Church Accessibility Project:
List of Common Universal Accommodations

- Use the copier to produce large print copies of printed materials that are either passed out or projected. Also include a digital option such as a flash drive or e-mail copy that can be easily sent for those using cell phones or other assistive technologies (such as those built into a cell phone or tablet).
- Include those with disabilities or those with knowledge of accessible modifications in the planning of any building renovations. They can help evaluate building plans from the perspective of those in wheelchairs, with medical disabilities, sensory disabilities, Autism, or other disabilities that would be affected by the structure of a building.
- Put paper cups out so that those who have difficulty accessing the water fountain have an option for getting a drink.
- Evaluate the lighting and sound systems not only to accommodate those with vision and hearing needs, but also at levels that would not overstimulate those with Autism or other disabilities that are sensitive to light/sound. Technologies exist that allow the sound system to

connect to headsets for those with hearing loss so that they can hear worship and the sermon without needing to sit in a location away from family/friends.

- Select videos with descriptive dialogue or include a verbal summary of key points from the video. This eliminates the requirement that people must be able to see the video in order to understand a key part of the service.

- Schedule members of the church to visit those who are unable to attend church. This can also lead to great mentoring opportunities if younger families/couples/youth are partnered with older and wiser Christians.

- Include and advocate for accessible Christian resources, such as large print or audio versions of the Bible and Bible study materials. This could be a question that is asked when purchasing new resources, as the more interest people show, the more likely companies are to value making things accessible. There could be a portion of the church website with information on getting accessible Christian materials.

- Offer education, either through training or through resources, on how to interact and assist people with disabilities, especially those with less apparent disabilities like epilepsy, mental health disorders, PTSD, and learning

disabilities. Also consider addressing a biblical approach that aims at eliminating misconceptions that any mental health, physical, sensory, or intellectual disability is the result of sin (see John 9). Just because Jesus can heal doesn't mean that he will or should. All disabilities, even mental health disorders, can be a source of spiritual growth and a wonderful connection we have to reach those who are unsaved and face the same thing. A Christian with depression has hope, but that does not make them still not need extra supports such as medication and therapists.

- Offer support groups or partnerships for those caring for people with severe disabilities (children with multiple disabilities, adult children caring for parents with Alzheimer's, etc.).

- Offer accessible events (a church in Buffalo does 3 Easter egg hunts every year, one regular, one designed for children with Autism, and one where they partner with the police department to offer an audio Easter egg hunt that uses a tracking device that makes sounds).

- Contact local group homes or nursing homes to see if there are people who would be interested in attending church if the church could provide transportation. (Also a good option for reaching

low income areas where transportation is a barrier.)

- Educate the congregation on discrimination and the hiring of people with disabilities. If Christians are in a position to hire people, they should be actively working to understand how they can help lessen the unemployment rate of people with disabilities (it is much higher than people without disabilities).
- Investigate what other churches are already doing that is successful according to those utilizing the service/accommodation.
- Use fonts that are designed to be easy to read. Also make sure that the contrast between font and background is clear enough to be easily read. This significantly helps people with Dyslexia and other visual processing disabilities and visual impairments.
- Make sure that the church website and other medias are accessible. This includes following screen reader and switch control guidelines for those with visual impairments and limited mobility. This also includes closed captioning on videos, describing pictures (either through alternative text descriptions that are created when the picture is posted, or by captioning the picture), making sure that important information is posted in language that is accessible to those

with smaller vocabularies, and making sure that color schemes are not overwhelming to those with Autism or other disabilities that are prone to being more easily overstimulated.