

**ANY BODY,  
EVERY BODY,  
CHRIST'S BODY**



**A Guide for Congregations,  
Associations, and Conferences  
for Becoming  
Accessible to All  
A2A**

**Written and compiled by  
UCC Disabilities Ministries**

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

*For it is you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
When I was being made in secret,  
Intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

*Psalm 139:13-15*

*Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*

*I Peter 4.8-11a (RSV)*

Spring 2016

A Message to Congregations, Associations, and Conferences:

On July 4, 2005, The Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the resolution: *“Called to Wholeness in Christ: Becoming a Church Accessible to All.”* In part, this resolution called congregations, associations, conferences, and all other organizations of the UCC to develop both short-range and long-term accessibility and inclusion plans. The UCC Disabilities Ministries (UCCDM) Board of Directors launched a campaign to invite church bodies, especially local congregations, to become accessible to all (A2A). Eleven years later we find that while several Conference Inclusion Teams exist, only a few congregations have sought to achieve the designation of “A2A.” While many have been interested in becoming accessible, some have halted their movement forward; perhaps because it seemed like an overwhelming and costly process. Ramps and physical access to congregational life are vitally important; however, research shows that social attitudes are often a bigger barrier to inclusion. This guide will help you break down the social barriers to inclusion and provide guidance in recognizing and addressing physical barriers. This guide will assist various settings of the church to recognize accessibility as a disability justice issue.

We on the UCCDM Board of Directors are committed to supporting and guiding the A2A process and to providing resources that will assist you as you move forward in your efforts to become accessible. This guide is designed to do just that. It is our goal that you will be successful in your efforts to become accessible to all so that the UCC can live up to the promise of its resolution to answer the call to wholeness: “Any Body, Every Body, Christ’s Body.”

Faithfully,

The UCCDM Board of Directors

## **Signs of Liberation and Access**

Written by Harold Wilke (1915–2003)

The festivals of the religious year show forth new meanings for access and liberation: In the glory of Easter – the stone rolled away – we see the barrier removed. In the wonder of Pentecost the message is heard, understood, and seen by all, In the liberating act of Passover the message is: “Let My People Go!” and the parting of the Red Sea. In the joy of Advent, God embodies divinity in human form.

Yet for many persons today – who are blind or deaf or have mental retardation or who are in wheelchairs – the barriers still remain; The stone is still in place; The waters are not parted, the way not opened; The words cannot be heard; The flame of the Spirit’s tongues cannot be seen, the message not understood.

Proclaiming the message in all languages for today means using Braille or larger print for people with visual disabilities, signing or special sound systems for persons with hearing disabilities; image, color and drama for people with cognitive disabilities; architectural access for people with physical disabilities or who are getting older.

Let the stone be rolled away! Let the glorious message be proclaimed truly, in all languages so all may hear and understand!

# ANY BODY, EVERYBODY, CHRIST'S BODY

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to provide congregations, associations, and conferences information about becoming Accessible to All (A2A) and radically welcoming to everyone in all aspects of life within the United Church of Christ. It is not intended to be a comprehensive resource for information about disabilities and access; however, what is provided within these pages will give congregations what they need as they begin their journey.

Associations and conferences will find within these pages information and resources for expanding their ability to support churches, pastors, lay leaders, and congregants as they expand and deepen their theological and physical capacity while becoming Accessible to All (A2A). The polity of the UCC creates an opportunity for the building of deep connections and mutual support within and among congregations, associations, and conferences in covenant.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ states that the UCC was formed “in order to express more fully the oneness in Christ of the churches composing it, to make more effective their common witness in Him, and to serve His kingdom in the world.” We live in an increasingly complex world, and the complexities of this world include the reality that one in five persons lives with a disability and one in four persons experiences a mental health concern over a lifetime. In John 13:34 (NRSV), Jesus declares: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” Within the UCC we can find new ways of loving one another when we expand our hearts, minds, and actions to encompass “Any Body, Every Body, Christ’s Body.”

# PART I: DISABILITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY

When thinking about disabilities, the first image that comes to mind for many people is someone who is in a wheelchair, uses a walker or cane, has a hearing aid that can be easily seen, has a service dog, uses sign language, or has an assistant or companion. However, some disabilities are “invisible,” to the casual observer—yet they interfere with the lives of those who live with them, sometimes in major ways. It is important to avoid making any assumptions or judgments about who does or does not have a disability. Because the UCC is the church of Extravagant Welcome and Hospitality, we have an obligation to ensure that each person who comes in the door—or who is invited in or may come in the future—can share a full experience of worship and fellowship and leadership. UCC settings remain leaders in the social justice issue of accessibility as lived out in structures, programs, and attitudes of its leaders and laity. Recommendations for how to create access can be found in Appendices II, III, and IV.

Not all disabilities are specifically named in this document. Persons with disabilities experience their disabilities as individuals; therefore, two persons with the same disability may have different experiences. It is important to recognize the persons with disabilities as experts and it is always wise to seek out resources about disabilities you may encounter.

- **Mobility**

Mobility issues can take many forms. They may include someone who uses a wheelchair, cane, walker, or someone who uses no devices. Mobility issues may be invisible. It's important to keep in mind that access is the goal; so all spaces must be kept safe and uncluttered so that full mobility is available to those with motorized wheelchairs and those whose pace is slow and deliberate.

- **Blindness and Impaired Vision**

Every congregation may have members with visual impairment of various levels, including complete blindness. The ultimate issue becomes how to create the opportunity for everyone to fully participate in all aspects of life in a faith community. So much of what happens within the life of the church is dependent upon printed material; therefore, it is important to keep those with impaired vision and blindness in mind when planning. While large print for all written materials may be enough for some, others require having materials in Braille. Collaborating on finding solutions is key. More suggestions on this may be found in Section IV: Communication.

- **Deafness**

Deaf individuals have specific needs for full participation, including print media and signing translators. Persons who were born deaf and their families will typically be able to educate the church leadership on their needs, but this cannot be assumed, so it's important to communicate readiness to provide whatever support is needed for accessibility. The same is true for those who have varying degrees of hearing loss. It is vital to make no assumptions. Assistive Listening Devices may help some who have hearing loss, while for others they are of no help. Sometimes it takes a few attempts to find the best way to provide access while remembering it is important to maintain the posture of hospitality throughout the process.

- **Hearing Loss**

The population of faith communities is aging. With this often comes hearing loss as well as increased desires to participate in community life longer. Even with the most technologically advanced hearing aids, many who have experienced hearing loss still have difficulty understanding what is being said, especially when there are competing noises or the speaker mumbles or speaks too rapidly. Many aging adults may carry some degree of embarrassment about their hearing loss, especially because it too often becomes the target of humor for families and friends. The same steps should be taken with those whose hearing is impaired as with those who are deaf. Find out what they need and provide what is necessary for accessibility.

- **Hypersensitivity to Sound**

An issue that is rarely discussed is that of hypersensitivity to sound. For these individuals the hypersensitivity can make certain situations excruciatingly uncomfortable to the point of needing to leave the current location. Whether due to a neurodevelopmental disability (such as autism) or issues with the inner ear that can develop at any time in life, it is important to discuss all possible solutions to provide relief for individuals such as adjusting sound systems, eliminating ambient noises in the environment, and learning what is needed to create a comfortable experience.



- **Neurodevelopmental Disabilities**

Neurodevelopmental disorders are impairments of the growth and development of the brain or central nervous system. These impairments can affect emotion, learning ability, self-control, and memory. While they occur primarily in infancy and childhood, they can also develop or be diagnosed later in life. Some neurodevelopmental disabilities are: autism spectrum disorder; communication; speech and language disorders; Down syndrome; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); schizophrenia; and some motor disorders. It is important to make no assumptions. It is always appropriate to ask families how the needs of all their children could best be addressed and to ask adults what would make their participation more fulfilling. It is wise to educate yourself about various neurodevelopmental disabilities, even if they are not currently represented in your congregation. Do not make assumptions that persons with neurodevelopmental disorders are less intelligent, cannot or do not wish to fully participate in the life of the church. Resources are available in Appendices II and III.

- **Learning Disabilities**

Individuals who have difficulty learning in what are considered the most typical methods are regarded to have learning disabilities. It is important to find ways to accommodate children and adults who have learning disabilities by finding out how they learn best and providing those opportunities in church education classes, committee and leadership team meetings. When these opportunities are not provided, the person with learning disabilities may feel frustrated, defensive or shame. Sensitivity in all church settings is key, especially when issues are somewhat subtle and more difficult to identify as they might be in the case of learning disabilities. Church leaders are encouraged to become facilitators of finding resources in the community.

- **Traumatic Brain Injury and Stroke**

Traumatic brain injury can happen at any time from an accident in which head trauma has occurred. Likewise, a stroke can create brain dysfunction and can occur at any age from a variety of causes. In either case, cognitive function, memory, and motor function can all be effected. Medical treatment and other therapies can help individuals recover some (at times most) function. The observable behaviors of either can be the same. It is more important to ask what the person needs to be a full participant in the life of the faith community, rather than how the person became disabled.

- **Dementia, and Alzheimer's Disease**

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are more likely to occur in aging populations. Dementia is an umbrella term for a set of symptoms including impaired thinking and memory. It can be part of a general cognitive decline that comes with aging; however, there are a variety of medical conditions that may cause dementia beyond aging or Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60% to 70% of cases of dementia and can include problems with language, disorientation, mood swings, lack of self-care, and uncharacteristic behaviors. If members of your faith community begin to demonstrate such symptoms, it is important to support them and their families in seeking medical diagnosis and treatment. Providing continued access to worship, fellowship, and leadership may extend the length of time the individual can remain in the community as well as provide respite for the caregivers. Remember to offer extended support at any time through outreach and pastoral visitations.

- **Mental Health Conditions**

There is no health without mental health. Although there is no exact understanding of the causes of mental illness (brain disorders, psychiatric disorders, mental health conditions or challenges), we know it may be a combination of genetics, biology, and environmental situations. We also know that mental illness is treatable and persons who find the right combination of treatments are productive, employable, fruitful and successfully offering their gifts to the world. For some, mental illness can become a disability while others who live with a mental health condition do not consider it a disability at all.

One of the largest barriers for someone who is living with a diagnosed mental illness to overcome is the stigma that is so apparent in our society. In fact, dealing with stigma can be more difficult than living with the illness. It is incumbent on churches to provide welcoming, inclusive, supportive and engaging programs and activities for persons who are sometimes marginalized in our society. The UCC Mental Health Network has developed a process for churches to become WISE Congregations for Mental Health ([www.mhn-ucc.blogspot.com](http://www.mhn-ucc.blogspot.com)). We believe that one of the most significant actions congregations can take is to address mental health. We welcome your engagement.

**Remember: your primary aim is to ensure that all who wish to participate in your faith community have access to all aspects of community life. ANY BODY, EVERY BODY, CHRIST'S BODY.**

## PART II: LEADERSHIP THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

The United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries Board sees both pastoral and lay leadership as vitally important for Accessible to All settings of the church. Leadership that supports the inclusion of “people with disabilities in all aspects of the Church’s life and ministry” is leadership that both understands the particularities of living with a disability and recognizes the gifts that people with disabilities have to contribute to the church as a whole. Theologically, leadership in the context of “Accessible to All” calls upon us all to recognize the wholeness of the Body of Christ.

Pastoral and lay leadership for all settings of the church to be Accessible to All will consist of:

- Accessible to All settings include pastoral staff and church leadership who have had some training in disability awareness. Some of this training may occur as part of the attitudinal accessibility portion of this document. However, pastoral leadership and persons who are involved with the pastoral care or educational ministry of congregations will also need additional training about the psychosocial and socio-economic particularities and disability justice issues experienced by persons living with disabilities and their families.
- Accessible to All settings have pastoral leadership and pastoral care teams who are aware that when visiting persons with disabilities in facilities, the facility is responsible for providing means for accessible communication such as ASL interpreters, writing pads, or white boards. Visitors can ask to use these services. When making visits to private homes the pastor or pastoral care team member will need to have these services or items provided by the church.
- Accessible to All settings of the church create inclusion teams to focus on accessibility and inclusion for all people.
- Accessible to All settings of the church include people with disabilities in leadership roles.

- Accessible to All leadership includes awareness of disability related social justice issues and disability theology. Both pastoral leaders and lay leaders are encouraged to stay updated on these materials.
- Accessible to All settings of the church include people with disabilities in all aspects of the life and leadership of the church. At times preconceived ideas cause people with disabilities to not be viewed as having the ability to lead. A2A settings can nurture the leadership skills of people with disabilities. An A2A setting may present the first opportunity for a person with a disability to be invited to participate in leadership. Churches that are Accessible to All will offer a mentoring experience for everyone.
- Accessible to All settings advertise the ways they are inclusive and what accommodations they provide.
- Accessible to All settings provide examples of leadership to the larger church by considering and placing people with disabilities in paid positions such as church pastor or secretary, as well as in volunteer positions.
- Accessible to All settings provide leadership and advocacy for disability rights and disability related social justice issues.

## PART III: ATTITUDES

When a church is considering ways to become-more accessible to people living with disabilities, frequent concerns are usually the difficulty of creating (or, more commonly, affording the cost of) access for people using wheelchairs to the church itself or to places within the church building. While a ramp into the church building is often a very helpful addition to its structure, as detailed in the book ***That All May Worship*** (see Appendix II) **a ramp is not enough!** There are other, more important changes that almost every worshipping community can make in order to provide an honest sense of welcome to **all** of God's children. And, many of these changes are **far less** expensive than additions or modifications to the physical structure of your church's facility.

When considering ways to welcome and include people living with disabilities into the active life of your church, **remember that it is most often an unwelcoming and unaccepting attitude that leads visitors with disabilities to not return or join in church membership (see Harris Survey information below).**

### Facts Concerning Disability

- Many Christian church bodies successfully lobbied to obtain exclusion from the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, contradicting Romans 15:7, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God." The UCC "Ejector" commercial in 2006 stated: "**God doesn't reject people. Neither do we.**"
- The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that the majority of Americans (approximately 80%) will live with a disability for more than 6 months during the course of their lifetimes. Thus, anyone could develop and live with a condition leading to a disability for a significant length of time before dying.
- The 2010 Harris Interactive Survey of Americans with Disabilities determined that persons with disability are 35% more likely to never attend worship services, stating it is not due to physical barriers but attitudinal barriers that make them less likely to feel comfortable and welcome in houses of worship.
- A large variety of impairments can lead to a person having a disability.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (nami.org) states that 1 in 4 adults...experiences mental illness in a given year.

The following list provides helpful suggestions of attitudes and actions that can ensure that potential members with disabilities feel welcome and included in the life of your setting. (A collection of guides and books containing more of such information can be found in Appendices II and III.)

**People with disabilities are people first and foremost**, so **we must** remember that impairments are only **one** aspect of a person's humanity and all people are more than their ability or disability!

- When interacting with a person who may be living with a disability, actually listen to what this person has to say. Do not expect or force them to speak only about disability. Remember, they are a whole person with many interests!
- Do not try to 'fix' a person, or even to help them without asking. If they desire any assistance from you, they will ask.
- Don't fall prey to ableism. This approach takes for granted some qualities or abilities as expected standards held by every human; however, expecting people to be or act in a particular way denies the beautiful diversity of the members of the human race! Learn more by reading the essay titled "Reassigning Meaning" by Simi Linton, accessible in the Disability History Museum.
- Read and ponder "Signs of Liberation and Access" by Harold Wilke (1915 – 2003) on page 4 of this guide.
- Take the time to read and learn from the article by Harold Wilke: 'Mainstreaming' The Alienated: The Church Responds to a 'New' Ministry.
- Form an **inclusion team** at your local church and be sure to include members who are people living with a disability! A guide for this process is included in Appendix I.
- Form church learning groups to discuss and learn of the variety of challenges felt by people with disabilities. You can start by reading or viewing, and then discussing, any of a large number of books or movies concerning people living with disability. Suggested lists can be found in Appendix II and Appendix III. **Remember to include in these learning groups all members of your church, not simply members of your inclusion team!**

- Investigate the accessibility of your church by taking the UCCDM Audit (available on the UCCDM website: [www.uccdm.org](http://www.uccdm.org)).
- **Most importantly, remember that as a people and as a church institution, we are called to be like Christ and welcome all people without condition!**

## PART IV: COMMUNICATION

When thinking of accessible communication, it's important to think about communicating in a variety of ways:

- 1) through visuals such as sign language, printed resources, and signs around the building to guide people to these resources and help people find their way around the building;
- 2) through auditory communication and technology for those who have disabilities involving eyesight;
- 3) through assistive listening devices and other technology for those with hearing disabilities.

The following questions and suggestions provide a good foundation for consideration of how to communicate well in church settings. Other resources can be found in Appendix II, III, and IV.

- **Are assistive listening devices, microphones, and sign language interpreters available upon request at all services and main congregational events including Bible study?**

Use a reliable sound system, and ensure that people know where the speakers are if they choose to be near one. Single earphones, audio loops, sign language interpreters, and hearing devices are of great benefit for those who have a hearing limitations. Regardless of how loud a speaker you are, **USE THE SOUND SYSTEM!!** Also, face the congregation when speaking. Some people read lips or use body language to help understand what the person is saying. Sermon notes may also be provided at the beginning of worship for those who would choose to use them.

- **Are recordings of services and other events available?**

Some individuals are unable to attend services or events and some who do can use the recordings to review material they were unable to completely process due to difficulty hearing, attention deficits, or other issues that arise for persons with disabilities.

- **Is there signage and notice of availability of all assistive equipment?**

Signage will help people with hearing disabilities to locate assistive equipment, find assistance, and navigate around the building.



- **Are printed sermons available?**

Printed sermons can assist those who have difficulty hearing or who are deaf, especially if a translator is not available. These printed sermons can also be helpful for those who process information more slowly and those who are unable to attend services due to their disability.

- **Are large print bulletins, hymnals (or printed lyrics), and Bibles available?**

Provide large print bulletins, newsletters, and information. Using the UCC bulletins, change font size from 12 points to 18-24 points. Instead of folding the bulletin, use it unfolded. This will allow for the use of larger type without disrupting the flow of the bulletin. Use a computer to change size, a copier to enlarge, or use 18 to 24 points for all bulletins, newsletters, and other church publications. You can always ask individuals with visual impairments which size works best for them. Changing the line spacing is also helpful, if you are working with a computer. Change single space to 1.25 and you will be surprised how much easier it is to read.

- **Are volunteers available to read bulletins, lyrics, and Bibles when needed if a Braille embosser is not available?**

It is appropriate to offer assistance for someone with a disability. Ask if there is anything you can do to assist, and wait for an answer. Do not be alarmed if the response is "No," some people with disabilities have learned how to do things independently and know what is best for them. Never help without permission!

# APPENDIX I: HOW TO BECOME AN A2A DESIGNATED CHURCH

## STEPS TO BECOMING AN A2A CONGREGATION

- If you have yet to form an Inclusion Team or an Accessible to All (A2A) Team at your church, begin by inviting others to join together to discuss the issues around accessibility. Be sure that your invitation reaches all members of the congregation. Resources are available in Appendices II-V of this guide to help you with background information.
- Determine which Bylaws in your church govern the establishment and work of teams, committees, or boards. Follow those guidelines and procedures and communicate with the church clergy and lay leadership about your intentions early on to ensure their support.
- Once a team has been authorized, make sure there is broad representation from the congregation on the team, including at least one liaison from the clergy. Ensure that the team has representation of persons with disabilities, including both visible and “invisible” disabilities. Acknowledge the request from the disabilities community “Nothing about us without us!”
- Select team members to make a presentation to the Board of Trustees, Leadership Team, and other representative decision-making groups in your congregation.
- Publicize team meetings widely and stay open to new members joining at any time.
- Review and make a preliminary overview of your church and congregation using the A2A Audit form available on the UCCDM Website: [www.uccdm.org](http://www.uccdm.org).
- Create a clear Purpose or Mission Statement and goals for the group. The discussion around the purpose and goals will allow members to get to know one another, create clarity about attitudes and knowledge gaps, and energize the team. Think about asking a facilitator to run the first few meetings.
- Gain endorsement of the congregation and clergy for moving ahead. This may be a very simple process in some churches. In others it will be more complex and may require more education, discussion, and even debate.
- Connect with the A2A network of the UCCDM. Network with other congregations, Associations, and Conferences who are actively engaged in becoming Accessible to All.

- Collaborate with other groups in the congregation. You will find that almost all the committees will be connected to the A2A Audit: Education, Social Action, Building and Grounds, Youth, Curriculum, Evangelism, Publicity, etc.
- Look for endowment or memorial funds that might be utilized for committee goals (particularly for any necessary physical plant modifications). Neighbors in Need grants are available through the UCC. Additionally, loans are available through the Cornerstone Fund.
- Plan various ways of providing Disability Awareness training, starting with church staff and lay leadership.
- Report regularly to the governing body.
- Use church newsletters, bulletins, and verbal announcements to keep A2A awareness alive and to celebrate each milestone along the way.
- Complete the A2A Audit (Available on the UCCDM Website: [www.uccdm.org](http://www.uccdm.org) and plan for necessary changes to the church plant, written materials, worship, and education programs.
- Complete and submit the A2A checklist to the UCC Disabilities Ministries Board (Available on the UCCDM Website: [www.uccdm.org](http://www.uccdm.org))

## **Contact Information for Questions, Other Resources, or Discussion of Your A2A Process**

If you have further questions before you begin this process, once you have begun the process, or just want someone to discuss what's happening with your process you are welcome to contact the UCCDM Chair or the UCCDM Secretary. They will talk with you or suggest someone on the board or in your conference who can help. Contact information is below.

[chair@uccdm.org](mailto:chair@uccdm.org)  
[secretary@uccdm.org](mailto:secretary@uccdm.org)

# APPENDIX II: VIRTUAL RESOURCES

## Resources for Additional Information and Recommendations Available Online

### Articles

**Nancy Eisland**, "[Encountering the Disabled God](http://www.dsfnetwork.org/assets/Uploads/DisabilitySunday/21206.Eisland-Disabled-God.pdf)" available on-line at <http://www.dsfnetwork.org/assets/Uploads/DisabilitySunday/21206.Eisland-Disabled-God.pdf>

**Simi Linton**, Reassigning Meaning. Available at the Disability Museum online at <http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/edu/essay.html?id=21>

**Harold Wilke**, "[Mainstreaming' The Alienated: The Church Responds To A 'New' Minority](http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/catcard.html?id=1721)" in the Christian Century, March 23, 1977. available at the Disability Museum online at <http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/catcard.html?id=1721>

**Harold Wilke**, "Signs of Liberation and Access"

**Harold Wilke**, '[Mainstreaming' The Alienated: The Church Responds to a 'New' Ministry](#)'.

### Booklets and Guides

***Dimensions of Faith and Congregational Ministries with Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families***, Ed. William C. Gaventa.

A comprehensive bibliography and listing of resources for clergy, laypersons, families, and service providers. The guide is divided into areas of ministry and outreach, worship, pastoral care, religious education, videos, coping with grief, person-centered planning...and more! A "must-have" for the church library, seminaries, and Conference resource centers. 2005. 176 pages. Download order form available at [www.rwjms.umdj.edu](http://www.rwjms.umdj.edu), also available in pdf format on website.

***Disability Access Symbols***. The Graphic Artists Guild.

[https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools\\_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols](https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols)

Twelve symbols that may be used to promote and publicize accessibility of places, programs, and other activities for people with various disabilities.

***That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome to People with Disabilities.***

Published by The American Association of People with Disabilities ~ 2013 H Street, NW, 5th Floor ~ Washington, DC 20006. Available for free download at <http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/interfaith/that-all-may-worship/that-all-may-worship-cover.html>

**You Don't Have to Break the Bank! What Your Church Can Do Now to be Accessible with Minimal Cost!** Charles Bamforth, Kansas Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ

[http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy\\_url/11027/11YouDontHaveToBreakTheBank.pdf?1418436735](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/11027/11YouDontHaveToBreakTheBank.pdf?1418436735)

## **Groups and Organizations**

**ARC** [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org) The Arc is the national organization of and for adults and children people with developmental disabilities and their families. It is devoted to promoting and improving supports and services for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. The association also fosters research and education regarding the prevention of developmental disabilities in infants and young children. Check for a local ARC organization for help with disability advocacy and support for individuals and families.

**Camphill Communities** [www.camphill.org](http://www.camphill.org)

**Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN)** <https://www.canaccess.org/> promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in faith communities. CAN provides tools for **individuals** and families, **friends** and **advocates**, and faith congregations and communities.

**Disability History Museum** – An excellent archive of the disability rights movement. Great articles and photos. [www.disabilitymuseum.org](http://www.disabilitymuseum.org)

**Disability Visibility Project** <http://www.disabilityvisibilityproject.com/>

**Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network, World Council of Churches**  
<http://www.edan-wcc.org/>

**L'Arche Communities** [www.larcheusa.org](http://www.larcheusa.org)

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons living with serious mental illness and their families. Founded in 1979, NAMI has become the nation's voice on mental illness. Nationally, there are NAMI organizations in every state and in over 1100 local communities across the country that join together to meet the NAMI mission through advocacy, research, support, and education.

**National Organization on Disability** [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org) A Religion and Disability organization that publishes several publications and has programs designed for religious groups who want to improve accessibility. 910 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, DC, 20006. (202) 293-5968

**Pathways to Promise** [www.pathways2promise.org](http://www.pathways2promise.org) This is an interfaith technical assistance and resource center which offers liturgical and educational materials, program models, and networking information to promote a caring ministry with people with mental illness and their families. These resources are used by people at all levels of faith group structures from local congregations to regional and national staff. 5400 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, MO 63139, FAX: (314) 877-6405, Email: [pathways@mimh.edu](mailto:pathways@mimh.edu)

**PEAK Parent Center** [www.peakparent.org](http://www.peakparent.org) PEAK Parent Center is Colorado's federally designated Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). PEAK assists families and others whose lives are affected by disabilities through services like its telephone hotline, workshops, conferences, website, and publications. Web site and printed materials are useful for families everywhere. PEAK sponsors excellent events for educators, parents and other professionals who deal with families and children, including clergy.

**The Accessible Icon Project** <http://accessibleicon.org/>

**The PACER Center** [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org), The mission of PACER Center is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. Through its ALLIANCE and other national projects, PACER, a national center, responds to thousands of parents and professionals each year. From California to Minnesota to New York, PACER resources make a difference in the lives of 6.5 million children with disabilities nationwide. They offer assistance to individual families, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children. PACER's work affects and encourages families across the nation. Excellent resource for understanding special education and disability rights.

**UCC Disabilities Ministries** [www.uccdm.org](http://www.uccdm.org) Established Board within the United Church of Christ with the responsibility of supporting the denomination to fulfill its mission to become Accessible to All (A2A) by including people with disabilities in all areas of the life of the church. We create resources and network with congregations and Conferences to further our work in this area.

**UCC HIV & AIDS Network** <http://www.ucc.org/ucan>

**UCC Mental Health Network** <http://mhn-ucc.blogspot.com/> This board within the UCC works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illnesses/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of congregations.

**Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** at Vanderbilt University is a rich source of information about disabilities, recommendations for interacting with and supporting persons with disabilities, and resources for congregations. A few of the links are listed below:

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/resources/printable/>

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf>

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/resources/disabilitiesrelmanual.pdf>

<http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/interfaith/that-all-may-worship/>

<http://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/vkc/resources/religionspirituality/>

### **Widening the Welcome**

[www.moredomainsforless.com/wideningthewelcome/](http://www.moredomainsforless.com/wideningthewelcome/)

See especially Widening the Welcome recordings:

[www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeWW8xI2FSDyFSDnh3Ed6R0cfPVpS5q67](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeWW8xI2FSDyFSDnh3Ed6R0cfPVpS5q67)

## APPENDIX III: RESOURCES IN PRINT

### **Theology**

Betcher, Sharon V. *Spirit And The Politics Of Disablement.* Fortress Press, 2007.

Block, Jennie Weiss. *Copious Hosting: A Theology Of Access For People With \_ Disabilities.* New York: Continuum, 2002.

Cone, James. *God Of The Oppressed.* Orbis, 2007.

Eiesland, Nancy L. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Fritzon, Arne and Samuel Kabue. *Interpreting Disability: A Church of All and for All.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004.

Swinton, John. *Critical Reflections On Stanley Hauerwas' Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology,* Haworth Press 2005.

Pailin, David A. *A Gentle Touch: from a Theology of Handicap to a Theology of Human Being.* London: SPCK, 1992.

Reynolds, Thomas. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality.* Grand Rapids, MI: BrazosPress. 2008.

### **Biblical Studies**

Olyan, Saul M. *\_Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Disabilities.\_* Cambridge University Press, 2008.

### **Inclusion Studies**

Carter, Erik W. *Including People With Disabilities In Faith Communities.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2007.

Eisland, Nancy L. and Don E Sailers ed. *Human Disability and the Service of God.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.



Shapiro, Arthur. *Every Body Belongs: Changing Negative Attitudes Towards Classmates with Disabilities*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 1999.

Shapiro, Joseph P. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Random House, 1993. This book teaches us the “hidden history” of disability rights in this country. Learning where we have been is important in order for us to go forward.

Webb-Mitchell, Brett. *Beyond Accessibility: Toward Full Inclusion of People With Disabilities In Faith Communities*. New York: Church Publishing, Inc., 2010.

Webb-Mitchell, Brett. *Dancing With Disabilities: Opening The Church To All God’s Children*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008.

Wilke, Harold. *Creating the Caring Congregation*. Abingdon Press, 1980.

## **History**

Haj, Fareed. *Disability in Antiquity*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1970.

Shapiro, Joseph P. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Random House, 1993.

## **Children**

Winters-Johnson, Diane. *The View From Under the Pew*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008.

## **Preaching and Worship**

Black, Kathy. *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability*. Nashville: Abington Press, 1996.

Foley, Edward, Editor. *Developmental Disabilities And Sacramental Access*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994.

Thornburgh, Ginny, Editor. *That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome To People With Disabilities*. New York: National Organization on Disability, 2000.

## **Pastoral Care**

Cox-Gedmark, Jan. *Coping with Physical Disability*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Hartbauer, Roy E., Editor. *Pastoral Care of the Handicapped*. Berrien Springs, Mich: Andrews University Press, 1983.

MacKinlay, Elizabeth, Editor. *Ageing, Disability, and Spirituality: Addressing the Challenge of Disability Later in Life*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008.

Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Understanding the Power of Ministry "In the Broken places" of Our Lives*. Spiritual teachings about universal vulnerability and God's love and acceptance. New York: Image Doubleday, 1979.

Roche, David. *The Church of 80% Sincerity*. New York: Perigee, 2008.

Rosemarie S. Cook. *Counseling Families of Children With Disabilities*. (Resources for Christian Counseling), New York: W Publishing Group, 1990.

Swinton, John. *Building a Church for Strangers*. Edinburgh: Contact Pastoral Trust, 1999.

Sullivan, Jackie. *Pastoral Care with Young and Midlife Adults in Long Term Care*. New York: Haworth Press, 2007.

Thompson, Carolyn. "Ableism: The Face of Oppression as Experienced by People with Disabilities" in *Injustice and the Care of Souls—Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care* ed. Sherly Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Brown Montagno, 211-226. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

## **Parenting Children With Disabilities**

Bolduc, Kathleen. *The Spiritual Art of Raising Children with Disabilities*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2014.

## **Individual Stories**

Bauby, Jean-Dominique. *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly: A Memoir of Life in Death*. New York: Random House, 1997.

Kreyer, Virginia. *Virginia's Story*. Williamsburg, VA: Oral Histories, 2004.

Molsberry, Robert F. *Blindsided By Grace: Entering the World of Disability*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004. Excellent insights offered from the author's experience before and after a serious accident. A unique look at disability in terms of cross-cultural understanding. A good choice for book groups and stimulating conversations. Bob Molsberry is a UCC Minister and is active with the UCCDM.

Molsberry, Robert. *Tour De Faith: A Cyclist's Lessons For Living*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

Pinsky, Mark. *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011.

### **Miscellaneous**

Thornburg, Ginny, Editor. *Loving Justice: The ADA And The Religious Community*. New York: National Organization on Disability, 1996.

Thornburgh, Ginny and Miller Rife, Janet. *From Barriers to Bridges: A Community \_ Action Guide for Congregations and People with Disabilities*. Organizing tips for educational events and community-building activities. Songs, readings, and prayers appropriate for inclusive worship. New York: National Organization on Disability, 1996.

## APPENDIX IV: DISABILITY LANGUAGE

There is a debate about language being held in the disability community. Ten years ago person-first language was the progressive way. Currently, language around disability is changing as not all persons with disabilities prefer the person first language. Some persons with disabilities prefer language that allows their identity as someone with a disability to be named first. The debate continues among activists, scholars, and advocacy groups.

### **Person First**

Positive language empowers. When writing or speaking about people with disabilities, it is important to put the person first. Group designations such as "the blind," "the retarded" or "the disabled" are inappropriate because they do not reflect the individuality, equality or dignity of people with disabilities. Further, words like "normal person" imply that the person with a disability isn't normal, whereas "person without a disability" is descriptive but not negative. The accompanying chart shows examples of positive and negative phrases.

<b>Positive Phrases</b>	<b>Negative Phrases</b>
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability	Retarded, mentally defective
Person who is blind, person who is visually impaired	The blind
Person with a disability	The disabled, handicapped
Person who is deaf	The deaf; deaf and dumb
Person who is hard of hearing	Suffers a hearing loss
Person who has multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by MS
Person with cerebral palsy	CP victim
Person with epilepsy, person with seizure disorder	Epileptic
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined or restricted to a wheelchair
Person who has muscular dystrophy	Stricken by MD
Person with a physical disability, physically disabled	Crippled, lame, deformed
Unable to speak, uses synthetic speech	Dumb; mute
Person with psychiatric disability	Crazy, nuts
Person who is successful, productive	Has overcome his/her disability

## **Identity First**

**Identity-first language** puts the disability-related word first when describing disabled people.

Identity-first language places the disability-related word first in a phrase. People who prefer identity-first language for themselves often argue that their disability is an important part of who they are, or that they wouldn't be the same person without their disability. For some people, identity-first language is about a shared community, culture, and identity. Identity-first language is also about thinking about disability as a type of diversity instead of something to be ashamed of.

Some communities that use identity-first language are the Autistic, Deaf, and Blind communities. Other people might use "disabled person" instead of "person with disabilities." Specific people might refer to themselves differently than most members of their communities, so it is a good idea to ask a person how they identify if you are writing about them or introducing them.

Usage examples: "Blind person", "Deaf person", "Autistic people", "Turner's women", "Disabled people"

Taken from: <http://www.autismacceptancemonth.com/resources/101-3/ways-of-thinking-about-disability/identity-first-language/> on-line [accessed October 17, 2015]

# APPENDIX V: UCC RESOLUTION

## **Resolution to Become Accessible to All**

05-GS-32 VOTED: The Twenty-fifth General Synod adopts the resolution “Called to Wholeness in Christ: Becoming a Church Accessible to All”

### **CALLED TO WHOLENESS IN CHRIST: BECOMING A CHURCH ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

WHEREAS the Biblical vision of the Great Messianic Banquet is of all gathered at the table with bounty for all; and WHEREAS any barrier that limits the wholeness of all, diminishes all; and

WHEREAS medical and scientific advances continue to reduce the death rate from infections, injuries, and other conditions, and more people survive to continue life with some disability and close to twenty percent of the US population identify themselves as having some level of disability, and over the age of eighty the percentage is much higher, so that all members of United Church of Christ congregations will be touched by a disability in some way at some time in their lives, and

WHEREAS the overwhelming majority of people with disabilities want to exercise choice in where and how they live, work, play, worship and serve; and

WHEREAS implementing the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 calls upon the church to take specific measures within each ministry of the church.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on Conferences, Associations, Congregations, seminaries and colleges, campus ministries, camps, covenanted ministries and all other UCC organizations to embody the philosophy of inclusion and interdependence, embark on study and reflection activities about disabilities, disabilities rights, and ways congregations are able to become accessible to all (A2A), remove or overcome barriers to welcoming and including all people in the work and witness of the United Church of Christ, and to support and implement provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Twenty-fifth General Synod acknowledges the uniqueness of every congregation and organization, and urges that these communities consider a progression of ministry and concern not only “to” or “for” people with disabilities but also ministry “with” and “by” people with disabilities.

The Twenty-fifth General Synod is aware that individuals who have lived with disability for some time say the real limitations to living, moving about, working and relating to others are not their particular impairments but the barriers they encounter in the social and physical environment.

Recognizing that discrimination against people with disabilities is complex, pervasive, and sometimes well-intentioned, and remembering that the United Church of Christ seeks to be multicultural, multiracial, open and affirming and accessible to all, this Twenty-Fifth Synod urges Conferences, Associations, congregations, seminaries and colleges, campus ministries, camps, covenanted ministries and all other organizations of the UCC to develop both short-range and long-term accessibility and inclusion plans, which may include some or all of the following activities:

- a) Establish Conference level Inclusion Task Forces charged with needs assessment, planning, and education;
- b) Join the Accessible Congregations Campaign of the National Organization on Disability.
- c) Continue to make improvements in United Church of Christ buildings and facilities to achieve full physical accessibility;
- d) Encourage local churches to establish Inclusion Committees and/or Inclusion Coaches to help conduct any accessibility or inclusion evaluation and modify existing curriculum and practices when needed.
- e) Seek out and befriend mentors in the disabilities community, keeping in mind the slogan, "Nothing about us without us."
- f) Consider ways to invite/include people with disabilities to participate in and lead worship services and other programming. This may involve hiring professional support or acquiring specialized technology.