



## 2023 Disability Awareness Sunday Resources

*Theme: Accessible Church*

### **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*



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### **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*



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### **Prayer: A Prayer for Each Other**

Leader: Let us pray for all God's people: For people who are blind or cannot see well, and for people who can see but do not see those in need;

Response: Lord, in your mercy make us see you and each other.

Leader: For people who are slow and cannot move well, and for people who are fast but will not slow their pace;

Response: Lord, in your mercy help us move in step with you.

Leader: For people who are deaf or cannot hear well, and for people who can hear but block out cries of pain;

Response: Lord, in your mercy make us hear you and each other.

Leader: For people who learn slowly or cannot think well, and for people who learn quickly but who close their minds;

Response: Lord, in your mercy help us search and learn from you.

Leader: For people who are sad and cannot cheer up, and for people who are happy and avoid all pain;

Response: Lord, in your mercy make us know you and each other.

Leader: For people who are sick and cannot get better, and for people who are well but do not thank you for health;

Response: Lord, in your mercy help us serve you while we can.

Leader: For people who are kind and serve the needy, and for people who are awkward in the face of need;

Response: Lord, in your mercy make us know we need each other.

Leader: For people who feel trapped by their impairments, and for people who feel strong and add to that despair;

Response: Lord, in your mercy help us set each other free.

Leader: For people who feel worthless and unlovely, and for people who feel proud and do not prize your love;

Response: Lord, in your mercy make us know your love together.

Leader: For all the people in your whole creation, that we may cherish each other and learn to live in peace;

Response: Lord, in your mercy teach us love and give us peace.

All: Amen.



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### **Song Ideas**

- All Are Welcome
- Bind Us Together
- Many Gifts, One Spirit
- Teach Us Your Ways
- We Are One in Christ Jesus / Somos Uno en Cristo
- Who You Say I Am