

2022 Disability Awareness Sunday Resources
Theme: Ableism

Prayer of Confession:

Creator God,

In the beginning you created and you called everything “good.” You made each of us in your own image with beautiful bodies and Spirit-filled souls. Made in your image, each of us belongs to you. Made in your image, each of us belongs to one another. Made in your image, each of us belongs to your church.

God, we lament the many ways we have perpetuated ableism in our lives, our institutions, and in our churches. We have excluded essential parts of the body of Christ, sometimes out of ease or comfort, and sometimes because we have not learned or listened. We grieve that our churches are safe and accessible for some, but not for all.

We lament that those with disabilities are under-represented, and that many feel marginalized and unwelcome. We have built structures and programs that are not accessible to all. We stigmatize accommodations. We forget that some disabilities are more public, and some are very private. We grieve that our churches are welcoming and equipped for some, but not for all.

God we lament that for too long, many of us have been unaware of the effects of ableism in your church. We confess the harm these attitudes and actions have caused.

We need your Holy Spirit to come among us and work in our hearts. Convict us where we have fallen short, encourage us to listen well, and lead us to make changes that better reflect the beautiful diversity of your church. We long to be your beloved church, for your beloved children. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This confession is written by Pastor Katie Ritsema Roelofs

Charge and Dedication, from Heidelberg Catechism Q&A #1:

Leader: Children of God, made in God’s image and called to serve God’s church, what is your only comfort in life and in death?

All: That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Leader: God calls us to be God’s church, a place of welcoming and belonging where each person’s gifts are valued. People of God, I charge you to do the necessary work so that all people—with and without disabilities—experience belonging in the body of Christ.

All: We belong, body and soul.

Leader: God desires that God's church reflect the beautiful diversity that God created. People of God, I charge you to see God's image in people with disabilities and value them as equal partners in this journey of faith. Learn from one another, grow with one another, and love one another as Christ loves us.

All: We belong, body and soul.

Leader: God will be present with us as we do the hard and holy work of being anti-ableist in our church. People of God, I charge you to be open to the ways that God will use these experiences to continue forming us that we might be Christlike in our actions and our words. The God who calls us to this work is the God who equips us and is beside us. We are never alone.

All: We belong, body and soul. Alleluia! Amen.

This litany is written by Pastor Katie Ritsema Roelofs

Songs:

Teach Us Your Ways

We Are One in Christ Jesus / Somos Uno en Cristo

All Are Welcome

Many Gifts, One Spirit

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Prayer:

A Prayer for Each Other <https://network.crcna.org/disability-concerns/prayer-each-other>

Other Suggestions:

- Print bulletin inserts on ableism provided by Disability Concerns.
- Ask people with disabilities in your church what their gifts are and how they'd like to be involved. Then make sure there is a connection with whoever plans the schedule so they can usher, or welcome people, volunteer in the nursery, read scripture, serve coffee, or whatever it is that their gifts and passions are.
- Invite someone with a disability to share their experiences of ableism.

- Start a new practice of offering instruments like tambourines and maracas for people who don't sing.
- Create or buy worship ribbons that add options for people to worship in different ways during songs.
- Purchase noise-canceling headphones, fidgets, coloring books, etc., to assist people, and keep in mind that people learn in different ways. Use visual pictures or items to engage visual learners during parts of worship, including the sermon.
- Start printing large-print bulletins if you don't already do so.
- Learn about how to make communion more accessible (<https://network.crcna.org/disability-concerns/inclusive-communion>)
- Establish a follow-up event or activity and tell people about it on disability awareness Sunday. Some ideas are:
 - Accessibility audit of your church (<https://www.faithward.org/everybody-belongs-serving-together/church-accessibility-audit/>)
 - *My Body Is Not a Prayer Request* Book Club (<https://network.crcna.org/disability-concerns/disability-concerns-book-year-my-body-not-prayer-request>)
 - Start a Friendship Club using the *Together* curriculum (<https://friendship.org/>)

Resources:

Everybody Belongs, Serving Together (everybody-belongs.com), available in English, Korean, Spanish, and French

Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship by Barbara Newman

My Body Is Not a Prayer Request by Amy Kenny