

CHECKLIST FOR WELCOMING SENIORS

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As you look at your church building and think about your congregation's worship services and programs, use this list to help determine if you are welcoming for seniors. This list might also help you determine places where you need to improve. Not every idea or program is appropriate for every congregation, but this might help you plan for the future. Check each line where you believe your church has done a good job.

Entering the Building

- 1. Are there rails or banisters at the steps?
- 2. Can the thresholds be easily stepped over or can a wheelchair get over them without assistance?
- 3. Are rugs or runners secured or are there corners that could catch a walker, wheelchair or foot if someone wasn't picking up their feet?
- 4. Are steps adequately lighted?
- 5. Do step edges need to be marked or highlighted?
- 6. Are ramps or elevators clearly indicated?
- 7. Are there proper places to stow walkers or wheelchairs in the sanctuary so they are both out of the way of other worshippers but accessible to the person?
- 8. Are aisles wide enough to easily accommodate wheelchairs or scooters?
- 9. Does the church emergency evacuation plan include a section for helping those with disabilities leave safely?
- 10. Could an EMS team easily reach a person in need?

9 – 10 checks: Your building is fairly easy for seniors to enter.

7 – 8 checks: Your building is fairly welcoming but you need to take a closer look.

6 or less checks: Take a closer look at your building and consider some improvements for safety and making your building more welcoming.

Worship

- 1. Is the light adequate to read the pages?
- 2. Are large print options for bulletins, Bibles and hymnals provided?
- 3. Are there hearing devices to amplify sound?
- 4. Are the treble and bass lines in the speaker system adequate to cover a range of voices?
- 5. What adjustments can an individual make if the musical instruments are too loud?
- 6. Are the hymn books and Bibles easy to hold?
- 7. Are the pencils or pens used easily held by someone with arthritis?
- 8. Are options offered at times such as communion for people who have trouble walking?
- 9. If a screen is used is it easily visible? Is the print of adequate size?
- 10. Are print options offered for those with hearing impairment?
- 11. Do ushers assist all people but particularly those with difficulty walking or

seeing to their seats? Do they offer assistance at the end of the service to leave?

_____ 12. Are wheelchair areas close enough for people to see and hear?

10 – 12 checks: Worship is easy for seniors

8 – 10 checks: Seniors might find some challenges

6 – 8 checks: You've made a good start but work needs to be done

5 or less checks: Seniors might find it difficult to worship with you

Coffee hour

_____ 1. Are there trays with cup holders so a person could carry food to the table?

_____ 2. Are there runners to assist someone with a wheelchair or walker in getting food?

_____ 3. Are decaf options offered at all times?

_____ 4. Are veggies, fruit and other healthful options offered?

_____ 5. Is there a plan to make sure everyone is engaged in conversation?

_____ 6. Are any options offered such as puzzles or crosswords for people to do?

_____ 7. Are chair exercises offered for those who need to wait for another?

_____ 8. Is there an awareness of what to do, whom to call if someone has a food allergy and has a reaction?

_____ 9. If a screen is used in this room is it easily visible? Is it of high enough quality that images and words can be read from most parts of the room?

_____ 10. Is there a microphone in this room? Is it well adjusted?

_____ 11. Are there safe areas for children and are they at a safe distance so that those using walkers, wheelchairs or canes get safely to a seat without disrupting the play space for the youngest members?

_____ 12. Are there structured interactions between the youngest and oldest members so people become part of a community together?

_____ 13. Are bathrooms equipped with handrails? Are there stalls with higher toilet seats? Is it possible to install automatic flush, automatic towel dispenses or automatic hand dryers?

11 – 13 checks: You are a church that has made fellowship easy

8 – 10 checks: You're working at being more welcoming

6 – 7 checks: You've made a good start but there is more work to be done

5 or less checks: Seniors and others will have difficulty participating here

Other

_____ 1. For evening events, are there drivers or a church van to pick up those wishing to attend but who no longer drive at night?

_____ 2. Is the lighting that was adequate during the day still adequate for evening events?

_____ 3. Do thresholds need different markings for evening use?

_____ 4. Is there a defibrillator?

_____ 5. Is there easy access (yet still safe for children) to a first aid kit?

_____ 6. Is there easy access to a phone if medical help is needed?

