

Social Justice - Disability

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6:8

Disability Justice is “all bodies must move together
to thrive, so no person is left behind”

Amy Kenny

The Apostle Paul describes the church
as the Body of Christ, where people move together

*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.*

Romans 12: 4-5



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***“Social justice is the heartbeat of the church. It’s the heart of our community. It’s simply about being human. Fully human. It’s about Christ being seen in what we do and say.”
Archbishop Winston Halapua***



Jesus calls us to participate in the reign of God by loving one another as Jesus loves us. The prophet Micah calls us to do justice to love kindness and walk humbly with God.

Disabled people face many barriers that prevent them from fully participating in society. This is an issue of social justice because barriers prevent disabled people from fully participating in society and not enjoying full citizenship rights.

Over the last 30 years there has been a shift in understanding of disability:

“Disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society; it is society that disables us, not our impairments, this is the thing all disabled people have in common. It is something that happens when the world we live in has been designed by people who assume that everyone is the same.”

Disability in New Zealand today - Office for Disability Issues (odi.govt.nz)



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Barriers that people face can be physical, information or attitudes.

As well as barriers in the environment, many disabled people face barriers of lack of understanding and low expectations from others. Disabled people often face the frustration of knowing how to overcome a barrier but not being given the opportunity to show how it can be overcome because of the attitudes of others.



This understanding of disability fits well with the biblical view of people being in relationship with God, with each other and the environment.

Disability is about the relationship between people with impairments not being able to participate in society on an equal basis with other people.

Doing justice is reducing barriers enabling disabled people to participate fully in society.

“Disability Justice” is about moving together, and no person being left behind. This is like the Body of Christ, with all members working together.

An excellent introduction to these ideas is the book:
[My Body is Not a Prayer Request Disability Justice in the Church:](#)
by Amy Kenny



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*We commit to fully include all people,
that together we may become more fully
the Body of Christ.*



How do we include disabled people as full members, encouraging people to explore gifts and opportunities for ministry?

We may need to alter the ways the environments and ways of thinking to enable us to support each other so all people can use their gifts for the building up of the body of Christ.

Some practical examples:

- Having written material in large print.
- All spoken words during the liturgy are written too.
- Inviting people to be comfortable either standing or sitting when a congregation is asked to stand. Suggested wording “Stand or sit as you are comfortable”
- Reading lessons from a place that is accessible for people using walkers or wheelchairs.
- Inviting people to participate in ministry and mission and finding ways around any barriers. Asking people what might work for them.



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Social Justice Sunday September 8

Resources for the Liturgy

Creation and Redemption liturgy: pg.456

Confession: pg.459.

Some Thoughts on the readings for the day:



Isaiah 35:4-7a

- How do we, as the Body of Christ, enable the vision of Isaiah to become a reality where all people can flourish in our community?
- In what ways can we eliminate barriers to enable people to participate in our community?

James 2: 1-10, (11-13), 14-17

- Warnings against making distinction between rich and poor. In many ways disabled people can be classed with the poor and oppressed in our society.
- The body of Christ need to be places where all people are welcomed, included and able to fully participate.

Mark 7:24-37

- The Syrophenician Woman challenges Jesus' sense of who is included within the ministry of Jesus. It is about being human and receiving God's love. Disabled people challenge the church to be open to ministry with disabled people.
- Tyler Sorenson's commentary on the healing of the man born deaf is rather different to the hearing perspective. By taking the man aside from the crowd, Jesus built relationship and communicated in a way the Deaf person could understand. This liberated the man from isolation and being excluded from the community.
- This highlights the importance of building relationships with people, this is good news.

Reference: [How can the Deaf "HEAR" the Gospel? \(Mark 7:31-37\) - Silent Blessings Deaf Ministries](#)



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Prayers to include in intercessions

The Archbishops have shared the following prayers in response to the Royal Commission report released.



E te Atua Atawhai, tēnei mātau e koropiko ana
ki mua i tōu aroaro i runga i te ngākau pōuri.
Nā te mea, tē taea mātau i rongō, i kite,
Nā te waha ngū ka whakakino mātau i te ngā harakore me ngā ngoikore.
E te Ariki, whakakahangia rātou ko te hunga mōrehu,
Arahina mātou ki te tika.
E te Ariki, whakarongo mai ki tā mātau inoi.
Āmine

Merciful God, we come to you in sorrow.
We would not hear, we did not believe,
Our silence condemned the innocent and the powerless.
Lord, strengthen and empower the survivors now,
and align our hearts with your justice.
God, hear our prayer.
Amen

[Anglican Taonga : New Zealand's Anglican News Leader](#)

Loving God,
We beseech you to hear our prayer for social justice in disability rights.
Bless those experience disability with strength, resilience, and the support
they need to thrive. Inspire us to create inclusive societies where
accessibility and equal opportunities are the norm. Grant us the wisdom to
dismantle physical and attitudinal barriers that hinder the full
participation of individuals who are disabled in our society. May we
celebrate the unique abilities and contributions of all people. With faith in
your divine plan, we commit ourselves to the journey of disability justice.
Amen.

[25 Powerful Prayers for Social Justice - Strength in Prayer \(altered\)](#)



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Social Justice Week 2024

Rights of disabled people in our church

Zoom hui series

Tuesday 10- Thursday 12 September

7-8.30 pm

Join the korero/conversation/talanoa

Tuesday 10th September

Launch of

**An Anglican theological statement on Disability in
Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia**

*Disabled people bear the image of God. We commit to fully include all
people, that together we may become more fully the Body of Christ*

Wednesday 11th September

Disabled People Rights

Disability is part of human experience

*Upholding the Rights of persons with disability
within the Church context.*

Thursday 12th September

Report on the Abuse in care

Disabled people bear the image of God.

What is our part as the body of Christ in the healing process?

If you are interested in attending, please contact:

disabilityresource@anglicanchurch.org.nz



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