



## DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

# Celebrating disability can be viewed as a part of diversity

by Katie Arnold

What comes to mind when you think of diversity? Race and ethnicity, class, gender identity and sexual orientation are often what most people think of diversity. They often do not include disability. Yet, the disability experience is an important part of diversity that shares commonalities with other minority experiences.

The disability community faces stigma, oppression, and discrimination like many other minority groups. There are many unique challenges that people with disabilities face. Unlike ethnic diversity, in which individuals



2010 Grand Marshall, Eli Clare, leading off the Disability Pride Parade.

typically share their diversity with other family members, people with disabilities are often the only family member with a disability. While many families provide environments of love and acceptance, it is important to strengthen the community of support among people with disabilities to share their common experi-

ences and provide role models to each other.

The Temple is hosting and participating in numerous events to increase awareness and enhance disability pride. Join the celebration, *(continued on page 5)*

## THE PASTOR'S COLUMN

# Ministry calls us to view disabilities from a more loving, gentle perspective



Three years ago we added a universal access ramp to the sanctuary, and I was one of the first to benefit from it. I had just had knee replacement surgery, and so the gentle slope of the ramp was much easier

for me to climb than the center steps to the chancel. When we first designed the new floor plan a few years earlier in order to make everything more accessible, I had not imagined that I would be using it. But there I was, grateful for the changes we had made.

Actually, the very first church meeting I attended at the Temple when I first started here 10 years ago was about access for people with handicapping conditions. People using wheelchairs or walkers could not get up to the pulpit, altar or choir area. There were no places for wheelchairs or walkers (or strollers, for that matter) in the rows of pews. We had only two narrow side aisles with no central aisle, so coming forward for Holy Communion was hazardous.

We saw problem for what it was – a justice issue. Everyone should be able to have access to all locations in the worship area. That was most evident one evening when we hosted a group from Chicago Theological Seminary who, when they discovered that

*(continued on page 2)*

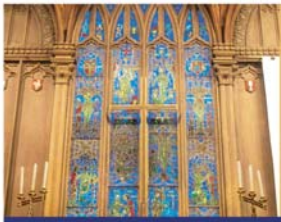
Fundraising efforts assist key causes

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Introducing Rev. Wendy Witt, new Associate Pastor

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# CHICAGO TEMPLE NEWS

## Fundraising efforts assist key causes

The Chicago Temple raised \$2,368.50 to go to United Methodist Committee on Relief. One hundred percent of the donation will go to **Japan Emergency relief** to assist with the recovery from earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan in March 2011.



Thanks to all who provided cookies, juice and assistance at the **Dan Magrini Memorial**. Please remember to keep the Magrini family in your prayers. A fund has been set up in Dan's memory at the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. If you would like to donate to the Dan Magrini Memorial, please visit <http://www.dbsalliance.org/tribute>, click find fund then enter "Magrini".

**Go, Cubs, Go!** \$1,225 was raised in the Cubs game fundraiser. All proceeds will benefit Gorham United Methodist Church.

Temple theatergoers raised \$2,200 for the **Yellow Face fundraiser**. All of the proceeds will go to the Capital Campaign Fund. Silk Road Theater Project donated the entire house on June 15.

**Fundraising appeal this month for Rasul "Rocky" Clark**. During the month of July, the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple is asking for donations of medical supplies and monetary gifts for Rasul "Rocky" Clark. Clark, a star running back

for Eisenhower High School in Blue Island, Ill., was tackled and injured in 2000 during a football game that cause two broken vertebrae in his neck and a spinal cord injury. The result was he became paralyzed from the neck down. The school district's insurance policy covered his 24-hour home care for years, but in 2010 it ran out after reaching its lifetime maximum benefit. Thus, his mother and caregiver, Annette, has been trying to care for him with limited resources and Medicaid.



Over the next three Sundays, we are asking that any who wish to give to this cause would do so by donating items to the box outside in the Narthex or by making monetary gifts. Then on Sunday, July 24, we are hoping to have Rocky and Annette join us at the 11 a.m. worship service, where the donations will be presented to them. The "CBS Evening News" may even be on hand to cover the presentation of our gifts to the Clarks. Please consider giving your support to Rocky and Annette as time is running out for him to maintain good health and for them to remain in their home, which they could lose because of this medical financial hardship. For more information, please contact the Rev. Claude King at [claud@chicagotemple.org](mailto:claud@chicagotemple.org).

### UMC (continued from page 1)

one of their community was physically not able to speak from the pulpit, conducted the entire ceremony from the floor level. If one person was excluded, then all would be excluded.

During the last three years all of us have found how freeing it is to be able to move easily around our sanctuary. Now everyone who wishes can join the choir or the instrumental groups. Now Communion servers in wheelchairs can gather at the altar with everyone else. Now preachers and lectors can be on the same level with all others leading worship. Now people needing more room than the normal pew configuration allows can find space right in the middle of the congregation, or up front or in back, as the person desires. And with the extra wide center aisle we all can move around more easily.

All of these changes, plus a new sound system and sanctuary lighting that is five times brighter than what we had before, are ways of saying that we welcome all who wish to worship with us. Our statement of welcome and inclusion is made physically real with our new arrangement.

Which now raises a challenging question: Are we ready to initiate a ministry that self-consciously includes people with handicapping conditions? Not just passively, accommodating anyone who comes in, but actively seeking connections with communities in Chicago.

I commend to you a little book co-authored by Jan Vanier and Stanley Hauerwas entitled, *Living Gently in a Violent World*. Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, an international network of people with and without disabilities living together, writes, "The mystery of people with disabilities is that they long for authentic and loving relationships more than power. . . . They are crying for what matters most: love." Hauerwas, observing a L'Arche community, comments, "Gentleness requires the slow and patient work necessary to create trust."

Do we have the patience to be gentle? Do we have the courage to overcome our fear? And are we willing to confront our prejudices, some of which have been nurtured by an obsolete theology that taught many of us that disabilities of all sorts are signs of God's punishment?

If we are going to be a truly inclusive church, then we must answer "yes" to all of these questions. Who wants to help lead the way?

Peace,

## The Rev. Wendy Witt joins the Temple, ready to connect to the congregation and celebrate its diversity

The Rev. Wendy Witt joins Chicago Temple this month as Associate Pastor, as the Rev. Cerna Castro Rand moves to her appointment at Prince of Peace United Methodist Church in Elk Grove Village, Ill. The Rev. Witt joins us from Cortland United Methodist Church in Cortland, Ill., where she served as its pastor. We conducted an e-mail interview with her, as she balanced moving to Chicago and taking care of her son who was recently injured in a baseball accident. She offered her insight and reflections about Methodism, her faith walk and commitment to social justice.

### **LL: What led you to the United Methodist Church?**

*W:* I was raised a Lutheran. I became a United Methodist as an adult. While I originally became a UM because I was married to a UM pastor, I choose to stay because of John Wesley's (and hence the UMC's) strong commitment to blending personal piety and spirituality with social justice and action. When I entered ministry, 24 years ago, the UMC was on the cutting edge of appointing women and minorities in positions previously held exclusively by white men. They did this with great intentionality and integrity. Jesse DeWitt was the NIC Bishop at the time, and his strong commitment to the church being involved in the fight for justice and equality on all levels was definitely a key determining factor.

### **LL: Explain your faith walk and how you've integrated key principles learned along the way into your ministry.**

*W:* I have known I wanted to be in ministry since I was 13, when I preached the Confirmation sermon for my class. I preached on Micah 6:8 – And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? – this passage has been the guiding passage of my life and my ministry. I challenged the congregation to do more in the way of racial justice in the small town of Fond du Lac, Wis., which was just beginning to experience some racial integration and tensions. I was blessed to have two pastors who felt strongly about civil rights, The associate pastor, who was the youth minister, got the confirmation class very involved in this movement.

Even though I knew at this time that I wanted to be a pastor/preacher, I was told by my paternal grandfather and others in the church that "women couldn't be pastors," and that I "should marry a pastor, instead." Again, it was the openness to women as pastors that led me into the UMC.

Throughout my ministry, I have sought to create communities that are committed to diversity and full inclusion of all people in the



The Rev. Wendy Witt is married to Don Floyd, and he is a community/political organizer. Their family consists of four children: Peter, married to Gretchen with three-year-old daughter, Chloe, living in Dallas; Abigail, an attorney with the federal prosecutor's office in Chicago, and engaged to Michael; Zachary, a senior at NIU; and Ross, a freshman at Jones College Prep High School.

life of the church and in society.

### **LL: Explain your work with the Reconciling Ministries Network and the Methodist Federation for Social Action. What are some of the areas these organizations address?**

*W:* My involvement with both these organizations stems from my commitment to justice and full inclusion of all people in the life of the church and society. I have worked with both around issues relating to our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters – again, in the church and in society. This is the primary focus of the Reconciling Ministries Network.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action works on a wide of diversity of social justice issues. Issues of poverty and racial justice and economic equity have been at the forefront of their work, as well as LGBT issues.

I have worked on changing the way we fund education in the state of Illinois so that **all** children will have access to a quality and affordable education. The way education is currently funded is inherently unfair and perpetuates the racial and class divisions and tensions that currently plague our country, our state, and our cities. I have not done this recently, because

there was no venue to do so in DeKalb, but I am looking forward to getting involved in this area once I am back in Chicago.

### **LL: If you feel comfortable, you mentioned your recent accident and even the injury with your son. Can you share with us the experience as well as how you overcame any obstacles? How did your faith help you and your family? Your attitude is so positive!**

*W:* My car accident occurred in July, 2005. I was hospitalized for two weeks, much of that in ICU. Following the accident, I was confined to a wheelchair for several months due to fractures in my hip. I had significant nerve damage done to my face, some of which was able to be repaired but not all of it. Through all of this, I never asked God: "Why me?" But rather chose to ask: "What, God, do you want me to learn from this experience so that I can be a better person, partner, parent, and pastor?" God has used that experience in my life and ministry in numerous ways. I have been taught great lessons in humility and patience. My time in a wheelchair sensitized me to the challenges that people who are permanently confined to a wheelchair have to deal with on a daily basis – from not having a place to sit in a church, to navigating crowded sidewalks, to hostile stares. I now see "space" in a totally different way. I also had to overcome some real issues with pride and vanity as I adjusted to partial facial paralysis. I had to find a

## The Rev. Wendy Witt joins the Temple, ready to connect (continued from page 3)

deeper and more enduring sense of who I am.

When Ross was hit in the eye with a baseball, many of these lessons came into play. Right now, we do not know the extent of the damage or how permanent it will be. Again, we are learning to be patient and trust in God. Ross is an incredible young man and is determined not to let this get to him or change in a fundamental way who he is or what he does.

Through both of these experiences, I have been shown that we are so much more than our limitations or injuries or illnesses. When people ask how Ross is doing, I now ask: "Are you asking about Ross or about his eye? They are not the same." We refuse to be defined by what has happened to us. God created us to be so much more!

During both of these times, our family was surrounded by the power of prayer. I have experienced firsthand that there is power in prayer – healing power, but also the power that strengthens and sustains and gives us the energy to persevere in the midst of adversity and trials.

I believe strongly that God can make a way when there seems to be no way, and that we can do all things through the One who strengthens us!

**"How Firm a Foundation"** is my favorite hymn and has become my soul song as well – "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid. I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand upheld by

my righteous, omnipotent hand" (v. 2).

**LL: What are you looking forward to by joining the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple? Can you be specific?**

**W:** There are many things I am looking forward to in joining the ministry team at the Temple. Key among those is being part of a ministry team that is committed to making a difference in the lives of those who come and in the communities in which they serve.

I am also excited to be in an urban setting, which will afford me the opportunity to be more involved in the justice issues that are so important to me. I am also looking forward to involving the members of the congregation in campaigns around jointly identified issues. We are uniquely positioned to take a real leadership role in effecting the changes that are important to us, to our members and constituents, and to all those we seek to serve in the name of our Christ.

I love the diversity of all kinds that is present at the Temple. My family's commitment to diversity is one of the main reasons we wanted to return to Chicago. It is extremely important to us that Ross attend a high school that is diverse and sees that as a value to be promoted and celebrated. In every church I have served, I have sought to create a community that is diverse and is reflective of the community in which it is located. That is already so very evident at the Temple. I am thrilled that diversity is a consistently articulated value of the congregation!

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## Disability Pride: A Personal Story

### Gary Arnold shares his advocacy work for people of short stature



By Gary Arnold

Each year on July 26, the disability community celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The disability community recognizes the anniversary in order to highlight accomplishments and build support for more that can be done with what is the most important piece of civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. I have been involved with the Chicago Disability Community for

more than ten years. I am part of many disability groups including Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, a non-profit disability rights and service organization, and Chicago ADAPT, an activist group. Yet, Little People of America (LPA), a national organization for people of short stature with various types of dwarfism, is the group that I most closely identify as a person with a disability.

For the past two years, I have marched with a small group of people from LPA in the Disability Pride Parade. As little people, because of physical difference, we are often the subject of attention. Attention for which we most often don't ask. But as part of the parade, we asked for attention. We wanted the people who lined the streets along the parade route to look at us and cheer. The experience was empowering because, unlike so many other times in public, those of us who marched as part of LPA in the parade asked for the attention. We were in control. I felt in my heart what it means to be disabled and proud.

**Gary Arnold**, who is married to Temple member Katie Arnold, will become President of Little People of America (LPA), the national non-profit organization for people of short stature with various types of dwarfism. He has been Vice President of Public Relations since 2006 where he served as spokesperson for the organization, addressing social and political issues that impact the dwarfism community. Gary has taken charge of numerous advocacy campaigns around respectful language and treatment of people with disabilities. Gary is a strong disability advocate with a sense of social justice.

# CHICAGO TEMPLE NEWS

## Celebrating disability (continued from page 1)

come participate in these fun events, and bring your friends and family!

### **The Disability Community Open Mic** July 22 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

The annual pre-parade event is where people in the disability community come to listen and share thoughts, poems and writings about the disability experience. This is a fun way to learn about disability culture. We strongly encourage members of our congregation to attend. Food and drinks will be provided during the event. If you would like to share something at the Open Mic, please sign up with Gary Arnold at [garnold@accessliving.org](mailto:garnold@accessliving.org).

### **Sibs in the City: A fun gathering for adult siblings of people with disabilities**

July 23 9-11 a.m. at the Chicago Temple

Come meet other people who share the experience of having a sibling with disabilities. Enjoy a light breakfast while listening to a brief seminar "Food for Thought: The Dynamic Sibling" to discuss how family relationships change over time, and strategies for siblings to deal with it all. For more information visit: [www.siblingleadership.org/2011/05/sibs-in-the-city/](http://www.siblingleadership.org/2011/05/sibs-in-the-city/)

### **The Disability Pride Parade**

July 23 at 11 a.m., stay for the post-parade celebration from 12:30-2 p.m.

Come watch the Disability Pride Parade – bring your family and friends! The parade kicks off at 11 a.m. on Van Buren Street and marches north on Dearborn to Washington Street ending at Daley Plaza. Spectators can sit on benches at 1 N. Dearborn to watch and cheer the parade. About 40 disability groups and



**The Disability Community Open Mic, which took place last year in James Parlor.**

organizations march in the parade. There is a fun post-parade celebration with music, performance and speakers in Daley Plaza. For more information about the disability pride parade visit: [www.disabilityprideparade.org](http://www.disabilityprideparade.org)

### **Hollywood Images of Race and Disability in Film** Aug. 26 from 6-8:30 p.m. in James Parlor

Come watch film clips of Hollywood movies and discuss how race and disability are portrayed. Disability culture activists critically examine and investigate how these films have shaped public perception of disability and how individuals with disabilities view themselves.

## CHURCH FAMILY MEMBERS

### Please Remember These Persons In Your Prayers

Chuck Andrews' sister, Mary  
James & Danielle Babiarz  
James Ballard  
Rodney Carmon & friends  
Louise Catron  
Veronica Cunningham's  
brother, Randy  
John Davies  
Mary Ruth Caldwell  
Roberta Eisinger's Father  
Maria & Elizabeth Elizondo  
Michelle Forté's uncle,  
Moses Forté and family  
Doris Galloway's sons,  
Erik & Allen  
Tru and Nancy Pollard  
Jann Ingmire's mother,  
Mary  
Jean Isaacson  
Beth Jacobs's mother  
Sefini and Joey Retkovsky  
Dorothy Drockman  
James & Bonnie Kelly  
Deepshika Khan  
Lisa Lenoir's parents,  
Ausbie & Etta  
Sheila Lockhart

The Magrini Family  
Delores Malone's son,  
Matthew and family  
Marciana Mangoraong  
Rose Martinelli's parents  
Bill Murray  
David Pearson  
Ramalee Pearson  
Virginia Holmes  
Joyce Rimel  
Julie Aver  
Marie Johnson  
Patti Acha  
Amy Schutt  
Yvonne Scott  
Chili Shears' father & sister  
Albert Vazquez  
Martha Miranda  
Tim Weiss  
Karen Williams & family

**Those at Home**  
Delbert Brown  
Tess Crisóstomo  
Barbara Schubert  
Edith Smith's husband,  
Henry

**Extended Care or Rehab**  
Florence Bos  
Henrietta Brown  
Edward Clay, Jr.  
Margaret Davies  
Louise Foote  
James Humble  
Alice Inouye  
Mildred Kretz  
Esther Penalzo  
Maureen Pfister  
Virginia Schuler  
David Weinland  
Priscilla Zapatka

**Mourning the  
Loss of a Loved One**  
The family and friends of  
Anna Osborne  
The family and friends of  
Dan Magrini  
The family of Lura Lynn  
Ryan  
The family and friends  
of Nancy Dougherty,  
Les Loss' friend

### Members Celebrating A Birthday

**July 1**  
Amy Looi  
**July 3**  
Janis Andersen  
**July 4**  
Ellen Dowling  
Paul Edwards  
Anna Adams  
**July 5**  
Joyce Rimel  
Susan Wurbel  
Heather Henstock  
**July 6**  
Les Ross  
**July 7**  
Dianne Kibbey  
Eric Zachrisson  
**July 8**  
James Wright  
Clarke Bennett  
Steven Riehs  
**July 9**  
Phyllis Cooper  
Joy Vinluan

**July 10**  
Sonia Flores  
Jay Dameron  
**July 11**  
James White  
**July 13**  
Lauro Sansano  
Tyra Schutt  
**July 14**  
Edith Smith  
John Miller  
**July 15**  
Judith Munson  
Grace Mendoza  
Sarah Cannon  
**July 17**  
Michele McGee  
**July 18**  
Ferdinand Gonzales  
**July 19**  
Liz Johnson  
Martha Miranda  
Louetta Irwin  
Doris Buehrer

**July 22**  
Cerna Rand  
Colin Dickey  
**July 23**  
Russell Bower  
Cheryl Magrini  
**July 24**  
Bobbie Ross  
Susan Hague  
**July 25**  
Katrina Willis  
**July 26**  
Blanche White  
Danielle Kays  
**July 27**  
Steven Murphy  
Jacquie Garrett  
Erin McGuire  
Melissa Hinds  
**July 28**  
Jeffrey Taylor  
**July 29**  
Roberta Eisinger  
Richard Gano  
**July 31**  
Paul Schook  
Eric Maxfield

## Final Thoughts: The Rev. Rand shares Scripture, ministry highlights at Chicago Temple

By Lisa D. Lenoir

The Rev. Cerna Castro Rand has a key Scripture on her new business card for Prince of Peace United Methodist Church in Elk Grove Village, Ill.

It is Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This Scripture, she says, helps her to never feel afraid and enables her to do God's work, love others and make a difference in the world.

With the Word in hand, she moves into her new position, where she will be the pastor of a 250-member congregation. But she does not leave without reflecting on her seven-year tenure at the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple, where she says she grew professionally and spiritually.

### Here are her thoughts on a few highlights:

**The Mabuhay Fellowship:** "I was able to work with the group to take on the responsibility to raise \$200,000 for the Capital Campaign, where we have raised \$12,000 clear profit." The Mabuhay space in the back of the sanctuary was the group's



vision to provide a welcoming environment for parents with crying babies and guests to congregate after church. The word Mabuhay means: "welcome, long-live."

**The Bereavement Ministry:** Through the vision of Azucena Munoz Tressler, Rev. Rand says this ministry that focused on helping people through levels of grief has been a blessing. It has grown from seven people to between nine and 13 people who come together to learn and share; it will continue with Rev. Wendy Wit, Rev. Anne Hampson, and lay leader David Myford.

**The Youth Group:** A flourishing youth group has been a true highlight. The group has been taken on mission trips to South Dakota and Marcy-Newberry, participated in services, and raised money for hunger. The ministry will continue with the leadership of Mary-Carol Riehs and Kristen Difani.

**Final thoughts:** "To all of you, thanks a million for everything that we have done together and for all your love, hospitality and giving spirits. Mark and I will keep you in our hearts and prayers. I will miss you. Thank you! Thank You! Thank You! God bless you all."