

Serving the Deaf Among Us

Roddey Caughman

Associate Pastor, Redemption Hill Church, Jefferson Hills, Pa

803-367-1463

Things to Consider When Requesting an Interpreter

When seeking to hire an interpreter for an event within the Pittsburgh Presbytery, here are some things to consider:

1. Finding an Interpreter:

a. Skill:

Seek an interpreter who is not only skilled and competent in American Sign Language, but also has some understanding of the Bible and theology. That being said, there are very few that fit that second criteria. Attached is a list of interpreters that Redemption Hill Church has developed. It may be that not all of them are Christians. Also, there are several interpreting agencies in the Pittsburgh area you can contact. I will also attach the contact information for those agencies.

b. Timing:

It is difficult to secure an interpreter on short notice, so plan ahead. For events with registration deadline, secure an interpreter 3-4 weeks in advance and give the Deaf a registration deadline no later than a week before the event. If no Deaf register by the deadline, you can cancel the interpreter without having to pay them.

For events with general admission and no registration, secure the interpreter 3-4 weeks in advance. Plan on biting the financial bullet, having the interpreter to interpret the event, knowing that the Deaf (like the Hearing) could decide last minute to attend.

- 2. Cancellation Policies:** While each interpreter's policy may vary, in general, most interpreters and agencies require a 24 to 48 cancellation notice. Otherwise, the hiring party will be responsible to pay the interpreter for the time.
- 3. Interpreter Pay Rates:** Ask the interpreter or the agency the interpreting rates. Please note that most interpreters will charge a two-hour minimum. In addition, weekend and late-night rates are usually higher.
- 4. Two-interpreter policy:** If the event is one where the presenter(s) will be speaking straight for more than 30 minutes, then the physical limitation for the interpreter will require hiring two interpreters. Most interpreters cannot interpret safely for more than 30 minutes at a time.

5. **Services are subject to availability:** There is a limited number of interpreters in any given area. Therefore, schedule the interpreter weeks, or if possible, months in advance. Otherwise, you might not be able to acquire their services.

Before the Interpreter Arrives...

1. **Information:** Provide the interpreter with as much information as possible, and as far in advance as possible. This helps the interpreter be prepared and alert you to any potential ethical conflicts. Such information may include the lyrics to any songs, topics from the speaker(s), number of Deaf attendees, and even an outline or transcript of the speaker's message, if available.
2. **Lighting:** Make sure there is ample lighting. There needs to be a light on the interpreter at all times, even with the light might be lowered for any reason. Otherwise, the Deaf will not be able to see the interpreter.
3. **Positioning:** Plan for the interpreter to sit or stand near the person who will be speaking the most. The Deaf person needs to be able to see the speaker and the interpreter.

Interacting with Deaf Attendees

Even though you may not know sign language, still seek to interact with the Deaf attendees, using the services of the interpreter(s). Remember that you have hired the interpreters to facilitate interaction.

Here are some things to do and not do when interacting one-on-one with the Deaf:

1. Before the event, research how to interact with a Deaf person, both with and without an interpreter.
2. Address the Deaf person directly, maintaining eye contact with him/her. It will be tempting for you to look at the interpreter, since that is what the Deaf person will be doing. Avoid saying, "Tell her/him..."
3. Remember that the person being Deaf does not mean he/she is uneducated.
4. If you do not understand something the Deaf person said, ask the Deaf person, not the interpreter, to clarify. Asking the interpreter actually cuts the Deaf person out of the conversation.

Redemption Hill Church's Suggested Interpreters

Please note: While we have reached out to all of these interpreters, not all of them have actually interpreted at Redemption Hill Church.

First Name	Last Name	Phone	Email address	Notes
Jessica	Adams	412-378-6319	JessicaKAdams12@gmail.com	
Michelle	Balfe	412-979-6254	assignpro.pgh@gmail.com	
Cathy	Morgan	412-491-9761	cmorganservices@gmail.com	
Robin	Schmidlin		rlschmidlin@comcast.net	
Joan	Stone	412 877-8150	jp.stone@comcast.net	Texting her is best
Megan	Chopek		chopek@gmail.com	Mostly for music only
Becky	Caughman		signingcs@gmail.com	
William	Murphy		TravelingYinzer@yahoo.com	
Chad	Barnett		chadtam719@yahoo.com	
John	Blasco		jjblas311@gmail.com	
Bichri	Lee	(male)	bichrilee@gmail.com	
Maggie	Brady		harperandmaggie@gmail.com	
Dan	Conley	412 400-3962	conleydan@msn.com	
Deborah	Gates	412 334-2277	dgates547@verizon.net	
Diana	Saunders-Conley	412 242-3642	saunders_conley@hotmail.com	
Maggie	Stewart	412 403-6493	mvsswims@yahoo.com	
Jim	Vevers	412 708-4819	aslanson1@gmail.com	
Darlene	Karaffa		pinkoak@verizon.net	
Darlene	Karaffa		darlene.karaffa@gmail.com	
Amber	Bahler		amberbahler@gmail.com	
Meghan	Aitken		meghanaitken@gmail.com	
Heather	Farmer		candlesfromme@comcast.net	

ASL Interpreting Agencies Serving the Pittsburgh Area

Sign Language Interpreting Professionals

<https://www.signlanguageinterpretingprofessionals.com/>

Pittsburgh Hearing and Deaf Services

<https://www.hdscenter.org/>

Indy Translations

<http://indytranslations.com/markets/pittsburgh-translation-services.htm>

Sorenson Interpreting Services

<https://www.sorenson.com/get-an-interpreter/>