**United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries**

January 2017

**February 5th is Disability Awareness Sunday**

Did you know that the first Sunday in February is designated as Disability Awareness Sunday? This is a good day to promote awareness about disabilities in general or about one specific disability. While many profoundly Deaf people do not consider deafness a disability, some hard-of-hearing and/or late-deafened people do. Whether you observe the special Sunday with a specific disability in mind or disabilities in general, it is helpful to include worship leaders and/or liturgists with disabilities to help lead the service (personal testimonies are insightful). The Baltimore Washington Conference Commission on Disability Concerns offers a Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit that offers plenty of ideas and suggestions for what to include (e.g. bulletin inserts, handouts, music selection, how to acquire guest speakers, and so on). Go to their webpage to download the church kit at http://www.bwcumc.org/ministries/disability-ministries/. Or go to the Disability Ministries Committee’s website (see above) for more resources. With many churches in decline, why not reach out to the disability community, some of which may have a hearing loss. Make sure you encourage your church leaders to observe this important Sunday and help to widen your church’s doors so all are welcome.

**Deaf Ministry – *Best Practice***

This quarter’s Deaf Ministry best practice is to have one or
two focuses of ministry and do them well. It is better to
have ministries that stand out than mediocre ministries that do not make an impression. Whatever your focus of ministry is – do it well! For example, have an interpreted ministry where the interpreters are competent and proficient. Another example, offering an annual tax preparation assistance day that includes signing tax preparers and/or having interpreters on-hand to interpret for hearing tax preparers. Have your ministry shine!

**Applying for Grants**
The United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Ministries offers grants for seed money for new ministries, domestic and international mission outreach, Deaf camps, communication access, and scholarships. To read the guidelines and to get an application, download it from www.umcdhm.org/download/grant.doc.

**Interpreted Ministry – *Best Practice***

This quarter’s *best practice* for the interpreted ministry
is **being familiar with community resources.** Often,
Deaf and hearing people ask the interpreter for
community resources and the interpreter will
share or make a referral. For example, some states
have an office or agency that offers resources specifically for those in the Deaf community. Perhaps it’s a resource directory that may include:
\* interpreting agencies
\* human service agencies
\* treatment services
\* vocational rehabilitation (V.R.)
\* advocacy
\* disability access
\* housing assistance
Some state agencies offer a referral service, while others only provide a directory. The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, through Gallaudet University, offers a list of state agencies for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Some states listed only have vocational rehabilitation (V.R.) offices; moreover, these V.R. offices will likely have their own directory of community resources for where to refer their clients who need additional services that are not offered through V.R. The website is http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/national-resources-and-directories/statewide-services.html. Don’t forget about your state deaf school. They likely have a list of resources, as well as some department of aging and disability offices. If your community does not have a directory or a list of deaf services, why not start one. Be sure to include your Deaf ministry! It’s a community resource too!

**From the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf**

**Save the Date!
The Global Methodist Missions Conference** will
be held from August 1-4, 2017 in Texas. Registration
will begin soon. Here is a link to the UMCD webpage
promoting this conference.
http://umcd.org/newsnat/1708.html
If you have not been to one of the global conferences,
you must go to this one. If a lack of funds is a barrier, try fund raising, ask your church, and/or your family members to help pay your way.

**Don’t Forget to Pay Your UMCD Dues**
UMCD asks, have you paid your dues for the new year?  UMCD is a grassroots organization that can't do anything without your support!  We rely on dues support for everything from the website at www.umcd.org to our meetings and workshops! Being a dues paying member means you can vote on officers and remain fully connected with a group of people like yourselves involved in Deaf ministries in The United Methodist Church. Supporting members can be deaf or hearing. Here is the membership page to download your membership application.

**Deaf Ministry – A Closer Look**St. Andrews United Methodist Church
The Deaf ministry at St. Andrew United Methodist
Church in Titusville, Florida is a small Deaf ministry that
has a strong serving presence in the community. Besides having an interpreted ministry on Sunday mornings, it offers periodic sign language classes, an outreach
to the community, a Deaf prison ministry, and most recently, include two Deaf lay people who completed a certified lay minister’s training. Their interpreted worship service is at 10am. Their website is
http://saintandrew-umc.com.

**Borrow Our Assisted Listening System**The **Mardy Walker Memorial Assistive Listening
System** is available by this committee and can
be loaned to congregations for a trial basis. It
includes table microphones, speaker mic, neck
loop, Flat-folding headphones with receivers. It
also includes a carrying case. If your church is
considering a new listening system, consider
borrowing this to see if it will work at your church.
For more information, go to www.umcdhm.org/resource/3001.html.

**Be Sure to Check Out Our Sister Committee
Disability Ministries Committee**www.umdisabilityministries.org

**News on…Deaf Missions**
**Israel –** The Rev. Dr. Tom Hudspeth and a group
of fellow travelers flew to Israel in November. It
included deaf and hard-of-hearing people from
different churches and annual conferences.
Look for a future article about this trip.