



How to have an accessible Christmas

Hints and tips to help you think about accessibility in your services

Your Building

- ☐ Talk to your congregation and listen to the access challenges they face if they are disabled or neurodivergent. Welcome any suggestions for change.
- ☐ Check your external lighting and replace any faulty bulbs.
- ☐ Make sure the approaches and entrances to your church are well-lit and safe.
- ☐ Sweep steps, ramps and paths and clear away leaves.
- ☐ Look for any trip hazards on paths and approach routes.
- ☐ Check your accessible toilet – remove anything stored in there and clear any obstructions to the toilet or sink.
- ☐ Test the toilet emergency alarm and make sure the door can be safely locked and unlocked from inside.
- ☐ Plan who can respond to the disabled toilet alarm and know how to help. The alarm cord must touch the floor so that if anyone falls, they can reach it.
- ☐ Check your conventional toilets. Make sure the lighting is adequate and remove any unnecessary clutter. Check that door catches and locks are easy to operate.
- ☐ Test your hearing loop and advise that the hearing loop is available.
- ☐ If you put out extra chairs and change the layout, make sure the aisles and access routes are wide enough for wheelchairs, pushchairs and people with walking aids.

Communications

- ☐ Create an accessibility area on your website. Include pictures and a description of the accessible facilities – these are all available for free at accessiblechurch.net.
- ☐ Include access information on your invitations – step-free, accessible toilet, hearing loop, etc. Be honest about shortcomings as well. Make it easy to see and read.



- ❑ Include descriptions of what will happen in services on your website and on your invitations: *"The church will be lit by candlelight". "We will serve coffee and mince pies after the service". "The service will last for approximately 90 minutes"*.
- ❑ Provide large print copies of service sheets. A minimum of 18 font on cream or light pastel coloured paper. Do not use white paper.
- ❑ Make service sheets Dyslexia friendly formats. Use a sans serif font, such as Verdana, 12 point, 1.25 or 1.5 line spacing.

Your Services

- ❑ Make your services representative of your congregation and local community. Include disabled people as leaders, readers, etc.
- ❑ Make inclusive announcements in your services, such as: 'You are welcome to stand or to remain seated if this is more comfortable for you.'
- ❑ Give reassurance from the start by saying something like: *"We want everyone to participate in our worship as is best for you. Please feel free to sit or stand, or move about, at any point in the service"*.
- ❑ If possible, why not include British Sign Language interpretation in one of your services? You might have a BSL interpreter in your parish.
- ❑ If you wanted to include a Makaton signed carol, there are ready-made videos at: beckymakatontutor.co.uk. Don't refer to Makaton signs as 'actions' as they are a language with meaning.
- ❑ Be aware that not everyone is comfortable or able to read with candlelight, so think about the lighting in the church.
- ❑ Avoid using flashing lights on Christmas trees and decorations as they can prove dazzling and disorientating.
- ❑ Make sure all leaders and readers use a microphone.
- ❑ Think about providing some useful things to aid concentration and participation.

**DON'T FORGET TO DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE SYMBOLS AT
WWW.ACCESSIBLECHURCH.NET**