

## Living into the Body of Christ

As the body of Christ, we are to welcome everyone to the banquet Feast of God's love in this world. The Feast of God's love is open to all and fully inclusive of people from all pathways of life.

We envision a church in which the designation or naming of a person's disability is less important than who that person is as one of God's people.

We envision a church in which all the members of the body of Christ honor, respect, nurture, and support the gifts, talents, and services of every other member.

We envision the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a leader in promoting and manifesting this vision of a just world, serving with and empowering people with disabilities to engage in this ongoing work.

The 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2006) approved a bold new policy, *Living into the Body of Christ*. It challenges the church to include people with disabilities in all areas of the church's life and to welcome their gifts. It calls the church to advocate with and for people with disabilities and to work for social justice. Many people with disabilities are homeless, most are unemployed or underemployed, and many lack needed services. Access Sunday calls us to do what we should be doing every Sunday – and every other day – welcoming all people to Christ's banquet!

Visit our web site and learn more about Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC), our resources, and the Disability Consultants who are available to answer your questions in the areas of hearing, vision, mobility and developmental/cognitive disabilities.



[www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc) 1-888-728-7228, extension 5800

PDC is one of 10 networks of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), a ministry of the Peace & Justice Ministries of the General Assembly Council, Presbyterian Church (USA)

## A Church Family for Eldon

Excerpt from a sermon by  
Rev. Cynthia Campbell, President  
McCormick Seminary

In the church I served in Salina, Kansas before coming to McCormick Seminary, there were two regular worshippers who were literally “back benchers” – they sat as far away from the pulpit as possible near the back door. Two elderly men. They lived in a group home for the mentally retarded just down the street from the church. Eldon, I learned, was our member; he brought his friend along. They came regularly to worship and to almost every event that involved food.

One fall Monday morning, I remarked to my secretary that I missed seeing Eldon and his friend. Within an hour, we got a call from the social worker at the group home. Eldon had died. They knew he went to the Presbyterian Church. Could we arrange a funeral service, and by the way, could I come down to the group home and answer some questions the rest of the residents had about death?

After getting to know the other residents and fielding all sorts of questions (where is Eldon now? If he is with God, can he still hear us? Will he wear shoes in the casket?), I had no idea what to expect at the service. The day came; the eight or ten other residents were brought up from the group home. When I walked in to take my place next to the casket, I was astounded by how many people were in the chapel. Several choir members, the women who came to the church each week to write cards to those who were on the prayer concern list, my secretary, our associate pastor, and the presiding judge of the district court.

The people from the group home were equally amazed. As I sat down, one of them said quite loudly, “Who are all these people?” “You are Eldon’s home family,” I said. “This is his church family.” “Oh,” said the young man, “that’s cool.” And it was.