



More than a Ramp but Maybe a Ramp

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Introductions

- To each other
- To the process of inclusion
 - Fidgets
 - Moving is OK
 - Identify yourself
 - Provide alternative formats





Objectives



- Learn strategies to help us be more welcoming to persons with disabilities and their families
- Identify main barriers
- Begin a plan to address them
- Identify gifts and strengths persons with disabilities bring to our churches

Identifying Barriers

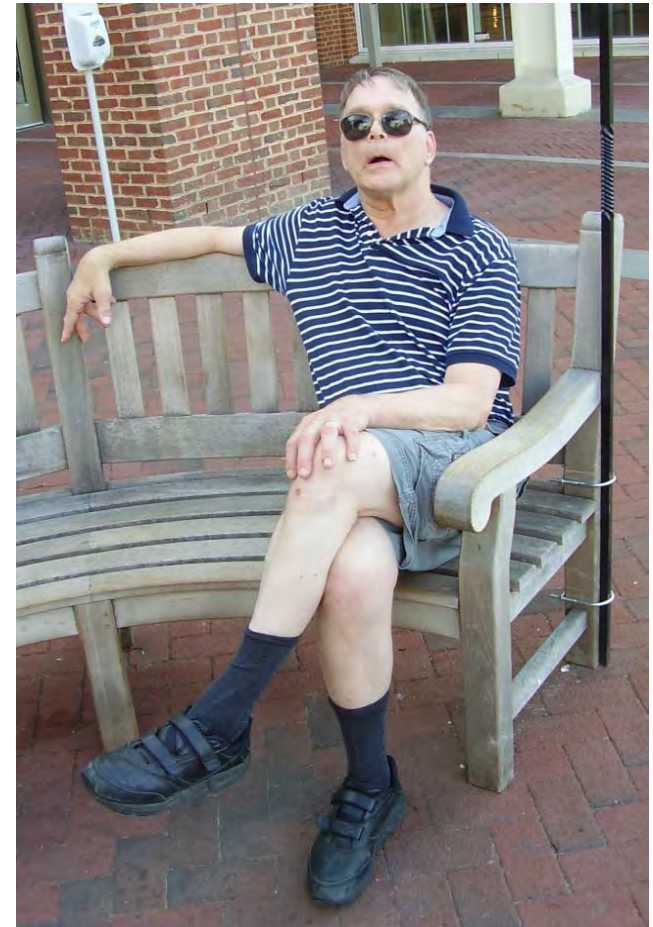
A barrier prevents full participation

- Attitude
- Communication
- Architectural
- Environmental
- Financial



Attitude

- Us/ them
- Language not person-first
- “We don’t have any”
- Ministry to vs. ministry with
- Stigma
- Pity vs inspiration



Communication

I talk loud enough!
Everyone can hear me.

- Small print bulletins* or hymnals
- No PA system, or people won't use it
- Pastor moves around the room – no mic
- DVD's, live streamed and recorded services aren't captioned

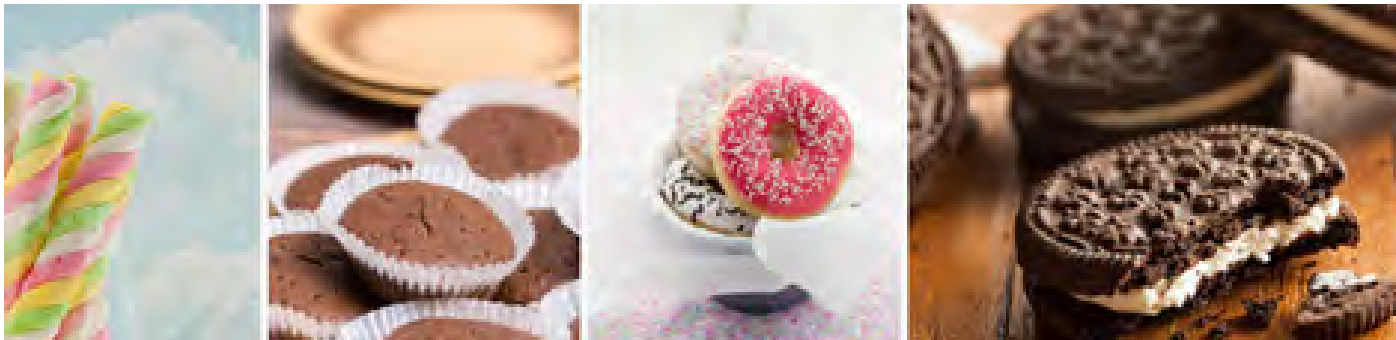
*Large print=Times Roman 14 bold or an 18 font

Architecture

- **Sidewalks, pathways, and hallways**
(bushes, clutter or protruding objects)
- **Coat racks, hooks, towels, mug holders**
(too high for people with wheelchairs or short stature)
- **Only part of the building is accessible**
- **Doors are heavy and hard to open**

Environment

- Heavy fragrances, scented products
- Paints and materials with high level of VOCs
- Flickering fluorescent lights
- Artwork and signs only visually accessible
- Hospitality relies heavily on sugary foods



Financial Barriers

- Assume all accommodations are costly
Assume grants aren't available
- Fear of costly projects in historical buildings
- Spending priorities are for decorative features
- We don't know people with disabilities, so if we build it will they come?

MONEY



A Process to Remove Barriers

- Start with prayer
- Respond to the Spirit
- Recruit an accessibility committee
 - People with disabilities, family members, rehabilitation therapists, trustees, people in construction or architecture
- Study theology of inclusion
 - Jesus spent reached out to people at the margins of society, including people with disabilities



A Process for Removing Barriers

- Complete an accessibility audit
 - Required annually in UM churches
- Member survey
 - What is needed?
 - Interests
 - Skills and gifts; spiritual gifts
 - Others who would attend church if accommodations were available?



Review Findings

- Skills and assets
- Barriers
- Priorities



Begin Removing Barriers

(We will do this after the break)



- Write down obstacles to full participation
- Find one or more solutions to these barriers
- Plan to share your ideas

Finding Your Church

- Local paper, “google” maps and searches
- Website people with low vision can use
- Accessibility information on your website:
 - Accessible parking
 - Building access
 - What accommodations are available



Getting to the Church

- Rides
- Parking
- Snow removal
- Public transportation
- Parking & door signs



Getting into the Church

- Valet parking
- Covered loading area
- Entrance at street level
- Entrance has ramp, lift or elevator
- Greeters open the doors and direct guests



Being Welcomed

- Greeter & usher training
- Welcome kiosk with large print
- Printed sermon
- Assisted listening devices
- Service animals welcome
- Companions available
- Low coat racks available
- Signs direct to restrooms



Worshiping

- Pew cuts – with choice of seating, clear view
- Accessible chancel
- Sign language interpreter
- Order of service projected on screen
- Captioned videos and services
- Visual images and events described
- Disruptions are ok - incorporated into worship



Learning and Study

- Universal design
- Multi-sensory
- Inclusive classes if possible
- Buddy system if needed
- Quiet place to take a break
- Materials in multiple formats
- Use of conference microphone, FM systems



Fellowship and Feasting

- Fellowship hall accessible
- Tables spaced with 36" aisle
- Some chairs have arms
- Special diets
- Alternative foods labeled and attractive
- Offer assistance to get and carry food
- Straws, non-slip placemats



Comfort and Safety

- Directional signage throughout the building
- Family style accessible restroom
- Fragrance free zones
- Careful selection of cleaning products
- Avoid glare and sudden light changes
- Contrasting colors on edge of steps
- Railings at strategic places
- Safety hazards identified and fixed



Out of Building Programming

- Hold small groups in “visitable” locations
- Hold retreats and events in accessible venues
- Check access ahead of time
- Transportation available
- Outdoor areas have sidewalks, accessible picnic tables, play features and restrooms



Reaching Out and Serving

- All members have gifts and skills
- Include persons with disabilities as employees and volunteers, e.g. for mission trips
- Reach out to disability organizations
 - Offer meeting space
 - Plan Disability Awareness Sunday
 - Serve alongside people with disabilities in Habitat, ramp building ministries, accessibility teams





For More Information



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