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# FAITH4ALL

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## Inclusive Times

Latest Edition:

This issue will address the common challenge of functional sound systems and listening devices.

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## Steps towards full inclusion: Sound Systems and Devices

In faith communities, listening devices are the most requested and commonly used assistive device. They help the many who are hard of hearing to participate more actively in the worship services of the community. These devices and systems are often the top priority (and commonly only) assistive device offered to visitors to a faith community. Because of their common use and importance, the functioning of a faith community's sound system and listening devices are a very important topic to be addressed. While most faith communities have sound systems designed to amplify anyone speaking or singing to help everyone hear, visitors and members who happen to be hard of hearing (or deaf) also deserve special attention to how the information spoken is relayed to them.

[Audio induction loop systems](#) are quite common in the USA. More than half of people who use assistive listening devices have hearing aids that have telecoils (or T-coils) installed in them that respond to the electromagnetic signals produced by a hearing loop installed in the floor or ceiling of the room where the listener is seated. T-coil induction systems use the signal from audio sound systems, send the signal into the hearing loop, and personal T-coils built into many hearing aids pick up the signals emitted by the hearing loop. Hearing aids with T-coils installed essentially act as personal speakers responding to the sound which has been sent into the hearing loop. ([HearingLoop.org](#) is a very useful website describing these systems.)

These systems require installation of a hearing loop connected to an audio sound system. Installation of a hearing loop can require a significant effort and, although professional hearing loop system installers are probably best to use, one can even design and install your own system! See [HEARING LOOP 101](#) for an installation guide for your home or office.

If an induction loop system hasn't been installed, often personal Frequency Modulated (FM) or Digital Modulated (DM) assistive listening devices (ALDs) are used to amplify sounds near a listener. A useful summary of different ALD systems can be found at this website: [www.healthyhearing.com/help/assistive-listening-devices](http://www.healthyhearing.com/help/assistive-listening-devices)

The advantage that these ALD systems have is that they can function as personal amplification systems for users and they can be kept with the user at all times.

Like FM/DM ALDs, personal sound amplification products (commonly known as [PSAPs](#)) are effective and portable, relatively cheap, and commonly used by people with new or only slight hearing loss. These devices have been commonly used in the past in many faith communities. Though used commonly, like the FM/DM ALDs, the PSAPs provide a cheaper, lower quality of sound, and in addition require the frequent replacement of batteries, which can be time consuming, costly, and harmful to the environment!

Although it seems obvious to state, those interested in improving the service experience of visitors to or members of their faith community need always remember that no matter which sound amplification system is chosen, none of these systems aid people who are completely deaf! For these individuals, several steps should be taken to aid their experience worshipping:

- Places to sit during the service near those speaking that feature a clear line of sight without distractions assists people who read lips to understand what's spoken. Space should be reserved at each service for this use.
- Depending on the number of people in the congregation who can read American Sign Language ([ASL](#)), the possibility of having an ASL interpreter at functions of accessible religious communities should be considered. The [ADA National Network](#) keeps a webpage titled "[ADA Quick Tips - Sign Language Interpreters](#)" that has a link to The National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf ([RID](#)) hosts an online database of interpreters.
- Another possible way of allowing those in attendance at a worship service to "listen" to what it said, even if they are deaf, is to transcribe what is stated into a sound system using [realtime transcription software](#) and providing the resultant text to those with phones or other devices linked to a local wifi network.
- Of course, the easiest way to provide the text of what will be said in the service is to provide paper copies of what will be read to interested parties before the service begins. *This is also a useful addition for everyone!*

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**On these beautiful autumn days,  
we ask that you consider and pray for the many people of communities  
devastated by the several consequences of human caused global warming!**

### Future Inclusive Times Topics:

- **Steps towards full inclusion: An Open Door**
- **Steps towards full inclusion: Including Young Ones with a Disability**



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