

**PTCA Disability Policy  
Suggestions for Implementation**

Recommendation	Suggestion for Implementation
<p>1. Continue to hold stated meetings and other Presbytery-wide events in settings that are accessible for worship, business, fellowship, and dining (Provide information on building accessibility in the call to the meeting).</p> <p>2. Provide signers when requested in a timely manner.</p> <p>3. Provide printed materials in alternative formats (large print or digital) as requested.</p> <p>4. Encourage speakers to read aloud projected materials that have not previously been made available.</p> <p>5. Require that all loan requests for funding new construction or remodeling of church property include provision for accessibility.</p> <p>6. Encourage speakers and leaders to use person-first language when referring to persons with disabilities. For example, use “a woman who is blind,” rather than “a blind woman.” Use inclusive language. For example, use a statement like “Please rise in body or in spirit” rather than “Please rise”.</p> <p>7. Encourage the nominating committee and COR to seek out persons with disabilities for leadership positions in Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly.</p> <p>8. Encourage inclusion of people with disabilities in worship leadership.</p>	<p>1. Churches will make accessibility information available in a timely manner to the Stated Clerk before the meeting is scheduled.</p> <p>2. Request for signing will be submitted to the Presbytery Office two weeks before the scheduled meeting.</p> <p>3. Requests for alternative formats will be submitted two weeks before the event.</p> <p>4. The Moderator will lead this effort to make new information available to all who are present.</p> <p>5. The requestor will submit provisions for accessibility to the Trustees. Ward Sessing is a Presbytery resource person.</p> <p>6. The Council will model the person first language. (The Disability Concerns Task Force is a resource)</p> <p>7. The Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk will include this as part of their committee resourcing.</p> <p>8. The Moderator and worship planners will seek out participants with the help of pastors.</p>

PTCA Disability Policy  
January 2011

Background

In 2006 the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PCUSA approved a comprehensive policy, Living Into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities. The policy calls all bodies of the church to include people with disabilities in all areas of the church's life. This includes leadership, worship, education, employment, service, and fellowship.

We believe that all people -- regardless of our abilities or limitations, or what any society labels as an ability or disability -- are created in the image of the Creator God, created to be in relationship with God and with one another.

We envision a church in which the designation or naming of a person's disability is less important than who that person is as one of God's people.

The policy affirms that, as Paul writes in I Corinthians 12:4-7, all Christians have gifts to share with the church. These gifts, like those of more able-bodied persons, include gifts of leadership.

... we are called, regardless of our abilities or limitations, to grow and live into the body of Christ ..... No one is excused from the gladsome task of discipleship ... As the body of Christ, it is our responsibility to remove all barriers and share the Gospel. In so doing, we reveal to the world a glimpse of God's Kingdom, challenging all social systems and constructs that deny the full humanity of any person. Equally, the Gospel is a challenge to those of us with disabilities ourselves to grow in discipleship and service to others.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area has been a leader in our denomination in advocacy with people with disabilities and in developing resources on disability awareness for congregations. In 1995 the 207<sup>th</sup> General Assembly approved a policy statement that included action requested in an overture initiated by PTCA. The statement required that all material produced by the PCUSA shall be available, when requested and in a timely fashion, in one or more alternative formats. For a number of years, resources produced by Presbyterians for Disability Concerns have included numerous contributions by individuals from PTCA. We believe that the following recommendations are consistent with the policies approved by the PCUSA and also with progress made by this Presbytery.

Recommendations from Disability Concerns Ministry

We recommend that Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area:

1. Continue to hold stated meetings and other Presbytery-wide events in settings that are accessible for worship, business, fellowship, and dining (Provide information on building accessibility in the call to the meeting)

2. Provide signers when requested in a timely manner
3. Provide printed materials in alternative formats (large print or digital) as requested
4. Encourage speakers to read aloud projected materials that have not previously been made available
5. Require that all loan requests for funding new construction or remodeling of church property include provision for accessibility
6. Encourage speakers and leaders to use person-first language when referring to persons with disabilities. For example, use “a woman who is blind,” rather than “a blind woman.” Use inclusive language. For example, use a statement like “Please rise in body or in spirit” rather than “Please rise”
7. Encourage the nominating committee and COR to seek out persons with disabilities for leadership positions in Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly
8. Encourage inclusion of people with disabilities in worship leadership

#### Conclusion

We propose that PTCA approve these recommendations that we remove barriers and model for our congregations full participation in leadership by people with disabilities, In doing so, we will celebrate the rich diversity in the body of Christ.