



The United Methodist Church

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Dear Friends and Members of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference:

When it comes to a concern for accessibility, we should all take it personally! At any given time in our lives—hopefully it's just briefly if we have a broken bone or surgery—we might need better accessibility into and within our church or it might be a chronic disease or the aging of our bodies that makes it difficult for us to navigate our church at a time when we really need our faith community!

So the NIC Accessibility Awareness Conference is one that applies to all of us! I invite you to send a team to the Accessibility Awareness Conference on November 8, 2014 at the Barrington UMC. Why?

There are many different types of disabilities that are common in our population and membership so it requires us as church leaders to pay attention to and address a variety of accessibility issues: such as hearing, sight, and mobility. But maybe the biggest accessibility issue that we all need to address is that of attitude: how do we regard and treat those with accessibility needs? Sometimes the body of Christ's greatest "disability" is in our attitude!

The accessibility audit that our Northern Illinois Conference Accessibility Ministries team has put together is an education in itself. I encourage you to print it off and share it with your church council and trustees to begin to be aware of your church facility and to make at least 3 goals in the next year. Start small if you must, but do something to increase your accessibility for all people.

It's really important that trustees are represented from your church at this event. Understanding the need of greater accessibility is the first step to addressing the most important needs and helping a congregation support those changes to the facility financially (a workshop will address the financial resources) and with radical hospitality.

As the body of Christ seeks to be more radical in its hospitality toward all people, the day will also include a very unique worship service.

Please make sure your church is well-represented at this important educational and inspirational event!

Sincerely,

Sally Dyck