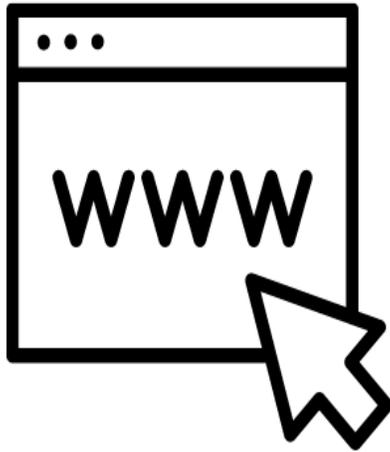


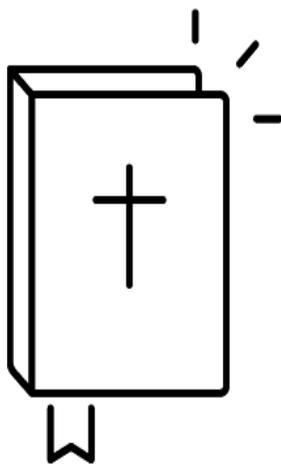
Church Website



Meetings



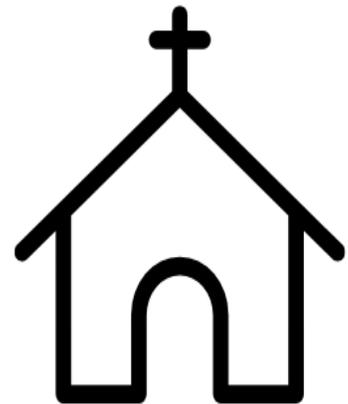
# ACCESSIBILITY EVERYWHERE



Bible Studies



Social Media



Church Events

## Preface

Grace and peace to you from Presbyterians for Disabilities Concerns (PDC)!

Thank you for your interest in the PDC Resources Packet for 2023. Presbyterians for Disabilities Concerns (PDC) in network with Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) welcomes those who affirm, support and advocate for the gifts, rights, and responsibilities of persons with disabilities in the total life of the church.

PDC has updated its Resources Packet for 2023. We are honored to have the wonderful contributors of this packet share their time and talent to compile this packet. We pray that it will spark the inclusion of all abilities within your groups, committees, and congregations to live out the true meaning of the “Body of Christ.”

Blessings,  
The PDC Leadership Team 2023

Moderator: Deborah Huggins  
Vice Moderator: Hunter Steinitz  
Clerks: Evelyn McMullen and Marijo Hockley

Rev. Ryan Althaus  
Darryl Eaton  
Rev. Dr. Letiah Fraser  
Martha Haythorn  
Marijo Hockley  
Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins  
Anna Kendig  
Susan E. Lydick  
Rev. Sarah McKenney

Evelyn McMullen  
Hannah Davis Millson  
Rev. Sue S. Montgomery  
Rev. Karen Moritz  
Hunter Steinitz  
Rev. Debra (Deb) Trevino  
Rev. Bethany McKenney Fox  
Rev. Joanne Van Sant

## Table of Contents

[Welcoming People to Worship](#).....Marijo Hockley

[Get To Know Your Disability Consultants](#)..... Rev. Sue Montgomery

[Ordination Exam Accommodations](#).....Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

[Disability Inclusion Toolkit](#).....Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

[Opening Doors](#).....Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

[Meeting, Event, & Webinar Accommodations](#).....Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

[Presentations, PowerPoint, & Handout Accommodations](#)...Hunter Steinitz

## **Welcoming All to Worship**

Submitted by Marijo Hockley

Do you have a ramp into your church? Do you have accessible bathrooms? Do you have places for people with wheelchairs or walkers to sit in your sanctuary? You do? Great! Being accessible is how we as a church can say “Welcome!” A ramp into your church is a step in the right direction, but it shouldn’t end with just a ramp. For many people with a disability, the greatest barrier isn’t the stairs they face, but the attitudes of those within the walls of the church. This packet gives suggestions on ways that faith communities and people with disabilities can work together in a loving and thoughtful way to encourage full participation of everyone involved. Please note, however; that the suggestions that are in this packet are simply that...suggestions. No two people with disabilities are the same and what works for one person may not work for another. The best thing that a faith community can do to help people with disability feel more included in that community is to talk to them. That is the best and easiest accommodation.

### **People First language**

People with disabilities are people first and are not solely defined by their disability. The toughest barriers for people with disabilities to overcome are the attitudes of those who have inadequate information about disabilities. For members of the faith community to become educated, they must welcome people all abilities.

### **Hospitality**

In hospitality, the Spirit is at work creating relations of support between God’s children. This includes persons with disabilities, not as an afterthought but as essential to the well-being of the community. Tom Reynolds in his book, *Vulnerable Communion* wrote, “Disability is not something less than normal, inferior or broken. People with and without a disability do not count as two exclusive types of human beings. All people are part of the Body of Christ...equally important.

Reflect for a moment about attitudes your congregation may have toward people with disabilities:

- Are people with disabilities welcome to worship with us?
  - If not, what are we doing wrong?
- Are there members with disabilities which are not apparent?
- Do we recognize the gifts and talents of people with disabilities and are they fully involved in the life of the congregation?
- Are people with disabilities given opportunities to serve others within the congregation and in the outreach programs?
- Are positions of leadership offered to individuals who happen to have a disability?
- How does the congregation respond to religious or lay leaders who acquire a serious disability?

Welcoming another makes room for a relationship that transforms both, the one who welcomes and the one who is welcomed. There are two ways that this can be accomplished.

- Recognizing the presence of persons with disabilities as vital and important contributing members of the faith community. This means you may have a discussion about the person with a disability's needs (accommodations), but also the gifts they bring to the faith community. Also important is becoming aware of how the community might be excluding some people unknowingly by participating in disabling practices and attitudes.
- Making a space for people with a disability. This may mean making a physical space that allows physical access. This may also mean changing attitudes that put up barriers as well.

Please remember, you and your faith community need not become experts in disabilities. You just need to practice loving one another.

## Get To Know Your Disability Consultants

Submitted by Rev. Sue Montgomery

After over two decades of serving the PC(USA) as disability consultants, Rev. Richard Roderick, Low Vision and Blindness, and the Rev. Ray Meester, Deafness and Hearing Loss, and Milton Tyree, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, officially retired from the consultant team. Their wisdom, passion, and commitment to this ministry was deeply appreciated and prayers are ascending with thanksgiving for their ministries and blessings on their new journey in ministry. It's time to welcome our new consultants! And keep scrolling for updates about the search for the new consultant for Deafness and Hearing Loss. Application deadline: September 1, 2023

### Rev. Dr. Bethany McKenney Fox

Bethany has lived out her passion to make churches and the broader culture more embracing of the gifts, full participation, and leadership of folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 20 years. She founded Beloved Everybody, an ability-inclusive New Worshiping Community where people with and without intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities lead and participate together, which she led through 2022. Her book *Disability and the Way of Jesus: Holistic Healing in the Gospels and the Church* (IVP Academic, 2019) examines how Jesus' healing in the Gospels, too often used in ways that wound people with disabilities, might point a way toward real healing and mutual thriving.



You can find more information about her writing, speaking, and teaching on her website: [bethanymckinneyfox.com](http://bethanymckinneyfox.com).

### Rev. Dr. Bethany McKinney Fox Consultant for Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

(323) 457-7720

Email: [BethanyFoxPDC@gmail.com](mailto:BethanyFoxPDC@gmail.com)

### **Rev. Dr. Karen R. Moritz**

As a “navy brat” and minister she has lived all over the US in the south, east and midwest. Most recently she served as a Mission Coworker in Prague, Czech Republic. Karen lives in Lincoln, NE where she is serving as the Pastor at First Christian Church. She loves to read and enjoys music of all types. She is a movie buff and describes herself as a “SciFi geek”, and a big Doctor Who and Star Trek fan. She also enjoys learning languages. Karen is our blindness/low vision consultant.



**Rev. Dr. Karen R Moritz**  
**Consultant for Visual Disabilities**  
(402) 570-7827  
Email: [revkarenmoritz@gmail.com](mailto:revkarenmoritz@gmail.com)

### **Rev. Sue Montgomery**

Sue continues as Consultant for Mobility/Accessibility, while serving as a chaplain at Polk Center, a residential facility for persons with intellectual disabilities. Sue has served on local and national boards addressing advocacy issues for persons with disabilities. She’s no stranger to the barriers people with mobility disabilities face. To address more than just architectural barriers, Sue has done extensive study in the areas of theology, language, and philosophical approaches to life with a disability. Sue is an avid hand cyclist who enjoys riding her 27 speed handcycle on the many rails to trails systems along the rivers of Pennsylvania. She received the Women of Faith Award from the Women’s Ministries Program Area of PC(USA) for her work with persons with disabilities.



**The Rev. Sue Montgomery**  
**Consultant for Mobility/Accessibility**  
(814) 797-1226  
Email: [suemontgomery@windstream.net](mailto:suemontgomery@windstream.net)

## Search For New Consultant on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries

PCUSA General Assembly (GA) and Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC), in partnership with Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) is seeking to hire a part-time consultant on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries to serve at the national level of the PC(USA).

Interested? Please submit (via postal or email) your resume and statement of interest **by September 1, 2023** to:

US postal: Lacey Hunter 100 Witherspoon St. Louisville, KY 40202

Email: [Lacey.hunter@pcusa.org](mailto:Lacey.hunter@pcusa.org)

### Job Description and Stipend:

- This is a position where the work is done primarily over the phone or via the internet (e-mail or Zoom). The current stipend of \$100 per quarter given for this work reflects the limited amount of time required as the number of requests for information, guidance, or assistance is limited. If the consultant would like to do face-to-face meetings with a congregation, pastor, or staff for training or support, those arrangements can be made personally, and additional remuneration for travel, meals, and other expenses can be arranged.
- The consultant generally participates in the Zoom conference calls of the Presbyterians for Disability Concerns Leadership Team on the second Tuesday of each month. These calls are made at 7:00 PM EST and are usually an hour in length. Flexibility is built in that attendance at every meeting is not mandatory. The PDC Leadership Team produces resource packets for the PC(USA) Inclusion Sunday, celebrated each year by the national church. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant, along with the three other Disability Consultants usually contribute to that resource packet.
- The Deaf/Hearing Loss Consultant would be expected to contribute articles to assist congregations in meeting the ministry needs of the deaf community.
- The consultants also contribute worship resources, prayers, litanies, hymns, and sermons to highlight the gifts people who live with disabilities bring to the church.

Experience required:

- Personal experience in ministry with persons who use sign language, understanding of deaf culture and sign language being a linguistic minority is helpful.
- Knowledge of current technologies being used in the churches and large meetings regarding closed captioning, auditory loops, hearing aids, and other technological advances used to enhance the full inclusion of people with hearing loss in the life and work of the church family.
- Knowledge of funding sources to purchase such assistive equipment would also be helpful.
- To be able to assist congregations who are seeking to hire sign interpreters to know the differences between skilled and talented signers and those who may create more confusion for the person or persons who are deaf. Just as there is a spectrum of gifted and talented musicians within the church, so too, there is a spectrum of sign interpreters.
- Knowledge of how to include not only the person who is dealing with a hearing loss but also the entire family would also be helpful.

## **PDC Advocacy around Ordination Exams: Which Issue(s) Shall We Pursue now?**

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

### **Helpful link:**

This is the most recent [Handbook](#) for ordination exams available (link is to pdf): pages 15-18 discuss “special arrangements” and “accommodations”

### **1. Privacy for candidates with disabilities not to have to disclose their disability unnecessarily**

Further Information: If someone is taking an exam via alternative means (not accommodations), it needs to be voted on and approved by the Presbytery. Someone can sign up for an oral component alongside written (where they have the opportunity to explain things they wrote after the fact, which can then help/hurt their initial performance), without needing alternative means. Alternative means would mean 100% oral, for example, without writing at all. One problem is that all kinds of other accommodations are also getting voted on by the whole Presbytery (e.g., extended time on the Bible Content exam) when they don't actually need to be, which means candidates are being compelled to disclose their disability to the entire Presbytery when it isn't necessary (whether they would want to or not).

Options for addressing this issue: Education for Presbyteries/CPMs.

Reaching out to seminaries/disability offices to educate disabled candidates about the process and their options within it. Some kind of information campaign. Something else? Note: Not every Presbytery has a CPM (and for those that do, there is already a long CPM handbook that most of them already don't read thoroughly).

## **2. Competency of the persons who determine exam accommodations**

Further Information: Presbyteries who are given the power to vote on a candidates' ordination exam requirements/accommodations are not actually knowledgeable or equipped enough to do so. So, we're putting

Options for addressing this issue: Create another committee/body that has the qualifications and does this (at synod level? Presbytery level? GA level - issues w/ that bc of trust when things are being instituted from "on high"). Equip the PCC to do this more often (they already do consult on this for Presbyteries when asked to). Something else?

## **3. Increased options for accessibility of Ordination Exams (particularly: extended time)**

Further Information: Right now, extended time is not possible for the senior ordination exams. They used to be 3 hours, now they are 9 hours (for the same exam), which made some folks feel like that made them universally accessible. However, there are some candidates who still express that due to their disability(ies), these exams are not accessible without additional time. It gets complicated because of exam integrity issues: if someone is getting additional time on one exam, they won't open another exam until perhaps a day late, when others will have already opened that exam the day before (and this would snowball with all the exams). This is even more an issue with the exegesis exam which is a week-long exam, because the reading of the exams starts the week right after it's due, which would make extended time even more complicated.

Options for addressing this issue: PDC could coordinate with PCC and write them a letter letting them know that we believe the inflexible time requirement is denying access to certain candidates. PCC is currently in a self-review process that happens every 5 years, we'd ideally need to reach out to them by Jan 15 if this is something we want to do. We can request formal dialogues w/ the PCC (PCC is not under GA but under the Presbyteries). Something else?

## **Disability Inclusion Toolkit**

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

We are delighted to share the Disability Ministries ToolKit from the Office of Christian Formation in the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/office-of-christian-formation/disability-inclusion-toolkit/>

Quicksheets include:

**[Speaking Words that Welcome: Language, Messages, and Communication \(with Visual Cues\)](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/speaking-words-that-welcome-language-messages-and-communication-with-visual-cues/)**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/speaking-words-that-welcome-language-messages-and-communication-with-visual-cues/>

**[Creating Sacred Space for All: Physical Access and Physical Accommodations and Supports](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/creating-space-for-all-physical-access-accommodations-and-supports/)**

[presbyterianmission.org/resource/creating-space-for-all-physical-access-accommodations-and-supports/](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/creating-space-for-all-physical-access-accommodations-and-supports/)

**[Being the Body of Christ: Social Access](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/being-the-body-of-christ-for-one-another-social-access/)**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/being-the-body-of-christ-for-one-another-social-access/>

**[Guiding with Intentionality: Policies, Forms, and Planning](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guiding-with-intentionality-policies-forms-and-planning/)**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guiding-with-intentionality-policies-forms-and-planning/>

**[Faith Communities and Inclusion of Persons of All Abilities Resource Roadmap](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/faith-communities-and-inclusion-of-persons-of-all-abilities-resource-roadmap/)**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/faith-communities-and-inclusion-of-persons-of-all-abilities-resource-roadmap/>



## Opening Doors

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

From Opening Doors to Discipleship: A resource from APCE  
Katie Snyder developed a great resource on Disability Inclusion Ministry:  
<https://odtd.net/disability-inclusion-for-ministry/>

Below are quick links to just some of the resources you can find on the site.  
Click on the link to their site above for more!

### Videos:

[Engaging Disabled  
People](#)

[Engaging Disabled  
Adults](#)

[Including Children and  
Youth with Disabilities](#)

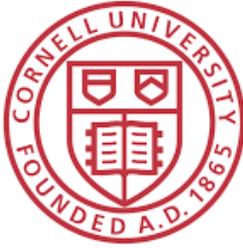
### Other resources:

[Disability Etiquette](#)

[Disability Language](#)

[Service Dogs in Churches](#)

[Speaking Words of Welcome](#)



## Meeting, Events, and Webinar Accommodations

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins

Cornell University has long been a leader in hospitality. We are delighted to share their guidelines for **accessible meetings**, and love the main point they make- ASK! Remember, the experts in disability inclusion are people with disabilities. We won't know what we need to do to accommodate unless we ask!

<https://accessibility.cornell.edu/event-planning/accessible-meeting-and-event-checklist/>

Below are quick links to just some of the resources you can find on the site. Click on the link to their site above for more!

[Accessible Meeting/Event Checklist](#)

[Webinar Accessibility](#)

[Accessible Event Planning](#)



## **Presentations, PowerPoint, and Handout Accommodations**

Submitted by Hunter Steinitz

These are guidelines used for the AUCD conference a number of years ago. We use these guidelines for all of our work at the PA state level to keep everything accessible.

<https://www.aucd.org/conference/index.cfm/presenter-guidelines-accessibility--inclusion2016#ppts>

Below are quick links to just some of the resources you can find on the site. Click on the link to their site above for more!

[Spoken or Audio Presentations](#)

[Handouts](#)

[PowerPoint Presentations](#)

[Posters](#)