Hearing Accessibility

In this category, it is important to distinguish between three descriptive terms.

• **Hard of hearing** – persons who have a hearing loss, but hear with a hearing aid or Assistive Listening Device, and/or sign language.

• **deaf** (with a small “d”) – persons who have very little or no hearing and rely on printed or visual language materials and/or speech reading (“lip reading”), as their primary means of communication.

• **Deaf** (with a capital “D”) – persons who use a distinct language, American Sign Language and identify themselves with a cultural group (North American Deaf Culture). They may have some hearing.

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**Assistive Listening Devices**

Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) address the issues for persons who are hard of hearing.

Churches that display this symbol will meet criteria 1-3. Criteria 4-8 are highly recommended. In addition, most persons who are hard of hearing or deaf can read, so the visual aids under Vision Accessibility are also recommended.

1. ___ **Sound System.** A regularly used, clear audible sound system with at least one microphone.

2. ___ **ALD.** The sound system includes individual Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) for people who have a hearing loss. Ushers are educated on the location of Assistive Listening Devices and how to assist persons wishing to use them.

Either 3 or 4 is acceptable for Hearing Accessibility

3. ___ **Roving microphone.** A roving microphone is available for sharing time, joys/concerns, etc, or when a roving microphone is not available, the pastor/worship leader summarizes over his/her microphone so that all can understand.

The following are highly recommended.

4. ___ At least one hearing aid compatible **telephone with a volume control**

5. ___ **Taped or paper copy of sermons/services.** Worship services are made available on audio and/or videotape

6. ___ **Face lighting of speakers**

7. ___ **Closed captioning** may be helpful as well as other visual language options.

8. ___ **Eliminate background noise.**