Anabaptist Disabilities Network

3145 Benham Ave., Suite 5
Elkhart, IN 46517-1970
Phone: 574-343-1362
Fax: 877-214-9838
E-mail: adn@anabaptistdisabilities.net
www.AnabaptistDisabilitiesNetwork.org

Audio Accessibility and Connectivity

There are several different types of assistive listening systems available that churches can use to help attenders who are hard of hearing participate more fully in the service. Post signs to let guest know that one of these systems is available, and provide headphones for those who do not have hearing aids that are enabled for the system. Test the equipment regularly and keep it in good repair.

It can also be helpful to offer print or electronic copies of sermons and spoken elements of worship to those who are hard of hearing, so they can follow along.

Audio Induction or Hearing Loop

This system transmits sound through a microphone with an amplifier and wiring that surrounds the seating area. It eliminates background noise and allows the listener to hear the speaker's voice clearly. Hearing aid users use the telecoil (T) switch or program on their hearing aids anywhere within the wired area. Those without hearing aids or without a T program on their hearing aids can use a portable device with headphones to access the hearing loop system. This is the most expensive technology and requires the installation of a wire loop around the meeting space. The benefit is that most modern hearing aids can use this type of system.

FM System

The radio frequency system is the most common and the least expensive hearing assistance system. It uses a transmitter plugged into the sound system and broadcasts sound wirelessly over radio waves. The speaker wears a transmitter and microphone and the listener wears a portable receiver with headphones. One drawback is that radio

interference is common and there can be static. It also requires both the speaker and the participant to wear a device.

Bluetooth System

This system uses a transmitter plugged into the sound system that transmits sound via Wi-Fi. It works directly with hearing aids that have Bluetooth capability, but can also be accessed using a smartphone or tablet with headphones, or through headsets with transmitters that connect directly to the system. The drawback is that not all hearing aids have the capacity to connect via Bluetooth.