INDICATORS OF BELONGING

Stone Belt

This assessment is an adaptation of Erik Carter's *Indicators of Welcome Tool* and developed in partnership with Christian Horizons (christianhorizons.org). The original can be found here:

Carter, Erik W. *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families and Congregations*. Baltimore, Md: Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 2010.

Perspectives

Whose perspectives were sought as part of this reflection process?

☐ Clergy

☐ Community members

☐ Family Member(s)

☐ Adult program leader

☐ Other: _____

☐ Person(s) with disabilities

☐ Children/youth program leader

☐ Service or Support Providers

☐ Worship leader

Presence and Participation

1. What steps have we taken to identify individuals *within* our congregation living with a disability?

2. What steps have we taken to identify individuals *beyond* our congregation living with a disability?

3. To what extent are children and adults with developmental disabilities, as well as their families, actively participating in the following dimensions of congregational life? *(please complete the checklist on the following page)*

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ASPECT	ACTIVELY	SOMETIMES	NEVER	UNCERTAIN	COMMENTS
Worship Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Sacraments and Rituals	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Fellowship Events	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Adult Religious Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Small Groups & Scripture Studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Children's Religious Education Programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Youth Groups & Young Adult Programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Summer Programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Greeters, Ushers, or Worship Assistants	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Choir or Worship Team Members	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Congregational Committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Outreach Ministries	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Congregation-sponsored Schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Leisure, Recreation, & Social Activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	
*Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	
*Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Other activities in which members of your congregation typically participate.

4. What barriers seem to be hindering their involvement in these areas?

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Presence and Participation

How are the following areas of our building and grounds accessible and can they be easily navigated by people using wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters, as well as other adaptive equipment?

	TOTALLY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN	COMMENTS
Sanctuaries & other worship spaces	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Platforms/stages & pulpits	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Classrooms & meeting rooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Fellowship areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Nursery	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Restrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Playgrounds & recreation areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Gymnasiums	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Parking lots & sidewalks	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Doorways & hallways	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Congregational offices	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Kitchen & eating areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	
School building & childcare center	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Summer program areas	☐	☐	☐	☐	
*Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	

*Other locations within your congregation that visitors or members might encounter

Which three architectural barriers are the most pressing?

1.
2.
3.

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Questions of Belonging

Read the following statements in each section. To what extent does each statement describe our congregation? If you are not sure, mark *Uncertain.*

A. Worship Services

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
Greeters, ushers, and other worship assistants know how to extend welcome and offer assistance to people with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities are supported to sit with friends, family or whomever they choose	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faith Partners are available to sit with befriend, and support people with disabilities, if desired.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Worship experiences are designed to engage multiple senses and allow for participation in various ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Congregational leaders are willing to explore alternate ways for participating in worship and the rituals/sacraments, as necessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities are contributing to worship services in varied ways, including as greeters or choir members.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The congregation expresses comfort with people who worship in different ways (e.g. making noises, rocking, flapping their hands)	☐	☐	☐	☐
The congregation is periodically asked about chemical sensitivities, food allergies, or other environmental issues that impact involvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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B. Religious Education

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
Children with and without disabilities participate in activities and classes together.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Activities are adapted and supports are provided so that children with disabilities can participate in activities to their greatest extent possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religious curricula appeals to children who learn, participate, and contribute in a variety of ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basic information, training, and support are provided to lay volunteers who work with children with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers and helpers are ready to include children with disabilities in their classrooms.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Youth with disabilities participate in preparation classes for membership (e.g. baptism, bat/bar mitzvah, confirmation)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Youth with disabilities are welcomed into youth programs and are a part of a small group.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adults with disabilities are included in religious education programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schools and daycare programs sponsored by our congregation include children with disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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C. Service

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
People with disabilities contribute on planning teams and serve in leadership positions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Efforts are made to discern the gifts of people with disabilities and connect them with opportunities to share their gifts.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities *within* the congregation	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities are serving in varied capacities *beyond* the congregation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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D. Outreach

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
Intentional efforts are made to invite people with disabilities and their families to engage in congregational life.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Families feel welcomed and supported as members of the church.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accessibility symbols and images of people with disabilities are included in our materials and advertising.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation to congregational activities is provided or arranged for individuals who cannot drive	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visitation programs are extended to people with disabilities and their families, as well as those who are homebound.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We actively seek out ways to address unmet needs of people with disabilities living in our community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Members are informed of opportunities to support people with disabilities within and outside of the congregation	☐	☐	☐	☐

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E. General Awareness

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
Our policies and practices clearly communicate our desire to worship and serve alongside people with disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our vision to be inclusive is frequently shared with members and broadcast throughout the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reflection on our accessibility and hospitality is conducted at least annually	☐	☐	☐	☐
Events promoting Belonging are observed each year.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basic disability awareness is communicated through sermons, bulletin inserts, newsletters, religious education curricula, and other avenues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accessibility and support needs are considered when congregational events are planned.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our resource library includes books and materials about theology and disability, as well as resources for families.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our clergy, staff, and ministry leaders are familiar with disability issues related to their specific programs, roles, and responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our policies and practices clearly communicate our desire to worship and serve alongside people with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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F. Families

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
Families who experience disability feel welcomed and included in the congregation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Families who experience disabilities contribute to discussions on accessibility.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respite care is available to interested parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support groups are available to interested parents, siblings, and others within our community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial support is available to people with disabilities and their families, as it is to all members of the congregation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities and their families know who to contact and feel comfortable with asking for support and assistance.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clergy and care staff equipped to provide spiritual care and support to people with disabilities and their families.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities and/or their families are involved in visioning and planning for the future of the congregation..	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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G. Partnership with Community Groups

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
We have developed relationships with agencies and organizations serving people with disabilities in our community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We have invited people with disabilities and advocacy groups to provide us with feedback about our materials, programs, and activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff from service and support organizations are helping us to improve our capacity to welcome and support people with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We know where to turn when we need more information about specific disability-related issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We advocate for laws, policies, and resources that improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes and additional considerations:

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H. Other Indicators

INDICATOR	ABSOLUTELY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL	UNCERTAIN
We have developed a written plan describing how we will improve our accessibility and welcome	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intentional efforts are made to support people with and without disabilities to develop meaningful social relationships.	☐	☐	☐	☐
A key person or group in our congregation is making sure that the needs of people with disabilities are being addressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
People with disabilities and/or their family members are involved in visioning and planning for the future of the congregation	☐	☐	☐	☐
We have a process for identifying the emotional, spiritual, practical and other support needs of congregation members.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Plan of Action

List up to five goals for improving our congregation's welcome, accessibility, and dimensions of belonging. What specific steps will we need to take to realize those goals? When will we aim to accomplish each goal? Who will be responsible for ensuring that each goal is followed through to completion?

GOALS	NEXT STEPS	COMPLETION DATE	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

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Notes and comments:

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