

Pastoral News

Ten Reasons People With Disabilities Shouldn't Go To Church

I found this Article Online the other day and thought it would fit right in with our story for A New Day. Meet Matt...

...Matt is a Wheaton graduate. He lives with disabilities including visual impairment, some autism spectrum tendencies, and bipolar disorder. Matt no longer identifies as a Christian, in large part because of the radical exclusion he has felt by the church. Matt is not an "ex-Christian," or a "non-Christian." He is an amazing human being with a poignant story to share. Please join me in hearing why he thinks people with disabilities shouldn't go to church.

(Please note, Matt wrote this post as a play-off of April Fiet's satirical piece "10 Reasons You Should Quit Going to Church," so even though this is more serious, it is still somewhat tongue-in-cheek.)

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1. Inaccessibility. This really shouldn't be on the list because it's a reason why you *couldn't* go to church, not shouldn't. But I put it on here nonetheless because churches are behind in providing accessible facilities as well

What's In This Month's Issue:

- Caritas Challenge
- Prayers Needed
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- United Women of Faith

March Calendar

5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th

Worship @ 10:30

19th Soup Challenge

2nd UWF @ noon

7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th

Tops @ 9

Prayer Group @ 10:30

Bible Study @ 11

9th

Disabilities Meeting @ 6

9th & 23rd

Crafting Group 9 till noon

12th

Ad Council meeting at noon

23rd

Flashes Articles Due

as transportation for those of us who can't drive.

2. **Baggage.** A lot of us with disabilities grew up being made fun of at church. Like all childhood experiences this went deep... and informed our view of church as an adult, perhaps making out to be a more hostile place than it actually is.

3. **Being a lone wolf.** A lot of us with disabilities were the only one in our community with that specific disability (or possibly any disability at all). This makes for a very isolating road. Minorities have churches which cater to them but people with disabilities do not (because they are spread so thin geographically and have had organizational and transportational barriers).

4. **Do doo doo.** Especially for males there is right and a wrong answer to the question, "what do you do?" If you give the wrong answer to this you are branded a man-fail and ignored. People with disabilities have a staggeringly high rate of unemployment and underemployment so they're less likely to be viewed as worth engaging by church people.



5. **Singled Out.** The church in America is designed to incubate. It's generally concerned with married people and their kids' upbringing. If you are single (which a large portion of people with disabilities are) you are viewed as a lesser person and ignored.

6. **Theology that sees individuals with disabilities as objects.** Good compassionate theology is out there but it doesn't often make its way to the church near you. People with disabilities are sick of being seen as items of unanswered

prayer or objects to project your romanticization of suffering upon. Disability needs to be celebrated and that's something most people can't get their head around.

7. Experience of God. A lot of Christian teaching instructs us to take the voice of God seriously. For mentally healthy people this can be fine but for those of us who are mentally ill the results can be disastrous. The problem is, the people who have had the experience of God turn against them are so ill they aren't in positions of power.

8. Perspectives run against the cultural narrative. Some denominations have made great strides in racial inclusivity which is amazing. They need to build on that including people with disabilities in positions of decision making. There is a deeper problem in that prejudice against people with disabilities hasn't abated the same way other prejudices have. This is because disability runs counter to the cultural (and dare I say Christian) narrative of youth, vitality, and prosperity. A racial minority can still ride this narrative to a place of respect.

9. Being judged based on appearance. The internet, not the church, is the chosen refuge of those of us with disabilities. Online we escape the snap judgements levied on us in real life. Plus, geographic dispersion and transportation are no longer issues so people with specific disabilities can virtually congregate together.

10. Including people with disabilities hit people's pain points. Let's face it, most American Christians are drawn to the faith through promises of comfort. These people aren't going to turn around and remodel an inaccessible bathroom or give a ride to church to someone with a mental illness who is effectively a shut-in because they don't have any friends.

I believe this could be some food for thought as we are moving towards the reality of A New Day...

Peace, René

Mother's Day Craft Show



April 28 & 29
from 9 to 5

Lunch available for \$8
at Fowler UMC
3928 N Howard

Craft Vendors!

To reserve a booth please
contact Roxy at 2088097429



Caritas Challenge



This month's challenge is Paper Towels!

Let's get at least 100 rolls

We can do this!

Soup Challenge



Its crockpot time again! On March 19th we are having our Soup Challenge. Sign up to bring in your best soup and let us decide which one is the best! See you then!



2nd David Olsen

9th - Vonnie Fergen

14th - Sindee Price

June Nelson

15th - Barbara Ritchey

23rd - Mary Russell

30th - Joan Schuman

Wishing our friends and family

a "happy. . .",

a "merry. . .",

a "best wishes . . .",

and a "blessings . . ."

for their special day.



Prayer Requests

Hand of God to Touch

A New Day

Jennifer – Life challenges

Nicholas – Life challenges

Evan to come to church

New great-granddaughter Dottie

Fundraising

Health and Healing

All with Flu/ Noro Virus and all bugs going around

June Bug

Roxy's mom

Jake Willis

Murphy Family

Nicole's upcoming surgery

Matthew with Covid

Pam and Marie suffering with cancer

Larry Price – Covid

Granddaughter, Brandi that has been having more heart & liver tests and difficulty in life

Continued Prayers

Victims of the earthquake in Syria

Prayers of Gratitude

For my husband



United Women in Faith

We will meet March 2, 2023 at noon in Corinthian Hall. All women are invited to attend. Being a member of the United Methodist Church is not a requirement. Bring a sack lunch and a friend. Dessert and coffee will be provided. Our Hostess will be Roxane Cleeves and June Nelson will lead our continuing study of the Lord's Prayer.

We will be discussing plans for the upcoming Church Craft Fair April 28-29. We will serve a lunch on Friday and Saturday. Help is needed on Thursday to help prepare and set up. We will also have a craft table, if you have been working on crafts, bring your priced items on Thursday. The money donated for the lunch and our crafts will go to support the mission work of the United Methodist Church and local missions for women and children.

Look on our board in Corinthian Hall for the list of Reading Program books. The list can also be found on the uwf website under "shop and download." Two books currently being discussed online are "A Knock at Midnight: A Story of Hope, Justice and Freedom" by Brittany K. Barnett and "The Land is not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery" by Sarah Augustine. To learn about these and other events join the Mighty Networks – uwfaith.mn.co. Many of these books are available at the Spokane Library. In our church UWF library you can find many books of interest. I just finished reading "Sleep, Pray, Heal" a very good read about a pastor and artist recovering from a severe brain injury.

Sharon Stovall

Fowler Unit President

The wilderness
and the dry land
shall be *glad*,
the desert shall *rejoice*
and *blossom*;
like the crocus it shall
blossom abundantly,
and *rejoice* with
joy and singing.

ISAIAH 35:1



Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church



LOVE IN ACTION

February 14, members of Fowler United Women in Faith delivered 47 bags of Valentine chocolates to the women and children staying at Anna Ogden Hall, a home for women recovering from addiction run by the Union Gospel Mission in Spokane. The women are offered counseling and education for employment. The children receive day care. There are currently nearly 40 staying at the facility.

Joan Grater made cross stitch hearts to place on each bag. The members filled the bags at our unit meeting February 2.

Three of us were given a tour of the facility and were introduced to members of the staff.



UMCOR DISASTER RELIEF FUND

ADVANCE # 982450 FOR DISASTER RESPONSE IN TURKEY AND SYRIA

Initial grants to UMCOR partner International Blue Crescent, which is headquartered in Turkey, and Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue in Syria, are helping to provide tents, heaters, blankets, warm clothes, ready to eat meals and first aid kits to people affected by the devastating earthquakes. By giving through the Advance 100% of your donation reaches your chosen mission project or ministry.

To give online go to the Global Ministries/UMCOR website. To give by mail, make your check payable to GCFA, write the Advance number on the memo line of the check and mail to:

Global Ministries/UMCOR GPO
P. O. Box 9068
New York, NY 10087-9068

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COME AND CRAFT WITH US!



The 2nd and fourth Thursday
at 9am