

Disability Awareness Sunday

Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church

In a section called "This We Believe" in the book *That All May Worship* (rev. ed., 2005), the National Organization on Disability articulates the belief that God sees in persons with disabilities a wholeness of spirit, where our imperfect vision may see only brokenness of body or mind. People with disabilities include those with physical, mental and intellectual disabilities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 54 million Americans have some form of disability.

In the church, we are commanded to see and love people the way God himself sees and loves them. People with disabilities are "disabled" in only the most superficial of ways. Beneath their physical, mental or intellectual limitations lie thriving souls, a wholeness of spirit, and unique gifts – just as with anyone else in the body of Christ. A congregation who embraces individuals with disabilities invites itself to partake in the Great Banquet – feasting on the diverse gifts of every child of God – and growing into a place that more fully reflects the kingdom of the Lord.

For more information about disability ministries and resources within the United Methodist Church, please visit www.umdisabilityministries.org.

...Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' (Luke 14:21)

Donations noted for "Indiana UMC Disability Ministry" will be used to grow resources for churches in our annual conference to serve people with disabilities.

An Ecumenical Litany for Wholeness

*by Ginny Thornburg, Program Director
American Association of People with Disabilities*

L: Let us pray for all God's People. For people who are blind and cannot see and for those who can see but are blind to those around them.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us touch each other.

L: For people who move slowly because of accident, illness or disability, and for those who move too fast to be aware of the world they live in.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us work together.

L: For people who are deaf and cannot hear and for those who can hear but who ignore the cries of others.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us respond to each other.

L: For people troubled in mind or spirit and for those too proud to admit to having problems.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us rely on each other.

L: For people who learn slowly, for people who learn in different ways and for people who learn quickly and easily but often choose ignorance.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us grow in your wisdom.

L: For people who have chronic illnesses for which there is no known cure or relief, and for people who live in unholy fear of developing a chronic illness.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us and heal us.

L: For families, friends and caregivers who serve people with disabilities and for those who feel awkward in their presence.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us see each other with your eyes.

L: For people who think they are worthless and beyond your love and for people who think they don't need your love.

P: Lord, in your mercy help us to accept your love.

L: For people who feel isolated by their disabilities and for people who contribute to some of that isolation.

P: Lord, in your mercy change our lives.

L: For all the people of your creation, that we may learn to respect each other and learn how to live together in your peace.

P: Lord, in your mercy bind us together. Amen.