

Guidance for Completing the “Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches” version 3/2019

Instructions: Based on your findings, mark Yes if the item is true. Focus on your main accessible entrance and on Sunday morning activities, especially worship. Not every restroom, fountain, etc., needs to comply. If the intent of the item is adequately met in a different way, e.g. greeters are posted throughout the morning on Sundays to open doors and provide directions mark it Yes. If only part of a multi-question item is met, mark that item No unless alternatives are given, as designated by “or.” If an item occurs at least 85% of the time, e.g. microphone use in worship and large meetings, score it Yes. If a system is in place to provide services, e.g. “buddy” companions, mark Yes even if no one is using the service. Mark No if an item is not currently met, and explain changes needed in the comments section. Note that scoring is encouraged, but optional. See Audit p. 4 for scoring instructions. Badge Level Key: B=Bronze, S=Silver, G=Gold

GETTING INTO THE CHURCH

1. Clearly visible signs mark or direct people to accessible entrances. (B)

Intent: Visitors can locate an accessible entrance without having to get out of their car or walk around the building to find the entrance.

Guidance: Signs on each side of the building should direct persons to the accessible entrance(s). If a marked accessible entrance door is close to the accessible parking, and is clearly level and accessible, mark this Yes.



2. 1+ [or more] ADA parking spaces are on level ground near entrance. (B)

Intent: ADA parking space(s), adjacent access aisle(s), and the pavement that leads to the access path are relatively level so that walkers and wheelchairs don't roll away or veer sideways when a person is getting in and out of the car, transferring into a wheelchair, and getting to the access path.

Guidance: Any slope with more than 1" rise in 20 feet is considered a ramp and is not level. ADA spaces should be in the rows closest to the building.

3. Wheelchair users don't have to move behind parked cars, cross traffic. (G)

Intent: People who use mobility devices can get to the access path directly, avoiding possible injury from drivers backing up and not seeing a person in a wheelchair moving behind their car.

Guidance: See diagram and photo for layout options



4. At least 1 per 25 spaces is clearly marked with access symbol on vertical signs and on pavement. (S)

Intent: There are sufficient accessible parking spaces for size of the congregation.

Guidance: Divide total spaces by accessible spaces. The accessible logo is painted on each space and the sign can be seen above car height and is helpful when snow is on the ground. Senior parking spaces without access aisles are helpful but don't count for this item, even if they are marked with ADA signs. See FAQ #4 (<https://umcdmc.org/about-disability-ministries/frequently-asked-questions/#4>) for details.

5. Accessible spaces are 8' wide with adjacent 5' access aisle. (B)

Intent: There are marked access aisles for a person to park a car and safely transfer into a wheelchair or assist someone else.

Guidance: The access aisle next to the accessible parking space is marked with painted striping or other means so that cars do not park in the space. Two parking spaces can share one access aisle. (See diagram and photos on prior page.) For some churches street parking may be acceptable if next to the space there is a level unloading area which leads directly to an accessible pathway.

6. At least one accessible space is van accessible: 11' wide with clearly marked adjacent 5' access aisle (or 8' space with 8' access aisle). (S)

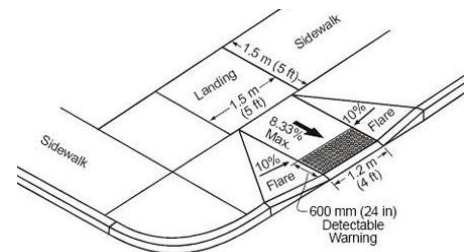
Intent: There is sufficient room for a wheelchair ramp to be lowered from a van side door and a person using a wheelchair to exit the ramp, turn, and move toward the accessible pathway.

Guidance: The access aisle should be marked to prevent cars from parking on it, and the sign (see Item #4) should indicate that the space is "van accessible." (See diagram on prior page.)

7. 36" wide curb cuts (curb ramps) are provided close to parking. (B)

Intent: Curb cuts need to be close to the accessible parking spaces and link to accessible pathways.

Guidance: See diagram. Count this as Yes if the parking area is level with no curbs between the parking lot and sidewalk.



8. Route (sidewalk) from accessible parking to accessible building entrance is smooth, flat, & at least 36" wide. (B)

Intent: People can safely and easily enter the building because the route surface is easy to roll on and no obstacles protrude to limit wheelchair mobility or cause falls.

Guidance: Surface of sidewalk and ramps is of a material such as asphalt, concrete, wood, etc., that doesn't slip or displace. There are no protrusions higher than ¼" or openings parallel to movement (e.g. grates) wider than ½" into which a wheel might slip. Bushes are trimmed so that the space above the sidewalk is at least 36" wide. Note: some state codes require wider (4 to 5') sidewalks.

9. Entrance is level or has exterior ramp with non-slip surface and minimum width of 36" between handrails. (B)

Intent: Persons can enter and exit safely on wet and frosty ramps, and there is adequate space for persons to pass or assist someone using a mobility device.

Guidance: Textured concrete, a metal grid, and roofing material on wooden ramps are all non-slip surface options. Do not use the material with round bumps (“truncated domes”) that is intended to warn people who are blind of hazardous areas such as a roadway. See Item #11 for more on handrails.

10. Ramp has max. incline of 1:12 with no more than 30’ between level landings, or entrance is level. (S)

Intent: On long ramps a person using or pushing a wheelchair may rest as needed between ramp segments.

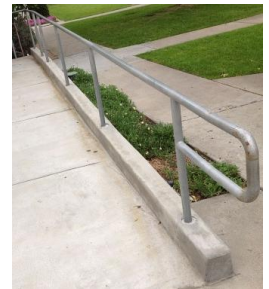
Guidance: The ramp should have at least 1’ length for every 1” of rise. Landings every 30’ should be 48” long. Measure height and length of ramp to compute slope, which should be no more than 1:12. If the slope of the ramp is between 1:16 and 1:20, the maximum rise is still 30” but the maximum run may be 40’.



11. 34-38” handrails are on both sides of ramp/ stairs, lower railing no higher than 4” above deck, or entrance is level. (S)

Intent: Persons who can only use one arm will have a handrail available going up and down. The lower railing prevents a wheel or foot from slipping off the edge.

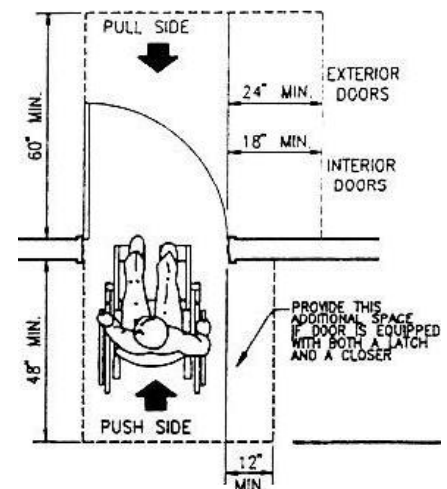
Guidance: Ensure that the tops of safe, smooth, rounded, easy-to-grip handrails with no gaps are mounted 34-38” from and parallel to the ramp surface. The top of the ramp railing is not a handrail. The handrail should extend at least to the point where the ramp starts and ends. Per ADA it should extend 12” horizontally beyond the beginning and end of a ramp or stairway, but omit this if protrusion would be a hazard because of location. A 4” curb (see photo) can substitute for the lower railing, but should usually be avoided in snowy climates for ease of snow removal.



12. There is a 60”x 60” level platform at entry door with space (approximately 18”) on pull side of door, or automatic door opener is used. (B)

Intent: A person using a mobility device has level space off to the side of the door as needed to pull the door open, and if the entrance is level will not roll backwards while trying to open the door.

Guidance: On the push side only 12” space is needed. See diagram.



13. Automatic door opener available, or attended doorbell for assist. (G)

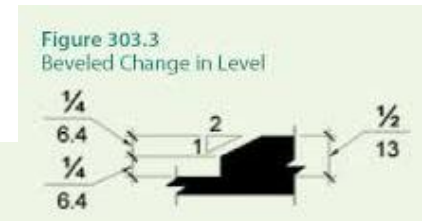
Intent: Persons who have difficulty pulling open the doors have assisted access during hours the office is open and the building is being used.

Guidance: Automatic doors should be enabled during building use hours. If a doorbell is used, it should be mounted no higher than 48” and ring in an area staffed during office hours, program hours, and on Sunday mornings. Mark Yes if someone is stationed at the door to open it from the time people arrive until after worshipers have left the church, and during midweek scheduled activities. Consider a phone number as back-up.

14. Entrance door is 36" wide; threshold no more than beveled ½" high. (B)

Intent: The door is wide enough for all wheelchair users to enter, and the threshold doesn't create a barrier or tripping hazard.

Guidance: An ADA compliant 36" door may have an effective opening of 32". A threshold higher than ¼" should be beveled so that wheels and feet do not get caught.



GETTING AROUND THE CHURCH

15. Signs in entrances/ halls direct visitors and help them locate rooms. (B)

Intent: Guests can easily find their way around the building or campus and locate the sanctuary, restrooms, nursery, etc.

Guidance: A directory at each entrance complements room and directional signs. The item intent is met if greeters are posted at doors, a welcome center, and at confusing points throughout the building/ campus before and during worship and Sunday school hours. ADA door signage with large, raised letters and Braille earns a bonus point.



16. Corridors are at least 36" wide and have non-glare floor surface. (B)

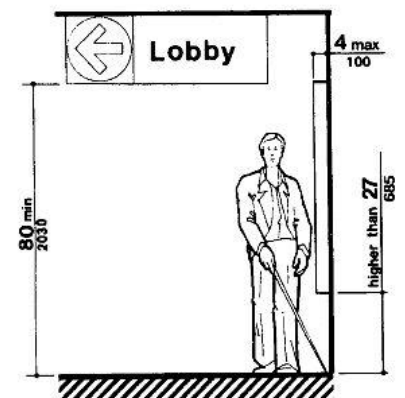
Intent: Persons using mobility devices can move throughout the building without barriers, and persons with various visual conditions can safely walk around without being blinded by glare.

Guidance: Ensure that there are no obstacles protruding into the 36" corridor space and that glare is controlled. Use a matte floor finish.

17. Objects that protrude more than 4" from the wall have a lower edge no higher than 27" above the floor, or a barrier such as a planter or guard rail, to allow detection with a cane. (B)

Intent: A person with a visual loss who uses a mobility cane will be able to detect any hazardous protrusions and obstacles in their path before the person bumps or is tripped by the obstacle.

Guidance: Check for protruding sloped ceilings, signs, mantles, shelves and coat racks, and that barriers such as skirting, flower pots, book-cases, etc. are below the protrusions. In addition, ensure that no sign or high protrusion is lower than 80".



18. Multi-level buildings provide access to all common/ most program areas via elevator, lift and/ or ramp(s), or building is on one level. (B)

Intent: Persons who use wheelchairs and mobility devices as well as persons with difficulty using stairs can participate in all programs and ministries they wish to attend.

Guidance: The sanctuary, fellowship hall, and restrooms must be on an accessible level. If some classrooms are on levels not accessible due to lack of elevator or lift, the intent of this item is met if the congregation is willing to shuffle rooms so that any activity (e.g. a Sunday School class) a person who cannot manage stairs wishes to attend is moved to an accessible location.

19. Interior doorways have a minimum of 32" clearance and thresholds are level or are no more than ½" high and beveled. (B)

Intent: Persons using wheelchairs, which are usually 28-32" wide, can safely enter all common areas of the church.

Guidance: Measure the actual door opening. Note that 36" ADA doors usually only have an effective "clear" door opening of 32". See Item #14 for threshold information.

20. Door handles to ADA bathrooms/ common areas are easy to grasp, operate with one hand (e.g. lever style) using less than 6 lbs. force. (S)

Intent: Persons using mobility devices, children, and persons with poor balance can safely enter accessible restrooms without having to fight the bathroom door weight.

Guidance: Mark Yes if marked accessible restroom doors and doors in hallways and to common areas such as the fellowship hall are easy to grasp and not heavy. Not every door needs to meet this item for a Yes. Heavy doors that are left propped open during building use are acceptable. In some instances the automatic closures will need to be adjusted, and fire safety codes also consulted.

21. Carpet pile is even, no more than ½" thick, with no or firm padding; floor mats have non-slip backing and are stable. (S)

Intent: Persons using wheelchairs do not struggle to push over thick carpet which requires much more force than a bare floor. All floor coverings are safe and not tripping hazards.

Guidance: Industrial or Berber flat low-pile carpeting is acceptable, plush or textured carpeting is not. Avoid padding under the carpet and eliminate area rugs with unsecured edges.

22. Fire alarm controls and extinguishers are no more than 48" from floor; visual and auditory fire alarms are in place. (G)

Intent: All building users will be able to reach, activate, and perceive activation of a fire alarm in order to exit the building immediately in case of fire.

Guidance: Measure to the point where the alarm control is triggered or the extinguisher release strap or enclosure door handle is located. Multi-floor churches have marked evacuation points and a plan in place. See <https://www.naomimitchum.com/emergency-planning/emergency-planning-special-needs/>.

23. At least one marked ADA unisex/ family restroom (or one stall in male and female restrooms) is accessible from each floor; has ~60"x 60" turning space with 33 – 36" high wall-mounted grab bar next to toilet extending 54" from back wall; toilet height 17 – 19". (B)

Intent: People with limited mobility who need an accessible toilet will be able to easily reach one, and persons needing to assist someone of the opposite gender will have a place to do so.

Guidance: Mark Yes if people needing an accessible restroom can easily access one from any part of the building, e.g. by using an elevator. Measure to top of toilet seat and grab bar from floor. See ADA standards for the variety of room and stall configurations that are acceptable. Not every restroom needs to be accessible to meet this item. Score a bonus point for having a fully accessible ADA family/ gender neutral restroom in addition to ADA stalls in men's and women's restrooms. See <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards/chapter-6-plumbing-elements-and-facilities>.

29. Top/bottom step edges & ramp level changes marked, or [building is] one level. (S)

Intent: People with visual disabilities (e.g. depth perception or visual field loss) have a visual cue of a change in level or grade, to decrease the risk of falls.

Guidance: Durable tape, paint, or other contrasting material - that will not work loose and cause a tripping hazard - mark the leading edge of stair treads and delineate the line where a ramp of the same color as the floor or carpet begins and ends.

SANCTUARY, CLASSROOMS, AND FELLOWSHIP AREA

30. At least 1-2 level pew cuts/ spaces for wheelchair users are available. (B)

Intent: In the sanctuary and rooms with fixed seating, persons seated in wheelchairs can find a place or two to sit for worship where they do not roll out of place, slide on their chair seat, or block the aisle, and where there is space for companions to sit with them.

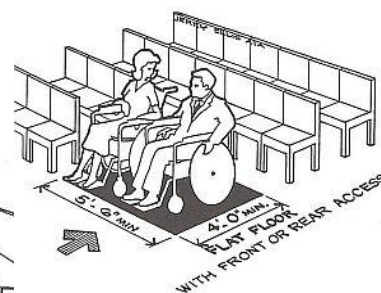
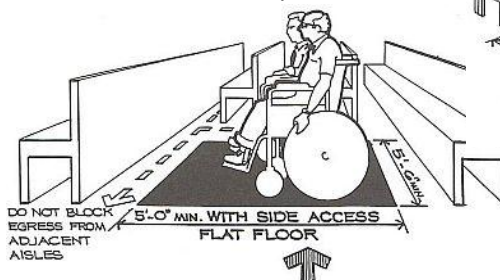
Guidance: For this item to be met, spaces can be at the front, back, or next to side pews as long as the floor is level and there is a 36" access aisle around the wheelchair, i.e. at least 70" total width.

31. Wheelchair spaces are 33"x48" forward or 33"x60" side approach, distributed throughout the room for choice in seating, with view of pulpit/ screen when others stand. (S)

Intent: There are seating options for wheelchair users within the congregation, not just in front of the first pew or behind the last pew. Each space should allow for a companion to sit next to the person.

Guidance: See diagrams. Usually the ends of two pews need to be removed to provide sufficient space. Look for the best sight lines and poll current members who use wheelchairs to determine where to place the

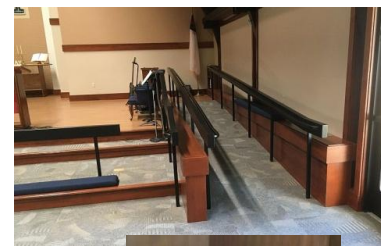
pew cuts. Cuts can be used for walkers and strollers if needed. Chairs can be placed in the spaces when not being used by someone needing the pew cut. If the pastor and worship leaders as well as songs and liturgies are projected on screens throughout worship, then mark this item Yes if persons seated in pew cuts can see a screen.



32. Chancel area and choir loft are accessible, e.g. with ramp or lift. (G)

Intent: Worship leadership is provided from a space that is accessible to all persons, including people who use mobility devices or cannot manage stairs.

Guidance: Access can also be from a back or side hallway with a door to the platform, or the church can choose to have all activity, including that of choir and liturgists, on the main floor in front of the chancel platform. It is acceptable for some members of a choir to be on risers as long as persons remaining on level ground are incorporated in the body of the group.



33. Handrail(s) provided for steps to the chancel, or chancel is level. (S)

Intent: Persons with some mobility limitations but who can manage stairs, especially persons who can only use one hand, can safely access the chancel.

Guidance: Ensure that there are safe, smooth, rounded, easy-to-grip handrails at ~34-38" from and parallel to the steps. Per ADA the rail(s) should extend 12" horizontally beyond the beginning and end of stairs, but for the chancel this extension may need to be shorter.

34. At least one aisle in each space is 36" or more. (B)

Intent: There is an access path to all needed areas, e.g. to the front of the sanctuary for communion, to the serving area and tables in the fellowship hall.

Guidance: Measure the narrowest spot, based on protruding furniture, pew arrangement, etc. Not every aisle needs to be 36" but all pew cut-outs and wheelchair spaces need to be adjacent to 36" or wider aisles.

35. Fellowship - e.g. potlucks, coffee hour- is offered in accessible space. (B)

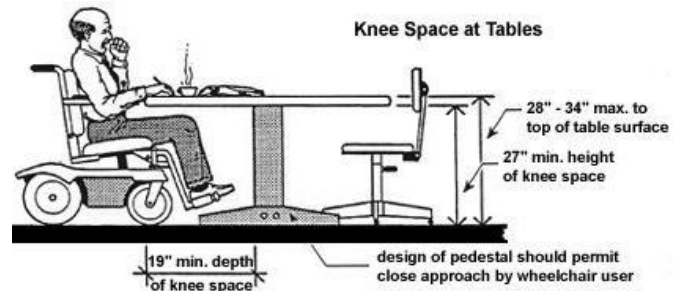
Intent: People with and without mobility limitations have fellowship opportunities together in the same space.

Guidance: Mark the item met if fellowship activities for all congregants are moved to an accessible location if the traditional location, e.g. the church basement, is not accessible.

36. In fellowship area and classrooms at least one table has minimum of 27" clearance on underside, and a maximum height of 34". (B)

Intent: All participants are able to sit with their legs under a table for meals or classes.

Guidance: See diagram – one or more tables should have clearance and knee space so that persons seated in wheelchairs can use them.



37. 1-2 sturdy chairs have armrests, seats ~18" from floor, and no wheels. (B)

Intent: There are safe seating options for people who have difficulty rising from low chairs, e.g. people who have had hip or back surgery, people with poor balance, etc.

Guidance: Such chairs need to be available for use anywhere in the church including the sanctuary, but not necessarily present in every room. Chairs with arms can be placed in extra wheelchair cut-out spaces and moved when the space is needed for someone using a mobility device.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

38. Members are sensitized about need to minimize use of fragrances. (S)

Intent: The congregation is hospitable to members and guests who are among the increasing number of persons with allergies and chemical sensitivities, and members are willing to modify their use of fragrances.



Guidance: Sensitization can be in the form of bulletin reminders, a newsletter article, or signs at the entrance to the sanctuary. Altar arrangements avoid fragrant bouquets, especially if there are members with significant allergies. Bonus point awarded if the sanctuary has a Fragrance-Free Zone.

39. Soaps, cleaning products and other chemicals are fragrance free; candles are unscented and non-petroleum-based. (G)

Intent: Persons with allergies and chemical sensitivities can potentially attend worship and use church facilities without becoming ill due to environmental triggers.

Guidance: Use of off-the-shelf commercially available products with no added chemical fragrances is sufficient to meet this item, but labels should be checked for hidden fragrances before purchase.

40. Projected words (e.g. song lyrics) use large font and good contrast. (S)

Intent: Information and liturgy projected on screens is accessible to most viewers.

Guidance: Avoid use of busy, multi-color background images and ensure that there is ample dark/light contrast between the background and letters. Plain backgrounds are optimal. Font size depends on sanctuary size, but at a minimum should be 24 points and visible throughout the room. Mark No if no projection is used.

41. Large print bulletin, song lyrics, & scriptures provided on request. (B)

Intent: Members and visitors with low vision who benefit from large print can participate fully in worship.

Guidance: Enlarging materials on the photocopier or within the document are good ways to meet this need – there is no requirement to purchase large print hymnals or Bibles, especially since font size needs vary among individuals. 18 point font is usually the minimum. Ideally large print bulletins, with supplemental materials, are provided routinely if there are members who need them, so that visitors with low vision also have immediate access.

42. Braille or electronic documents provided upon advanced request. (S)

Intent: Persons who cannot use print media due to visual loss can access materials through the technology that they use, in order to actively participate in worship and other church activities.

Guidance: The congregation is willing to locate a source to transcribe the bulletin and song lyrics etc. into Braille, should someone request this, and to send the bulletin and song lyrics ahead of time via e-mail to someone who requests this access for use with their refreshable Braille display or text-to-speech program. Having a Braille Bible and hymnal scores a bonus point, but is not required for this item to be met. See FAQ #10 (<https://umcdmc.org/about-disability-ministries/frequently-asked-questions/#10>) for more information.

43. Microphone used by all speakers or comments are repeated at mic. (B)

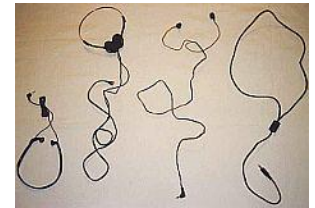
Intent: All attendees and participants who need amplification are able to hear during worship, presentations, and meetings.

Guidance: If requested and for events with more than 15-20 people, a PA or conference microphone system is used, and when possible there is a second pass-around microphone for audience participation. Members are gently reminded to use the microphone when requested to do so.

44. Assisted listening system (FM and/ or loop) and receivers are available. (S)

Intent: Persons who lack hearing aids or have T-switch technology in their hearing aids or cochlear implants are able to participate as fully as possible.

Guidance: A sign posted near the entrance to the sanctuary indicates presence of the devices, and ushers are able to direct worshipers to them. Offer neck loop receivers in addition to earbuds and headsets. Check the system weekly to ensure it is operative, and have replacement batteries readily available. See the Congregational Resources from the UM Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries website <https://www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html> for more information.



45. ASL sign language interpreter is provided upon advanced request. (G)

Intent: The congregation is willing to obtain a qualified ASL sign language interpreter for worship, participation in classes, meetings and fellowship time, should this be requested in advance by a Deaf person.

Guidance: There is no requirement to have an ASL interpreter if one is not needed, but the congregation should have information on arranging for an interpreter when one is requested. For events lasting over an hour, two interpreters are needed to alternate at 20 minute intervals. See the Congregational Resources from the UM Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries website <https://www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html> for more information.

46. Print/ e-mailed copies of sermon provided upon advanced request. (S)

Intent: Persons who have difficulty hearing will be able to supplement their understanding of the sermon by following along or reading the full sermon after the service.

Guidance: Copies can be provided by e-mail or printed copies may be available from an usher. If the pastor doesn't use a manuscript, providing a detailed outline meets the intent of the item.

47. Captions are provided / turned on for videos and other media. (G)

Intent: Persons with hearing loss (and people for whom English is not their first language) will be able to perceive information along with people who can hear the information.

Guidance: Captions are turned on when available, and items that originate in the congregation are captioned if there are spoken parts. When media is purchased or ordered from the conference media center, availability of captions is requested as a priority feature. Bonus point awarded if the entire service is captioned weekly, either live (on a screen or via a device) or on-line.

ATTITUDES

48. Accessibility measures and who to contact for questions described in bulletin, website, maps, Find-A-Church site, and/or signage. (B)

Intent: Persons interested in your church can easily find basic access and accommodations information along with contact details for a knowledgeable person who can answer questions and arrange support based on specific needs.

Guidance: Check your website, noting whether or not a visitor who uses a wheelchair or needs other accommodations would find the information they need, including parking, building, and program accessibility. Information should be available in two or more places. Bonus point awarded if there is a detailed accessibility section on the website or a designated accessibility coordinator or disability ministry coordinator available.

49. Pastor(s), ushers, greeters, and leaders have learned and practice appropriate disability etiquette and hospitality. (B)

Intent: Hospitality is shown to all who enter the church, irrespective of ability. Greeters and ushers feel comfortable when they meet and assist visitors with disabilities.

Guidance: Use on-line resources, such as those at <https://umcdmc.org/resources/ways-to-welcome-all/etiquette-and-communication/>. Ask your greeters and ushers if they need additional training. Ask families or persons with disabilities what response they receive. You may use the “Congregational Survey: Ministries with People with Disabilities” form to gather additional information.

50. Signs, websites, and/or bulletin boards offer evidence that people with visible and hidden disabilities are welcome and included in the life of the congregation, e.g. through support group info., photos. (S)

Intent: There is visible evidence that persons with disabilities are expected and active in the congregation.

Guidance: Look at photographs in your media including the website and newsletter to see if the diversity reflected include persons with visible disabilities. Look for brochures, articles, or classes about resources such as support groups, respite services, equipment loan closet, etc. as appropriate to your context.



51. Disruptions are accepted and incorporated into worship. (B)

Intent: Persons (children and adults) who call out, cough, talk, or need to stand up during the service, etc. are not singled out, stared at, or made to feel out of place.

Guidance: Observe responses during worship, and discuss this item with the pastor. Ask families or persons with disabilities how others react. You may use the “Congregational Survey: Ministries with People with Disabilities” form to gather additional information.

52. Qualified service animals (e.g. guide dogs) are welcome within the church building(s) including the sanctuary and fellowship hall. (B)

Intent: Anyone with a disability who uses a trained service dog that meets ADA standards is welcome to bring the dog with them as they participate in aspects of church life.

Guidance: Dogs are not “certified” but must be well-trained and perform specific tasks for the person with a disability. The dogs should be mostly invisible as they remain close to their handler and are left alone by the congregation. You should not permit dogs that are disruptive to remain in the building. You are not required to but may choose to allow well-trained companion animals. See the ADA directive <https://adata.org/factsheet/service-animals> and FAQ #9 (<https://umcdmc.org/about-disability-ministries/frequently-asked-questions/#9>) for more specifics.

53. Congregation works to use inclusive, person-first language in worship, e.g. people are invited to “rise in body or in spirit.” (B)

Intent: All persons are included as beloved children of God in the liturgy and songs.

Guidance: Say “please be in an attitude of prayer” rather than “close your eyes for prayer,” which leaves out people who have hearing loss and need to watch the pastor’s lips. Make sure the liturgy and hymns do not equate disability with sin, as in the phrases “blind to the needs of our neighbors” or “deaf to the cries of the poor.” Instead use phrases like “open the eyes or our hearts” or “may our spirits respond to...” Avoid stigmatizing language around mental health, such as the words “crazy” or “nuts,” and avoid using diagnoses (e.g. schizophrenia) as metaphors. When mentioning people who have a disability, refer to the person first, e.g. the man who uses a wheelchair or the child who has cerebral palsy – don’t define identity by diagnoses unless an individual (often someone on the autism spectrum or who is Deaf) requests this.

54. Classes and programs are adapted as needed to facilitate active participation of children and adults with disabilities. (S)

Intent: Persons with disabilities are included in the life of the congregation, using support and accommodations to make typical programs work for most persons and activities. Adaptation is done intentionally, set up by persons with knowledge about disability who may train others.

Guidance: Set-apart programs are the exception and used only on request of the participants or their families, e.g. a Sunday School class for adults with intellectual disabilities who enjoy the weekly time together and are otherwise fully integrated into worship, fellowship, and service opportunities.

See <https://www.naomitchum.com/special-needs/special-needs-leader-information/> for ideas.

55. Disability Awareness Sunday ¶265.4 observed during past 1-2 years. (B)

Intent: There is visible evidence that inclusion and disability awareness is part of the culture of the congregation, evidenced partly by celebrating Disability Awareness Sunday at least every other year.

Guidance: See <https://umcdmc.org/worship/disability-sunday-order-of-worship/> and FAQ #11 (<https://umcdmc.org/about-disability-ministries/frequently-asked-questions/#11>) for ideas, liturgies, and links to help you plan your service. Note that if people with disabilities are already highly involved and integrated into all aspects of the life of the congregation and if the members with disabilities feel that a “special Sunday” would be a step backward, providing disability awareness in alternative ways meets the intent of this item.

56. Gifts of persons with disabilities are identified and used in service, worship, and leadership roles, and to help to improve access. (S)

Intent: People with disabilities serve in various roles according to their gifts and interests, ranging from greeter and usher to committee member or chairperson, liturgist, or technical consultant. Persons with disabilities and family members help complete this Annual Accessibility Audit.

Guidance: Ask members with disabilities whether they feel their gifts are being well-utilized. The “Congregational Survey: Ministries with People with Disabilities” is one tool to use. Pay attention to the composition of committees and people serving in volunteer and staff roles in your ministries, and whether persons with disabilities are actively involved.

57. Needs of people on special diets are considered when food is offered, including gluten-free & alcohol-free communion elements. (B)

Intent: Visitors and members with dietary needs are assured that they can safely receive communion and find appropriate food at events.

Guidance: Communion elements are either gluten-free for all, or the gluten-free option is kept apart (including use of a separate chalice) from wheat-based elements. The communion invitation includes the location of the gluten-free station. If wine is used, grape juice is offered as well. Information about food ingredients and alternatives is posted on signs or recipe cards at potlucks. Fellowship treats include more than high-carbohydrate baked goods so that people on diabetic or weight loss diets find appealing protein and vegetable options. If a member has a peanut or other serious allergy there is a safety system in place and followed.



58. Transportation and valet parking or parking lot assistance is offered. (S)

Intent: There is a system for offering rides to church for adults not able to drive, and to help people with mobility limitations easily and safely enter the church, especially in inclement weather, within the parameters of the church Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures.

Guidance: Respond based on your context. In small churches neighbors naturally offer rides as needed, and greeters watch for anyone struggling to get from their cars into the church, offer umbrellas, etc. Large churches may station a golf-cart driver in the parking lot to assist people with difficulty walking, pick people up from their residences in an accessible bus, and/or offer approved greeters who park cars of people who pull into the unloading area (note that driving a hand-control van may require certification), using a secure key access and retrieval system. A bonus point is awarded if the church has a bus with wheelchair lift that is used regularly to bring members to worship.

59. “Buddy” system offered for individuals needing 1:1 assistance. (S)

Intent: Trained volunteers or staff members are available to be with a child, youth, or adult who needs support in order to participate fully in Sunday School, worship, and fellowship, within the parameters of the church Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures.

Guidance: Mark Yes if there is a system in place to provide support, whether or not it is actively used. See <https://www.naomimitchum.com/special-needs/special-needs-leader-information/a-buddy-notebook-2/> for information on developing such a system.

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Goals – Setting goals, while not required, increases your likelihood of making needed improvements. Set priorities based on needs of persons who are currently attending or would like to participate, and on what you can realistically change in the short term. Add long-term goals to the Trustees’ 5 or 10 year plan.

Consultation – Many annual conferences have a Disability Concerns or similar committee (per Paragraph 653 of the *Book of Discipline*) that would love to hear from you. Most committees have members with expertise in accessibility, or can guide you to persons or organizations that have this expertise. See <https://umcdmc.org/disability-ministries/disability-groups-by-state/> for contact information.

Comments – Provide explanations of “No” answers (listed by audit item), or use this space for summary or general notes. Continue comments on additional pages as needed.

Signatures – Print the form and have the pastor and Trustee’s chairperson sign the completed audit to indicate that they have participated and are aware of the findings. The signature of the District Superintendent is optional, depending on requirements of your Annual Conference.

Dates – Please indicate the date the audit report was completed. Add the Charge Conference date to ensure that the report is ready to submit prior to that date, per requirements of Paragraph 2533.6 of the *Book of Discipline*.

Contact information – Please provide names and contact information for the persons completing the form who can answer questions if needed.

Process information

- This form is for use on existing buildings only; refer to current ADA & state regulations for construction or major remodeling projects: https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm.
- The survey should be completed by a team including a member of the trustees, and people with construction, architecture and/or rehabilitation backgrounds. Include persons with disabilities and family members, especially someone who uses a wheelchair and someone with low vision, in the process.
- Interview individuals with disabilities and family members of children and adults with disabilities to learn how welcoming your congregation is and to help set priorities.
- This is not an all-inclusive listing of ADA guidelines or appropriate accommodations, but rather represents basic first steps that a church may take to begin to implement accessibility measures.
- Remember that the items contained in this audit are minimum expectations and not a full ADA audit, and that the ADA standards are also only minimum standards.
- Resources are available through your conference Disability Concerns Committee (§1653) and through the DisAbility Ministry Committee of the UMC at <https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/> (check subheadings, too) to help you plan and carry out improvements. For more information e-mail us at information@umcdmc.org.

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Scoring – (not mandatory)

1. Add the number of **Yes** responses in each badge category (**B**ronze, **S**ilver, and **G**old).
2. Compute the percentage of **Yes** responses in that badge category.
3. In order to receive a badge at the designated level, the church needs to score at least 85% at that level and any lower levels, i.e. the church cannot receive **S**ilver if the **B**ronze level is not met.

Examples –

- Church A scores 29/32 in the **B**ronze category (90%), 14/20 in the **S**ilver category (70%) and 2/7 in the **G**old category (28%). This church qualifies for the **B**ronze badge
- Church B scores 31/32 in the **B**ronze category (96%), 18/20 in the **S**ilver category (90%) and 4/7 in the **G**old category. This church may apply for a review to see if it qualifies for the **G**old badge.*

Key –

B = Bronze (Basic accessibility and accommodations) – The church is welcoming and offers basic amenities needed for a person with a disability to participate, e.g. a place to park, a way to get into the building and sanctuary, a bathroom that is usable, etc. Most items at this level are low cost and can be easily provided, e.g. ushers and greeters trained in disability etiquette, website information on access.

(Verified by self-report, using the Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches.)

S = Silver (Satisfactory accessibility and accommodations) – The church has many accessible features and offers accommodations for persons with a variety of disabilities including hearing loss and limited vision. Silver level items may cost a bit more and take more effort to put in place. While some areas are not yet fully accessible and inclusive, it is clear that the congregation is working towards accessibility.

(Verified by self-report, using the Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches.)

G = Gold (Great accessibility and accommodations) – The congregation has gone beyond ADA and strives to provide an accessible space and appropriate accommodations. The church welcomes individuals with varying disabilities and their families through intentional measures and ministries. Continued improvement is planned based on needs of members and the community. This church would be a good choice to host conference events per ¶716.2 of the *Book of Discipline*, and might mentor other churches.

*(*Verified by the Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches and an interview or site visit. The audit will be reviewed in more depth to reach the Gold level. Additional measures you have taken may count as bonus Gold points to reach 85% or more.)*

Next steps –

After the audit is completed and scored, please submit it as part of your annual Charge Conference packet. Your District Superintendent will let you know if a copy of the report is required, and where to send it if so.

If you have scored a Bronze or Silver badge, contact your conference Disability Ministry Committee to see if they are participating in the program and can send the badge. If not, please complete the short application at <https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/accessibility-audit/> and send it to information@umcdmc.org and you will be sent a password so that you can download your badge.

You may use the downloaded badge on your website, newsletter, bulletin and any other media where you tell about your congregation and ministries. Celebrate your achievement at a worship service so the whole congregation can make the commitment to live into this designation.

If you believe you have scored a Gold badge, you may use a Silver badge (see above) until you can schedule a site review. The review can be completed by designated persons from your conference Disability Ministry Committee, or by Resource Persons from the DisAbility Ministries Committee of the UMC. Contact us at information@umcdmc.org for more information.

Next year's audit will be easy – you only need to check to see whether there are changes, and update the current form! Blessings as you work to improve accessibility and to become an increasingly disability-friendly church, where persons of all abilities may worship and participate together.