

Presbyterians for Disability Concerns

A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

Before and Beyond the Benediction: Inclusion of People of all Abilities



2013 Disability Inclusion Resource Packet

Artwork by Alex Brown, age 19

Member of Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church in Midland, Michigan

The 2013 PDC Resource Packet “Wordle” artist is Alex Brown.

Alex Brown is a 19 year old young man and a confirmed member of Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church, where he serves on the Board of Christian Education. He also ushers frequently and volunteers for VBS. He is currently a junior at Dow High School in Midland, Michigan. He enjoys swimming, bowling, golfing and watching WWE. He happens to have Down Syndrome.



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**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
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INTRODUCTION

Rev. Bebe Baldwin

Before and Beyond the Benediction: Inclusion of People of All Abilities

We are the beloved children of God

From the “Litany For Rejoicing Spirits Service” by Terry Chaney

The 2013 resources offered the church by PHEWA’s Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) reach to the very heart of our mission: full inclusion of all “beloved children of God.” In her meditation on I Corinthians 12, “The Inclusive Body of Christ,” the Rev. Sue Montgomery sets the theme and lays a Biblical foundation for inclusion.

In the diversity and depth of God’s creative breath, there is no exclusionary clause for anyone and there is a place at God’s diverse table for everyone. We would like to offer a special thanks to our youngest contributor, Wordle artist Alex Brown, who encourages us to think beyond our own definition of “inclusion.”

The idea for this year’s theme grew out of discussions by members of the PDC Leadership Team on the book, *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion* (see Resources). As we discussed this excellent collection, our excitement grew as we talked of the possibility of sharing stories of the amazing gifts in congregations in our own denomination. The writers who shared their experiences responded to our call. Again and again, our worship resources and our stories and articles remind us of the amazing gifts that are lost to the church when any are excluded.

The worship resources, from the Call to Worship to the Benedictions, are designed to assist in planning for Disability Inclusion Sunday on June 23. It is our hope, however, that every Sunday will be a Sunday for inclusion and that the worship resources will call the church to be a welcoming community and to give praise to God who has given abilities to all of us. We are grateful to each contributor whose commitment and creativity are truly the gifts of the Spirit. Perhaps our suggestions will encourage you to add your own prayers for inclusion as you design worship for your congregation.

PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultant Milton Tyree introduces the section, “Moving Toward Inclusion,” with his article, “The Meaning of Inclusion: Living into Our Faith Traditions.” He builds on our Biblical foundations to explain what inclusion is and is not – an attitude, not a program – and goes on to describe the benefits of inclusion for persons with disabilities, for families, and for society. Questions for discussion follow his article. In their article, “How Are Churches Doing in Including Persons with Disabilities?” Dr. Melinda Jones Ault and Dr. Belva C. Collins summarize the sobering results of a major survey of parents and pass on advice given by respondents.

This year’s resources offer many practical, usable suggestions for churches as they move toward inclusion. Rev. Sue Montgomery, in “Models for Becoming the Family of God and Finding Our Place at the Table,” tells a family story that becomes the story of the church family. Dr. Collins, in “Creating an Inclusive Church,” lists practical suggestions for developing awareness in congregations. Katie Wolf Smith, MSW and Jeff Bradford, MSW, in “We’re Open, You’re Welcome,” describe inclusion at the Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky where members are called to “roll up your sleeves in mission.” The writers tell stories of members with disabilities who have discovered that they have gifts to share in service to God. Rev. Rick Roderick, in “Producing a Braille Bulletin,” gives detailed, step-by-step directions for making worship accessible for Braille readers. Dr. John Judson, in “A Planning Process for a Rejoicing Spirits Community,” gives us a glimpse into the “no-shush” worship service at the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Michigan. Rev. Bebe Baldwin, in “Organizing a Presbytery Disability Concerns Ministry to Model Inclusion,” describes a ministry of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area that is resourcing congregations and challenging Presbytery to model inclusion for local churches. Rev. Jean Davidson, in “Including Youth with Disabilities in PYC Functions,” poses the question, “What are some of the things we can do to help the youth who have particular challenges to feel included in the community?” She offers ideas that include: opening conversations, planning recreation, and developing spiritual practices.

Two articles have been included in response to many questions Leadership Team members and our PC(USA) disability concerns consultants receive concerning ways to include children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Barbara Newman, in “Pringles vs. Chex Mix,” describes in a helpful way the characteristics of some of the children in “God’s creative variety”: children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She offers “Ideas to try” for volunteer leaders and teachers. Rev. Janet Ruark, in “The Story Behind Our Quiet Room,” relates the creative process used in a small church in rural Wisconsin where leaders worked with parents to accommodate two young boys with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A beautiful article by Joanne Blair closes this section of *Before and Beyond the Benediction*. In “Better Together,” she describes her own journey toward a better understanding of inclusion and tells a moving story of the gift she was given by a child with a disability.

For our readers who want to learn more about ways to be “better together,” Carol Brown has coordinated the suggestions of PDC Leadership Team members to produce a resource section of carefully chosen books, PC(USA) resources, websites, and articles.

It is our prayer that someday our churches will welcome all God’s children to the Table. You can be part of our ministry by answering the two questions included in this resource. Together, let us work and pray for a time when inclusion is real, “Before and Beyond the Benediction.” Then people with all abilities can rejoice, knowing that “ we are the beloved children of God.”

The Rev. Bebe Baldwin,
Past moderator and advisor to the PDC Leadership Team

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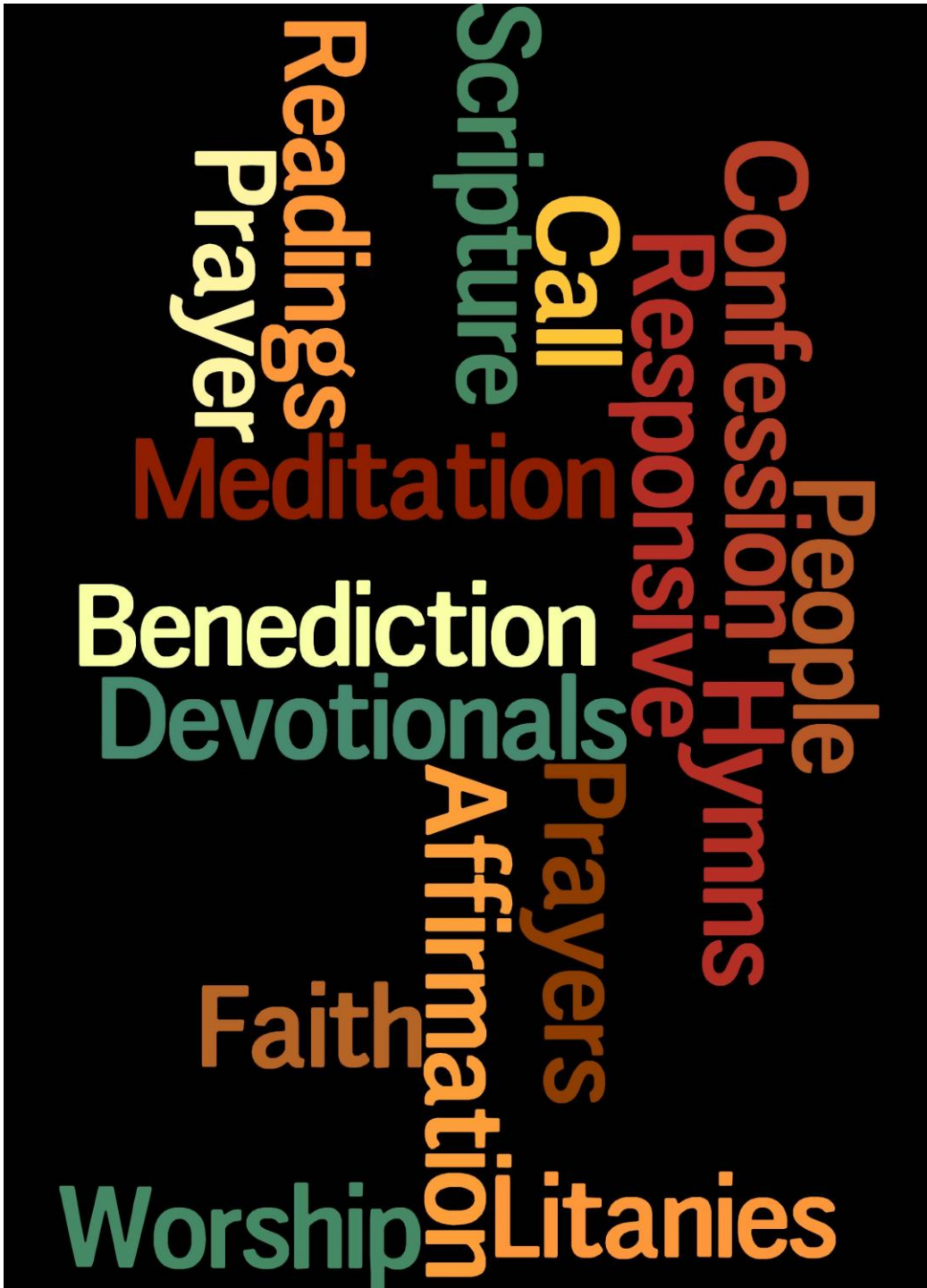
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The Rev. Bebe L. Baldwin is a retired minister and moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area Disability Concerns Ministry. She is a former moderator of PHEWA’s Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) and serves on the PDC Advisory Committee. She can be reached at randbonmarquette@yahoo.com

Worship Resources



Wordle created by Alex Brown, Age 19



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CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D.

ONE: With what shall we come before God?

ALL: With the complete diversity of our strengths and weaknesses.

ONE: What does God require of us?

ALL: To use our unique gifts to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

ONE: Why must we walk humbly with God?

ALL: Only God knows the purpose for which God Made each one of us, and power is found in our weakness. Thanks be to God!

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D. is an ordained PC(USA) minister who serves as a Parish Associate at the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Michigan. He is also Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Pediatrics at the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, where he directs the longitudinal course in Medical Humanities and Clinical Bioethics. Dr. Krug can be contacted at krug@oakland.edu



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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D.

God of grace and justice, we confess that we measure ourselves against others and are ashamed of our imperfections. We look to others to define our worth. We ignore or resist your claim upon our lives. Instead of helping others to experience your love through us, we question your love for us. We also confess that we typically fail to see your gifts in those we consider weak, damaged, or dysfunctional. In your mercy Lord, please forgive us and open our eyes to your presence with us and with those around us. By your grace enable each one of us to comprehend how your power is made perfect in every person's weakness. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D. is an ordained PC(USA) minister who serves as a Parish Associate at the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Michigan. He is also Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Pediatrics at the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, where he directs the longitudinal course in Medical Humanities and Clinical Bioethics. Dr. Krug can be contacted at krug@oakland.edu



A LITANY OF INCLUSION

Rev. Jo Taliaferro

Leader: The earth is yours, O Lord, the world and all who dwell on the planet.

People: You have given us the privilege of caring for the earth and each other from the smallest to the greatest of all creatures. You command us to love neighbor and self, teaching us in story and parable how to do so.

Leader: By example you sent your only son, Jesus, as a little child when we wanted a conqueror, one who would rout the enemy, glorify the chosen, defeating forever, all but the worthy.

People: Jesus grew in stature and wisdom, teaching, healing, encountering people where they were, no matter their race, gender or ability.

Leader: Have we not heard? Have we not known? We are the ones to help the wounded stranger left for dead beside the road, to stretch out the hands of the leper and invite the beggar without sight to our homes.

People: We are compelled to love the neighbor who cannot love in return and to show by our actions that love means getting our hands dirty, working, worshipping and going to Sunday school with neighbors unable to read, unable to comprehend, unable to express themselves except by sounds we call disruptive.

Leader: We are the reticent, the fearful, and the patronizing, believing that if we use only our dollars to build ramps and widen doors, we may be missing the need to intentionally cultivate relationships with people in wheelchairs, scooters, or partnered with service animals.

People: We want to do the right thing: to go shopping with the person who is autistic, to incorporate the person with dementia or Alzheimer's into our lives, our communities, our churches, and to embrace veterans needing to talk of war, of lost loved ones in combat, of the PTSD that plagues them, and the flashbacks that come when least expected.

Leader: People with disabilities are our mothers, our fathers, our children, our teachers, our pastors.

People: We advocate for family members, cry out for justice and inclusion when our loved ones are shunned, bullied, set aside, impeded by the behaviors and attitudes of neighbors with good intentions.



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Leader: God calls us to do the same for ALL people, to be the one who lowers the paralyzed man through the roof or describes scenes in a movie to the person without eyesight.

People: I, as one person, with or without a disability, can make a difference. I can learn to embrace disability in myself, to turn my attitudes into acts of inclusion praising God for technologies that enhance or bestow new ability. I can spread the good news about hearing devices, phones that talk, eReaders that speak curriculum, church bulletins, bibles, newspapers and restaurant menus.

Leader: I will adapt to a new norm of inclusiveness of all God's people. I will welcome the stranger as neighbor and not cast out those who manage life differently.

People: For even though you may not know, I, too, have been marginalized, laughed at, judged for difference of opinion, the constant shaking of my hands or the numerous times I have to ask someone to repeat themselves.

Leader: Let us reach out to neighbors across the street and around the globe, as the family of God's own making, the whole body of Christ, including one another because of, rather than in spite of, our diverse adaptations to life's challenges.

People: Let us sing a new song of inclusion where every voice is valued, every note a gift and every gift a hymn and every hymn an exclamation of praise to the triune God, creator, redeemer and sustainer who declares, "I am with you even to the close of the age."

Rev. Jo Taliaferro is a teaching elder in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities and serves on the Presbytery Task Force for Disability Ministries, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and the Committee on Representation. She was ordained in 1980 and has served in several churches in Michigan and Kansas as well as holding a staff chaplaincy position where she says her guide dog was accepted before she was! Jo is active at North Como Presbyterian Church in Roseville, Minnesota, serving wherever she is needed. She can be contacted at soaringeagle7@comcast.net



LITANY FOR REJOICING SPIRITS SERVICE

Terry Chaney

The first thing that we do when planning a Rejoicing Spirits service at First Presbyterian Birmingham is to discuss, often at great length, what God's good news for our worshipping community is, the good news that is contained in a particular passage. I admit that we don't necessarily articulate it in that way, nor do we articulate what we are doing as working out the hermeneutical challenge, but that is in fact what we are doing. We seek to arrive at a pithy, short, and easily memorized phrase that also will be usable in sign language. This litany seeks to follow these principles.

One: When others tell me that I don't think, or talk, or move fast enough I will not be ashamed because

Many: I know that I am a beloved child of God

One: When others tell me of people, "just like me" who have climbed mountains, played in the Olympic games, or done other "amazing" things, I will celebrate their triumph and not be ashamed that I may not have done those things because I know that...

All: I am a beloved child of God

One: When I am told that I can be "just like everyone else" if only I work harder, purchase certain technology, or subject myself to this or that training program I will listen and decide, but I will not be ashamed because I know that...

Many: I am a beloved child of God

One: Let us celebrate the many gifts that we have all been given as we worship the God who alone can see how it all wonderfully fits together, feeling no lack or shame because we know that...

All: we are the beloved children of God

Terry Chaney has completed the commissioned lay pastor training and is currently working on an M.A. at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in the area of disability inclusion. He is a member of First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan where he serves on the Rejoicing Spirits leadership team and the All Abilities Inclusion Ministry. Terry can be contacted at chaneyt@wowway.com



MEDITATION: THE INCLUSIVE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a

Rev. Sue Montgomery

As a college student working at a mission site in Appalachia I learned a song about a man who lived on the moon. His body was made of favorite foods. It was humorous to hear what children said--legs made of spaghetti, heads of cheese, arms of breadsticks, feet of pizza, stomachs of Jello. One of the most memorable of responses was from a child, the future class clown, who wanted to be the funny bone! The scripture passage from Corinthians uses the imagery of the body to affirm the importance of every part of the body--especially the less honorable or respectable. From the brain to the funny bone, every part of the body is necessary. The truth of the matter is the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor can the head say to the feet. "I have no need of you." We want to believe the church never says to anyone "we have no need of you" and certainly members of the church do want to be affirming and inclusive of others. Sometimes the message "I have no need of you" is spoken in unintentional and hurtful ways.

During the meeting of the 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) hearings were held on an overture that addressed disability awareness. Many Presbyterians believe the church is already inclusive, sensitive, and aware of the ministry needs of people who live with disabilities. Some were saying that the overture calling for disability awareness training wasn't necessary. That is, until a mother shared the story of her daughter, who lives with a disability, and her Sunday School class. The class was studying the Corinthians passage on the body and all its parts. The teacher asked each student what part of the body they would be. Every child but one claimed a part of the body. The mother then shared what happened when the teacher encouraged her daughter to choose what part of the body that she would be. The daughter's response was this: "I'd be the appendix because people could live without me." The room was silent. No one had ever intentionally told this child--"I have no need of you" yet the attitudes, the silent messages she perceived had been heard loud and clear; the world, the Body of Christ, could live without her.

There are human and spiritual attributes happening here. The human is our desire to create hierarchies of importance and value. We practice this skill all the time. We do it when we discern priority orders for our use of time, resources, and skills. We do it in our relationships with one another, our social and cultural structures. Hierarchy of personal value is tangible in medical care, employment, education, housing, and in the community of faith which we know as the church. No one wanted this mother's child to feel like she was the appendix and people could live without her, yet that silent, unspoken message was heard and felt loud and clear. As members of the Body of Christ, each and every one

of us needs to hear the voice of this perceptive child--and make sure no child ever again feels unnecessary or unwanted.

People who live with disabilities have come a long way since the days when parents were told to institutionalize their “handicapped” children and forget they were born. As a society, the days of complete rejection and isolation of people with disabilities has ended, yet difficulties regarding the full inclusion of people with disabilities continues. Sadly, families are told: “We don’t have a program for your child here, you’ll need to find another church.” Or, “If you can’t get into our building because of our stairs, you’ll need to find a church for your kind.” These kinds of statements reflect the hierarchy, the qualifications, and the requirements expected of those who enter into the church buildings and programs. However, when we seek to be the body of Christ, hierarchies are transformed into something new and different. Paul turns traditional understandings of value and hierarchical importance upside down and creates havoc on those who revel in power. The weak become strong, the first become last, the last first, the least the most important, the less honorable, the honored.

And here is where we see the second theme of this passage--not only does Paul transform hierarchies used to define worth and value, Paul gives us a new way of understanding God’s creative breath and gifts of the Spirit. As the people, the creation of God, we are created in the image of God. Since all of us are created in the image of God, those who are the weaker, who live with disabilities or other differences, are also created in the image of God. In the diversity and depth of God’s creative breathe there is no exclusionary clause for anyone and there is a place at God’s diverse table for everyone. Disability is frequently understood as something that needs to be fixed, cured, rehabilitated or repaired. Such understandings feed attitudes of exclusion and failure to comply. If only people with disabilities would believe more, work harder, get the proper medical and psychological care, acceptance will come. Such attitudes can only be transformed with a new understanding. When disability is understood as a part of God’s creative diversity, disability is no longer an aberration that needs to be fixed. Sure, there are some aspects of disability that benefit from adaptive equipment and medical advances, yet disability often brings wisdom, sensitivity, and new understandings to relationships and life that would otherwise be absent. When disability is seen as a part of the diversity of God’s creative hand, then disability is free to be embraced and affirmed rather than judged. The power of God’s transforming love comes to life when a child with a disability is no longer known as the “problem child” and becomes known as child of God.

Never forget that when God finished creating the earth and humankind, God stepped back and declared all of creation good. The powerful hierarchical and judgmental acts that give people more or less value are transformed when we remember we are all created in the image of God. Since God created us with a variety of gifts, our gifts should not be the basis for comparison, judgment, inclusion or exclusion from the Body of Christ. Comparisons are a form of judgment that can be painful and exclusionary. These attitudes

prevent everyone from seeing the gifts in one another. God creates a variety of gifts in us, and it's time for us to not only see that rich and deep variety but to claim and appreciate it.

Central to our well-being is our need to belong, to have a place where we are accepted, embraced, and valued for who we are. Within the Body of Christ there are no exclusionary clauses for disability or any form of judgment that says you aren't needed or wanted here. The gift of belonging to the Body of Christ, the communion of faith, is not ours to give, it is Christ's and Christ's alone. Belonging is made complete when gifts are shared, accepted, and cherished. Belonging is a shared experience at the table and in the community of faith where we, as the family of God, live and work as the Body of Christ. Within that body God enables us to value and cherish one another just as we are. May we do so to the glory of God. May we seek to enable every child, teen, or adult, disabled or not, to experience and know how vital each is to the body of Christ for together --we-- are the heart of faith. To God be the Glory.

The Rev. Sue S. Montgomery is the Team Leader of the PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants. Sue is no stranger to disability, as she uses a wheelchair for mobility. She is active in handcycling, orchestral French horn, camping, and kayaking. Sue has served as a smaller membership church pastor for thirty six years and as a chaplain at a residential facility for persons with intellectual disabilities for thirty years. She and her husband, the Rev. Jay Montgomery, HR, will celebrate the upcoming graduation of their son Joel and his wife Janis from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in May of 2013. They are joined by their twenty month old son, Caleb. Sue also welcomes to her family Toby, a Shetland Sheep dog, who works with her in ministry as a therapy dog. Sue can be reached at suemontgomery@windstream.net or (814) 797-1226.

MEDITATION: CALL FOR A HEALING CHURCH

Mark 7:32-35

Terry Chaney

32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” 35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. (NRSV)

In "A Healing Homiletic" Kathy Black addresses the difficulty that many people with disabilities have with the stories found in our scriptures concerning persons with physical, and other disabilities who encounter Jesus, or, later in the New Testament narrative, an apostle. She notes that after the encounter, the person is "healed" and able to rejoin their community. Traditionally understood, this means that some kind of physical restoration has taken place, and thus, in this type of understanding, the Church is a place of "healing" where persons with a disability should be able to approach with faith and be physically "fixed/healed." If this does not happen, the faith of either the person with the disability, or perhaps the faith of the community can be questioned. Is this understanding either reasonable or even justified, or is there another way of defining a healing community? I believe that there is.

I believe that a healing community is a place where I, as a person with a disability, can confess that I have acquired behaviors and habits that are destructive or at least harmful to me and those around me. In a healing community I can both confess and acknowledge these habits and behaviors, practice laying them aside, and find behaviors and habits that will help me to better attune myself to God and Neighbor. Of course, I will need help, but I can also give help to others as we all walk the path of becoming the children of God together.

Prayer

Loving God:

Many thanks for your hands, the hands of those in my community who have supported me with encouragement and correction. Thanks for letting me be your hands, as I contribute who I am and how I have lived to your community and Kingdom. We don't know how it will all work out, but trust that it will.

With gratitude to the God who empowers, redeems, and creates, we give thanks. Amen.

Terry Chaney has completed the commissioned lay pastor training and is currently working on an M.A. at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in the area of disability inclusion. He is a member of First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Michigan, where he serves on the Rejoicing Spirits leadership team and the All Abilities Inclusion Ministry. Terry can be contacted at chaneyt@wowway.com



**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
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AN AFFIRMATION

Rev. Bebe Baldwin

We trust in God who loves diversity, whose love is beyond our imagining, and who creates persons with all abilities in the image of God.

We rejoice that our value as humans is not determined by “perfection” of mind or body but by our preciousness to God.

We trust in the love of God as we know it in Jesus, who broke down the walls that divide us, who called all to follow him, and whose work of healing was a ministry of inclusion.

We rejoice in Christ’s continuing presence in our lives and that we are called to join with people of all abilities in Christ’s work of reconciliation.

We trust in the Holy Spirit who makes us one in Christ and whose gifts we share as we work with God in the healing of our communities.

We rejoice that every one of our gifts is a trust from God and that it is our call and our privilege to “do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with our God.”

Joining together, we commit ourselves to work for more inclusive churches and communities, where walls of fear and prejudice do not separate us, and where all are known as persons named and loved by God.

The Rev. Bebe L. Baldwin is a retired minister and moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area Disability Concerns Ministry. She is a former moderator of PHEWA’s Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) and serves on the PDC Advisory Committee. She can be reached at randbonmarquette@yahoo.com



PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE

Rev. Raymond Meester

Creator God, we praise you that you have made your people
a diverse group, a world of different races, genders, and nationalities,
We are young and old, people of various gifts and abilities,
temporarily able-bodied and persons with disabilities.
Help us to be appreciative of, and not fearful of, the wonderful diversity of your world.

Persuade your church to never reject or neglect any of your people.
May we not be the eye that says to the ear,
“Because you do not hear, you are not a part of us,”
nor the body to the legs,
“Because you cannot walk, you have nothing to offer us.”

As Jesus sought to tear down the walls that divide us,
make us more determined to remove those barriers, physical and attitudinal,
which prevent your people from participating in and contributing to your church.
May we not only welcome, but also include, all of your people
in the ministries of your church.
Help us to see the gifts in each other,
to value those gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to all,
and to encourage the use of God-given gifts
for the church and the world,
for your glory and for the edification of the church.

Help us, as your church, to be not only an example of—
but also an advocate for—inclusion.
May we set before the world your vision of the day when
“The eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.”
Help your church to understand that it is in including people
that people experience healing and wholeness.
May we be your hands so that your healing power may work through us and in us.

We pray for all your people who are suffering,
for those who are homeless, who are hungry, who are poor, the orphan, the refugee,
the victims of violence.
Make us your caregivers in ministering not just to, but also with your people
so that all may enjoy the riches of your earth.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Rev. Raymond Meester grew up in the Deaf world. His parents and four uncles and aunts were deaf. He is pastor of Heritage Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska, and is the consultant for ministries with the deaf and hard of hearing for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He can be reached at Raymond@HeritagePres.org or (402) 477-3401.

When Hands Reach Out

O WALY WALY LM

When hands reach out and fingers trace
The beauty of a loved one's face,
We thank you, God, that love relies
On gifts of grace not seen with eyes.

When fingers spell and signs express
Our prayer and praise and thankfulness,
We thank you, God, that hands can sing;
You bless the silent songs we bring.

When broken bodies will not mend,
We thank you, God, for Christ our Friend.
In him, our healing can begin:
He welcomes all the wounded in.

And when the ways we learn and grow
Are not the ways that others know,
We thank you, God, that we have learned
Your love's a gift, and never earned.

Your Spirit gives us differing ways
To serve you well and offer praise.
When all are joined as one, we'll be
Your able, strong community.

Tune: English folk melody. ("Though I May Speak")

Alternate Tune: TALLIS' CANON LM by Thomas Tallis, Adapt. Parker's
Whole Psalter, c. 1561 ("All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night")

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Copied from *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* by Carolyn
Winfrey Gillette (Upper Room Books, 2009) Email: bcgillette@comcast.net

Web site: <http://www.carolynshymns.com/>

Hymn Reflection on "When Hands Reach Out"

This hymn was commissioned for a national conference on disabilities hosted by Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. Presbyterians for Disability Concerns has posted it on their web site. This hymn was included in the United Church of Canada's hymnal supplement, *More Voices* (2007). Biblical references include John 15:15 and I Corinthians 12.

I am grateful for the ministry of many people who have touched my life over the years. One of them is Jessie Scanlon, a young woman with autism. She was a teenager when we were serving the church she attended with her family. Every Sunday, she and her sister and parents would sit near the front of the sanctuary, on the left hand side. She had her own ministry there. She reminded us that God's "love is a gift, and never earned."

I am grateful for the ministry of two other people I have known over the years. One of them has sight problems and another has hearing difficulties. They have taught me that hands can sing, and that love relies on gifts other than sight and sound.

I am grateful for the ministry of a friend who faced a terminal illness. He lived and died as a person with deep faith in God's abiding love. All of these friends, and many others, have helped me to understand God's care and unconditional love.

Copied from *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2009.

Rev. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette and her husband, Bruce, have been the co-pastors of Limestone Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware since August 2004. She is a prolific hymn writer and has published more than 119 hymns in two books. She can be contacted at bcgillette@comcast.net or (302) 994-5646.



BENEDICTIONS

Let us go forth from this place, striving to know all of our brothers and sisters in the same way as God does.... the God to whom in life and death we belong. May we see and celebrate the gifts of all, as we see the wonder of how God weaves all gifts into the tapestry of life in God's kingdom.

Terry Chaney

Terry Chaney has completed the commissioned lay pastor training and is currently working on a M.A. at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in the area of disability inclusion. He is a member of First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan, where he serves on the Rejoicing Spirits leadership team and the All Abilities Inclusion Ministry. Terry can be contacted at chaneyt@wowway.com

Friends, life is short and there is little time to build up others on this journey of faith with Christ. So be quick to love and make haste to be kind to all God's children. In this way, our faithfulness to God's command to love others may be a beacon of light to the world, now and every day. Amen.

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D.

Rev. Ernest Krug, M.D. is an ordained PC(USA) minister who serves as a Parish Associate at the First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan. He is also Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Pediatrics at the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine where he directs the longitudinal course in Medical Humanities and Clinical Bioethics. Dr. Krug can be contacted at krug@oakland.edu

“Loving God, source of all of our gifts, challenge us to put our diverse gifts into action as we work for the common good in your world. Amen.”

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Moving Toward Inclusion: Glimpses Into Our Stories



Wordle artwork by Alex Brown, Age 19



The Meaning of Inclusion: Living Into Our Faith Traditions

By Milton Tyree

Inclusion. It's one of those things people notice if they don't have it but don't think much about when they do. Always to be offered, but never imposed, inclusion opens the door for relationships rooted in understanding, mutuality, reciprocity, and contribution. It builds on commonalities rather than emphasizing differences -- engaging positive ways for people to know one another who otherwise wouldn't.

Providing a response to those often finding themselves relegated to second-class citizenship and separated from typical features of everyday life, inclusion honors the spiritual impulse of personal identification and relationship. "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27) "For... I was a stranger and you invited me in..." (Matthew 25:35) "Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up." (Romans 15:2) Yet even though inclusion is consistent with Christian theology and traditions, our faith communities remain one of its final frontiers.

So, what's included in inclusion?

Here's a concise definition recently discovered, quite by accident, on a corporate foundation web site: "Inclusion is an attitude and approach that ensures all people, regardless of ability or background, can meaningfully participate in all aspects of life. Inclusion is an approach, not a program. An attitude, not an activity. Inclusion is belonging!" (Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation) One aspect of this definition that's bound to appeal to many is that inclusion is *not* a new program to implement. Nonetheless, it usually involves growing into unexplored ways of thinking and being. And because it often requires developing new responses, the work of inclusion may involve a small group within a congregation focusing attention on ways of translation. For example, what are things to consider when we invite Ralph to participate in the everyday life of our church?

Inclusion also means:

- Devoting time to know one person at a time, learning about interests and talents while developing an understanding of individual support needs.
- Offering personalized participation in everyday ministries or functions of the faith community – exploring ways these intersect with a person's talents and interests, while providing adaptations or supports as needed. (There are typically many ways of doing the same things. Additionally, it's not necessary to do everything within a role, to do something.)



- Providing opportunities for positive relationships with other faith community members who do not have disabilities, in the places where other faith community members are ordinarily involved.

What's not inclusion?

In the same way that it's important to define what's included in inclusion, it's worth saying a bit about what inclusion is not:

- People with disabilities being physically present but not participating.
- Abandoning people with disabilities without suitable adaptations or supports.
- People with disabilities only with their paid support workers.
- Special classes, groups or worship only for people with disabilities.
- Reverse inclusion, or developing special classes, groups, or worship for people with disabilities, and then inviting non-disabled people to join.

Why is the idea of inclusion so often difficult to embrace?

Over the last thirty years, significant progress has been made regarding inclusion of people with disabilities. Even so, for the most part inclusion remains a counter-cultural way of life. Historically, with the exception of Deaf culture, separate ways and special groups have been created by others (by people who are not separated) and then learned and popularized throughout society. Nowadays these special approaches are overwhelmingly developed with good intentions. Because of their benevolent purpose, congregated and segregated practices will commonly be promoted and defended on the basis of their benefits, while the costs are rarely recognized. Even though unintended, these costs can be massive, including perpetuating beliefs that people with disabilities are alike, and fundamentally different from non-disabled people; all have the same needs, and all learn the same way, want to be together, and even should be together. People with disabilities may become accustomed to *not* being included and may even be said to "choose" the only thing they know. For all of these reasons, inclusion can be a touchy subject and one that requires great sensitivity, clarity, respect, and patience.

What are some of the benefits of inclusion?

The good news is that inclusion has benefits for all. For the person with a disability there's: a) a wider variety of experiences -- a menu of possibilities that's richer and more expansive than could possibly be made available through special means; b) opportunities for meeting a wider range of people and forming balanced mutually satisfying relationships; c) more ways of exercising autonomy, authentic choice, freedom, and citizenship privileges; d) better opportunities for learning and competency development; and e) protection of a person's welfare and safety. For the person's family there's a greater likelihood that the family will increase relationships with additional families and become better included themselves. For society there are advantages of: a) upholding basic idealized socio-political values of equality and civic participation; b) broadening



societal understanding; and c) a greater likelihood that the person will contribute to society. (Derived from Wolf Wolfensberger.)

What will be helpful when proceeding on the road to inclusion?

Begin with people interested, “inclusionees” and “inclusioners.” Maintain clarity about what inclusion includes. Plan with one person at a time. Seek good examples of inclusion while maintaining a clear vision about what’s desired. Believe it before you see it. Align yourself with inclusion allies in other areas of the community including education, home, and employment. Be gentle but persistent with advancing the cause. Pray. Seek spirit led ways. Act on all that’s feasible to support people with disabilities finding their rightful place within faith communities and the world.

Acknowledgement: This article relies on a variety of ideas, insights, and theories related to inclusion -- none of which originated with the author.

Inclusion Issues for Discussion

1. Think of a time in your life when you were concerned about being affiliated with someone because being seen or perceived as connected with this person could cause you to be rejected, or perhaps risk others making fun of you.
 - a. Within the timeline of life, taking an age range from 3-years-old to 80-years-old, when are people more sensitive to these kinds of evaluations by other individuals or groups?
 - b. Does or should our Christian identity make a difference in our thoughts and/or actions when faced with this kind of dilemma? (On the one hand, the affiliation may risk your status with people with whom you most identify. But on the other hand, to do nothing risks deepening the wound of rejection for the other person.)
 - c. If deciding to offer some type of involvement with the rejected person, then what should be the nature of the relationship? For instance, should the relationship be based in: • reciprocity and mutuality? • helping the less fortunate? • commonality (in at least some facets of life, perhaps an interest)? d) seeing Jesus in the stranger? • charity? • pity? Which of these responses are most common? Which kinds of responses are most needed? Why?
2. Rejection and exclusion are common life experiences for many people who have disabilities.
 - a. Can you identify an event in your life when you wanted to be included, but were excluded? (Perhaps you were not invited. Or maybe you were invited, but merely

- physically present, not involved, and felt like an outsider.) What did you learn from this? What or who could have been helpful to you?
- b. What if rejection and exclusion were everyday experiences rather than isolated or occasional? How would this impact your life (e.g., in terms of trying new things, your sense of personal significance, confidence, etc.)?
3. Jo Massarelli, a proponent, teacher and practitioner of Wolfensberger's Social Role Valorization theory, has a saying about a needed response for people that have been rejected, isolated and separated from typical experiences of everyday life (such as joining a community of faith, becoming an employee for the first time, taking a Zumba class...). She says that what people really need is "a friendly guide in a foreign culture."
 - a. What do you think she means by this?
 - b. How might this relate to someone you know who's been deprived of many typical life experiences?
 4. Who were the outcasts during Jesus' days on earth? What was his response to the people rejected and the rejecters?
 5. John O'Brien, a leader who gave us *The Five Accomplishments* as a framework for conceptualizing a positive future for people with disabilities, says there are "old stories" and "new stories" about people with disabilities and their rightful place in society.
 - a. What do you think would be the ideas included in *old stories*?
 - b. What would characterize *new stories*?
 6. What do you think about the idea that people can learn, become socialized, and entrapped in limited ways of thinking about themselves, their potential, and place in the world -- perhaps even "choosing" congregation/segregation and their exclusion from typical functions of everyday life?
 - a. Have you seen this happen to others?
 - b. Have you ever felt something like this happening to you?
 7. Wolf Wolfensberger, a true pioneer whose prophetic voice offered a transformational vision for the good life for socially devalued people, recognized the functional impact of disability (e.g., getting around, hearing, seeing, learning...) but said that the primary obstacles (wounds) are societally imposed. For example, one of the deeply

rooted expressions of devaluation is that one socially devalued aspect of personal identity (in this case, disability) becomes life defining.

- a. Think of someone you know, or know of, who has a disability. To what degree does the person's disability, or even the name of his or her disability, define these aspects of the person's life: • Where does/did he or she attend school and with whom? • Where does he or she live and with whom? • Is he or she involved in recreational or sports activities, and if so, who are the others involved? • What about employment - the nature of the work and co-workers?
- b. Think about other similar life functions, others involved and their reasons for involvement in these groups or associations. And finally, what does involvement look like within her/his faith community, doing what, and with whom?
- c. What could you and your congregation offer to someone who's been entrapped in this way?

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HOW ARE CHURCHES DOING IN INCLUDING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES? RESULTS OF A PARENT SURVEY

Melinda Jones Ault and Belva C. Collins

Members of churches often think of their congregations as being open and receptive to children with disabilities and their families. Sometimes this is true, but sometimes good intentions do not translate to appropriate actions. Researchers at the University of Kentucky and the University of Wisconsin-Madison conducted a survey of 416 parents who had sons and daughters with disabilities to find out about how they participated in their places of worship and the factors that were most associated with their participation (Ault, Collins, & Carter, in press). The survey received responses from parents across 35 states in the United States, although the majority of responses came from respondents in Kentucky and Wisconsin. In addition, the majority of respondents came from the Protestant denominations, although the Catholic and Jewish faiths also were represented.

The parents revealed interesting stories and perspectives about their participation at their faith communities that can provide guidance for other communities planning effective and inclusive programs. Most of the parents (86%) indicated that their faith was important to them and that they frequently attended their places of worship. Unfortunately, only 42.5% of the parents indicated that they felt supported at their places of worship, and about one-third of the families reported they had changed their places of worship because they did not feel supported or welcomed. When asked specific questions about the experiences they had at their communities, it was clear why many parents felt unsupported. For example, 47% of the parents said they had refrained from participating in a religious activity because their child was not included, 56% said they had kept their child from participating in an activity because support was not provided, and 55% said they had been expected to stay with their child so their child could participate in a religious activity.

In communities where persons with disabilities are included and supported, lay leaders and clergy should be proactive about planning for and individualizing the supports needed by people with disabilities and their families so that they can be included in the ongoing activities of the faith community and be included with other people without disabilities. Families should be able to feel secure knowing that supports are in place for their sons or daughters.

While many of the families surveyed had positive experiences to report about their faith communities, similar numbers had negative experiences. Themes that emerged from the survey can give faith communities a good place to start when designing their own programs. First, a welcoming attitude was the number one item (91.5%) rated by parents that they found helpful in participating in their communities. Parents appreciated those communities that had disability awareness activities, were open to accommodations and changes so the daughters and sons could be included, those that included individualized programs that met the child's needs, and had leaders that provided good models for the congregation on how to interact and include persons with disabilities. Parents also indicated that they desired to have their child participate in inclusive programs rather than having segregated programs designed just for persons with

disabilities. To do this effectively, parents appreciated practices and supports that enabled their child to participate, such as providing peer helpers or buddies, modifying educational materials, hiring extra help or utilizing volunteers, and adapting learning objectives. Finally, parents found that persons knowledgeable in disabilities were helpful in supporting their participation. Parents valued persons in leadership positions who had training or experience in disabilities and laypeople who were utilized based on their experience and expertise with persons with disabilities.

The survey also gave parents the opportunity to offer advice for other parents and for faith communities who are working to include their child in their faith communities. These are bulleted below.

For other parents, the respondents gave the following advice:

- Accompany the child for a little while until volunteers feel comfortable with the child's needs.
- Tell others it is okay to ask questions about the child.
- Ask for disability awareness opportunities for the community.
- Reach out to other parents who have children with disabilities.
- Take children to the place of worship regularly so they can become part of the community.
- Be persistent in your efforts working with the church.
- Tell the church what the child needs to be successful.

For faith communities, the respondents offered the following advice:

- Have a quiet calming place or activity area in case an individual wants or needs to leave the worship service and the parents want to stay.
- Have a philosophy of open doors and open hearts to everyone.
- Teach tolerance and awareness to the community.
- Involve people with disabilities in the community as servers of others.
- Ask the parents how the community can include and meet their needs.
- Talk to the person with disabilities about their wants and needs.
- Help families with similarities make connections with each other.

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**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
DISABILITY CONCERNS**

A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

MODELS FOR BECOMING THE FAMILY OF GOD AND FINDING OUR PLACE AT THE TABLE

Rev. Sue Montgomery

As a native of Pennsylvania, I've grown up with an awareness of Amish communities. In 1982 my husband and I moved to western Pennsylvania where our home was surrounded by Amish farms. We were in for a whole new experience that would include cantankerous goats, varieties of baked goods, rambunctious teenagers experiencing rumspringa, and slow moving Amish buggies. The Amish gave us a gift, they opened their homes and hearts to help us understand what it was about their faith that separated their church communities from the world. We learned about our common ground in faith-family matters. Among the Amish, other than one's relationship to Jesus Christ in baptism, family is the most important relationship. Family, faith, baptism, and community are the ties that connect people of faith. It is these ties that cannot and must not be broken. The Amish have a profound understanding that the "we" is more important than the "I." The "I" is always submissive to the "we." Outside of the Amish communities, and within the non-Amish churches, this is a difficult if not foreign foundation or principle. Pretty much most of us are taught from day one that the "I" is the most important person in the world!

How we understand family is crucial to our practice of the Christian faith; the phrase "the family of God" is frequently used. People who live with disabilities help us understand not only how we identify family, but also define who belongs and who doesn't, who sits at the table, and who does not. When a baby is born into a family and that baby has a disability, the family immediately begins to adapt and re-identify itself. If the child is deaf, the parents begin to learn sign language. Siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and close family friends all become a part of that newly identifiable circle that is now a part of a linguistic minority that speaks in sign language. The love of the child enables and encourages all to learn sign language. The desire to include and share the life of this new born child creates a new understanding of family. The same is true of families that adapt when there is an accident, an illness, or a birth defect that makes a traditional home with steps and other physical barriers a difficult place to live. Ramps are built, renovations are done to enable the affected family member to live with the family. In other words, for family members affected by any disability, there is always a place for them at the family table. There isn't a place specially created for Easter, Christmas or Thanksgiving, there is a place for breakfast, lunch, and dinner everyday. Families readily adapt. The profound sense of belonging prevails over all the obstacles or barriers to living together and of being inclusive.

How congregations understand being the family of God has a profound influence on how people who are different or who live with disabilities find a place at the table of faith, or find a place to call home. In smaller membership congregations it's interesting to observe that when a child is born with a disability, the entire congregation adapts with the child. As the child grows, much like the birth family adapts, so too does the church family. Infant baptism is a significant moment for every church family. The baptismal vows have no exclusionary clauses for disability. Congregations can build on the model of the family which adapts the home and the family table and create an inclusive community of acceptance and access.

It starts with a transformed understanding of what it means to be the family of God. The family of God is the "we"--not the "I." The family of God is "us," and "us" does not exclude "them." The "them" is often persons with disabilities and their families. When not seen as a part of the family but as people who no longer fit into the architecture or programs of the church, people with disabilities and their families are told to find another church that can meet their needs. This attitude denies the connectional, familial identity we have as the family of God. The sad reality is that whenever a congregation excludes one member of a family, two to three generations of family are excluded--child, parents, and grandparents.

As a PC(USA) disability concerns consultant, many calls start with the question, "What can we do, how can we help?" These questions often lead to more understandings grow and the desire to be an inclusive church blossoms. One call concerned a church member who had become a paraplegic. The church mission committee had decided that instead of going to Mexico on their annual mission trip, they would renovate her home. I met with their team, plans were drawn, her home was made accessible. It was a gift of love.

As the work progressed, I looked at the team and asked, "Now that you have her home renovated and accessible, what about her church home? Is it accessible?" She had always been an extremely active member of her church's music program. As we talked the team discovered that although the stroke hadn't affected her musical abilities to sing or play handbells, she was unable to share those gifts or participate in any fellowship events solely because the church was inaccessible. Although the sanctuary was wheelchair accessible, the chancel area and the rest of the church was not. Her church home was not accessible. The team's response was, "We have to do something about this." And they did. In that moment, perhaps for the first time, her church family discovered a deep and profound understanding of what it meant to be the family of God. An elevator was installed, other accessible renovations followed. Now anyone with a disability can participate in the work and worship of their congregation. The chancel and handbell choirs moved to a new location in the sanctuary which enabled her to share her musical gifts. Her church family did exactly as her family at home did--their understanding of what it meant to be inclusive was transformed. No family member was left out of their

lives and work. The exciting part of this new understanding of what it meant to be the family of God is that this was just the first home renovation within the congregation. A new ministry came to life. Whenever a church member becomes disabled, their mission team now works to renovate each home.

Living among the Amish has its challenges. Slow moving buggies can be traffic hazards, as can the green, prolific, organic exhaust of the horses! At the same time, what the Amish have to teach us about the family is rich with meaning and hope. There is no “I” in a community, it is always the “us,” the “we.” When a person of the Amish faith requires an adapted home, the family is there. We see Amish homes being adapted to accommodate three generations of family. Families don’t even have to be Amish-- Presbyterians can do it too! As people of faith we need to look to the family model to build our relationships with God, in Christ, and in the communion of faith. Families aren’t perfect, and the church will never be perfect. What we can do is embrace and reclaim the connections, the ties that bind us together as the family of God. Together we can overcome all barriers and embrace one another in the love of Christ and in the family of God. We can and must declare with great joy--there is a place for all at the family table.

The Rev. Sue S. Montgomery is the Team Leader of the PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants. Sue is no stranger to disability, as she uses a wheelchair for mobility. She is active in handcycling, orchestral french horn, camping, and kayaking. Sue has served as a smaller membership church pastor for thirty six years and as a chaplain at a residential facility for persons with intellectual disabilities for thirty years. She and her husband, the Rev. Jay Montgomery, HR, will celebrate the May 2013 graduation of their son Joel and his wife Janis from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. They are joined by their twenty month old son, Caleb. Sue also welcomes to her family Toby, a Shetland Sheep dog, who works with her in ministry as a therapy dog.

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CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Belva C. Collins

Several years ago, leaders at Second Presbyterian Church (Lexington, Kentucky) had a request for programming for children with disabilities and responded by inviting all these children, regardless of age, to join a class created for young children, ages 4 to 7. When told that this might not be the appropriate solution, the Pastor charged me with creating an ad hoc committee to address the issue of including persons with disabilities of all ages in age-appropriate activities across the life of our church. The members would report to the Christian Education committee, on which I was serving. In collaboration with an associate pastor, we issued an invitation to members of the congregation to attend an organizational meeting if they had a disability or had an interest in disabilities. A large group of individuals responded that included family members of persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities, related service professionals (e.g., speech/language pathology, psychology, rehabilitation counseling), and special education professionals. These individuals had experience with a range of disabilities that included autism spectrum disorder, behavior disorders, communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, physical impairments, and sensory impairments, as well as mental illness. This meeting was the birth of the Open Arms Ministry at Second Presbyterian.

The committee launched on a logical progression of activities that included selecting a committee name, writing a mission statement, developing a protocol for contact with members with disabilities, setting meeting times, and contacting one of the PC(USA) disability concerns consultants to come meet with the group. The meeting with this consultant resulted in an introduction to the PC(USA) materials for hosting an annual Access Sunday. This activity fell within the parameters of one of the committee's goals: To increase awareness of and sensitivity toward persons with special needs (all types of disabilities, all ages) so that they might be supported to participate in all aspects of church life. The church had already completed a recent renovation of its historic facility to insure physical accessibility, but there had been no formal plan to support persons who might want to be included in the life of the church.

Since the Open Arms committee began its mission, they have hosted six annual Access Sundays, and this activity has become a line item in the budget of the Christian Education committee. Access Sunday is now a day that is anticipated by the members as one that addresses all aspects of church life. Access Sunday worship services have included noted speakers on disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, and clergy with disabilities. Programs for children and youth also have included a variety of speakers that have facilitated sensitivity toward others who have intellectual, physical, and sensory disabilities. In addition, the Open Arms committee has undertaken a number of other activities that have included

supporting a youth member during confirmation, arranging transportation for a person with a visual impairment, conducting a workshop for church leaders (pastoral staff, deacons, elders, trustees), and conducting a family scavenger hunt for building accessibility.

Based on the experiences of the Open Arms committee, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Continually survey the congregation for members who are interested in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for ALL to worship together, regardless of ability. Be aware that it may take some gentle guidance and re-education if some church members favor segregated programs.
2. Recognize that busy lives can temper enthusiasm over time. Meet often enough to maintain interest but not so often that members experience burn-out.
3. Since churches are dynamic entities, recognize that the message of inclusiveness must be repeated over time as new members join the church and children are born and grow up in the church.
4. Do not try to address too many areas of special needs at once. Pick one (autism, behavior disorders, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, vision or hearing impairments) as a focus each year.
5. In addition to Access Sunday, keep awareness and sensitivity on the minds of members throughout the year with short items in church newsletters, reminders in the church bulletin, bulletin board displays, or website features.

Dr. Belva Collins is Professor and Chair of the Department of Early Childhood Special Education, and Rehabilitative Counseling at the University of Kentucky. She is also a member of Second Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, where she was one of the founders of the Open Arms Committee to promote and support inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of the church. Dr. Collins contact information is bcoll1@uky.edu and (859) 257-8591.

WE'RE OPEN, YOU'RE WELCOME

Katie Wolf Smith, MSW and Jeff Bradford, MSW

If you Google Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church (MSPC), Lexington, Kentucky, you might find a paragraph that looks like this:

“Maxwell Street is known in the community for its mission. We live to be of service to those in need! We're also known for our diversity. You will find people from all walks of life at Maxwell Street. We're known as well for our inclusion. You are welcome here, whoever you are, for Maxwell Street is a place for new beginnings, where we all work in our own particular ways, with the different gifts each of has been given, to serve Christ in the world. Come join us anytime!”

Maxwell Street (as it is known by most who attend there) is a church that really tries to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to “roll up your sleeves mission” and inclusion of all people. At Maxwell Street, inclusion is probably best defined as a series of daily random and intentional acts of including all people at all times.

Maxwell Street has an Inclusion Committee that meets on a regular basis. This group is constantly meeting to look at better ways to make everyone feel welcome to worship and share their gifts and talents with all the committees and outreach opportunities that Maxwell Street provides. This committee organizes events and brainstorms ways of celebrating the diversity of people in its membership. November might be our month celebrating our Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Brothers and Sisters while February we could be celebrating Disability Awareness with our youth groups.

On Sunday mornings during worship, a visitor might see Paula singing with the choir. Paula happens to be on the autism spectrum but more importantly, she has a lovely singing voice that blends nicely with the sopranos in the choir. Paula had just graduated from high school and has always enjoyed singing with all the youth choirs as she has grown into a young adult at Maxwell Street. Her comfort level is very high at Maxwell Street and makes it much easier for her to socialize with church members. Since graduating from high school, Paula spends a day helping with clerical duties. Paula's skills in this area are very valuable to the church.

Every Sunday, Diana sits on the front row and center aisle. Diana will tell you how much she enjoys listening to the choir. Diana happens to have Down syndrome. One of her favorite parts of church is cutting off the choir at the end of an anthem or hymn. Her smile and audible cackle bring a smile to all those in the sanctuary. Diana always assists the pastors as they perform the benediction at the close of worship.

Children are included from a young age at Maxwell Street. If a child needs extra supports to be included in Sunday School, then those are figured out individually. The church has money dedicated to paid support if that is needed. This resource has allowed students from UK- the University of Kentucky (usually studying Special Education or Humans Services) to be paid to act as an aid. Because of the church's close proximity to the University campus, this is an arrangement that makes a lot of sense and college students are often seen around church. This

has helped Mark, who has Autism, and doesn't speak and sometimes has more trouble than most sitting still with his peers. The aid allows Mark to be in Sunday School. If he needs extra attention, she is there to help and the teacher can continue to teach. The other kids get to know him as just another kid from church. His mom is able to remain in worship and be known as a mom with kids in Children's Ministries, not as a mom with a kid with a disability. It took formal behind the scenes arrangements to find the paid aid and a designated person at Maxwell Street, employed with Children's Ministries made the connections. An unintended benefit of this arrangement is that the UK student ended up growing close to Mark and his family and has been able to offer support outside of church, as well.

Another young boy, Alex, has attention and other sensory difficulties. It would be difficult for a Sunday School teacher to juggle a class of such young kids and always have to keep Alex with the group. So a high school youth is paid to "hang out" with him. If Alex needs reminders to be in the group, to keep his voice down, to find ways to calm down then he's able to help with that. Because high school youth often volunteer in the Sunday School classes, it doesn't necessarily make Alex seem different. A woman in the church, who knows Alex, made a sensory box (plastic container of rice and some small objects) that he can play with if and when he needs it. This is what makes sense for Mark. It was figured out by the teacher and Children's Ministries Coordinator. If you weren't a teacher in the class, you likely wouldn't even know about the "supports" for inclusion.

Maxwell Street seems to have a nice balance of intentionally supporting people with disabilities in their church without creating "special" programs. There are people on staff who are sure to pay attention to including everyone. The Inclusion Committee meets regularly to stay aware of potential issues going on in the church community. Sometimes the easiest solution makes the most sense. For example, a member or staff person could reach out to a church member so that intentional connections can be made to include and invite people to various church activities. Perhaps, it's a sixteen year old asking a young man with autism to come and sit with all of the other high schoolers in the balcony of the church. Maybe, it's a youth group member inviting a young man with a very loud voice to a hockey game attended by other church members. Perhaps, his loud voice fits in much better at the hockey game than a meditative worship service. Maxwell Street continues to find different ways to explore its diversity and to celebrate all of its members. It doesn't pretend to have all the answers concerning inclusion but it does strive to be intentional about including all those who walk through its doors.

Katie Wolf Smith, MSW, is the Associate Director of the Kentucky Supported Employment Training Project at the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute. In this position she coordinates training and technical assistance for service providers and presents on personalized employment supports for people with disabilities across the state. She has been a member at MSPC since 2006 and is a Sunday School teacher with the pre-school children. Kate can be contacted at kwolf@uky.edu

Jeff Bradford, MSW has been the director of the Supported Higher Education Project (SHEP) at the Human Development Institute housed at the University of Kentucky. The SHEP is a model demonstration project aimed at including students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in postsecondary education. Jeff has attended Maxwell Street for over fifteen years and has enjoyed working on the Inclusion Committee as well as working with many of the youth programs at Maxwell Street. Jeff can be contacted at jeff.bradford@uky.edu



PRODUCING A BRAILLE BULLETIN

A SUCCESS STORY

Rev. Rick Roderick

I have been a Presbyterian all my life, but total participation in worship was denied to me until the 90s. Responsive readings often sounded like collective mumbling. Words to hymns were equally incomprehensible. In 1990, this changed. This is the model that makes worship accessible for people who are blind. It is the model used by Crescent Hill Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Here are the steps we use.

1. Our church administrator, Patti Marcum, produces the bulletin in Microsoft Publisher. She copies it to a Word file.
2. She removes boldface and puts Leader: and People: in front of the appropriate parts. She replaces colons with number signs in Scripture references, the proper braille format.
3. She inserts any hymns from *Sing the Faith* or other sources than the *Presbyterian Hymnal*.
4. She emails the bulletin to me.
5. I open the Word Document into my braille program, MegaDots and issue the translation command. This command substitutes braille symbols for print ones.
6. I issue formatting commands so that various parts of the bulletin are in the correct styles. The Prayer of Confession would be a paragraph. Hymns appear as poetry.
7. I add hymns from the *Presbyterian Hymnal*, which I have in electronic braille. When I produce a new hymn from cutting and pasting from one of the hymnal volumes, I save the file. When I need it again, I can then insert it into the proper place in the service.

The *Presbyterian Hymnal* was available from a volunteer service that has been discontinued. However, the volumes are available in braille files and are available from the Braille and Audio Download service of the National Library Service for the blind and Physically Handicapped. <https://nlsbard.loc.gov>. In order to use this site, one must be a user of this service.

8. I produce the number of braille bulletins that will be needed. One person prefers an electronic copy of the bulletin that he can read on a note-taking device. I produce this, as well.

I may not braille the whole bulletin. After others have become familiar with the structure of the service, I may not put in the headings for different parts of the service. I may leave out responses that have become standard through repeated use if they are short. I usually put refrains at the end of each verse of hymns that have them. If the braille readers also receive the Word copy of the

bulletin, I may leave out the announcements. Bulletins can either be bound or stapled, according to reader preference.

A few warnings: First, the bulletin should be complete for any newcomers. Second, a transcriber should not leave things out until users become familiar with the structure of worship. If a likelihood exists of other people who are blind coming to church, at least one extra copy should be prepared.

The braille ministry that we have at Crescent Hill has opened a whole new world to me and to those who are blind who worship with me. Although not all who are blind read braille, those who do usually value it very highly. Modern technology has revolutionized braille production. If you want to start a similar program, look within your congregation. The resources may be there. If not, check with agencies serving the blind or blindness organizations, and someone may be able to assist you.

People with disabilities, like all of us, have varying needs and preferences in how adaptive resources are integrated to our lives. It is important to start with the people in the church community who would benefit from adaptive technology. It is important to seek their input as it is the only way personal needs are met; your ministry becomes rich with an inclusive spirit. Keep in mind that in this case, one size does not fit all. By working with those who need adaptation and those who can provide it, your ministry can become truly inclusive.

The Rev. Rick Roderick serves as the Consultant for Visual Disabilities for the PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants program. He is a graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1978) and was ordained in 1980. He has worked for the Kentucky Office for the Blind as a rehabilitation counselor and as an assistive technology specialist. He can be contacted at rickrod@insightbb.com or (502) 423-8195.

See: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/disability-concerns-consultants/>

A PLANNING PROCESS FOR A REJOICING SPIRITS COMMUNITY

Rev. Dr. John Judson

The Rejoicing Spirits Community (RSC) at First Presbyterian Church Birmingham is an intentional community in which persons of all abilities, as well as a variety of religious backgrounds are building relationships and honoring the spiritual needs and gifts of all. The life of our RSC consists of three parts: worship, intentional community wide social events and individual, family or group home interactions.

The worship life of the Rejoicing Spirits Community consists of two no-shush services a month during the school year and one worship service a month over the summer. The planning process follows the calendar year which means the planning team, consisting of both clergy and laity, begins the planning for each year in October or November of the preceding year.

Step one is choosing an annual theme and accompanying scriptures. The theme directs the selection of scripture passages which then guide the content of the services. The first service of the month is based on an Old Testament text and the second service of the month is centered on a New Testament text. Our theme for 2013 is “water.” The stories we have selected run from Moses striking the rock at Massah for water in the wilderness to Jesus stilling the storm.

Step two is organizing the two services for the coming month. We begin by choosing a summary phrase around which the two services will be organized. The phrases chosen have ranged from God Gives Us Peace, to God Gives us Helpers, to God Doesn’t Lose Us. This phrase is used as the heart of the call to worship, the prayer of confession and the interactive sermon. The signing for the phrase is taught at the beginning of each service in order that people sign it together every time it appears in the service. The planning continues with a discussion about appropriate music. We try and use simple and repetitive music that is accessible to all worshippers and is thematically tied to the monthly phrase. Next we plan as many ways as possible for worshippers to be actively involved in the service. This can range from “Setting the Table of Community” (bringing forward Bible, candle and offering plate), to being actors in the retelling of the story, to taking up the offering, to helping with prayer time.

Step three is dividing up the responsibilities. The team clearly lays out who is responsible for the overall PowerPoint presentation, creating the music slides, getting any props necessary for retelling the weekly story, writing prayer liturgy, leading the service and the service music, reading particular portions of the liturgy, carrying the roving microphone for prayers, organizing the welcome tables and organizing after service snacks/meal. In this way the services, while often appearing to be chaotic (remember it is truly a no-shush service) run smoothly and honor the gifts and spirituality of all members of the community.



A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

Our intentional community-wide social events occur quarterly. They can include events such as dances, movies, ice-cream socials and game nights. These events are planned at the end of one calendar year for the following year. Our All Abilities Inclusion Ministry team, in consultation with representatives from the various group homes and families who are part of the community, set out the schedule and divide up responsibilities for each event.

The final piece of our RSC focuses on individual, family and group home interactions. The most significant aspect of this portion of our community involves one of our members who provides regular spiritual enrichment for several of the group homes. In addition we have individual members, along with our Inclusion Coordinators, who occasionally share their gifts (crafts, etc.) with members of the RSC.

Rev. Dr. John Judson is the pastor, head of staff at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham where he has led the Session and congregation in living into their vision statement to “serve Christ by cultivating mission, inclusion and community.” He can be contacted at: First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple Rd., Birmingham, Michigan 48009. Phone (248) 644-2040
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ORGANIZING A PRESBYTERY DISABILITY MINISTRY TO MODEL INCLUSION

Rev. Bebe Baldwin

“Gentle, but very clear” was the way one member of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (PTCA) described the message of the PTCA Disability Concerns Ministry. Our message has been consistent: inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of congregations and in the Presbytery.

The original Presbytery group grew out of a disability concerns committee organized in the early 1980’s at North Como Presbyterian Church in Roseville, Minnesota. A group of people who were living with disabilities began to meet, to support each other, and to raise the awareness of the congregation on the need for a more accessible church. We advocated for church members with disabilities, led discussions, and presented programs in order to convince the congregation that it was time for a change.

Our group caught the attention of the Associate Executive Presbyter who encouraged us to expand our membership and our work to become a committee of Presbytery. That was the beginning of our PTCA Disability Concerns Ministry. There have been some gaps in our existence as Presbytery has undergone several reorganizations, but the committee/task force/ministry has always come back in whatever form fits into the organization of Presbytery.

Our original work focused primarily on architectural accessibility. That will always be an important focus of our ministry, but we have broadened our services to local churches and Presbytery. We offer speakers on a wide variety of subjects that include living with disabilities, mental illness, veterans’ issues, and the Bible and disabilities. We work with churches that are planning for greater accessibility and inclusion. We present Presbytery-wide workshops; a November 2012 pre-Presbytery meeting, “The Gifts of Aging,” was based on the 2012 resources of PHEWA’s Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) network (see Resources section of this packet). We submit articles and information on disability issues for our PTCA website. We developed a policy on inclusion which was approved unanimously by Presbytery. We took an overture on inclusion to the 2012 General Assembly. It was approved by G.A. and a report on progress will be made at the 2014 G.A.

We would like to offer several suggestions for those who wish to move their own presbyteries forward.

- Learn how and where you can fit into the structure of Presbytery. You need a voice, a place at the table, and a budget. Seek the support of key people,

including your Executive Presbyter. In our Presbytery, we are a ministry of the Mission and Witness Committee and we receive great support from the Presbytery Council and the Executive Presbyter.

- Organize with others who are knowledgeable and willing and able to advocate. Our group has fifteen active members, each of whom either lives with a disability or has other personal or professional experience. Make sure that your own meetings are accessible! We have an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter and we meet in a location with good public transportation.
- Connect! Don't try to go it alone. We both contribute to and use the annual PDC resources. We work with our PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants and members of the PDC Leadership Team.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/disability-concerns-consultants/>
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/presbyterians-disability-concerns/>
<http://www.phewacomunity.org/>

- Don't try to do everything at once! We choose annual themes so that we can focus our time and resources. (That doesn't mean we don't respond to other requests, like organizing a panel of speakers for a church that is just beginning to think seriously about inclusion.)
- Now that you are in the Presbytery system, don't stop there. Encourage committee members and others who are living with disabilities to seek leadership positions in the Presbytery. Extend your ability to advocate.

We believe that our presence in Presbytery is making a difference and that our Presbytery is modeling inclusion for local churches. Nothing is perfect; we have much more to do. But, we are committed to our ministry and will welcome opportunities to communicate and share with other presbytery groups who wish to begin the journey. We can learn from each other!

The Rev. Bebe L. Baldwin is a retired minister and moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area Disability Concerns Ministry. She is a former moderator of PDC and serves on the PDC Advisory Committee. She can be reached at

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**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
DISABILITY CONCERNS**

A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

INCLUDING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN PYC FUNCTIONS- UNIQUE AND CONNECTED IN COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Rev. Jean Davidson

The Presbyterian Youth Connection (PYC) is a partnership of youth and adults with a shared ministry.

A particular PYC is an ever-changing community made up of diverse and developing individuals. Every person in the community is graced with different abilities and disabilities which, because they are youth, can change. There are youth for whom studying is a breeze and those who are struggling, youth from supportive families and youth carrying the burden of broken family relationships, youth who are athletic and those who can't throw a ball, youth who are talkative and youth who seldom say anything in a group. There are youth with personality challenges, with temporary disabilities when they are injured, and youth with ongoing disabilities. A PYC will strive to include everyone in their community, knowing that everyone is an important part to the whole PYC. This is not always easy. What are some of the things we can do to help the youth who have particular challenges to feeling included in the community?

A good place to start is by doing the things that make *every* youth feel welcomed. Every youth thrives under appropriate, genuine, focused attention. If activities are planned and set up in advance, the PYC leadership can spend quality time with each youth. If there is at least one adult for every 5-7 youth there is a greater likelihood that each youth will experience the PYC as a caring community. Sometimes a youth with particular challenges will benefit from an additional adult or a caring peer who is there for everyone but charged with becoming a partner in participation with a particular youth. It is always a blessing for the group to have adults, who love God and youth, present with no programming responsibility, just to be there with the youth.

Some youth love to talk and others thrive on listening and reflecting or may have a hard time sharing in a group. Eric Law of the Kaleidoscope Institute (www.kscopeinstitute.org) suggests using "invitational conversation" to help break down barriers to communication within a group. An invitational conversation begins as the facilitator asks a question and then leaves time for everyone to think about their answer. The facilitator then asks someone, like the person with the shortest hair, to begin. This person can answer the question, pass until later, or pass. If they choose to answer, they speak and no one else in the group can respond until everyone has spoken. The speaker *invites* the next person, by name, to speak, and so on, until everyone has had the opportunity to speak. This process gives everyone the opportunity to be heard and feel included. The group can move from fairly safe discussions to much deeper questions in about three rounds. A foam ball or paper wad may be passed to invite the next person to speak. Using invitational conversation not only provides the quieter person a safe place for their voice to be heard but also facilitates listening and communication

among the whole community. If a large group is having difficulty sharing with one another, break the group up into pairs, or groups of 4 or 8.

One of the paradoxes in the lives of many youth is having high energy and a need for time and space with God. Youth with AD/HD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) may be challenged by too much structure or not enough structure.

Everyone has difficulty focusing at one time or another. If there is a stationary bicycle or a set of bicycle exercising pedals in the room where the PYC has conversations, anyone who is having trouble sitting still can ride the bike or pedal during a group conversation without distracting other youth. That person can still hear and participate in the conversations but can move at the same time.

Giving all of the youth something to do with their hands, like ‘squunchy’ or craft dough to form and reform as the conversation moves along, can be helpful. Using clay to provide movement for the hands so that the heart and mind can focus can be introduced by leading the group in a guided meditation with the instructions to form and reform the clay as the Spirit leads them.

Having any type of quiet space to “get away” for a few minutes can be helpful for people who need their own space in the midst of a noisy group. This can be a comfortable high-backed chair or a partially screened corner of a room or a prayer space. Having a prayer space with interactive prayer stations can help everyone grow in faith. Youth so often don’t have time just to “be” with God and many have a hard time being still in God’s presence. An interactive prayer space can include prayer beads to make, a fountain, a bucket to drop rocks into to represent feelings or concerns to give up or prayers, a labyrinth, finger labyrinths, a space for written prayers, map and newspaper or computer news clippings and a basket for prayers for others, a space for confessions, a cross wall, pictures of a particular time in the life of Jesus, Bibles, prayer books, journals, markers, flameless candles, quiet music, a sand box, video clips, etc. There are many options for prayer space activities, which can be rotated over time.

Youth can also develop other spiritual practices that involve movement. For example, youth can pray individually or say a Bible verse while dribbling a basketball or running, walking a course, or climbing stairs, or, as a group, saying a prayer or verse while passing a basketball back and forth with a dribble in between.

It is important for recreation leaders, youth or adults, to think through the activity with everyone in mind so that everyone is included in recreation activities. There are many kinds of cooperative games that are suitable for everyone and can be adapted for a particular group’s needs.

Avoid games which eliminate people from the group and use games that build community. If some youth group members are very skilled or are more challenged by an activity, change the rules to negate the advantage of the more skilled players. For instance, maybe everyone has to hop or can only use one arm or must play the game seated.

Beth Gunn, an experienced PC(USA) recreation leader and co-creator of the soon to be updated resource, "Recreation Express," suggests these sources for community building games that can be easily adapted: http://www.bannermanfamily.com/hose_play.htm and <http://www.bannermanfamily.com/Products.htm>

It is also important to include everyone in ministry that the PYC does together. Thinking about access for activities and alternative ways of doing things can be an opportunity to build community as challenges are tackled together.

Open, caring communication about a youth's particular disability or challenge goes a long way in creating a caring community partnership. Helping a person become self aware of their particular challenges is important. What would facilitate their full inclusion in the PYC? Is it helpful for them to eat or not eat before youth group? Is a quiet space or a noisy space a plus or a minus? Would a posted list of plans for that day bring some peace of mind? For the group to function well, parents, adults and peer partners are included in the conversation about what facilitates inclusion for a particular youth. Connecting with recommended behavioral routines that are a part of the rest of the week for a youth removes some of the stress from new situations. Another partnership model might include a mutually agreed upon behavioral covenant or agreed upon subtle hand motions as reminders to focus. In other words, ask the youth what works for them and, if appropriate, brainstorm together about new ways to accomplish their full participation in the community and in its ministry together.

The actions which are taken to include youth with particular disabilities or challenges often benefit the whole community and lead everyone into a deeper walk with God and one another. With God's Spirit surrounding us, may we be thoughtful, respectful, prayerful, creative, and energetic in reaching out to one another with the love of Christ.

Rev. Jean Davidson is a teaching elder who ministered with youth in churches in Knoxville, TN, Talladega, AL, Nashville, TN and Louisville, KY. She can be contacted at rev2jean@gmail.com



PRINGLES VS. CHEX MIX: IDEAS TO TRY FOR

AD/HD and ASD

Barbara Newman

There is something nice and neat about a can of Pringles. They stack so perfectly into that round can, and the taste and shape are entirely predictable. A bag of Chex Mix, however, has variety in taste, shape, texture, and look. When you put your hand in that bag, it's never entirely clear what to expect.

Church volunteers often expect the children to resemble that can of Pringles. The reality is, however, that God's creative variety is fully evidenced in every group of children! From learning styles to differences in personality, looks, IQ, abilities, and interests, children's groups far more resemble Chex Mix than Pringles!

To better equip the volunteers, this article will explain some of the differences associated with children who have been diagnosed with AD/HD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) and those with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Volunteers who are armed with information, as well as ideas to try, often find greater delight in the group of Chex Mix children!

AD/HD

One job of the brain is to help us attend to the tasks we do each day. The brain has chemicals that allow us to focus on a task, control behavior, and keep the body still when needed. When these chemicals, or neurotransmitters, are in short supply, a person is known as having AD/HD. There are 3 types of AD/HD:

A child with ***AD/HD Inattentive Type*** may find it difficult to focus on the Bible story or group discussion. Following all four parts of the directions, organizing supplies or materials, and following through on projects and tasks may also be difficult.

A child with ***AD/HD Impulsive Type*** may struggle to keep the body from fidgeting, squirming, and moving as well as staying seated during worship or small group times. Other challenges may be playing quietly, waiting to answer a question or take a turn without interrupting or blurting out an answer, or thinking carefully about the consequences of an action.

For a child with ***AD/HD Combined Type***, you will see signs of inattention as well as impulsivity.

Ideas to try:

1. While the area of attention may be weaker, this child will certainly have areas of gifting. Find those areas and use them as a way to engage and encourage. Illustrating the Bible story as you speak, leading the group in exercises,

- constructing a portion of your story with blocks, or setting up a word search for others based on the lesson might make the child more a part of the experience. Act out, build, move, stretch, construct. Let the child shine.
2. Give choices in seating and activities. Instead of only offering chairs, consider supplying an exercise ball or a seat cushion. Give children a choice to complete an activity while sitting, standing, kneeling, or rocking in a rocking chair.
 3. Provide breaks as needed. Running errands or doing short movements or exercises mixed inside lessons or worship can be very helpful.
 4. Use visuals. Posting rules, directions, samples, and expectations allows children to have the boundaries and instructions always visible.
 5. Be understanding. Some children may take medication that allows an individual to pay attention. Some of these medications, however, may be in the process of running out during late afternoon or evening hours. Some parents may choose to have children off medication on week-end days. Both of these situations can make evening church meetings and Sunday settings more challenging for a child with AD/HD. Also, would leaders ever consider bribing or punishing a child with diabetes for not making insulin? Remember, AD/HD is a biological issue. Keep that in mind as you set up expectations for the child.
 6. Provide leaders with additional information. *Learning Disabilities and the Church: Including All God's Kids in Your Education and Worship* by Cynthia Holder Rich and Martha Ross-Mockaitis (Faith Alive Resources) would be helpful.

ASD

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurological difference. Children with ASD exhibit a wide spectrum of differences in six areas:

Language Understanding. Children may be unable to use spoken words and may communicate through sign language or systems involving pictures. Other children may have an excellent ability to speak but may understand words very literally, being surprised that it's "raining cats and dogs" or that someone would suggest you should "give your heart to Jesus".

Social skills. Children may try to hide from or escape social settings or be confused with body language and facial expressions. Others may make social errors or blunders, often not recognizing their words or actions were inappropriate. Some children incorrectly analyze the best course of action in a social setting.

Repetitive themes and behaviors. Children may have a great fascination with one topic such as trains, a particular movie, or computers. Others may repeat the same action, such as lining up toy cars or making sure each chair is sitting in exactly the correct spot. Children may be limited in the types of activities they enjoy.

Desire for routine. Children may seek to know the schedule, routine, or order of worship and get upset when that schedule is altered or suspended without advance warning in a way they will understand.

Perspective-taking ability. Children may know only their own perspective and advocate for their idea with great passion. They may also find it hard to accurately know what others might be thinking, feeling, and experiencing.

Sensory responses. Children may have one or more sensory system that processes information differently. Sounds might be very loud to one person while another child may need extra volume to penetrate the senses. One child may crave heavy, hard touch while another child might get hurt from someone brushing against him lightly. These differences may happen in sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touches, balance, and pressure.

Ideas to Try:

1. Get to know the individual child. Find out what activities that child really enjoys and what might be difficult. Find out especially what sensory system may have differences and what that will mean for your church setting.
2. Visual supports are very important. Vision is often a very stable sensory system, so using picture or word schedules, devising behavior systems using visual supports, and illustrating a Biblical concept with pictures or real objects can often enhance communication.
3. Create a predictable schedule or routine. If that routine needs to be changed, give advance warning in a way that individual will understand (moving pictures around on a picture schedule, providing an alternate order of worship for the day).
4. Understand how that child interprets words. Telling a child who interprets words literally that they are “covered with the blood of Jesus”, for example, can be a frightening thing. If a child can point to pictures, get some pictures. If a child knows some sign language, learn those signs.
5. Allow peer groups to better understand that child by giving accurate, positive, and honest information about ASD.
6. Provide leaders with additional information. Consider purchasing *Autism and Your Church* and *Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities* by Barbara J. Newman (Faith Alive Resources) as well as *Autism: A Christian Response Training DVD* and *Church Welcome Story* by Barbara J. Newman (CLC Network).

**Reprinted with permission from the Winter 2012 edition of *The Advocate*, Journal of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators.

Barbara J. Newman is a church school and school consultant for CLC Network (Christian Learning Center). She is the author of several books including “Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities,” “Autism and Your Church,” and “Body Building.” She is a frequent national speaker and enjoys working in her classroom at Zeeland Christian School. She can be reached at bnewman@clcnetwork.org



**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
DISABILITY CONCERNS**

A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

THE STORY BEHIND OUR QUIET ROOM

Rev. Janet Ruark

This is the story of how a small congregation with limited resources learned how to respond to a need in their own church, and from that have learned they can do something about other needs in their community, and do it.

First United Presbyterian Church of Baldwin, Wisconsin, is a congregation of 110 members in a community of 3,984 people. At the Officers Retreat in January 2010, a newly elected elder shared with the group the experience one of her friends had with a child with special needs when she was met at the door of the church by the priest and told she and her son were not welcome because her son was too disruptive. The group agreed this was one of the saddest things they had ever heard, and began discussing how we could be a church where all God's children are welcome. That phrase has become our mission statement in reaching out to children with special needs.

Being Presbyterian, the issue was referred to the Outreach Committee. They picked it up enthusiastically and began visiting another congregation in the area that has built up a large ministry, from scratch, with children with special needs. The committee also started studying printed information. There were two pieces of advice we kept hearing over and over: start with the children you have, and make sure you ask parents what will meet the needs of their children and themselves. We have two young boys with autism, and their mother was on the committee, so that is where we began to address the issue. We decided to put together a room with special toys and tools for children with autism.

The Session designated a room to be used as the Quiet Room. We applied for and received a \$900 mission grant from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. With \$689 of the grant money we purchased two gym mats, a mirror, chalk, markers, a weighted vest, two therapy balls and a mini trampoline. Donations by members of the congregation included homemade afghans, a boombox and a small pup tent. The balance of the grant money went into the fund for renovating the men's and women's bathrooms to be wheelchair accessible.

As the pastor, I kept hearing people from the congregation ask, "Why do we need a Quiet Room?" Then, at one of the Presbyterian Women's meetings, a woman who had grown up in the congregation and moved away after she married, shared with the group what it meant when the church and pastor in the town where she was living made a special effort to reach out to her daughter who has Down Syndrome. I never heard people ask why a Quiet Room was needed again.

The Quiet Room has become the most popular room and is usually not very quiet! It is the place where all of the children play together, with the understanding that if a parent

needs the room for their child, everyone else will leave without discussion. One Sunday morning as the room was being organized, two of the women from the Outreach Committee met with all the children to put together the rules for the room. This is what they came up with:

1. The room is to be used for children with special needs, along with parents. Other children should ask permission to come in and should always use their inside voice.
2. One person at a time is allowed on the equipment – TAKE TURNS!!!
3. The trampoline is to be used for jumping only – NO FLIPS!!! (and the hand rails are for hands only !!!)
4. NO SHOES!!!

In addition, Children's Message times in worship and Sunday School have been used to help educate all the children about autism and welcoming other children.

Some parents need time away to focus on their spiritual needs and want a place where they know their children will be safe, cared for, and will learn about God's love for them. One parent wishes her children to attend worship and Sunday school with everyone else, but needs a place with sensory items for them to become calm again. When other parents come with their children, we are set up to interview them individually about how the church can not only meet their children's needs, but the parents' needs as well.

We are still working on getting the word out about our Quiet Room through a flyer and a church website. Setting up a church website is a chronic issue but we are getting closer to the solution. The biggest blessing of all has been to watch our two toddlers grow into young boys who feel this church is their church, and are determined to participate in all parts of it.

Resources that we found helpful were

Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities, by Barbara J. Newman, © 2001 by Faith Alive Christian Resources;

Special Needs Ministry Handbook by Sharon J. Davis, © Sharon J. Davis 2002, 2007, www.specialneedsministry.com;

Autism and Children's Ministry Webinar on www.crcna.org/webinars with Nella Uitvlugt, Executive Director, Friendship Ministries.

The Rev. Janet Ruark has been an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor for 30 years, and served congregations in Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. She and her husband Chaz met in seminary, and have two adult children and one granddaughter.

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BETTER TOGETHER

Joanne Blair

As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable... God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. (1 Cor 12:20-25/NRSV)

If we are honest, many (dare I say most?) of us began our journeys into inclusion ministry with the desire to minister **to** those with disabilities. I must say that, for this writer at least, that was where it all began. My intent was good, kind, noble. And while I always had the strong desire to build relationships, in the beginning my mindset was still that of "me helping them." I was missing the whole point.

I have been involved with inclusion ministry in a church setting for over ten years, but I only believe I really started to understand it in the past six years. I would love to say there was an "aha moment," but I think it was more a slow and gradual process of growth and development on my part. We are better together.

Making the transformation from "doing inclusion" to "being inclusive" has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. The reason I chose to write about this is that in the busy-ness of our days it is easy to slip back into the mechanics of doing, rather than being. I am privileged to serve as one of the Inclusion Coordinators at our church, and in that role I have the opportunity to be honed and shaped and reminded of what Christ's model of inclusion looks like by the people with whom I work. The lessons are simple, but so easily forgotten. We are better together. We are all part of a great design. We are created to live in relationship.

One of the main responsibilities of my job is to recruit buddies and adapt curriculum so that our children with disabilities can be fully included in their Sunday school class. It is a wonderful job and I really felt that I was making a difference in the children's church experience. What I had failed to recognize was the difference they were making in mine. One of the children often had a hard time being in the Sanctuary and was frequently unable to maintain his composure until it was time to go to Sunday school. We started with a visible schedule, and have now progressed to numbering the bulletin for him so that he can cross off each numbered item until it is time to leave. We worked on responding to the call of worship, repeating the prayers, and singing. Week after week for months and months we worked on following along in the hymnal and using our voices. Now he sings! And smiles while he's singing! It's beautiful! It's such a gift to hear him use his voice and join in, but it wasn't until a few weeks after he started singing that I

realized the full extent of the gift. *He got me* to sing! I had always been told that I couldn't carry a tune (and I can't), so I had become very adept at lip-syncing. Well I couldn't very well ask him to sing if I wasn't, and so while *I* was trying to get *him* to sing, *he* was actually getting *me* to sing. Now we sing together with the rest of the congregation...parts of the whole. Better together. According to God's design.

We each have gifts to share and as Christians it is not only our duty to share our gifts, it is our task to recognize and receive the gifts of others. Only when we enter into relationship with each other are we able to do this. Better together.

Gracious, steadfast, and loving God,
Thank you for your presence in all of our lives. Thank you for our diversity-making us parts of the whole and not the whole. May we continue to realize that, by your design, we are better together than we ever are on our own. Amen.

Joanne Blair currently serves as an Inclusion Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan, where she works with children and youth on Sunday mornings, trains and recruits volunteers, and meets with families to learn what kinds of supports they need to be included in the life of the church. She is also a recent seminary graduate and a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament. She can be reached at joanneblair@everybodyschurch.org

Annotated Resources



Wordle artwork created by Alex Brown, Age 19



ANNOTATED RESOURCES

BOOKS

Becker, Amy Julia (2011). **A Good and Perfect Gift: Faith, Expectations, and a Little Girl Named Penny.** Bloomington, MN: Bethany House
ISBN 978-0-7642-0917-8. A Good and Perfect Gift is more than just a narrative that spans the first two years of Amy Julia Becker's new life with Down syndrome. From the initial dark moments in the hospital to the light and laughter Penny brought into the family, it is a story of a remarkable little girl who surpassed expectations. It is the story of a young couple coming to terms with their first-born child being different than they anticipated, and eventually receiving that child as a precious gift. It should appeal to any reader who wonders how grief can be transformed into joy.

Bolduc, Kathleen D. (2001). **A Place Called Acceptance- Ministry With Families of Children With Disabilities.** Louisville, KY: Bridge Resources
ISBN 9781578950980. A powerful resource for congregations who want to be communities of welcome and encouragement for families of children with disabilities. It provides concrete ways every congregation can take to experience the value of including families with special needs--and special gifts--in the life of the people of faith.

Bolduc, K. D. (2010). **Autism & Alleluias.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press
ISBN 978-0-8170-1568-8. In this series of slice-of-life vignettes, God's grace glimmers through as Joel, an intellectually challenged young adult with autism, teaches those who love him that life requires: childlike faith, humility, trust, compassion, forgiveness, and openness to all God's gifts.

Brown, Ian (2011). **The Boy In the Moon, A Father's Journey to Understand his Extraordinary Son.** New York, NY: St. Martin's Press ISBN 978-0-312-67183-9
Ian Brown's son, Walker, is one of only about 300 people worldwide diagnosed with cardiofaciocutaneous (CFC) syndrome—an extremely rare genetic mutation that results in unusual facial appearance, the inability to speak, and a compulsion to hit himself constantly. At age thirteen, he is mentally and developmentally between one and three years old and will need constant care for the rest of his life. As Brown gradually lets go of his self-blame and hope for a cure, he learns to accept the Walker he loves, just as he is.

Carter, Erik W. (2007). **Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, & Congregations.** Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing ISBN 978-1-55766-743-4

A congregational community is an ideal place to share and strengthen faith, form lasting relationships, and develop special gifts and talents. Too often, though, people with developmental and other disabilities lack the opportunities and supports to fully participate in the life of their faith community. That's why families and service providers need to read this groundbreaking guidebook—and share a copy with congregations that want to become places of welcome and belonging for people with disabilities.

Conner, Benjamin T. (2012). **Amplifying Our Witness: Giving Voice to Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities.** Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN 978-0802867216

Nearly twenty percent of adolescents have developmental disabilities, yet far too often they are marginalized within churches. Amplifying Our Witness challenges congregations to adopt a new, practice-centered approach to congregational ministry -- one that includes and amplifies the witness of adolescents with developmental disabilities.

Kind, Vicki (2010). **The Caregiver's Path to Compassionate Decision Making: Making Choices for Those Who Can't.** Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press, ISBN 978-1-60832-041-7

An author with both clinical and personal experience shows readers how to make decisions for others with integrity, compassion, and honor. It features practical tools for individuals and professional caregivers. With the rapid increase in our elderly population and the rapid escalation of medical costs, decision making has become a critical and often heartbreaking exercise for caregivers. This book provides a proven method for facing tough choices in emotionally charged circumstances.

Klein, Stanley D. Ph.D and Kemp, John D., Editors (2004). **Reflections from a Different Journey: What Adults With Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew.** New York, NY: McGraw-Hill ISBN 978-0071422697

Reflections from a Different Journey presents 40 stories by successful adults who grew up with disabilities. They provide insights into what it is like to persevere in the face of community prejudices, and what it takes for families and children with disabilities to work together toward fulfillment.

Pinsky, Mark I. (2011). **Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion.** Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute. ISBN 978-1-56699-421-7

A compilation of 64 amazing, real-life stories of people with disabilities, their family members, and their congregations. This book should be read cover to cover—even the forward and the introduction! Our PC(USA) is well represented here!

Reinders, Hans. S. (2008). **Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound Disability, Theological Anthropology, and Ethics.** Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. ISBN 978-0-8028-6232-7

Receiving the Gift of Friendship consists of three parts: (1) Profound Disability, (2) Theology, and (3) Ethics. Overturning the "commonsense" view of human beings, Reinders's argument for a paradigm shift in our relation to people with disabilities is founded on a groundbreaking philosophical-theological consideration of humanity and of our basic human commonality. Moreover, Reinders gives his study human vividness and warmth with stories of people who have profound disabilities, from his own life and from the work of Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen in L'Arche communities.

Reinders, Hans S. (2000). **The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society: An Ethical Analysis.** Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press ISBN 978-0-268-02857-2

The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society questions developments in human genetic research from the perspective of persons with mental disabilities and their families. Reinders points out that the possibility of preventing disabled lives is at odds with our commitment to the full inclusion of citizens with disabilities in society. The tension between these different perspectives is of concern to all of us as genetic testing procedures proliferate. Reinders warns that preventative uses of human genetics might even become a threat to the social security and welfare benefits that help support persons with disabilities and their families.

Reynolds, Thomas (2008). **Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality.** Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press ISBN 978-1-58743-177-7

As parents of a son with disabilities, Thomas E. Reynolds and his wife know what it's like to be misunderstood by a church community. In *Vulnerable Communion*, Reynolds draws upon that personal experience and a diverse body of literature to empower churches and individuals to foster deeper hospitality toward persons with disabilities.

Walsh, M. B., Walsh, A. F., & Gaventa, W. C. (2011). **Autism and Faith: A Journey into Community.** Ewing, NJ: COSAC. Retrieved from:

<http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/documents/AutismandFaith.pdf>

Stories and strategies from The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Also available in Spanish, see:

http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/Product_FaithBased.html

INTERNET RESOURCES

PC(USA)

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/living-body-christ/>

Living Into the Body of Christ; Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities. 40 page Statement approved by the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2006; includes Study Guide. Free download at web link above.

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/2012-disability-inclusion-resource-packet/> PDF

A Variety of Gifts: Inclusion of People with Disabilities as We Age. PHEWA's Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) offers resources to equip churches for inclusive ministry. This awareness and worship resource packet speaks to people who are aging, the challenge to overcome the stereotypes that devalue aging and to live with dignity and creativity; and, "For the church, the challenges are to embrace all members of the body of Christ in the community and to affirm and welcome the gifts of persons of all ages." PDC members believe that every Sunday – and every day between Sundays – should be a day for including all members of the body of Christ in the life of the community, and we dedicate these resources toward that reality.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/disability-concerns-consultants/>

PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants program- email or telephone consultations, at no charge. Four specific areas of ministry- Hearing and deafness, mobility/accessibility, visual disabilities, and intellectual & developmental disabilities; or, contact Team Leader, the Rev. Sue Montgomery if your concern does not fit in those categories.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/presbyterians-disability-concerns/>

<http://www.phewacommunity.org/>

Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC), **a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA).** PDC celebrates the gifts of all people and is committed to affirmation, support and advocacy for the rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities in the total life of the church. We are a volunteer membership organization, working to keep disability and inclusion ministry vibrant concerns in the life of the PC(USA). Join us by becoming a member (of PDC/PHEWA & other PHEWA Networks) and prayerfully considering support of our ministry, financially, at:

http://www.phewacommunity.org/images/PHEWA_membership_form.pdf

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/2011-disability-inclusion-resource-packet/> PDF

Inclusion from the Inside Out: Welcoming God's Children of All Abilities.

Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) offers resources to equip churches for inclusive ministry. The ideas and suggestions for worship and theology, confirmation and models of ministry come from actual experiences of writers who are committed to inclusion of children and youth of all abilities. It is our prayer that this packet will assist you in your ministry with all of God's children.

<http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc>

Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility, and Inclusion. A comprehensive guide to help congregations discover how welcoming they are to people of all ages and abilities. The audit includes access to all areas of church life, including leadership. Also, scroll down at this link to view PDC's **Offering Our Gifts**- a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and audio that features the personal experiences and faith witness of persons with disabilities.

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/life-abundant-values-choices-and-health-care/>

Life Abundant: Values, Choices and Health Care. The Responsibility and Role of the Presbyterian Church (USA), The 200th General Assembly, 1988. In pdf form, feel free to print out the sections useful to you from the G.A.'s website link.

<http://ptcaweb.s3.amazonaws.com/ptcaweb/image/2008/12/stories-and-articles-on-inclusion2.pdf> An article by PC(USA) Disabilities Concerns Consultant Milton Tyree entitled, **"Lost and Found, an Integration Story."**

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/pcusa-congregational-health-related-ministry-direc/> **The Wellness Connection-** a listing of PC(USA) congregations

and worshipping communities and their Wellness ministries. Not many listed (yet) with Disability Inclusion- register your ministries here for connections & mutual support!

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/71335540/InPrint-November-2011> **Welcoming God's Children of All Abilities; A publication of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.**

This issue features personal stories of people with a variety of abilities and how they participate with their congregations. The "Beatitudes for an Inclusive Church" are very insightful.



OTHER USEFUL SITES:

<http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/interfaith/interfaith-initiative.html> **The American Association of People with Disabilities Interfaith Initiative.** Under the direction of Ginny Thornburgh, the mission of the AAPD Interfaith Initiative is to support people with disabilities and their families as they seek spiritual and religious access, and to bring the powerful and prophetic voice of the faith community to the 21st Century disability agenda.

http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/projects/faith_based.html An excellent resource for projects, publications, education opportunities, and more from Bill Gaventa, Project Director, **Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, Robert Woods Johnson Medical School.**

<http://drgreveh.wordpress.com/2012/02/12/disability-ministry-any-church-can-do/> **Video of Libby Peterson, Bay Presbyterian Church,** explaining relational missional ministry (not “program”), within our own neighborhoods, for families of children with special needs.

<http://www.faithinclusionnetwork.org/> **Faith Inclusion Network** serves many denominations in Virginia and offers excellent resources through the website.

<http://www.trinitynorfolk.com/access.html> **Trinity Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Virginia, Access Ministry.** An excellent model of inclusion ministry.

<http://bethesdaoinstitute.org/Theology2012Presentations> **videos** of presentations at the **2012 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability.** Powerful messages! The mission of **Bethesda Institute** is to raise the level the excellence in services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing education, resources, consultation and services: <http://bethesdaoinstitute.org/>

www.theologyanddisability.wordpress.com This is also from 2012 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability, **notes** taken and comments by people who attended along with slide presentations and lecture notes of the presenters.

http://tash.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Connections_newsletter_September2012-forIssuu.pdf Excellent TASH publication, **“Spirituality: From Rights to Relationships.”** TASH is an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members,

other advocates, and people who work in the disability field. TASH has over 30 chapters and members in 34 countries and territories.

<http://alliesinselfadvocacy.org/accessible-meetings-presentations/> **Allies in Self-Advocacy** offers here brief descriptions of a variety of useful resources, with links to more information, to help presentations and meetings be accessible to and respectful of all.

<http://www.aucd.org/conference/template/page.cfm?id=50061> more good ideas for accessible meetings and presentations from the **Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)**.

<http://www.faithability.org> Faith Ability- Religion and Disability Resources, an ecumenical website providing news articles, event information and more relating to faith for all people. Good links to other helpful websites.

<http://www.inclusion.com> “Together We’re Better*All Means All*Inclusion means WITH-not just IN” This website takes you to the original advocates for inclusion and provides many resources, workshops and more regarding inclusion of ALL ages and abilities in ALL areas of life.

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Ault, M. J., Collins, B. C., & Carter, E. W (in press). Congregational participation and supports for children and adults with disabilities: Parent perceptions. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*.

Collins, B. C., & Ault, M. J. (2010). Including persons with disabilities in the religious community: Program models implemented by two churches. *Journal of Religion, Disability, & Health*, 14, 113-131. doi: 10.1080/15228961003622195

Resources submitted by “Beyond the Benediction” packet article writers, PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants, and members of PHEWA’s Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC) Leadership Team were compiled by Carol Brown, a member of the PDC Leadership Team. Carol can be reached at cbrownarc@charter.net



**PRESBYTERIANS FOR
DISABILITY CONCERNS**

A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

RESPONSE FORM

The Presbyterians for Disability Concerns Network of PHEWA creates a Resource Packet of this type each year that can be used in conjunction with the designated Presbyterian Disability Inclusion Sunday in June (or whatever Sunday your congregation chooses). Your answers to the following questions will assist in the creating of future Resource Packets.

Thank you so much for your input.

How were the materials in the packet used by you or your congregation?

Which was the most useful part(s) of this packet for your ministry?

Do you have any suggestions for themes/content of future packets? Other input?

How may we contact you?

Name _____

Email address: _____

Phone(s): _____

Please reply to: Susan Stack
100 Witherspoon St., Room 3228
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

susan.stack@pcusa.org