

Our Social Principles on ...

Persons with Disabilities

We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological, and psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God.

We also affirm their rightful place in both the church and society.

We affirm the responsibility of the Church and society to be in ministry with children, youths, and adults with mental, physical,

developmental, and/or psychological and neurological conditions or disabilities whose particular needs in the areas of mobility, communication, intellectual comprehension, or personal relationships might make more chal-

lenging their participation

or that of their families in the life of the Church and the community.

We urge the Church and society to recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith.

We call the Church and society to be sensitive to, and advocate for, programs of rehabilitation, services, employment, education, appropriate housing, and transportation.

We call on the Church and society to protect the civil rights of persons with all types and kinds of disabilities.

—United Methodist 2008 Book of Discipline
III. The Social Community ¶162
I) “Rights of Persons with Disabilities”



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

Our Social Principles on Disabilities

Read reflectively

“When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” (Luke 14:12-14)

Reflect prayerfully

Whose eyes do you use when you look at differently-abled persons? Do you use the eyes of the world and only see what they cannot do, or do you use the eyes of God to celebrate the unique gifts they possess?

Pray responsively

Great Healer, use me as your instrument of peace for those who suffer due to physical or psychological conditions. Guide my words and actions as I interact with these your special children. Amen.

Respond justly

Acts of mercy

- Provide respite care so that caretakers of disabled family members can take a much needed rest.
- Support Special Olympics or other programs designed to encourage and support members of your community who are differently-abled.

Acts of justice

- Make your church facility handicapped-accessible. This may include installing ramps or elevators, offering sign language interpretation or specialized sound equipment.
- Integrate differently-abled members of your congregation in as many ministries as possible. When physical or psychological limitations are too severe, accommodate them by offering specialized ministries.

The United Methodist Church is responding justly

Bishop Peggy Johnson and others in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference have made strides toward including sign interpretation or other accommodations for hearing-impaired members. They have educated clergy and laity about deaf ministries.

