

## All Belong Spirituality & Disability Virtual Conference Agenda

Sponsored by Minot State University's Special Education Department & the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities with support from the ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Session	Description	Presenter	Friday, April 16 <sup>th</sup>
Welcome		Dr. Steven Shirley, Dr. Lori Garnes	8:00 am - 8:15 am
Conference Overview and Logistics		Dr. Holly Pedersen and Ms. JoLynn Webster	8:15 am - 8:30 am
The Absence of Asterisks: Creating Communities of Belonging in Every Congregation	What does it really mean to <b>belong</b> ? This presentation will spur deeper reflection about the ways in which local congregations can welcome and weave people with disabilities and their families more fully into the life of the faith community. In moving from barriers to belonging, we discover the power of life lived together and how those at the margins are indispensable to the flourishing of everyone.	Dr. Erik Carter	8:30 am - 10:00 am
Break			10:00 am -10:30 am
Creating Belonging: A Practical 3-Part Plan	Planting our feet in Scripture, we look at why inclusion of people of all abilities is a vital part of congregational life. From there we step into a three-part plan for belonging which begins in <b>Perspective</b> , followed by discussion on <b>Participation</b> through Universal Design, concluding with a look at <b>Personalization</b> through Responsive Design planning.	Ms. Victoria White	10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Lunch	Conversing and Connecting (optional)	Ms. Victoria White, Dr. Holly Pedersen and Ms. JoLynn Webster	12:00 pm -12:30 pm
Faith and Flourishing: Inclusive Spiritual Supports for People with Disabilities and Their Families	The most compelling service systems are driven by a deep commitment to the flourishing of individuals with disabilities and their families. While much of our attention focuses on where individuals with IDD live, work, and recreate, we often struggle to address other important dimensions of life like spirituality and congregational connections. This session will focus on promising pathways and potential partnerships for supporting the faith and flourishing of individuals with IDD. It will address creative ways of	Dr. Erik Carter	12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

	identifying and supporting the spiritual commitments of the individuals you serve.		
Practical Strategies for Congregations	This session is full of <b>actionable items</b> you can try, paired with <b>stories</b> from congregations and families, showing how the 3-part plan can come together. Details such as forms, equipment, roles and positions will be discussed.	Ms. Victoria White	12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
From Uncertainty to Real Partnership: Congregations and Agencies Collaborating on Inclusion and Belonging	Bridging the two worlds between faith communities and service.	Rev. Bill Gaventa	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
Wrap-Up	Next Steps for ND: What does this look like for me?	Dr. Erik Carter, Ms. Victoria White Dr. Holly Pedersen and Ms. JoLynn Webster	2:30 pm - 3:00 pm

**All Belong: Spirituality & Disability Virtual Post Conference Session on Dementia**

Session	Description	Presenter	Schedule Saturday, April 17 <sup>th</sup>
Welcome		Dr. Holly Pedersen and Ms. JoLynn Webster	9:00 am - 9:05 am
Dementia: Faith-based Strategies for Connecting with One Another	Discover some important <b>information</b> about dementia as well as multiple <b>practical ideas</b> to use when interacting with someone experiencing dementia. We will explore effective multi-sensory strategies, family support ideas, as well as ideas connected with worship for interacting with one another in corporate worship or individually during this season of life.	Ms. Victoria White	9:05 am – 10:30 am

## Speaker Biographies: We are Pleased to Host these Experts!



Dr. Erik Carter is *Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education* at Vanderbilt University and Co-Director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy UCEDD. His research and teaching focuses on effective strategies for supporting inclusion and valued roles in work, community, school, and congregational settings for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. He has published more than 200 articles and chapters, along with 6 books. Learn more about his work and writing at [www.erikwcarter.com](http://www.erikwcarter.com).



Rev. Bill Gaventa is an author, speaker, trainer, and consultant primarily in the arena of faith and disability. He is the founder and Director Emeritus of the Summer Institute of Theology and Disability and the current Director of the National Collaborative on Faith and Disability. He was the Director of Community and Congregational Supports at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities in New Jersey from 1995-2013. Primary areas of experience and expertise include spiritual and faith-based supports with people with disabilities, training for clergy, seminarians and community services staff, aging and end of life/grief issues in intellectual and developmental disabilities, cultural competence, and community building. He served as the President of American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2016-2017. He was Editor of the *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* for 14 years, and is author of *Spirituality and Disability: Recovering Wholeness* published by Baylor University Press in 2018.



As director of the Church Services team at All Belong Center for Inclusive Education in Wyoming, MI, Ms. Victoria White partners with All Belong's other church consultants to share best practices for creating congregations of belonging. Her desire to see people of all abilities active in the life of the church fuels her work with congregations, ministries, and organizations. She brings over 20 years of experiences in ministry and educational settings, a season of life marked by chronic illness, and more than a decade of mentorship under former Director of Church Services, the late Barbara J. Newman. She has written numerous curriculum and other resources and shares her expertise around the nation.