



# Disability Awareness Sunday Information Sheet



The Committee on Disability Concerns is bringing to the Texas Annual Conference a resolution regarding a Disability Awareness Sunday. The *Discipline of the United Methodist Church* in ¶266 lists four special Sundays that the annual conference is asked to observe: Christian Education Sunday, Golden Cross Sunday, Rural Life Sunday and Disability Awareness Sunday.

The *Discipline* states that the annual conference should approve the special Sunday and suggest a date for its observance. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received by the local church and the funds remitted to the conference treasurer to be used by the annual conference to promote the creation of architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches.

The goals of a Disability Awareness Sunday are (¶ 266.4)

1. To celebrate the gifts of persons with disabilities.
2. To call the church and society to full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

Whether your church's ministry with disabilities is just beginning or is already underway, this special day is a time to remember persons with special needs and a time to celebrate the gifts they bring to the family of faith. Below are several models of celebration for Disability Awareness Sunday that have been used by local congregations.

## Disability Awareness Sunday Celebrations

Model 1: Worship services highlighting gifts of persons with special needs. These services should highlight the gifts that we give to and receive from persons with special needs as well as the churches' willingness to participate in this area of ministry. This model would be good for a church exploring or just beginning a disabilities ministry.

Model 2: Local church-wide Disability Awareness Sunday events:

- a. Experiential Room where a person can temporarily experience a disability.
- b. Accessibility Fair to showcase ministries, programs or businesses that address the needs of persons with disabilities.
- c. A Sunday that introduces a month-long emphasis on special needs.

Model 3: Worship service that celebrates the accomplishments of the congregation in meeting the needs of persons with special needs. These services can also be used to describe a vision for enhancing the ministry. This would be good for congregations that are farther along in their disability ministry.

Model 4: Worship service that includes persons with special needs in leadership of the service. This would model how all persons can be included in different aspects of a church's worship and ministry.

The Committee on Disability Concerns has other information available to help your church develop its Disability Awareness Sunday. Let us know what ideas have worked at your church and we will share them on our web site at [www.disabilityconcerns.org](http://www.disabilityconcerns.org). If you need more information, contact Rev. Greg Edwards, chair of the Committee on Disability Concerns, at [gedwards@txcumc.org](mailto:gedwards@txcumc.org).

**Committee on Disability Concerns**  
**Texas Conference Resolution 2007**  
**Disability Awareness Sunday**

**Whereas** the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is in mission to change lives and reshape futures for Jesus Christ and believes in radical hospitality, passionate worship, and connectional ministry for all persons

And

**Whereas** the church of Jesus Christ and The United Methodist Church is open to all children of God having differing gifts and needs; and these needs are varied and universal yet specific to a local church

And

**Whereas** churches in the Texas Annual Conference need persons with special needs and disabilities in their midst to make congregations whole

And

**Whereas** the Book of Discipline paragraph ¶266.4 calls for the observance of a Disability Awareness Sunday with an optional offering

**Therefore** be it resolved

That these recommendations be adopted to allow local congregations to celebrate the gift exchange that exists between themselves and persons with disabilities.

1. That the Committee on Disability Concerns work with the conference to designate an annual "Disability Awareness Sunday" to promote the participation and celebration of the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities within the local congregation.
2. That the annual conference may receive a voluntary offering to promote architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches, to be administered by the Committee on Disability Concerns.
3. That the Committee on Disability Concerns will provide resources for the planning and celebration of a Disability Awareness Sunday.