DISABILITY CONCERNS MINISTRY POLICY

Presbytery of Western North Carolina

- One in five Americans lives with a disability that significantly limits one or more daily activities.

- It is anticipated that many members of our Presbytery will, at some point, have a disability, especially as they age.

- Persons who have a disability and who have valuable gifts to serve the Church, presbytery, and congregations, are prevented from participating fully in the life of the Body of Christ.

- The attitude of our society has changed toward full inclusion of persons who have a disability since the national Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.

- However, numerous barriers still exist that reflect a lack of sensitivity or understanding that denies those who have a disability the dignity and respect they deserve, including:
    - Architecture
    - Communication
    - Attitudes

- Our call to share our faith alongside the many people who have a disability can be accomplished only as we become accessible to all both in space and attitude.

- The life of Jesus, his works, and his teachings, provide a clear basis for our Presbytery's commitment to participation and inclusion.

- We believe that God requires the Church to reflect these rights in its preaching, teaching, and practice.

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina and its Disability Inclusion Team commits to support each congregation, committee, facility, and gathering of the Presbytery to enable all people to participate fully in all ministries of the Presbytery through:

- Ensuring that all may attend, worship, serve, be served, learn, and grow as valued members of the Christian community, recognizing the need for family assistance and support,

- Examining barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that prevent persons with a disability to live fully in church community and striving to rectify such barriers,

- Communicating barriers to accessibility at presbytery, congregational, conference center events and offering solutions to assist those with disabilities to participate fully

- Modifying or designing existing and future sites within the presbytery as much as possible, so that they adhere to the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and

- Providing educational resources and training to assist in fulfilling these commitments.

With gratitude to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities for permission to adapt their disability inclusion policy