

## Autism

Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders known as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). The other pervasive developmental disorders are PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified), Asperger's Syndrome, Rett Syndrome and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder. Many parents and professionals refer to this group as Autism Spectrum Disorders. These conditions are neurological and a genetic predisposition may run in families.

Though there is no single known cause or cure, autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention can lead to significantly improved outcomes. With the right services and supports, people with autism can live full, healthy and meaningful lives.

## Statistics

- A new case of autism is diagnosed nearly every 20 minutes.
- An estimated 1 in 88 children are on the Autism Spectrum
- There are 24,000 new autism cases diagnosed in the U.S. each year.
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases.
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism.
- Families with an autistic child and no church affiliation have an 80% higher divorce rate than other families.

Quoted from "Autism Speaks"  
[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

"...Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest.

Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace..."

*Matthew 11:28, The Mes-*



Autistic children often have sensory issues. Many are sensitive to textures, noises, crowds, transitions and changes

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# A Special Grace

## Ministry with Autism Spectrum Families

Sensory-Friendly Worship

First Sunday of EVERY Month

2pm

PLEASE JOIN US!!



Tel: 508-668 2353

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“Jesus loves them, but the person in the next pew might struggle. Children with autism sometimes exhibit behaviors people don't normally see in church. They yell, flap their hands, talk nonstop about one topic, have inappropriate contact with strangers, throw tantrums and behave unpredictably. Some are sensitive to light, noise, crowds and change.



Children on the autism spectrum have a variety of abilities

Children with autism sometimes exhibit behaviors people don't normally see in church. They yell, flap their hands, talk nonstop about one topic, have inappropriate contact with strangers, throw tantrums and behave unpredictably. Some are sensitive to light, noise, crowds and change.

Autism can isolate a family.

Anne Platt doesn't even try to take her son Billy, 10, to church anymore. She and her husband, Keith, attend ... with their other children, one parent staying home with Billy while the other worships.

"If your child's diagnosis is keeping you from attending church, you end up with an entire family often who is not attending church. You love the family by loving the child and attending to the child so the whole family can take part in worship services," said Lisa Wickenheiser of Lower Allen Township, ACCESS ministry team chairwoman at First United Methodist in Mechanicsburg."

excerpt from an article By DIANA FISHLOCK, [The Patriot-News](#), July 05, 2009

## A Service of Worship & Christian Formation

Designed especially to support Autism Spectrum families, but all families are welcome!

Featuring :

- Sensory Friendly Worship
- Hands-on activities to support motor skills, tactile awareness, and social skills.
- Picture aids, sensory diet and aids available
- Support for families and siblings



Siblings and families need extra support to help raise an autistic child.

### Related Ministries

- **Church B.U.D.S.** — (Building Up Developmental Services): Training volunteers to assist families with full inclusion in the church community.
- **Ministry to Families with Special Needs**
- **Pray With Me**— Prayer Partners for Families with Special Needs

“Rhythms of Grace is my chance to really worship with my brother,.”

“This program focuses on what’s important. They don’t mind a meltdown and they’re really good at getting my child to participate. He really likes it!”

“Rhythms of Grace gives my parish a chance to draw the circle wider to include everyone.”



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