

Accessing Faith Like Everyone Else
 A webinar series sponsored by the <http://faithanddisability.org/>.

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Agenda

- Linda Rammler, UConn UCEDD
- Fr. John Gallagher, O.F.M. Cap. (St. Pius X Church)
- Kim Ranell Newgass (Baptist Church in New Haven)
- Mary Lou Freitas (Bethany Covenant)
- Doris Maldonado (Unitarian Society of Hrtfrd)
- Rabbi Ilana Garber (Beth El Synagogue)
- Questions and answers

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Objectives: Following this webinar, participants will be able to provide specific examples of how 5 different faith communities facilitate inclusion in common faith community activities of:

- *Worship and Holidays*
- *Parish events*
- *Faith formation*
- *Outreach/service*

Resulting in **friendship and fellowship** through accessing faith like everyone else.

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CT UCEDD 2013- 2018

CT UCEDD VISION: CT Citizens with Disabilities are valued citizens with opportunities and supports that allow them to be fully included, independent, productive and contributing members of society

CT UCEDD MISSION: To provide interdisciplinary leadership through the core functions on evidenced based practices and policies to ensure all of CT Citizens with Disabilities and their families fully participate in all facets of community life.

EMPHASIS AREAS: To enhance informed choice and supported decision making by CT Citizens with Disabilities so they may achieve quality of life

CAC DDN UConn/UCDC	Education	Early Intervention Schools Health Leadership and Sustainability
	Community Services	
	Research	
	Dissemination	

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UConn UCEDD's Faith-Based Initiative

- Member and host of CT Faith and Spirituality Advisory Council (2007-2011)
- Not currently funded ("what we can when we can")
- Member of Collaborative on Faith and Disability
- AUCD Faith and Disability Special Interest Group

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UConn UCEDD's FBI Projects

- DDN "Day of Respect" conference w/Rev. Bill Gaventa (3/16/09)
- DDN "Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: Strategies that will work in your community" workshop w/Erik Carter (5/16/12)

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Projects, cont.

- Restructured “St. Cyril of Jerusalem Program for Catechesis” for the Bridgeport Diocese available on DVD – section on inclusive “Teaching People with DD”
- “Including People with Autism in Faith Communities” w/Joe Geriak & Kim Newgass* (10/12/12 at St. Pius X Church*)

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Projects, cont.

- Consultation to faith communities (e.g., AIM*)
- Community Outreach & Valley Parish Nurse Program conference (3/4/13)
- Interfaith events at Beth El
- “Group watch”/round table discussions about Collaborative’s 2014-15 webinars

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Projects, cont.

- People First CT annual conference (6/17/17)
- TASH National in Atlanta
- Currently maintain a website and provide individual and organizational technical assistance

https://uconnucedd.org/projects/faith_initiative/

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Inclusion in Worship and Holidays



Father John Gallagher,
OFM Cap
pastor of Saint Pius X Parish
and Guardian of the
Capuchin community



St. Pius X Church
Middletown, CT

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Physical accessibility for worship and holidays

- Pew cut-outs
- Accessible parking spaces level w/main entrance
- Stair lift to church hall
- Railings up steps to altar
- Live-streamed “overflow” Masses
- Good Friday Stations of the Cross

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Inclusion in worship and holidays

- ALL are welcome – service animals, crying babies, individuals who vocalize their joy
- Friendly greetings and farewells
- Implications of tithing
- Option to receive Holy Communion without having to approach the altar

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Inclusion in worship and holidays, cont.

- Option of pew cushions
- Bulletin notices re: scent-free
- Homilies emphasize community and love for all
- Community banquets – natural supports
- Sydney’s story



Faith formation

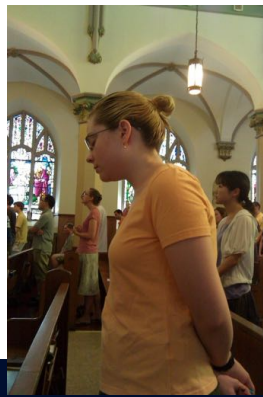


Kim Ranell Newgass,
Mom, autism activist, and involved parishioner at Trinity Baptist Church



Samy:

How
We
Got
Here



Our God is a Rock?



Timelines May Be Helpful...



Faith formation and Parish events



Mary Lou “Lu”
Freitas,
Mom and active
parishioner at
Bethany Covenant
Church



Faith formation and Parish events

- AIM (All-In-Ministry)
 - Current
 - Others in congregation
 - Community
- Hands-on and interactive activities for all
 - Teacher & Youth Education
- Peer mentors
 - Confirmation
 - Camp Squanto/Retreats



Faith formation and Parish events, cont.

- Youth groups
- Worship Arts & Music
- Volunteerism
 - Fundraising
 - Sunday School, greeting, etc.



Faith Outreach and Service



Adoptive mom of teens with disabilities, person with a disability, NAMI Advocate, Special Education Teacher, and active member, Unitarian Society of Hartford



Faith Outreach and Service -- “I just bring them”

- Involvement in high school youth group
- CT KASA initiative for foster children through the church
- Ending the Silence program
- Volunteers at soup kitchen through the church
- Collecting for food pantry



Faith Outreach and Service, cont.

- Using faith base to reach and teach families and friends
- NAMI curriculum
- Support Group for people with mental illness
- Need for cultural awareness/involvement of the Spanish community
- Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM)



In Summary



Rabbi Ilana Garber,
Rabbinic Director of
Lifelong Learning and
Community Engagement
at Beth El Temple



All means ALL at Beth El

- Available to create a warm and welcoming environment across inclusive community:
- Scent-free (we put it in all of our materials and request people try)
- Handrails leading up to our pulpit (also down hallways to social hall)



All means ALL, cont.

Worship and holidays

- Book cart in sanctuary for those who need a break
- Large print prayer books, magnifying glasses available on front table
- Hearing assistance devices available too
- Dairy-/allergen-free candies at end of services



All means ALL, cont.

- **Faith formation** -- our educational program (called SULAM)
 - We teach the student, not the curriculum, so some children learn in transliteration (Hebrew/English) and we support that need
 - Supports include paras, fidget tools, wobble stools, and more



All means ALL, cont.

- A sensory room with mats on the floor and foam equipment for kids who need to "get their sillies out" before SULAM begins or during services



Questions?



For more information about *Accessing Faith*

Like Everyone Else, please contact:

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Please remember to complete your evaluation!



Thank you for your participation!

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