

Worship Bulletin Cover



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Bulletin Inserts

The [Deaf & Hard of Hearing Ministries Committee](#) has bulletin inserts. Consider one of them or simply include the ASL alphabet.

Announcements

Today we are celebrating Deaf Awareness Sunday. We are dedicating this worship time to recognizing and honoring Deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind people within our church and community. The Deaf and DeafBlind communities often uses sign language and tactile sign language to communicate with one another - what wonderful gifts from God. It is probably to no surprise, we hearing people could do a better job at learning sign language so we can communicate with them. In the 19th and early 20th century, Martha's Vineyard even had a large Deaf community where the majority of the hearing community knew sign language, making their community accessible and welcoming to Deaf and hard of hearing people. Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind people work in professions, we even have pastors and deacons who serve as ministers. So, let us open our hearts and spirits to this special service today.

* Note: Consider a special announcement that your church will implement a Deaf ministry at your church OR put together a Deaf ministry team or committee to explore the opportunity. The book, [Deaf Ministries](#), is an excellent resource to support new and expanding existing ministries, it was authored by a United Methodist Deacon.

Opening Litany

Leader: All are welcome including Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind to worship.

People: We have come to worship the Lord our God.

Leader: Sign language for Deaf and hard of hearing people, tactile sign language for DeafBlind people, having communication access, and offering visual aids are all expressions of faith.

People: We have come to worship the Lord our God.

All: All are welcomed in the house of the Lord, let us be welcoming in the Lord's House. Amen.

Opening Prayer

You, O God, are the Creator of all sign languages, bringing all your Deaf people, including Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind people, to come and worship you. With your Holy Spirit, you

have disseminated spiritual gifts, your graces, and your love - all shared to include all your people. We pray today, especially for our local Deaf community and DeafBlind community, as well as the wider Deaf and DeafBlind communities, may they know they not only know the Spirit of the Lord is in this place, but they too are welcomed in this faith community. Support and bless our hospitality efforts for being welcoming to all people. We pray this in the name of the powerful name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Children's Message

Red Light - Green Light

Give the children instructions to play the game, Red Light - Green Light. Have the children stand at the entrance of the sanctuary. When the person leading the children's message faces the children, that is red light. When the children's minister turns their back, it is now considered a green light and the children move toward them. When the children's minister turns and faces the children again, it is red light. Do this a few times until the children arrive to the children's minister. Once they arrive up front, have the children sit down.

The heart of the message is we sometimes need to stop and look around because when we do we will see Deaf and hard of hearing people. Stopping to see, we will see their sign language and how they communicate using sign language and other communication methods. It's a beautiful language. Many Deaf and hard of hearing people also rely on captions for TV and for the movies so they can follow what's being said though they likely prefer everything in their first language - sign language. So, can we agree, let's slow down, let's look all around, and let's see Deaf and hard of hearing people around us. Time permitting, teach the children, "Thank you" and "Welcome" in ASL. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Mark 7:31-37

This passage is about deaf-mute person who Jesus seems to have healed. But on the offset, it also looks like Jesus healed / restored the community to ensure they include this man in their community.

Luke 1:57-65

This passage has Zechariah is said to be mute, but is likely "deaf-mute" as the reader see the Jewish leaders gesturing / signing to Zechariah who requested a writing tablet as an accommodation (to communicate).

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (shorter version) OR 12-27

This passage emphasizes that the body of Christ is made up of many members, including Deaf and hard of hearing people. All the members - all the parts - that includes Deaf and hard of hearing people are equal value in the body of Christ.

Offering OR Special Offering

Consider taking up a special offering today to support accessibility initiatives for the church. Have funding available for ASL interpreters, using captions for public access (like otter.ai), comprehensive worship guides that are easier for people with hearing loss to follow along, and church-related activities such as ASL class (books or instructor) or local Deaf-related charities. The [Deaf & Hard of Hearing Ministries Committee](#) of The United Methodist Church (through the

[Advance](#)) AND the [United Methodist Congress of the Deaf](#) (a Deaf UMC caucus) appreciates donations. The United Methodist Congress of the Deaf (UMCD) is a caucus made up of persons and ministers affiliated with Deaf ministries across the United Methodist connection.

Doxology

Consider signing the Doxology with a small group - they can follow / copy what the person in the front row is signing while the person on the front pew has a tablet to follow / copy the video they are using to sign it. Or simply, show [the video](#) by the United Methodist Communications.

Pastoral Prayer

Lord, we have gathered here today, remembering and honoring Deaf and hard of hearing people. We better realize their presence with us and we give you thanks. We give thanks for their gifts and grace to our faith community and wider community. Where advocacy efforts and partnering efforts are needed, help us to support them. When communication access is needed, help us to support it. When communication efforts fail, help us to restore them.

Today, we also pray for Deaf ministries here, in our own town, in our area, and all around the world. Deaf ministries is a gift to the Church and we give you thanks for helping the Church to welcome all people including our Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind siblings in Christ.

Lord, where there are communication barriers, such as the refusal of providing sign language interpreters, having available funds to support communication access, and attitudinal barriers such as not being sensitive to including and welcoming people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, we pray you will remove such barriers. Where DeafBlind people are excluded because no one will guide them, remind us to step in and offer to do so. And, Lord, forgive us when we have failed to be welcoming to Deaf and hard of hearing people, whether it was with expressions of audism and ableism or simply not realizing we have left them out because of our hearing privilege. Jesus flipped the tables in the Temple, help us to flip them in our own way so all people have access to employment, healthcare, housing, treatments, and the like.

Guide us with your Spirit to expand our hospitality so we can be welcoming to Deaf and hard of hearing people. Help us to better represent the body of Christ, here at _____ Church. Send us Deaf and hard of hearing people, so we too can share the love and grace of Jesus the Christ. It's always been your hope, and was a part of Jesus' public ministry, that we all all know and be in a relationship with you, O Lord.

We pray this in Christ's holy and precious name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

You, O God, have done it once again. Your Spirit has not only shown up, it has also shown us how we should work towards having a welcoming and accessible worship space for all people, including Deaf and hard of hearing people. Continue to stir in our hearts a desire to learn and be in relationship with Deaf and hard of hearing people. Help us to better see their gifts. Help us to be sensitive to supporting DeafBlind people, whether it is visiting, having coffee with them, learning tactile signing, or simply offering to bring them to church. Thank you, O Lord. Amen.

Benediction

Receive this benediction. Go, learn the ASL alphabet, even some ASL phrases. Let us practice honoring the gifts of Deaf and hard of hearing people, here and in our communities. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Permission granted to edit and copy this for church needs. Email inquires and questions to Rev. Dr. Leo Yates at leoyjr@gmail.com.