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## Q and A

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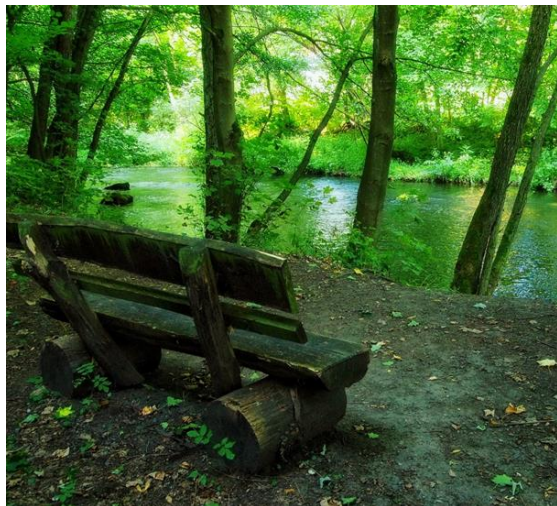
# Practical Resources for Churches



PRC is a non-profit ecumenical resource center offering consultants, workshops, webinars, and resources to congregations and individuals.

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# Worship and Ministry with People with Disabilities

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Harriet Wilkin



This webinar will explore how to use the 5 senses in worship and explore ways to include people with disabilities in ministry. The webinar has been designed to give helpful tips and resources for your toolbox.



# Theology of Worship





As pastors we have a blank canvas in front of us to create a work of art with each worship service. I like this analogy of being an artist of sorts. The steps that a painter takes in transforming a blank canvas to a masterpiece is similar to what a pastor does when creating a worship service each week. Artists look for inspiration from a source.




Each worship service is like creating a piece of three-dimensional artwork. We are able to incorporate the 5 senses when thinking about preparing worship to include people with disabilities.





As the artist, we use those brush strokes to teach and preach and form the congregation, just as God taught in the Old Testament through creation, and just as Jesus taught with Parables.



William H. Willimon

- “Theology is what God says about God.”

Willimon, William H., *United Methodist Beliefs: A Brief Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), page 60.

# Why do we worship?


God is present in worship.

To be in love with God means that the love I have for God I express with the way we praise, pray, sing, confess, preach, forgive, baptize and share in communion together.

Where 2 or more are gathered – God is there also.

We ask the Holy Spirit to be present with us.





James F. Whites writes, “In worship, God gives God’s selfhood to us through human speech, and we, through God’s power, give ourselves to God through our speech.”

James F. White. Introduction to Christian Worship. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 166.



Barbara Newman writes,

“Accessibility. I used that word to help us think about the gospel message.

How do we make that more accessible to each one?

Now imagine accessibility in church, a small group setting, and individual settings.

While it’s easy to think about issues like bathrooms, ramps, drinking fountains, pew cut outs for wheelchair users, and elevators, walk with me more deeply into this concept.”



We are seeking to communicate and engage in worship with God in an experience that is personal and communal.



Through the rhythm of the worship service, we can help build a relationship with God and with the community of believers. Worship as a congregation provides nurturing the needs of each other in order to go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel message in daily life.

# In person and Online Worship



- Taste
- Touch
- Sight
- Listening
- Smell



# Taste – What does taste have to do with worship?

Communion/ Love Feast





Willimon writes, “At the Lord’s Table or before the baptismal font, the word of God is made visible, enacted, and experienced in a way which is tangible, communal, and deeply engaging of all our senses.”

Willimon, William H. , *Why I Am A United Methodist*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 66.

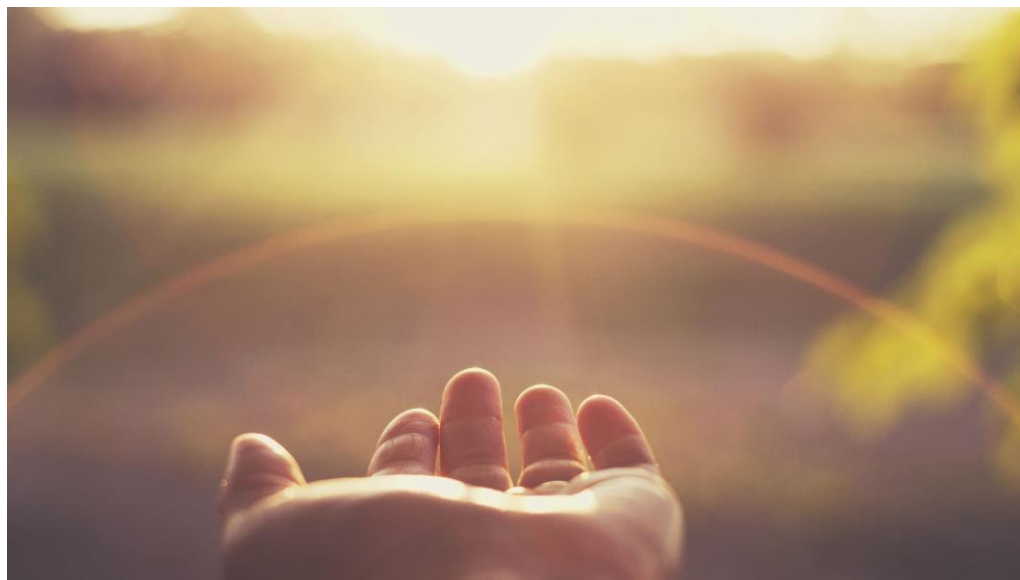


What Willimon describes in that sentence is only about a segment of the whole experience of each particular service. Yet, each service should have something for each participant who attends. Not everyone is going to connect with the songs or with the sermon, but through each the scripture is declared in a respectful manner.



For me, each week, the songs and the visuals continue to help build my relationship with God and the church community. The times that we do have sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, they are special in their own way in my life and the life I share with the church community. Each component has its place in my life.

What about your life?



**Touch – How can people be engaged  
in Worship through touch?**

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Bulletin

Hymnal

Clapping

Musical instruments

**Sight –  
What does  
a person  
see?**

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## Bulletin

- use pictures to illustrate action
- have bulletins available in large print

## PowerPoint

### What are the visuals around the worship space?

- Flowers – be careful of scents
- Decorations – Advent/ Christmas, Easter & for the whole year  
Pinterest has some really great visual ideas worship spaces.
- Stain glass windows
- Candles – be careful using scented candles
- Paraments

## Sign Language

## Baptism

## Communion



# Hearing Loss – Deaf - Sign Language:

<https://umdisability.blogspot.com/2020/07/face-masks.html>

<https://www.umdeaf.org/link.html>

<https://www.umdeaf.org/atech/>

<https://umdisability.blogspot.com/2020/03/online-and-virtual-gatherings-inclusion.html>

<http://umdisability.blogspot.com/2020/04/deaf-communities-gather-for-online.html>



# Listening – What are people hearing?






Newman writes:

“Most of our worship settings can be described as a conversation.

While some of them are corporate and others are individual, we enter into a place where we speak to God and allow God to speak to our lives. For some individuals with disabilities, the tools we use as part of that conversation might be a bit different for some of the traditional tools.”

Newman, Barbara J.; Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship © 2016 all belong, page 35



Hearing the Words of Scripture being read

Hearing songs being sung

Hearing sermons

In a way that are clear and engaging.

Shorten to be within 15 minutes.

As the pastor, we have options on what or how we would like to use the preaching tools. As the pastor, we will be presenting theology in word, through a skit or having visuals as part of the message.

Newman – page 17



# Smell – What are the pos and cons to having smell being a part of the Worship time?

Indoor



Outdoor





The bread for Communion

The food for a Love Feast

Flowers – need to be careful what flowers are used - some people are hypersensitive to some scents

# Online Worship – Hybrid Worship

Whether using YouTube or Zoom or another online platform make sure that Closed Captioning is on.

When using Facebook – think of ways to include the wording for the worship service. Using PowerPoint is a great way to do that. Making sure that the camera is zoomed in on the text on the screen.

Besides using what is available on PowerPoint through Microsoft office, you can also use Canva. <https://www.canva.com/>







If you are streaming through the church website,  
you can also use Closed Captioning.

Can you do some research as to the best Closed  
Captioning software would be best for your  
church.

# Resources

<https://allbelong.org/> - *All belong – Center for inclusive education*

“All Belong equips congregations and schools to glorify God through purposeful, innovative inclusion of persons with varied abilities.”

-All Belong’s Mission Statement

**Black, Kathy., *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability* © 1996**  
Abingdon Press: Nashville

**Hardwick, Lamar., *Disability And The Church: A Vision For Diversity and Inclusion*; © 2021** InterVarsity Press: Illinois.

**Holland, Rev. Rebecca., *The United Methodist Church and Disability: Essays & Practical Tips for Churches, Clergy, and People with Disabilities*. © 2019**

<https://beckiewrites.com/author/beckiewrites/>





**Disability Ministries – The United Methodist Church -**

<https://umcdmc.org/>


There are several resources available on the website.

- Worship –

<https://umcdmc.org/worship/>

- Accessibility Audit –

<https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/accessibility-audit/>



**Jones, Tony-Phelps;** and other contributors; *Making Church Accessible to All: Including disabled people in church life.* © 2013 The Bible Reading Fellowship

**Newman, Barbara J.;** *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* © 2016 all belong

**Mitchum, Naomi;** *Every Child Can Bloom: Inclusive Classroom*  
<https://naomimitchum.com/>



# Conclusion



As in each of the different forms of worship services, each requires the pastor to be an artist that signals that all who are attending are participating. Whether the worship service is on a Sunday or another day of the week or indoors or outdoors, the pastor takes into account every component of songs, words, and visuals. Everything whether inside or out is about glorifying God with God being present in the glorification. God is forever present with all who are attending. The relationship of God and the people of the congregation continues to grow with each other.



## **What is the purpose of Worship?**

- not to educate, but to draw us into partnership/  
relationship with the guidance of the Holy Spirit with God.



Even though the purpose of the service is not to educate, what is educating is the layout of the church building confining God or if holding worship outside, where we are open with God. The visuals of the area are teaching the theology the congregation believes as to where God is present and how the congregation is interacting with the congregation, and how God is participating in the service. There is more to worship than just filling the pews.





There is more to worship than dressing appropriately. Worship is about providing the three-dimensional masterpiece, where all are participating within their given function.

As master painters, we can look at worship and ministry with people with disabilities in new ways that make sure all are being included.

## **Interactive question**

What did you notice about the slides in this PowerPoint?





# Questions and Comments

Harriet Wilkin

Email: [h.wilkin.cfm@gmail.com](mailto:h.wilkin.cfm@gmail.com)