameriglide.com/)

**Kone Elevators**

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

**National Wheel-O-Vator Co.**

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

**Otis Elevator Company**

10 Farm Springs Road  
Farmington CT 06032  
Phone: (860) 676-6000  
[www.otisworldwide.com](http://www.otisworldwide.com)

**Schindler Elevator**

20 Whippany Road, Ste. 225  
Morristown, NJ 07960-4524  
Phone: (800) 225-0140  
Fax: (973) 397-3710  
[www.us.schindler.com](http://www.us.schindler.com)

Tips for users with special needs:  
[www.us.schindler.com/sec\\_kg\\_profile\\_safety\\_specialneedstips](http://www.us.schindler.com/sec_kg_profile_safety_specialneedstips)

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

**Access Elevator and Lifts Inc.**  
930 S. 48<sup>th</sup> St.  
Omaha, NE 68106  
Phone: (515) 243-8000  
Phone (toll free): (800) 397-400  
[www.accesslevatorinc.com](http://www.accesslevatorinc.com)

**Cambridge Elevating Inc.**  
1261 Industrial Road  
Cambridge, Ontario N3H 4W3  
Canada  
Phone: (519)-653-4222; (toll free): (800) 265-3579  
Phone (fax): (519) 653-9927  
[www.cambridgeelevating.com](http://www.cambridgeelevating.com)  
Email: [info@cambridgeelevating.com](mailto:info@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](http://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](http://www.carpenterlighting.com)

**L.N. Curtis & Sons**

1800 Peralta Street  
Oakland, CA 94607  
Phone (toll free): (800) 443-3556  
Phone: (510) 839-5111  
[www.Incurtis.com/](http://www.Incurtis.com/)

### **Grab Bars and Handrails**

Grab bars are essential in making restrooms accessible. The bars are mounted to walls. If you are enlarging a stall, installing grab bars along one side and the back 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 1 ¼ 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](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a6045).

Handrails are required by 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](http://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](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a302)

### **Parking Space Identification**



**Parking identification sign indicating accessible parking space for cars**



**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](http://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](http://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 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](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a603), [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a604), [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a605](http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a605) [www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a606](http://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 later 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, 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 by people who are wheelchair users as well as 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.

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/](http://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 (e-mail, instant messaging, chat), smart phones, cell phones with texting and videophones (such as Sorenson Videophone). However, some Deaf people still use a TTY, a text telephone – sometimes called a TDD by hearing people. 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 our audit's Chapter I: "Access for People Who Are Deaf, Deafened, Deaf-blind and Hard of Hearing.")

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

**Harris Communications, Inc.**

15155 Technology Dr,  
Eden Prairie MN 55344  
Phone: (800) 825-6758 Voice  
Phone (TTY): (800) 825-9187  
[www.harriscomm.com](http://www.harriscomm.com)

**United TTY Sales and Service (UTSS)**

21004 Brooke Knolls Rd.  
Laytonsville, MD 20882  
Phone: (Voice or TTY): (866) 889-4872  
[www.unitedtty.com/contactus.htm](http://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 of 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  
Winamac, IN 46996  
Phone: (800) THE-LIFT  
[www.braunability.com/](http://www.braunability.com/)

**Vantage Mobility International (VMI)**

5202 S. 28<sup>th</sup> Place  
Phoenix AZ 85040  
Phone: (602) 243-2700; toll free: (800) 348-VANS  
[www.vantagemobility.com](http://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, New York 10115. Phone: (212) 870-2267. Available online for download from website: [www.nccusa.org/elmc/disabilitiesmanual.html](http://www.nccusa.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. [www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/pdfs/rbmeetingguide.pdf](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/pdfs/rbmeetingguide.pdf)

### Access for people who are blind, partially sighted or have low vision

***“Improving Your Website’s Accessibility.”*** In ***Web Accessibility.*** By American Foundation for the Blind. [www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=57&TopicID=167&DocumentID=2176](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

***Singing the Living Tradition, Braille edition.*** Contact the UUA Bookstore for ordering information

***Singing the Living Tradition, large print edition.***  
<http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=562>

***Singing the Journey, Braille edition.*** Contact the UUA Bookstore for ordering information

***Singing the Journey, large print edition.***  
<http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=567>

***Welcome: A UU Primer, Braille edition.*** Contact the UUA Bookstore for ordering information.

***UU World Magazine on tape*** – subscription at no charge. Contact the Congregational Life staff group for information.

### Access for people who are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing

***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 [www.shhh-rochester-ny.org/Accessibility%20Handbook.doc](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 [www.amazon.com/Interpreting-Church-ParadigmLanguageInterpreters/dp/1419653180/ref=pd\\_bxgy\\_b\\_img\\_a](http://www.amazon.com/Interpreting-Church-ParadigmLanguageInterpreters/dp/1419653180/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_a)

**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](http://www.djfiddlefoundation.org/userdocs/Autism_&_Faith_final-1.pdf)

***Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith***

***Communities.*** (2004). By Sally Patton. Published by the UUA, this book can be purchased through the UUA Bookstore. <http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756>

***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 330, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10115 [new.gbqm-umc.org/umcor/media/pdfs%20health/autism\\_spirituality042007.pdf](http://new.gbqm-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, Michigan 49560 [www.faithaliveresources.org/Autism-and-Your-Church?sc=13&category=8370](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 New Jersey 08903. Phone: (732) 235-9300

<http://rwjms.umdj.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., Post Office Box 10624, Baltimore, Maryland 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, Education and Resources. [www.wehearyou.org](http://www.wehearyou.org) (website under construction as of January 2010)

***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

[ncccecojustice.org/resources/#environmentalhealthresources](http://ncccecojustice.org/resources/#environmentalhealthresources)

### **Access for people who have mobility disabilities**

“Step-By-Step Guidance for Improving Wheelchair Transportation Safety.” In ***Ridesafe: Information to help you travel more safely in motor vehicles while seated in your wheelchair.*** (2009). University of Michigan Transportation Institute. Email: [umtridocs@umich.edu](mailto: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](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, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief32.htm](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  
[www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve\\_access.htm](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 43<sup>rd</sup> Street – Fourth Floor, New York, New York 10036  
[webstore.ansi.org/RecordDetail.aspx?sku=ICC%2FANSI+A117.1-2003](http://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 & Neal A. Vogel. The Retirement Research Foundation, 8765 West Higgins Road, Suite 430, Chicago, Illinois 60631-4170. Phone: (773) 714-8080  
[www.rrf.org/PDF/Accessible\\_Faith.pdf](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 D.C. 20004-1111. Phone: (202) 272-0080 (v) (202) 272-0082 (TTY) (202) 272-0081 (fax); (800) 872-2253 (v); (800) 993-2822 (TTY) [www.access-board.gov/ada%2Daba/](http://www.access-board.gov/ada%2Daba/)

***Guide to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas.*** (2005). United States Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington D.C. 20004-1111. Phone: (202) 272-0080 (v) (202) 272-0082 (TTY) (202) 272-0081 (fax); (800) 872-2253 (v); (800) 993-2822 (TTY)  
[www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm)

### **Awareness and attitudes**

***Disability is Natural.*** (website, 2009). By Kathy Snow and Brave Heart Press, PO Box 7245, Woodland Park, CO, 80863. Phone (Voice): (719) 687-0735; Phone (Fax): (719) 687-8114;  
[www.disabilityisnatural.com/](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; TTY: (800) 227-4091 [www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=646529](http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=646529)

## CHAPTER IV GLOSSARY

**Accessibility.** In the context of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), describes a site, building, facility or portion thereof, that complies with ADA guidelines. In disability ministry use, refers to being 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](http://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/](http://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 Induction Loop).

**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, power point shows and TV programs that remove the sound barrier for people who do not hear.

**Chemical sensitivities.** A type of environmental disability. 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 medically fragile.

**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](http://www.robertperske.com/Books.html) People who figuratively circle around a person with an intellectual or emotional/behavioral disability to form a support system for that person as needed, including being the person's friend.

**Circles of Support.** See "Circles of Friends." An extensive discussion of the circles of support concept can be found 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., Post Office Box 10624, Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624 Website: [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

**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 Deaf person whose primary language is American Sign Language.

**Computer-Assisted Notetaking (CAN).** A technology that enables deaf and hard of hearing people who are fluent in written language to participate in discussions, meetings and lectures with hearing people. 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.

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

**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.

**Fragrances.** Fragrances include “any product which produces a scent, strong enough to be perceived by others” such as colognes, perfumes, after shave and hair care products, lotions, powders, some detergents and fabric softeners and other personal and clothing-care products.<sup>6</sup>

**Frequency Modulation (FM) technology.** An assistive listening system in which a stationary transmitter transmits a radio signal (like a commercial FM radio) received by pocket size “radio receivers” using a variety of receiver-to-ear connectors.

**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 as without providing a platform, it cannot carry a wheelchair.

**Inclined Platform Lift.** A type of mechanized lift that allows a person in a wheelchair to travel 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.** 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

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<sup>6</sup> *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, pages 13-17.

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 is best in a darkened room with light-colored walls. An infrared device does not work outdoors.

**Large print.** Print that is set in a large size of type 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.aph.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>

**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 where the use and application is limited by size, capacity, speed and rise and may be used by the general public.

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

**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 being 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.

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

**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/](http://www.rid.org/)

**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 needs of persons with disabilities.

**Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS).** Also known as Relay Services. An operator service reached throughout the USA by dialing 711. It connects over the telephone network 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).

**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 use their computers for e-mail, instant messaging and chat.

**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.