

## Congregational Reading for Blue Sunday 2022

### Reading Instructions:

If you have shown the Blue Sunday video at [www.pdmcsc.org/bluesunday](http://www.pdmcsc.org/bluesunday), read **PART B Only**.

However, If the above video is not available for viewing, please read both **PART A & B**.

### **PART A**

Welcome To Blue Sunday! Blue Sunday is part of April's Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. Blue Sunday is a nation-wide prayer initiative of churches from all over the country coming together, on this day, to pray for the victims of Child Abuse and Neglect.

The World Health Organization defines child maltreatment as the abuse and/or neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence, and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Child Abuse and Neglect are more common than you might expect. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 7 children have experienced some form of child abuse in the last year. That's over 10 million kids annually in the United States. On average, 5 children die per day from abuse and neglect.

Children who have experienced abuse and neglect also experience trauma. According to the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, severe childhood trauma can lead to many mental and physical health problems such as heart disease, obesity, anxiety, depression, alcoholism, and more.

Research also shows that resiliency trumps Adverse Childhood Experiences. This means a child who has experienced trauma can return to a healthy and hopeful state if they have supportive caregivers who provide a safe and nurturing environment after the abuse has occurred.

There are some very specific ways that churches can pray during Blue Sunday.

- Intervention for the unseen and voiceless victims of child abuse.
- Healing and wholeness of child abuse victims and their families.
- The agencies and professionals who work tirelessly to stop abuse and help child abuse victims. This includes: Victim Advocates, Forensic Interviewers, Therapists, Department of Human Services Workers, Crimes Against Children Division Investigators, Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, and anyone who works directly with children.

**PART B is on the Next Page >>>**

## **PART B**

As a church, we can pray today for the victims of child abuse and neglect. Additionally, we can respond in simple and practical ways too. We can act locally to protect the children in our own church and community.

- 1) We can continue in regular and ongoing **PRAYER** for the victims of child abuse and neglect.
- 2) We can **LEARN** and increase your own personal awareness of child abuse and neglect, trauma, and Adverse Childhood Experiences. A great place to start is at [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).
- 3) We can **PROTECT** kids by implementing child safety policies to safeguard the children in the care of our church. Our parents can also develop mindful family practices to protect their own children.
- 4) We can **RESPOND** when we suspect a child is being abused or neglected by reporting suspected abuse to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at 800-482-5964 or 844-SAVE-A-CHILD.

**After the congregational reading, please pray as a church.**