



The United Methodist Committee on

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Ministries

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September 2018

To share Jesus' love by equipping and advocating access through effective communication and leadership among the diverse Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Deaf-blind communities.

Deaf Ministries Conference

The United Methodist Congress of the Deaf (UMCD), a United Methodist approved caucus, took part in a joint “ELM” conference in Las Vegas, NV from July 26-29, 2018. ELM refers to Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist. The three denominations collaborate on several aspects of Deaf ministries. As a prelude to the conference, on July 23rd and 24th UMCD offered a Basic Certified Lay Servant class and an Advanced Certified Lay Servant class for Deaf and hard of hearing people. Also, UMCD leaders participated in the Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries meeting held on July 25th. The former UMCD president, Rev. Dr. Kirk VanGilder completed his term and caucus members voted and chose the new president, Billy Deters of Titusville, FL. Plans are on their way for a next conference.

LaSander Saunders was awarded *The Philip Hasenstab Award* for her excellence in Deaf mission and evangelism. She was recognized through her years of service at her former Deaf church in Baltimore, MD. *The Daniel Moylan Award*, which is for church excellence in Deaf evangelism and mission, was awarded to Hilltop United Methodist Church, St. James' UMC, and the other Deaf ministries in the Mutare District of the Zimbabwe East Annual Conference. These Deaf ministries began over 14 years ago, providing accessible worship in Zimbabwean Sign Language, and training interpreters as well as identifying and training Deaf youth and adults to become Christian leaders through serving the Deaf community. Approximately 100 Deaf people are being served and engaged through these two churches.



[Image Description: DHM group meeting]

Certified Lay Servant Classes for Deaf People



[Image Description: Logo for Certified Lay Servant]

Certified Lay Servant (CLS) classes were held in Las Vegas, which were a part of the Deaf Ministries conference in July 2018. The two classes, Basic and Advanced, were taught in Las Vegas, NV specifically for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Carol Stevens collaborated with Discipleship Ministries (General Board of Discipleship Ministries) and designed the two curricula. In Las Vegas, Rev. Dr. Tom Hudspeth and Karen Miller taught the Basic class and had 5 participants. Carol Stevens taught the Advanced class and had ten participants. The participants represented churches from the following annual conferences: Florida, Texas, North Texas, Oklahoma, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, North Georgia, Detroit, and Delaware.



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Deaf Ministry: Best Practices

Raising Deaf awareness is this quarter's *Deaf Ministry: Best Practice*. Raising Deaf awareness helps to educate both Deaf and hearing people, creating a united front to draw attention to Deaf and hard of hearing and Deafblind people, their accomplishments and to promote their rights. Ways to promote awareness are to promote better understanding about Deaf culture, Deaf issues, and remembering the history of the Deaf community. One website that offers helpful ideas is [Very Well Health](http://www.verywellhealth.com/deaf-awareness-week-1046519) (www.verywellhealth.com/deaf-awareness-week-1046519). Anytime is a good time to raise Deaf awareness, whether it is through one-on-one conversations, holding trainings, or hosting national observances. National observances include:

- Deaf Awareness Week, the last week of September
- Better Hearing and Speech Month in May (promoting hearing screenings)
- National Deaf History Month (March 13 – April 15)
- Disability Awareness Sunday (with the focus on Deaf and hard of hearing)

Ideas for raising Deaf awareness are widespread. Here a few ideas:

- Posting articles on church bulletin boards or the church website
- Using bulletin inserts
- Having a group study that shows a video (see the Very Well Health link)
- Offer an ASL class
- Host a Deaf Awareness Sunday (see this committee's website for a guide)

The Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries has resources. Check out their [resource webpage](http://www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html). (www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html).



[Image Description: Deaf Awareness Ribbon]

Interpreted Ministry: Best Practices

Increasing your sign vocabulary is this quarter's *Interpreted Ministry: Best Practice*. Most sign language interpreters know that fluency in both American Sign Language (ASL) and English is necessary for their work. This comes through learning new signs, reading articles, viewing videos, conversations with others, and through studying. Those providing interpreting services in church settings become knowledgeable with Bible, theology, and learning church-related signs; however, learning the signs from other venues or settings, such as medical, mental health, and education, are helpful.

The website, [Very Well Health](http://www.verywellhealth.com/sign-language-dictionary-online-1046859) (www.verywellhealth.com/sign-language-dictionary-online-1046859) offers a short list of online sign language dictionaries that includes:

- [Food signs](#)
- [Medical Signs](#)
- [Religious signs](#)
- [Signs for sexual communications](#)
- [Mental health](#) (through Sign Savy at www.signingsavvy.com/wordlist/14473)

One website to subscribe that offers professional articles for interpreters is [Street Leverage](http://streetleverage.com) (<https://streetleverage.com>).



[Image Description: Interpreter with a speaker]



Deaf Awareness Week in September

Deaf Awareness Week is observed the last week of September. It first began being observed in 1958. To read about its history, check out Signing Savy's website (www.signingsavvy.com/deafawarenessweek). This is a great opportunity for Deaf ministries to host special services, teach sign language classes, offer its community resources, and/or to invite speakers to share about Deaf. Some helpful resources include:



[Image Description: Branch with Deaf Awareness Week]

- Deaf Awareness Sunday Guide (www.umdeaf.org/download/deafsunday.pdf)
- Sign Language Class (www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/info-to-go/asl/learning-aslbooks_media_classes.html)
- Post Deaf-related events (www.verywellhealth.com/deaf-events-calendars-1048717), don't forget to include your own Deaf ministry's events
- Have a Deaf-friendly worship service (<https://um-insight.net/in-the-church/local-church/create-deaf-friendly-worship-with-hospitality/>)
- Bulletin inserts (www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html)
- Print and display informational brochures (www.umdeaf.org/resource/cong.html)
- Host an after worship sign language class on September 23rd that includes highlighting some features of Deaf culture, a few basic sign phrases, and the manual alphabet (the ABCs)

A Deafblind Minute

By David Jessop



[Image Description: A person with a navigating cane]

Most, if not all, churches have older adults and elderly members. It is likely these individuals have some hearing loss and/or vision loss. While many people will have glasses to correct their vision and some may have hearing aids, not all people will use these corrective measures. Offering improved accessibility for seniors, really everyone, is necessary to help keep them participating and engaged in their faith community. A few suggestions to improve accessibility can include large print bulletins and handouts, having an Assisted Listening System, turning on the subtitles or closed captions to videos, consistently using a sound system, and repeating what others say when they're not using a microphone. Deafblind people are often considered persons who have full deafness and full blindness; however, most have varying degree of deafness and vision loss (e.g. hard of hearing with failing eye sight). It's important to remember these folks so they remain active and do not lose touch with their church, some of which may have been members for most their lives. They stuck with their churches and the churches need to stick by them.

Be a star!

We'd like to make you a star! We're looking for videos of any aspect of Deaf and HOH ministry. Do you sign the scripture readings in church? Would you like to share a short devotion? Is there a Deaf or HOH event or program going on? We'd like to see it and share with other members. Send us an e-mail (umdeaf@gmail.com) if you can help.



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United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities Meet

The United Methodist approved caucus, United Methodist Association of Ministers with Disabilities (UMAMD), met in Washington, DC from August 1-3, 2018. Their conference theme was “Taking Our Place at the Table.” The conference was held on the campus of Gallaudet University. Speakers from United Methodist boards and agencies highlighted the event, including a guest speaker from the Lewis Center on Leadership (from Wesley Theological Seminary) who spoke about leadership. The conference rallied mutual support, encouraged the focus for supporting persons with disabilities, and raised awareness about the inequality that occurs for some, if not most, persons with disabilities in The United Methodist Church. To read the meeting minutes, go to the [UMAMD website](http://www.umdisabledministers.org/meeting/2018.html) (www.umdisabledministers.org/meeting/2018.html).

Deaf Ministry: A Closer Look

The Dallas Indian United Methodist Church is this quarter’s *A Closer Look*. The Dallas Indian United Methodist Church, a Native American congregation in Dallas, TX, has a Deaf ministry that has several Deaf and hard of hearing persons actively participating in the ministry. They hold Bible studies, have a drum group, and other fellowship activities for its members. The Deaf ministry has received support from Lover Lane UMC’s Deaf ministry/congregation, as well as grant support from Global Ministries’ Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries. To learn more about the church, go to their website at www.dallasindianumc.org.



[Image Description: Deaf group in a church sanctuary]

Are you following our Facebook pages?

We post a variety of pieces: of course we have stories from churches about Deaf and HOH ministry, but also stories about Deaf and HOH people, notices about scholarships, news about products, tips and general advice about hearing aids, safety, and similar items. Check them out at:

<https://www.facebook.com/United-Methodist-Committee-for-Deaf-and-Hard-of-Hearing-Ministries-DHM-152198489326/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UMCD-United-Methodist-Congress-of-the-Deaf-260161100677427/>

Quick Links

[DisAbility Ministries Committee of the UMC](#)

The [VOICE of the United Methodist Disability Connection](#) (Newsletter)

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