



Engaging Disability with the Gospel

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
Psalm 139:13-16, ESV

Brothers and sisters of Bethel,

Peace be with you always.

Our ministry focus this week is Engaging Disability. Engaging Disability is a ministry that exists to help churches disciple and enfold children, teens, and adults with disabilities so that every person in the body of Christ can worship, grow, and belong. Not all disabilities are seen. Some suffer in silence and isolation. Some are easily seen (birth "defects", genetic syndromes, chronic illnesses, bodily damage from physical trauma, cancer, etc.). Engaging Disability's belief is that ministering to the disabled is not a separate "niche" ministry, but a ministry through which the whole church grows in love, compassion and gospel-centered community as we are so called. They offer various resources and support, including individual church coaching/training, published resources, education on various disabilities including behavior and needs, individualized support to individuals and families within a congregation, and long-term planning of disability accessible ministries. They will always prioritize discipleship and sustainability over any form of "rigid" programming.

They are firmly rooted in the Reformed theological doctrine and were formed initially out of a PCA program. Today, they serve across all denominations through the lens of a Reformed, scripture-based ministry.

Why are we highlighting and bringing focus to this ministry?

The very beginning of God's word, Genesis 1, declares that all of humanity is created in the image of God. Every human (regardless of abilities or capacities) bears the divine image of our Creator. This tenet of our theology

holds that no disability diminishes our worth. We are all formed as part of His good design, and even disabilities are part of God's all-holy, all-just, all-good sovereign plan for creation and redemption. They are not a disqualifier – God remains sovereign over all and equips and uses who He so wishes. In John 9, Christ heals a man born blind, and His disciples begin asking whose sin it was that caused the curse of blindness. Jesus answers them that it was not sin, but "so that the works of God might be displayed in him." God, in His sovereignty, reveals His power and grace through the disability of the man.

What then is our call and response?

As always, let's look to Christ. Going back to John 9, Christ heals the man, restores him socially within the community, and then directly confronts the religious leaders who cast him out to begin with. In Mark 2, Christ heals the paralyzed man lowered through the roof, but first, forgives his sins. Our king honors faith, breaks down societal barriers to the destitute and downtrodden, and heals in His power to demonstrate His authority. In John 5, a disabled man of 38 years lies unnoticed and unaided by everyone that passes him by. Jesus directly seeks him out and approaches him directly. Jesus heals him, and later, speaks to him again. Christ demonstrates that we must show compassion and ongoing, continuing care. For further examples, look to Mark 1, Mark 5, Mark 7, Luke 13, and Luke 19. Jesus summarized His mission to the outcasts in Luke 4, speaking from the scroll of Isaiah, saying that He came to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, and liberty to the oppressed.

This is the importance of Engaging Disability as a ministry organization and the role it serves through its gifts in the body of Christ.

Please take time to visit <https://engagingdisability.org/>. Review their resources to educate yourself further and donate as you are led with a glad heart. Pray that not only our congregation responds in call to their mission but the whole body of Christ as we are called by our Holy Redeemer.

Thank you for your individual and corporate help in supporting these ministries.

Seth Neely
Bethel Diaconate

this week

Sunday's
sermon:

*Christmas in the New Testament:
The Name Above All Others - Part 2*

Philippians 2:1-11

events

Children's Christmas Play
12/7 @ 6:00 pm

Circle #3
12/8 at 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study
12/10 at 6:00 am

Colleen Riddle Circle
12/10 at 11:00 am

GriefShare
12/10 at 1:00 pm

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery
Lindsey Hall and
Grace & Pavlina Benes

Toddler Nursery
Abby Chidester
and Ilse Wallace

Worship Training
Danielle Austin and
Kathy Donnelly