



Welcome to the 2016 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability!

We are glad you are here. This 7th Summer Institute would not have happened without the promise of your presence, the invitation from Western Theological Seminary and Hope College to host us, and the terrific sponsorship support we have received this year after moving the Institute in the direction of a broader sponsorship and funding base. Sara Wielenga at Hope College and Shanna Housman and Ben Conner from Western have been wonderful in helping to plan for your arrival.

As this welcome is written, we have around 160 people who will be here for all or part of the Institute. You represent multiple faith traditions, parts of North America and the overseas countries, and perspectives from your respective roles, vocations, and interest in the growing intersections of faith and disability. About half of you are people who have been to a previous Summer Institute, and the other half people who are with us for the first time.

In our 7th year, we have some continuing traditions and a number of firsts. Our format is basically the same, with plenary sessions in the morning and workshops in the afternoon, and the days bracketed by opportunities for meditation and reflection. Other than the Ph.D. symposium, we chose not to do afternoon courses this year, partly because of the quantity and quality of workshop proposals that were submitted to us in late fall. The Cooperative Resource Exhibit is back, and we also welcome Eerdmans' Publishing and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Thanks to the Calvin Institute, all participants will receive a complimentary copy of Barbara Newman's book: *Accessible Worship*, an indication of their commitment to inclusive worship.

The firsts include the array of sponsors you see on this page, with special thanks to the David and Carol Myers Foundation. David Myers teaches at Hope College and is a world recognized expert in hearing loss. The Ruderman Family Foundation is our first Jewish sponsor, and the national/international work they are doing in faith inclusion is amazing. Another first is the concurrent meeting of the Christian Faith-based Providers Leadership Roundtable, with two of their members, Mosaic and Christian Horizons, also sponsoring. DDI is the Michigan University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. The ELCA stepped in to be a sponsor without even being asked. Friendship House Partners started here at Western Theological Seminary.

So thank you and please help us thank them all!

