Accessibility Committee Meeting Minutes for 1.17.16

Present: Sam Clark, Robert Younberg, Liz Benjamin, Mary Alice Bisbee, Fran Krushenick, Tina Ruth (ET liaison).

1. Sam handed out the report he had prepared for this meeting, attached. Referring by number to his concepts:

1. Small projects we could and just should do: Railings on both sides of the two steps from the chancel up to the organ loft. Sam will check with Paul Ohlson to see how much under budget the handicapped bathroom actually cost, and see if some of that surplus could be used for such railings. We were very pleased with the coat hooks that have already been installed in the Vestry, think more should be added below the adult hooks for kids where wood already exists to attach them to, and should wait to see if more are needed after that. We also have more door levers in stock, and should install them where there are still knobs.

The threshold under the inner front door to the church is also too high, people have tripped on it, so it is being lowered.

2. Hidden and invisible accessibility issues: Adding sensitivity to scent and improving the audio aids to the H&I accessibility list. Mary Alice Bisbee will write an announcement to go in the e-news regularly, asking people to wait until after they leave the church on Sunday to put on such strong scents as after shave, perfume, colognes, and hair and body products. We also talked about putting signs up inside the front and School Street doors to that effect, and putting occasional notices in the order of service if possible. Certain strong –scented flowers, such as Easter lilies, should be avoided for Sunday services.

Liz Benjamin said she would undertake the task of checking out the hearing aid devices in the drawer of the table in the back of the Sanctuary, to make sure the batteries are fresh and they work. She will also find a container for them to be in on the table each Sunday, where people can see and try them.

3. Slightly bigger projects: We'll wait to see if more storage is needed before enlarging the cabinets that back up to the entry to the vestry from the vestibule.

Sam and Paul Ohlson plan to meet with Joan to talk about the south lawn, determine who all the interested parties are, and consider next steps.

4. and 5: We discussed the proposed lift between the Sanctuary and the chancel, and the proposed Full Church Accessibility renovation of the School Street entry, complete with elevator and ramp between the Sanctuary and Children's Chapel, and decided that we were not ready to decide whether to push for either of these now.

2. There was very strong disappointment at the very meager mention of accessibility in the 2020 Vision statement adopted by the Board on January 5, 2016. Members of the committee agreed to attend the next two Sunday congregational meetings about the Vision, to voice their concerns, and suggest general areas of accessibility development that the church might undertake, rather than specific projects. E.g., more handicapped parking, greater access from the Sanctuary to the chancel, organ loft, and Children's Chapel, and a real elevator, without details.

3. Next meetings: We agreed to continue meeting on the third Sunday of each month at 11:30, so Feb.21 and March 20. Tina will ask Bettie to reserve space.

Minutes by Tina Ruth
1.17.16