

## **Commission on Disability Concerns**

The Disability Commission continued to be quite active in 2016-2017. Along with submitting disability-related resolutions to the 2016 General Conference, a representative from our disability commission flew to Portland to be an added voice in the collective to advocate on behalf of the disability community.

During the Leadership Day meetings in the various regions, representatives of the Disability Commission and its allies helped provide presentations on disability awareness and accessibility. Since substance abuse falls under the purview of disabilities, workshops on "Heroin and the Church" were presented to help promote awareness on this epidemic and how churches can be engaged in their communities. Presentations were also given at other venues.

Promoting disability awareness and inclusion continued to be a priority for the Commission. It provided consultations to church leaders, congregations, and communities. This was done through observing Disability Awareness Sunday (typically the first Sunday in February or on another Sunday), by written articles for our annual conference, and through collaboration with the GBGM Committee on Disability Ministries. Also, a representative from our Commission attends the Maryland Department of Disabilities (part of the state government) in order to keep a pulse on what's happening at the state level, as well as help The United Methodist Church be a visible presence to the state commission on disabilities. Our Disability Commission continued to collaborate with other ministries, such as the UMW and Older Adult Ministries. Advocacy plays an important role in the Commission's work and partnering with other ministries helps to better achieve this.

Identifying new and existing resources continues to be a significant part of the Commission's work. The Commission's webpage on the conference website is updated with a plethora of resources that includes grant opportunities, fundraising ideas, ways to observe Disability Awareness Sunday, and so on. The Disability Commission developed a Disability Awareness Sunday Church Kit that offers ideas to churches for how to observe this special Sunday.

The Disability Commission continues to be faithful to its work on behalf of our annual conference. Thank you to everyone who assisted us in this.

Rev. Leo Yates, Jr., Chairperson