

DISABILITY SUNDAY

JULY 14TH

BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE NEED FOR DISABILITY MINISTRY.

Dear Pastor or Church Leader,

We are thrilled to announce our inaugural Disability Sunday on July 14, and we invite you to join us in bringing awareness and support to individuals and families with disabilities.

As the father of a special young man affected by autism and other complex disabilities, one of the greatest acts of love I have experienced is the inclusion of my son Jimmy in my home church family.

Sadly, many individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities choose not to attend church because they do not feel welcome. Some may be hampered by the church's lack of resources or inaccessibility, such as a restrictive entryway. Others don't attend because they believe the church will be uncomfortable if a person with disabilities makes noises or behaves in an "unacceptable" way during a worship service. And others don't attend because they were never invited.

Lifeway Research reports that children with autism are twice as likely to NEVER attend church, and others with various types of disabilities are often absent. I believe this grieves the heart of God.

God tells us that all of us are "wonderfully made." Psalm 139:13-14 says, "For it was You who created my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well."

God also tells us that we are to invite and include individuals who are affected by disabilities. Luke 14:12-14 says, "Then he told the man who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, stop inviting only your friends, brothers, relatives, or rich neighbors. Otherwise, they may invite you in return and you would be repaid. Instead, when you give a banquet, make it your habit to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then you will be blessed because they can't repay you. And you will be repaid when the righteous are resurrected.'"

We invite you to join churches throughout Maryland/Delaware in recognizing the second Sunday of July as Disability Sunday. We are excited to partner with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) to encourage individuals with disabilities and their families. Our prayer is that Disability Sunday will raise awareness of the need for disability ministries in our churches.

Many churches in Maryland/Delaware have wonderful disability ministries, and others are starting them. Some don't know where to begin. Your church can be a place for rest and rescue for these families rather than just one more place where they struggle or avoid out of fear.

We stand ready to help you. Contact Disability Missionary Katie Matthews for information on ways we assist you in starting or strengthening a disability ministry.

Thank you for your church's commitment to sharing the gospel with so many who desperately need Jesus.

Below is a list of resources to help you promote and celebrate our inaugural Disability Sunday:

- **Social Media Graphic:** You can use this on Instagram, Facebook, and presentation-ready graphics to make your church aware of Disability Sunday. Feel free to add your church's logo.
- **Bulletin Insert/Handout:** This half-page handout highlights the biblical need for disability ministries in our churches. We have included a QR code for more information and resources.
- **Prayer Guide:** Katie Matthews and Prayer Coordinator Adron Dozat have prepared a prayer guide to help you and your congregation pray for churches and families.
- **Transition Video:** Churches can use the video as a transition prior to the sermon or anytime during the service to highlight the biblical perspective of disability and the Church.

May God bless you as you serve Him.

Tom Stolle
BCM/D Executive Director