

THE TOM PATON AWARD

Honoring Conference Churches and Ministries Committed to Accessibility

Could your church be a “Tom Paton Award” church?

A BIT OF HISTORY

In 1979, the first Tom Paton Award was received by Avon Lake United Church of Christ.

In 1980, Pilgrim Hills hosted persons from an international conference on persons with disabilities.

Bob Ruck reported in July, 1980 “Participants came from seven countries -Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, India, Canada, and the United States. ...It could have been a Tower of Babel since it was necessary to have simultaneous translation into both Japanese and Korean, yet love bridged the language barrier as well as the nationality barriers and age barriers, to make us ‘one in the spirit’ as some of us had never experienced before!”

“A great variety of churches was represented, including the National Christian Council of Japan; the United Church of Christ (Kyodan church); the Roman Catholic Church in Korea, Japan and Taiwan; the Baptist Church in Japan and Korea; the Korean Church in Japan; the Mennonite Church in Canada; and, the United Church of Christ in the USA.....

“For me,” writes Mr. Ruck, “it was without question the most meaningful and powerful week of my life.”

The guests interacted with that year’s Sports Camp at Pilgrim Hills, including what was described as “the most amazing disco dance you could ever imagine.”

From that experience, more than 85 congregations in the Heartland Conference have been honored with the Tom Paton Award between 1980 and 2003.

Tom Paton served as a Board of World Ministries’ (now Wider Church Ministers) missionary in residence from Japan within the Heartland Conference in 1979-1980.

A Heartland Conference Task Force on ‘An Inclusive Church and Persons with Disabilities’ honored Tom Paton for his efforts to serve persons who are mentally and physically differently abled. His witness inspired the development of criteria for recognition such as the following:

- Building accessibility
- Participation by persons with disabilities in worship, program and activities of the church
- publicity and awareness of services available to persons with disabilities
- special facilities or features
- Addressing attitudes, outreach and sensitivities
- Employment of persons with disabilities

Could your church be a “Tom Paton Award” church?

You are invited to fill out the application form on the next page to share about your church’s work to make its life more accessible to all!

Heartland Conference • United Church of Christ
Tom Paton Award Accessibility Checklist
Is Your Church Accessible?

Communication

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large-print hymnals, bulletins, Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language provided |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Braille materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sermons or entire services on tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Printed sermons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amplifying sound systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio loops and other assistive listening devices |

Parking and Paths

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curb cuts to sidewalks and ramps to entrances | <input type="checkbox"/> Level resting space around doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways at least 48" wide, sloped no more than 5% | <input type="checkbox"/> Marked accessible parking close to accessible entrances |

Ramps and Stairs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs with rubber treads | <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs with handrails on both sides, 32" above the step and extending 1' beyond the top and bottom of the stairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramps 36" wide, minimum, extending 1' in length for every 1" of rise (1:12 ratio) | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly raised abrasive strips on top steps to warn people with limited sight where stairs begin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handrails on at least one side of ramp, 32" above surface | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protection from rain and snow over ramps; non-skid ramp surfaces | |

Bathrooms

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least one accessible bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair turning space, 5' x 5' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grab bars on each side of accessible toilet | <input type="checkbox"/> Towel dispensers no higher than 40" from floor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sink with 29" clearance from floor to bottom of sink | <input type="checkbox"/> Lever-type faucet controls and hardware on doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One toilet stall 36" wide with 48" clear depth from door closing to front of toilet and a 32" door that swings out | |

Water Fountains

- Mounted with basin no more than 36" from floor, easily operated from wheelchairs

Elevators and Lifts

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handrail on at least one side, 32" from floor | <input type="checkbox"/> Braille plaques on elevator panels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elevators or chair lifts to ensure access to the sanctuary and all major program areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Controls placed 54" or less from the elevator floor, reachable from a wheelchair |

Worship Space

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered spaces or "pew cuts" for wheelchair users | <input type="checkbox"/> Choir area allowing wheelchair users to participate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seating spaces with extra leg room for people using crutches, walkers, braces or casts | <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate lighting directed on the face of the speaker for those who read lips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area with lectern and microphones accessible to those with mobility impairments | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookstands or lap boards available for those unable to hold hymnals or Bibles |

Doors and Doorways

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lever handles or push bars | <input type="checkbox"/> Door openings 32" wide or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doors that can be opened by exerting 81 pounds of pressure or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Doors that can be opened electronically by pushing a button |

Other Improvements

In the space below, share with us the things you have done which are not covered by this checklist. Add extra pages if needed.

Church Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Contact Person _____

This form must be completed and emailed by noon on September 14, to office@heartlanducc.org if you and your church wish to be considered for the Tom Paton Award this year. Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.