



Disability-Friendly and Accessible Church Badge Project Process for Annual Conference Disability Ministry Committees

1. Participation in the Badge Project

- Decide whether or not your conference and its disability ministries committee wants to participate in the DisAbility Ministries Committee (DMC) Disability-Friendly and Accessible Church Badge project
 - this year, next year, not at all

2. Project Implementation Process— Take ownership of the project through the following:

- Make sure that your conference Communications staff have uploaded the 3/2019 version of the Annual Accessibility Audit for UM Churches (see <https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/accessibility-audit/>) onto the conference website, under charge conference forms (delete the outdated version) and/or on the disability ministries committee page
- Ensure that the cabinet includes the Audit in the expected charge conference forms and reports, per Paragraph 2533.6 of *The Book of Discipline*.
- Note that the Bronze or Silver badges are awarded based on self-report from the Annual Accessibility Audit scoring. While churches can apply at the DMC website for their badges, having the conference Disability Ministries Committee manage the program is preferred. Contact us at information@umcdmc.org for more information. You will be able to adapt the forms in the Appendix to meet the needs of your annual conference and committee.
- Gold badges require a site review from your committee or other qualified persons. Decide how you will create capacity or seek assistance for validating the Gold level badge. Note: See Appendix for more information about badge level and the review process.
- Decide whether reviewers are comfortable with accessibility audits of need training.
 - Read the Guidance document at <https://umcdmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Guidance-for-Completing-the-Annual-Accessibility-Audit-for-Churches-2019-FINAL.pdf> to review the intent and process for completing the Audit
 - If no one has experience with accessibility, decide how to conduct or obtain training
- Request the badge graphics and certificates from the DMC if you haven't already received them.

3. Tracking Badges

- Decide who will receive the Annual Accessibility Audits
 - Copies of all audits submitted to the conference disability ministries committee?
 - Copies to district or conference office?
- Decide how to track/ who will track which churches receive badges and how many in each category
 - Work with conference IT staff to come up with a process for tracking?
 - Please include a process for reporting numbers and stories to the DMC.

4. Promotion Options

Since Annual Conference season is over, consider an article in your conference newsletter or other conference media channels, e.g. Facebook, highlighting churches that are awarded badges and describing their ministries.

5. Recognition of Churches

Have fun with this! A little friendly competition (e.g. between districts?) may be a good thing.

- Where will congregations that earn badges be recognized?
 - On floor of conference – plenary or laity session?
 - In conference media?
 - Presented on during worship at the individual church?
- Which churches will be recognized?
 - Gold level only or all badges?
 - One time only per each new level achieved? Or via an ongoing commitment process?
- How will churches be recognized
 - Certificate only?
 - Door decal purchased by the conference disability ministries committee or available for purchase/ donation by the church?

For more information check the website <https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/> or contact the DMC at information@umcdmc.org if you can't find an answer to your question.

Disability-Friendly and Accessible Badge Awards: Gold Level Criteria and Process

1. Based on the most recent audit, the church reaches at least 85% for the Bronze and Silver levels, and 85% or at least 4/7 Gold items with the expectation of adding bonus points (see below).
2. The church schedules a review of and discussion about the audit responses:
 - a. The follow-up will be done by reviewers from outside the church who have been validated in the process. Reviewers include conference or district disability ministries committee members, DMC members, or resource persons. The training will be available on-line.
 - b. The reviewer meets with one or (preferably) more persons who helped complete the audit; this can be done via in-person site visit, or using a video call, or by phone call with follow-up photos sent afterwards as indicated.
3. The review starts with a check to ensure the intent of the audit items is met and the church is striving to go beyond the ADA and minimum standards.
4. The review includes identifying ministries, building features, and other indicators of a Gold level of accessibility and inclusion. A bonus Gold point is awarded for each additional item that goes above and beyond in the context of the church's ministry setting, e.g.:
 - A disability committee is responsible for accessibility and sets and achieves goals.
 - A designated staff member addresses disability ministries as a significant part of their job.
 - Leadership systematically asks for feedback on how welcoming they are to families and individuals with disabilities, or has conducted a congregational survey on disability this year.
 - The church employs a pastor or staff member who is Deaf or has a significant disability.
 - Respite services are offered for children with disabilities or adults with dementia.
 - Support groups for parents or siblings of children with disabilities meet regularly.
 - A "shush-free" worship service strives to include children and adults of all abilities in worship.
 - A sensory room or other identified safe/ quiet space is available with appropriate staffing.
 - Signs meet ADA standards for placement height, large raised contrasting letters, and Braille.
 - The church has a van or bus with a wheelchair lift or ramp and uses it regularly.
 - A restroom changing table with privacy provided is set up for children and others needing this.
 - There is a covered unloading area at an accessible entrance with valet parking provided.
 - The church has a Deaf ministry, provides live captioning, or on-line sermons are captioned.
5. The reviewer and church agree on the number of bonus Gold points to be added to the number of Gold items met and to the total number of possible Gold points in order to compute the score.
6. The reviewer and the church representative(s) come to a mutual agreement that the congregation and church meet the intent of the Gold level accessibility and hospitality standards.
7. The reviewer notifies the conference disability committee and requests a badge and certificate.
8. If possible, a representative from the conference or district Disability Ministries committee presents a certificate to the congregation during a worship service, so that the entire congregation makes the commitment to becoming a Disability-Friendly and Accessible Church. If a visit isn't possible, mail the certificate and have someone from the Trustees and or local disability ministries committee receive the certificate on behalf of the congregation.

Disability-Friendly and Accessible Badge – Silver, Applying for Gold

COMMIT! We certify that our congregation scored at the Silver Badge level based on completing the 2019 Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches. We also believe that we will earn the Gold Badge after a review of our facilities and programs.* By downloading this badge and accepting this “Disability-Friendly and Accessible” designation, this congregation commits to continuing to remove barriers of architecture, communication, and attitudes so that people with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of worship, leadership, ministry, and mission. We agree that the Gold Badge statement reflects our church facilities as well as congregational values and practices.

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..

Congregation:

City:

Annual conference:

Date:

Audit score: Bronze ___/32 = ___%; Silver ___/20 = ___%; Gold ___/7 + ___ (bonus) = ___%

Person downloading badge:

E-mail address:

Note: You may contact us to download the Silver badge now, or wait until the review and the chance to receive the Gold badge.

COMMUNICATE AND CELEBRATE! Congratulations on the hard work your congregation has done to get to this point! Use the badge on your church website and print or digital media to let potential guests know of your access and intentionality. Door decals will be available soon.

Let your congregation, Administrative Council, and Annual Conference Disability Concerns Committee know that you earned the badge, and include the information as part of your Charge/Church Conference report.

Please send this page, when completed, to information@umcdmc.org. You can scan and send it, or copy it into the body of an e-mail. You will receive a password to allow you to download the digital badge. We will ensure that the badge is added to your [Find-A-Church](#) site at UMC.org. Thanks for helping us track the number of congregations who earn badges and thanks for being disability-friendly and accessible!

DONATE! Please strongly consider making a donation to the DisAbility Ministries Committee of the UMC through [The Advance for United Methodist Churches # 3021054](#) in order to assist other churches to make accessibility improvements!

Obtaining your Disability-Friendly and Accessible Badge - Silver

COMMIT!

We certify that our congregation scored at the Silver Badge level based on completing the 2019 Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches. By downloading this badge and accepting this “Disability-Friendly and Accessible” designation, this congregation commits to continuing to remove barriers of architecture, communication, and attitudes so that people with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of worship, leadership, ministry, and mission. We agree that the Silver Badge statement reflects our church facilities as well as congregational values and practices.

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.

Congregation:

City:

Annual conference:

Date:

Audit score: Bronze ___/32 = ___%; Silver ___/20 = ___%; Gold ___/7 = ___%

Person downloading badge:

E-mail address:

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Obtaining your Disability-Friendly and Accessible Badge - Bronze

COMMIT!

We certify that our congregation scored at the Bronze Badge level based on completing the 2019 Annual Accessibility Audit for United Methodist Churches. By downloading this badge and accepting this “Disability-Friendly and Accessible” designation, this congregation commits to continuing to remove barriers of architecture, communication, and attitudes so that people with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of worship, leadership, ministry, and mission. We agree that the Bronze Badge statement reflects our church facilities as well as congregational values and practices.

Bronze Badge (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.

Congregation:

City:

Annual conference:

Date:

Audit score: Bronze ____/32 = ____%; Silver ____/20 = ____%; Gold ____/7 = ____%

Person downloading badge:

E-mail address:

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