

Get Looped

I AM, BY AUDIOLOGY STANDARDS, PROFOUNDLY HARD OF hearing. I wear the best hearing aid and also rely on lip reading. These serve me well. However, I always hear with a muffled quality.

Church is another matter. I strain to hear sermons and prayers—the “long prayer,” especially, often goes unheard. All of that changed a few months ago.

My pastor, Rev. C.J. den Dulk, and the council of Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Sparta, Mich., heard of the Loop System and agreed to install it in our church for those of us who are hearing impaired. This system is virtually unheard of in the United States but widely used throughout Europe. There it's installed in most public places such as churches, auditoriums, banks, and grocery stores. It operates by sound waves through a wired system that's placed in the floor under the carpet. This is connected to the sound system. You switch on the T-coil switch on your hearing aid to activate it.

The first Sunday I was able to use this, I nearly jumped out of my seat in the pew. Never have I heard like this in my life! My pastor's voice went directly into my ear instead of around it. No more straining to hear. How disappointing and frustrating it was to have to switch it off after the service. The sound was so crystal clear. Two other parishioners had the same experience. What a joy! A big thank you to my pastor and council who did this for us.

My church is among the first I've heard of in my area to install this system. I feel so strongly about how it helps those with hearing impairments that I believe every Christian Reformed church—and congregations in other denominations as well—should install this. Who knows? Because they don't hear well some people may be staying away from attending church.

Now all I need to do is get my council to put out a sign in front of church stating, “WE ARE LOOPED!”

—Linda Cotton

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Linda Cotton is a member of Trinity Christian Reformed Church, Sparta, Mich.