



Lakewood United Methodist Church unveils new sensory room

Church set to unveil new sensory room, offering safe and stimulating environment for those with special needs.

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On November 13, Lakewood United Methodist Church will have an open house to demonstrate their new sensory room, which offers toys and hands-on manipulatives providing a range of stimuli to help individuals develop and engage their senses in a safe environment.

Sensory rooms can include movement, lights, colors, sounds, sensory soft play resources, and even aromas - to help those who may be suffering from anxiety, panic attacks, or who simply need redirection or the ability to decompress. Studies show that individuals suffering from anxiety, as well as those on the autism spectrum who experience overstimulation can realize benefits from engaging sensory play. Therapy mats, fiber optic lighting enclosures,

Lakewood UMC's sensory room includes a fiber optic light enclosure, a maxi-bubble tube, a digital light projection system, an interactive exploration station with music, sound effects and lights, kinesthetic engagement stations, sound steps, and a therapy platform swing, among other items. The sensory room was made possible through a generous grant from the Central District of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Additionally, Lakewood UMC's Children's Ministries, and members Joel and Debra Buckner, and Bobby and Anne Turner also contributed to cover the cost of the room and its resources. Installation was provided without cost by Holsted Company, of North Little Rock.

Additionally, Lakewood UMC plans to employ a dedicated worker to staff the room on Sundays and during other church events. This individual will receive special training on the resources available and how best to use them in different situations. The Isaacson Memorial Endowment Fund will be used to pay for this individual's training and time.

“We are already seeing the benefits of having the sensory room in our church,” shares Lakewood UMC's Children's Ministry Director, Jill Dillman, who helped draft the grant request. “Our weekday Ministries team has used the space already in various ways, and other children, youth

and adults have also used the room, since its installation, and each one has had a positive reaction to the sensory stimuli resources.”

Lakewood United Methodist Church invites members and the general public to attend their Sensory Room Open House, Sunday, November 13, at 10:00 a.m.

ACCOMPANYING PHOTO:

[Mirande.img, attached separately]



CAPTION:

Mirande Eyes, a member at LUMC, enjoys the lights and motions in Lakewood UMC’s sensory room. She is pictured, left, alongside Children’s Ministry Director, Rochelle Gray.

+ For further information or questions, contact Ginger Kehler, LUMC Communications Director, at gkebler@lakewood-umc.org or 501-753-6186