



Study Committee Report Accessibility Improvement Project

Prepared for: Church Council and Charge Conference

Church: Maplewood United Methodist Church

Date: August 13, 2026

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline, the Church Council of Maplewood United Methodist Church appointed a Study Committee to evaluate the need, feasibility, and ministry impact of proposed accessibility improvements to the church facilities.

The committee met five times over several months to assess the current accessibility of the church campus, gather input from members and visitors, review ministry needs, consult with building professionals, and consider how the church can better fulfill its mission of welcoming all people into the life and ministry of the congregation.

With a history of more than 100 years, Maplewood United Methodist Church has approximately 115 active members with an average weekly attendance of 112, including online worship views and engagement (87 in person, 25 online). Offering robust Sunday School and small-group programs for all ages, the church has seen 15 baptisms and 35 confirmations and professions in the last 3 years. With an annual budget of \$302,000, the church continues to grow and exceed its budgeted giving each year. Most importantly, the church continues to have significant community outreach and impact, including monthly Community Unity Dinners averaging 85 in attendance, an annual Summer Academy for 20 local at-risk children, a weekly neighborhood resale shop dedicated to affordability, and sharing the facility with multiple community groups, such as AA and the Boy Scouts. The church believes that faith grows best when practiced in community.

The committee approached this work prayerfully, recognizing that accessibility is both a practical responsibility and a reflection of our Christian commitment to hospitality, inclusion, and dignity for all God's children.

Committee Membership

The Study Committee consisted of:

- Carolyn Greene, Chair
- Reverend Andy Bryan, Pastor
- Dave Viers, Board of Trustees Representative
- Jerry Blackwell, Finance Committee Representative
- Barb Riney, Administrative Council Representative
- Colette Cummings, Lay Leader
- Carolyn Green, Member-at-Large
- Pickett Lema, Member-at-Large
- Tim McDonough, Administrative Council Representative
- Linda Reeder, Member-at-Large
- Courtney Stotler, Member-at-Large

Purpose of the Project

The committee identified several accessibility concerns that limit full participation in worship, fellowship, educational programs, and community events.

The purpose of this project is to:

1. Remove physical barriers that hinder access to church facilities.
2. Ensure that persons of all ages and abilities can participate fully in the life of the church.
3. Improve safety and ease of movement throughout the building.
4. Support the church's mission of radical hospitality and inclusion.
5. Preserve and enhance the usefulness of church facilities for future generations.

Assessment of Existing Facilities

The committee conducted a review of the church campus and identified several areas where accessibility improvements are needed.

Areas evaluated included:

- Building entrances and exits
- Parking and pathways
- Restroom facilities
- Sanctuary access
- Fellowship and meeting spaces
- Educational classrooms

- Interior circulation routes
- Signage and wayfinding

The committee determined that while the church has effectively maintained the property while making efforts over the years to improve accessibility, additional improvements are necessary to ensure that members, guests, and community users can fully access all areas of the facility.

Proposed Accessibility Improvements

The proposed project may include the following improvements:

- Installation or enhancement of accessible entrances.
- Construction of ramps and improved pathways.
- Upgrades to restroom facilities to meet accessibility standards.
- Improved accessibility to worship, fellowship, and educational spaces.
- Enhanced interior signage and wayfinding.
- Improved exterior access routes.
- Other accessibility enhancements as recommended by architects, contractors, and accessibility consultants.

Final project specifications will be developed following approval of the project and consultation with qualified professionals.

Ministry Impact

The committee believes these improvements will significantly strengthen the ministry of Maplewood United Methodist Church by:

- Demonstrating Christ's welcome to all persons.
- Removing barriers to participation in worship and fellowship.
- Supporting older adults who wish to remain active in church life.
- Improving access for individuals with mobility challenges and disabilities.
- Enhancing the church's ability to host community events and outreach programs.
- Reflecting the congregation's commitment to inclusion and hospitality.

The committee recognizes that accessibility improvements benefit not only those with permanent disabilities but also families with young children, individuals recovering from illness or injury, and visitors of all ages.

Financial Review

The committee reviewed preliminary estimates and financing options.

Estimated Project Cost: \$875,000.00

Potential funding sources include:

- Existing building and maintenance reserves
- Capital campaign contributions
- Grants and accessibility-related funding opportunities
- Memorial and designated gifts
- Mortgage financing, if necessary

The committee believes the project is financially responsible and aligned with the long-term ministry priorities of the congregation.

Findings

After reviewing the facility, gathering input, and considering the mission and ministry of Maplewood United Methodist Church, the committee finds that:

1. Accessibility improvements are necessary and justified.
2. The proposed project supports the church's mission and values.
3. The benefits to current and future ministry outweigh the costs.
4. The project represents a responsible investment in the church's future.
5. The congregation will be better equipped to serve all people through these improvements.

Recommendation

After prayerful study and careful consideration, the Study Committee unanimously recommends that Maplewood United Methodist Church proceed with the proposed accessibility improvement project.

The committee further recommends that:

- The Board of Trustees be authorized to engage architects, engineers, contractors, and other professionals as needed.
- Detailed plans and cost estimates be finalized prior to construction.
- The project be submitted to the Charge Conference for approval as required by The Book of Discipline.
- Church leadership continue to communicate regularly with the congregation regarding project progress and financing.

Resolution

The Study Committee respectfully recommends approval of the proposed Accessibility Improvement Project and requests that the Charge Conference authorize Maplewood United Methodist Church to proceed with the planning, financing, and implementation of the project.

We believe these improvements will strengthen the church's witness, expand opportunities for ministry, and ensure that all persons may more fully participate in the life of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair, Study Committee: _____

Pastor: _____

Chair, Board of Trustees: _____

Date: _____