

DISABILITY RIGHTS

What does the Bible say?

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them. **(Genesis 1:27)**

For the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. **(1 Samuel 16:7b)**

Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation [including level of ability], will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **(Romans 8:38-39)**

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. **(Romans 12:3-6a)**



What does The United Methodist Church say?

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. **(Social Principles ¶162.1)**

There are no conditions of human life (including age or intellectual ability, race or nationality, gender or sexual identity, class or disability) that exclude persons from the sacrament of baptism.

(Book of Resolutions ¶8031)

There exist inadequacies in the church and in society with regard to concerns for the rights of people with disabilities, utilization of talents, and their full participation within the life of the church and society.

(Book of Resolutions ¶3302)

While there is much to be done within the church to make real the gospel of inclusiveness with regard to people with disabilities, there is a world society that also must be made aware of the concerns and needs of these persons.

(Book of Resolutions ¶3302)

We urge the church and its people to stand alongside people with disabilities and to speak out on their rights in society. **(Book of Resolutions ¶3302)**



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

DISABILITY RIGHTS

CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

What do the facts say?

- 1 million adults (26% or 1 in 4 adults) in the United States live with a disability.¹ Globally, 1 billion people (15% of the world's population) experience some form of disability.²
- People with disabilities are subject to multiple violations of their civil and human rights, including acts of violence, abuse, and prejudice, obstacles to civic and economic participation, and disrespect because of their disability, which intersects with other forms of discrimination based on age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and racial and ethnic identity.
- In the U.S., 19.1% of persons with a disability are employed compared to 63.7% of persons without a disability.³
- 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. The global literacy rate for adults with disabilities is as low as 3%, and 1% for women with disabilities.⁴
- For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and acquire a permanent form of disability. In some countries, up to a quarter of disabilities result from injuries and violence. Research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their peers without disabilities.⁵
- Globally, people with disabilities are three times more likely to be denied health care, four times more likely to be treated badly in the health care system, and 50% more likely to suffer catastrophic health expenditure.⁶



1: CDC *Disability Impacts Us All*; 2,4,5: UN-Department of Economic and Social Affairs: *Disability, Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities*; 3: USDL-BLS, *Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics – 2021*; 6: WHO, *Disability and Health*, November 24, 2021

What do you say?

Take **ACTION** for justice...

Find out if your local church has conducted an accessibility audit or has a disability ministry, and how you can connect with the disability committee for your annual conference. **Incorporate disability experiences** into worship and the life of the church by celebrating Disability Awareness Sunday and learning more about disability theology and how it impacts our interpretation of scripture and community life (umcdmc.org).

Learn more about accessibility to the means of thriving for people with disabilities in your own state, county, and municipality by exploring resources on disability and education, employment, housing and transportation, voting and representation on public boards and commissions, encounters with public safety and emergency services, and health care networks.

Support companies that are intentionally inclusive of, and equitable for, people with disabilities in hiring, retention, and advancement, and that have robust representation from the disability community within their governing structures (<https://disabilityin.org/resources/>).

Advocate for policies that affirm the inherent dignity of people with disabilities and that create and enhance equitable access to the means of human thriving (economic, social, political, and spiritual).



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