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Exploring Efforts toward Accessibility & Disability Ministries

Evangelical Church in America (ELCA)



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



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Background and Purpose

In the fall of 2024, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) partnered with DataWise Consulting, LLC to conduct a study exploring current accessibility efforts and the experience of individuals with disabilities within various congregations. The study aimed to describe accessibility efforts, successes, and barriers, specifically exploring the factors that contribute to or inhibit this work. Additionally, it aimed to explore the ways in which people with disabilities serve in decision-making roles within the congregation and experience a sense of welcome. This report provides a summary of results from interviews with congregations, as well as recommendations for the ELCA to support accessibility work moving forward.

Method

A group of ELCA leaders were invited to identify ELCA congregations with some level of intentional focus on accessibility or disability ministries. This resulted in a list of 24 churches. The group of ELCA leaders sent an introductory email to leaders of these churches as well as their bishops to introduce the project and invite the leaders to participate in an interview.

DataWise followed up by email to the list of potential congregations. Each congregation had a primary contact identified by the ELCA but were encouraged to invite others from their church with experience or expertise related to accessibility and disability ministries. Prior to participation, each interviewee reviewed and signed a consent form. In addition to indicating their willingness to participate in an interview with DataWise, each person noted whether they wished for the recording and transcript from their interview to be made available to the ELCA.

Interviews took place virtually through Microsoft Teams or Zoom and lasted approximately 50-75 minutes each. A total of 10 interviews involving 10 congregations and 22 individuals were completed in December 2024 and January 2025. There were 3 interviews that included only 1 participant, 3 interviews that included 2 participants, 3 interviews that included 3 participants, and 1 interview that included 4 participants. A group interview (i.e., more than one participant) occurred only when the primary contact requested others to join the conversation. Each participant received a \$50 Visa gift card via email in appreciation for their participation.

Rachel Venema and Cole Sweda led each interview, and one other DataWise team member joined to take notes. After each interview, the DataWise team members discussed and recorded the key points from the interview. Audio recordings were transcribed using AI, with transcripts reviewed and edited by the DataWise team for accuracy. After all interviews were complete, DataWise team members reviewed all notes and transcripts to identify themes that emerged across interviews.

Interview Protocol

Interviews were semi-structured, meaning that DataWise used a list of questions to guide the interviews but did not necessarily ask each question exactly as written or in the stated order. Often, interviewees addressed topics related to later interview questions in their responses, so those questions were skipped or asked as a brief follow-up. The interview guide focused on current practices related to accessibility and disability ministries, how those practices came to be, common barriers to increasing accessibility and full inclusion of people with disabilities, and hopes for the future related to accessibility and disability ministries in their congregation. See the Appendix for the full interview guide.

Key Findings

Accessibility Efforts

Area of Focus

Most congregations described **one primary area of focus for accessibility** or disability ministries. For some, this focused on a **specific population or specific disability**, such as people with developmental disabilities; people with learning disabilities; the deaf and hard of hearing community; and children, youth, and families (e.g., children who are neurodivergent).

In the past three years, we had a group of parents, of which [Name] has been one of the leaders, who have come together to launch a neurodiversity ministry team and family support group, and we have done a lot of work to try to make sure that all aspects of our ministry are open and accessible to folks regardless of how their brains work.

When asked to describe what accessibility looks like in their congregations, some pointed to a **specific area of focus**, such as physical space/structures (e.g., ramps, elevators, automatic doors) in relation to mobility, transportation and other accommodations for

participation in worship (e.g., livestream services), and spaces external to the church building (e.g., community playground).

We are all one floor and we have speakers in the back of the church to help those that are becoming hard of hearing. We do large print bulletins as well as regular print bulletins. We have a handicapped ramp for people to come up and get into the church.

Participants described various ways to make worship services more accessible. One interviewee described a careful attention to language, using words such as “*Receive our prayer*” rather than “*Hear our prayer*” to be inclusive with word choice. Others described accessible worship as providing a means for people to physically get to the service.

For participation in worship over the years, we have really looked at the transportation issue of trying to get to church, and now we contract with transit bus locally that has a lift so people with wheelchairs and walkers can ride that bus back and forth from church. And that, I think, has been a huge ministry.

In almost all cases, congregations described how **attention in one area led to increased awareness** more generally and resulted in increased accommodation more broadly. The following quote shows how a congregation’s efforts on an accessible playground in their local community led to conversations about how to be more welcoming and accessible within the church.

We can be as accessible as we want to be outside of our four walls, but are we really accessible inside? And welcoming, to being fully accessible? And that's a very different conversation. And I think what happened was, when this project began, it really heightened and showed us different areas that we needed to be better at.

How that Focus Area Came to Be

All congregations made a conscious effort to increase accessibility and disability ministries **due to a need in the congregation**. Some congregations described a **foundational desire to be inclusive**, which prompted attention to specific issues. In one group conversation, one participant said: “*All of this was intentional.*” And the other interview participant echoed: “*Yeah. I would say it started with our mission as a church to include everybody.*” The following quote describes how an approach to accessibility stemmed from a broader focus on welcome and inclusion within the church.

I think a lot of it started with a focus on LGBT folks and seeing folks show up. But then as a really important part of that, trying to be really intentional about gender diverse kiddos, and so trying to

pay attention to the language we use during baptisms, and trying to pay attention to a lot of language stuff in worship. But then I do think that has had some positive overflow effects in terms of pushing us to pay attention to the other reasons that someone might feel welcome... and wondering if there are barriers we're not even paying attention to that keep them from showing up in the first place.

Most congregations, however, **began their accessibility efforts in relation to a particular topic or population**, which then spread to a broader focus on disability and accessibility.

The angle that we were going towards at that point was education, trying to educate our people about mental health and how to be kind and considerate to people with mental health issues. We started with that approach, and then we started to expand. What are some other things that we need to look at and be more welcoming with, and the whole disability portion of that came into being as we researched and dug into it. But we started just with education, trying to increase our awareness on mental health and what that means in our community, and how we need to respond.

Most congregations began working around **accessibility to accommodate specific people in their congregations**. Accessibility within interviewed congregations was largely individualized, with congregational leaders connecting directly with people in the church with disabilities to understand how to meet their needs. In references to neurodiverse individuals within the congregation, one participant described their efforts to intentionally *“hear about their experience and take that into consideration and make the changes so that everyone feels like they belong.”* Once accessibility increased in a certain focus area, more people with needs in that focus area joined the church, leading to even more time, money, and energy being put towards improving that focus area.

And then it was almost as if it was the opening of the floodgates. Once word got out that we were a place where families could bring their children who may engage in the world in all sorts of different ways. We now see significant growth in membership. It is very common for someone to be walking in our door and say, ‘We heard that this was a place that our family would be welcome.’

It was evident that **having a “champion” or two** within each church helped to bring awareness around accessibility issues and move the work forward. These “champions” were described as people who showed attentive listening to members of the community, who had a vision that something could be done differently, who had personal experiences with disability or related professional experience, and who were guided by the Holy Spirit to act upon something they felt compelled to do. One of these “champions” described the crucial role of listening and seeking to understand.

I think the key word there is listening. Listening to the community. I mean, what's going to be Phase Five—which we now have gotten funding for—is a sensory trail. I knew nothing about sensory. I didn't even know there was such a thing as a sensory disorder. I didn't understand it. But I just dove in and started listening, asking questions and listening on 'What does this community need?'

The following quote demonstrates the attention that one person brought to accessibility within the church, which has guided the congregation's principles moving forward.

But when the church went to build the building, one of the people who was overseeing that building project was a double amputee from the Korean War, and one of his guiding principles was that the church would be accessible to all people. We have no steps, everything is ramped and that has, from the beginning of this congregation, been important to us. Over the years, we've continued to think about what that means to live out of our core value that all are welcome.

Others described how they personally brought awareness to a lack of accessibility and demanded change.

I and many others were kind of screaming for change. For example, in Holy Week, we had Good Friday services, and the church tends to dim the lights very low, and they forgot to set a light for the interpreter. And then the church became so dark that you couldn't see any of the interpretation. I said, 'We have to have that.' And so we got a clip-on light.

People with Disabilities in Decision-Making Roles

Although people with disabilities served in formal leadership roles (i.e., Council) in a few churches, in most cases, congregations heard feedback from people with disabilities in informal ways. Some congregations reported that this **informal feedback** is by design, not wanting to call unnecessary attention to folks with disabilities, which was especially the case with children. In other cases, congregations admitted that they had never thought to have formal mechanisms for feedback or inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making roles. This question seemed to cause interviewees to reflect on their approach to accessibility. Multiple interviewees commented that they should continue to consider how they could be more inclusive in inviting people with disabilities into leadership and decision-making roles.

I really am trying to be purposeful, to have them be the speakers... And of course, some of them are going to be little children, and so their parents are speaking for them. But you know, that's okay

too, because they know more than I know... Some of these are teens that I work very closely with because they're in my worship band. [I ask] 'What do you guys want? What works best for you?'

Several of the churches commented that one or more **leaders with disabilities (either staff or volunteer positions)** inform decision making due to their formal role within the congregation.

I have neurodivergent teenagers who are in specialized high school programs who are teaching alongside their peers, yeah, teaching class and it's great, right? Because they are constantly coming to us and saying, 'This is working. This isn't working.' They can see with a different lens. For our kids, I think it's going to be remarkable for us as a church to watch us then raise them up into adult leadership positions. And actually, in this space, we're seeing more and more adults come forward to talk about their different abilities.

What Facilitates Accessibility Efforts

Funding

Congregations shared the **importance of grants** in helping them create an accessible and inclusive church. Multiple churches mentioned how grant-funded building renovations were the only way they could afford to make the church accessible for those who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other physical aids. **Funding from multiple sources** was critical to the creation and maintenance of ongoing accessibility efforts. Congregations noted how grants from the ELCA helped them get started on a new venture, and external grants and donations allowed them to grow and sustain the work. Regular budget allocations are also critical but acknowledged as typically insufficient.

I don't think it would have happened without the grant. It was the impetus for the whole [thing]. I think those things are significant, particularly for congregations where it's so easy to get caught in this minutia of doing what we do and keeping things going... It takes outside resources sometimes. And a grant comes with a timeline, and you have to report back what you did and all of that. So there's some accountability to keep the work going.

Human Capital

Interviewees often stated the importance of **having a team** to support accessibility efforts. People—often volunteers—in the congregation willing to be educated and trained and willing to give of their time are crucial for accessibility efforts and disability ministries. As one person said: *“It's the right people and the Spirit moving.”*

The 10 people that are on this team—they all had different insights. Each one walks a different phase of life and what they can bring to the table, but every one of them wanted to see it happen. I think the passion behind that made this happen.

Staff capacity was deemed critical to engaging in accessibility efforts by congregations. Though volunteers play an important role, it seemed that **larger congregations with more staff can address a wider range of accessibility issues**. Given the individualized approach to accessibility, additional staff members were critical to ensure everyone in the congregation received the attention and support they needed. One congregation stated the importance of frequent team strategy sessions to prepare for Sundays and follow-up meetings to review successful and unsuccessful strategies from the past week, which small congregations simply do not have the capacity to do. An interview participant and mother of a special needs child shared how important it is to have dedicated staff to support not just children, but parents of special needs children as well.

I think you have to have staff leadership like we have. I think volunteers are really important. I mean, we have great volunteers, but the real leadership has to be staff, because you also have to remember that a lot of the beneficiaries, such as myself—I'm a parent of a special needs child, and I'm tapped out—I'm coming there to worship with my child, and that is a source of strengthening for me and inspiration for me. I see this as me being cared for too. Yeah, so it's not just my child. This community nurtures me too.

Awareness and Education

Most accessibility efforts started with and were sustained by **congregation-wide awareness building and education**. According to interviewees, accessibility is facilitated by a commitment to ongoing learning, flexibility, and adaptability. Some congregations shared how helpful it was to have access to people with expertise in a focus area, or the finances to hire educators or consultants to help them improve their materials or approaches to accessibility. One congregation shared how they overhauled their entire Sunday school curriculum with the help of a consultant, which has completely changed the way their Sunday school functions.

We're blessed with [name] and I take the lead on this [name of disability ministry program] but we have three [or] four retired special ed teachers in the congregation who are super helpful with curriculum development activities, interacting with the kids, helping everybody feel comfortable. We have a bunch of professionals who are trained and experienced in working with a wide range of populations.

Congregational Initiative and Buy-In

Buy-in from the whole congregation was paramount for congregations to expand and sustain their efforts toward accessibility. When the congregation understood the importance of accessibility, more resources (i.e., human and financial) were dedicated to expanding it further. One congregation connected all their accessibility efforts to their *Welcome Statement*, stating that it's a part of their “*missional mindset*.” They said that everything they do is connected to hospitality and inclusion, and they regularly review who is not “at the table” to refine their inclusivity.

I think our people deserve a lot of credit for all of these things because I think the congregation has had a missional mindset for a long time, that care and service of others is at the core of who we are. And that goes back a long, long way here. I think part of it is [that] those needs came up. There were people already here in the congregation that had passion for that and background, even professionally.

We have critical mass, and that makes all the difference in the world. You will never be the only person at a service who is neurodivergent, or you will never be the only person with a baby at a service. And critical mass makes all the difference in this kind of ministry, because it keeps it from being about 'Oh, this is what we do for Joe.' And there's not that kind of looking down on Joe, like 'Joe's different.' ... It's the universal design, access for everybody.

Barriers to Accessibility Efforts

Lack of Funding

Lack of money to improve accessibility came up in every interview. Churches with small budgets and small congregations simply cannot provide the same support as churches receiving grant funding or churches with large budgets to utilize. One congregation talked about not being able to afford necessary accommodations.

We had a deaf person, and she had said to us, 'Can you guys get an ASL person?' But I mean, it was costly, so we could only afford the ASL interpreter once a month.

Many congregations noted difficulty finding grants for which they meet the eligibility requirements. When they could find grants, they stressed the time commitment and effort it takes to write a competitive grant proposal. Other interviewees described challenges with

getting grants, whether by being unaware of grant opportunities or not having the capacity to apply for grants.

I have not known of any that were available. But I have applied for grants to use for community outreach, and we also used a grant from the Synod where we built a prayer labyrinth. But now that I know there's ones out there for disability, I'm going to try and find those and apply for those to get that ramp built.

Limited Human Resources

Congregations shared that a **lack of staff capacity** was a substantial barrier to their accessibility efforts. Some interviewees shared that all staff are part-time, which made it difficult to improve accessibility. One person shared:

There's no full-time employees [in] the congregation. Everybody's part time. And so having some time to be able to do outreach and to develop this curriculum—that's a challenge.

In addition to staff capacity, some congregations noted that a lack of volunteerism has negatively impacted accessibility efforts. For instance, some congregants note a diminishing number of volunteers since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hurt their ability to serve people with an individualized level of thought and consideration.

Personally, I think one of the problems post-COVID is volunteerism, and the number of volunteers that we have available has definitely dwindled. We have people that worship online. That's great, but unless they're there in person to help folks along the way, whatever the needs might be there... And then also we've all talked about [how] somebody stepped forward. Somebody stepped forward to help with this. We don't have a lot of step forwards anymore.

Lack of Knowledge or Expertise

Lack of knowledge and expertise related to accessibility and disability was a theme throughout the interviews. Congregations shared a desire to improve their efforts but often lacked an understanding of how to improve accessibility within their church. Some recognized that they did not even know what they needed to know about disability, since it is an ever-changing area for learning. This lack of knowledge focused both on a lack of education about disabilities as well as accessibility options or requirements (e.g., ADA compliance). When asked about barriers to accessibility efforts, one interviewee said:

I think just ignorance. And I think just not knowing, maybe not being brave enough to ask. I think just this knowledge and just not knowing.

Another interviewee pointed specifically to not understanding ADA requirements as a barrier to improving accessibility.

Perhaps another hindrance is not being completely aware of what some of the rules and regulations are. Our church was built 25 years—however long ago—and there have been a few changes, but not that many. And there might be other things that we need to do, like I'm just thinking, our restrooms are all on one level, but I'm not sure that our toilets are the right height, you know, little things like that that we might not be aware of.

Sometimes a lack of knowledge was apparent in the approach to disability or accessibility, whether in language used by the denomination or individual churches or incorrect assumptions made about people with disabilities.

My biggest struggle with the ELCA is that they have a viewpoint of deaf people that they need help. The language on the website and in a lot of the publications and writings and things is very old-fashioned thinking that deaf people are not capable of being involved in all the different facets of life.

For the congregations who described a focus on children, youth, and families, a common theme centered on the **lack of appropriate and accessible curriculum** for children's ministries, including vacation Bible school, confirmation, and baptism. One interviewee expressed their frustration with most of the available resources for Sunday School, saying:

We have a hard time with the curriculum. I mean there's nothing available that is easily utilized. We have to modify everything. That's a resource limitation, frankly.

Congregational Support

Though most interviewees expressed support and buy-in from the whole congregation, some interviewees felt their **congregation needed to grow in this area**. These comments ranged from wishing congregants had a better understanding of autism and neurodiversity, desiring that others not approach people with disabilities with pity, to wishing congregations valued accessibility over building aesthetics.

I want to get away from this [idea] that we're doing these things because we pity them. Again, sometimes that's our responsibility from the pulpit, or that's our responsibility from curriculum, from Sunday school, is that we love our neighbor, period. We serve our neighbor, period. We don't love our neighbor because they're handicapped. We don't serve our neighbor because they're handicapped, you know? So, we have a ways to go. When I say that this congregation does a good

job of welcoming, I think they do, but they're not perfect. And we do have more educating to do. I think that will always just be a continual [thing].

Another interviewee described disagreements over values or priorities within the congregation, especially when limited resources were at play.

This church, aesthetics, I think, was their number one thing. And then accessibility.

Lack of Collaboration with Other Churches

A consistent thread throughout the interviews was feeling like an island or **feeling isolated in their own congregation**. Most of the congregations described efforts toward accessibility that their congregation was working on independently. In other words, they described a lack of networking, sharing, and support across the ELCA denomination. One participant said: “*My biggest frustration is the ELCA and them not fostering those relationships.*” Many interviewees wondered what other churches were doing in relation to accessibility and believed it would be helpful to have more knowledge and resource sharing.

My prayer is that we can do this in so many areas, in different churches, definitely in the ELCA, and work together as churches, because it's not a competition. The Holy Spirit is big enough that we do not have to be in competition, but just to know that every child of God is beloved and has amazing gifts for this world. The more we can listen and open doors and just be the community that Christ has invited us into, I think it could just be an amazing blessing.

Future Goals related to Accessibility and Disability Ministries

Continue Current Accessibility and Disability Ministries

Congregations noted the **importance of continuing the current work they're doing**, including further education and awareness building within their congregation. Interviewees expressed that they receive ongoing feedback from their congregants regarding their needs and wants in the congregation, which they hope to further in the future.

As far as the awareness and the education we probably need, some educational material for the leadership group, to be able to then share with the congregation.

Some described that the current accessibility work within their church, and across the ELCA, should focus on universal design.

We'd like to continue improving things. Right now I'm encouraging them to take the philosophy of universal design. Universal design means that, yes, you're designing it for accessibility, but everyone benefits from it.

Other participants pointed to the underlying values that push them to continue efforts toward full inclusion of people with disabilities.

I think making sure that there's voice in leadership is a big one, and that they have a sense of ownership over the church... I believe that following Jesus, being a disciple of Jesus, does not make us consumers of church. It makes us the church. And so helping people with disabilities feel like they are the church, as opposed to just the recipients of the church's ministry.

Expand Accessibility and Disability Ministries

Several interviewees highlighted that attention to accessibility is an **ongoing effort** that will continue indefinitely. One person described this as a challenge to seek “abundance,” stating:

Our enough is never God's enough. Our enough is minimal, but God's enough is always abundance.

Most congregations described specific ways in which they would like to expand their efforts toward accessibility, noting the resources needed to start and sustain their work. In these cases, they expressed their desire to have the financial resources to hire professional consultation, instead of relying on their own experience.

Well, that extra ramp, removing the unsightly speakers that are in the back of our church to help and have them actually put up in the ceiling where they should be. And what would be great if money was no object would be, if we found that we had somebody who became a homebound person and didn't have a computer or access to internet and helped them get it. That would be awesome!

Congregations with older buildings typically had specific building renovation goals, such as adding an elevator, creating accessible bathrooms, or adding buttons on entrances so doors can open automatically.

It's only on two of our entrances that we have the buttons, and we have four other entrances. So that would probably be something so that they [people with mobility impairments] would have full access to every entrance, not just two. That's something that fully abled people might say something off putting, like, 'Well, they can get it in two areas.' So that would probably be a teaching moment. Don't say, 'Well, they have enough access.' They need to have full access. You

can't limit it by saying, 'Well, we've done at least something.' Yes, but if you want to be truly welcoming, then you gotta fully think it through.

Increased denominational support

Others expressed a **desire for the ELCA leadership and Synod gatherings to incorporate more accommodation**, such as attending to mobility impairments or providing ASL interpretation in denominational communications.

But Jesus kept on to his dying day, he was seeing those marginalized, and the two that were marginalized especially were the two thieves that were hanging next to him. Even on the cross he didn't stop seeing the marginalized. So, if we're going to live into Christ... Yep, you're tired, but God's pushing you... you can't go down this path and then at some point say, 'Well, this is enough.' There's always going to be doors opening for us to walk through.

One interviewee made a very direct plea to the ELCA to be more intentional about its accessibility efforts at the denominational level, from incorporating ASL interpretation in communications, to prioritizing the inclusion of people with disabilities in leadership roles. There was an appreciation for some efforts but a conclusion that there is *not* “robust support” related to accessibility.

But what frustrates me most is that the ELCA doesn't see me. I don't see anyone who looks like me in the ELCA, and they don't look at our language as valuable. They don't see a clear promise to incorporate any of the deaf members [at] the National Assembly as well, and [our church] feels like an island, like we are all supporting each other, but as the larger system, we don't feel that support.

This interviewee suggested that the ELCA “reprogram their thinking that we're not a special ministry, we're not a special program. We are people that exist across all sorts of different populations.”

Recommendations

The themes from these interviews point to some recommendations that should be considered by the ELCA to further support the work of ELCA churches in relation to accessibility. These recommendations stem from common themes related to factors that support accessibility efforts and factors that impede accessibility efforts. The recommendations also come from direct requests and suggestions stated by interviewees. The recommendations are categorized into three broad categories: 1) developing a

framework for mutual support and learning, 2) providing resources to increase awareness and education, and 3) modeling adaptability, accessibility, and inclusion in ELCA leadership.

1. Develop Framework for Mutual Support and Learning within the ELCA

- Share what congregations across the ELCA are doing in this area
- Regularly highlight creative solutions and “**exemplars**”
- Develop a mechanism for mutual support, sharing knowledge, and finding those with experience and passion in this area within the ELCA

2. Provide Resources to increase Awareness and Education around Accessibility

- Increase education around disability across the denomination
- Develop or find a toolkit, curriculum, or book groups that churches could use to build awareness and learning
- Commit additional financial resources to accessibility efforts (e.g., additional staffing at the denominational level, funding opportunities)
- Spread news of ELCA grants widely; develop simple grant applications
- Develop a list of resources outside the ELCA for education and funding

3. Model Adaptability, Accessibility, and Inclusion in ELCA Leadership

- Continue to analyze and improve the use of language related to disability
- Explore sensitivities to the inclusion of mental illness in disability ministries
- Encourage accessibility that uses universal design
- Encourage congregations to develop more formal inclusion/invitation of people with disabilities in decision making roles
- ELCA Synod and national staff lead by example in this area; for example, creating a full-time staff position at the national level related to disability; incorporating additional accommodations into ELCA leadership events and communications

In conclusion, interview participants welcomed the opportunity to share the work they were doing within their congregations related to accessibility. They easily connected this work to

the gospel message and believed that finding ways to fully include people with disabilities **was part of God's call toward inclusion and hospitality**. Participants wanted more opportunities to learn and share, both with other congregations within the ELCA and with denominational leadership more broadly. This last quote demonstrates the desire that many participants shared to more directly reach leaders in the ELCA and hear a clear response. Congregations shared much to be proud of in their ongoing efforts toward accessibility, and hope for continued support and encouragement in this area.

I feel like the ELCA themselves could have a conversation with us. And it's too common that I've seen this happen where they're doing research or studies and I believe that it's a great help. It's definitely important work and information. But when will I ever meet or have a conversation with any of them? They can speak directly to us. And I want the ELCA to come meet with us, you know, and see our congregation, have a conversation with us and see firsthand.

Appendix

Interview Guide

Note for interviewer: Accessibility is not just about physical space. Accessibility can mean: access to Braille and large print, ASL interpretation, sensory friendly worship and rooms, appropriate lighting. The disability community includes people with disabilities of all kinds, including invisible disabilities such as: dyslexia, learning, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive disabilities.

1. First, can you tell us a little bit about your church and what accessibility looks like at your congregation?
 - a. Infrastructure
 - b. Technology / equipment
 - c. Specific programs/ministries for people with disabilities
 - d. Other accommodations
2. Tell us how this ministry or attention to accessibility came into being.
 - a. Was it in response to a need in the congregation?
 - b. Was it in response to a need in the community?
 - c. Or did it come about as an act of intentional welcome and inclusion?
3. What are some areas related to accessibility that you feel especially proud of? In what areas do you believe your church / congregation is doing well?
 - a. What made this possible?
 - b. What resources did you rely on to do this work?
4. In what ways do people with disabilities serve in different leadership roles or inform decisions related to accessibility? In what ways do people with disabilities inform decisions across the congregation?

5. How does your congregation practice welcome or show hospitality to people with disabilities?
 - a. What gets in the way?
 - b. What do you do well?
 - c. How are you creating community?
 - d. What kind of education did you do to create a welcoming environment?
6. What prevents you or people with disabilities in your congregation from full participation?
 - a. Communication
 - b. Architecture
 - c. Technology
 - d. Faith formation (materials and classroom experience)
 - e. Worship materials
 - f. Fellowship
7. What do you hope to improve in your congregation to better serve people with disabilities?
 - a. What would make that possible?
 - b. What resources would you need to achieve those improvements?
8. What else would you like to share about your experience or church? What did we miss? What would be helpful for others to know?