



Bishop Saenz has led us in a four-year Wesleyan emphasis to assist clergy, laity and churches in growing as disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The previous themes have been Know God, Proclaim Christ and Serve Others (Especially the poor). The 2020 theme is Seek Justice.

WHY THIS FORM?

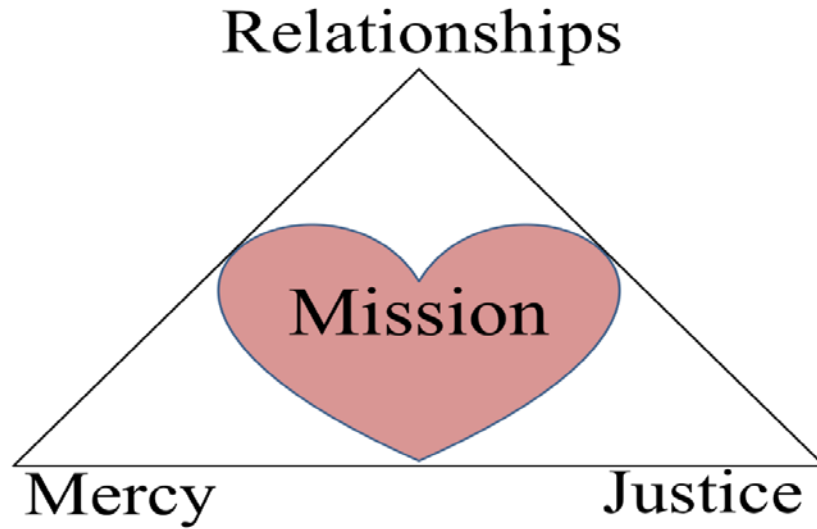
What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NRSV)

We celebrate and give thanks for the many ways our churches live out kindness in mission to our congregation and surrounding communities. We often refer to such forms of mission as mercy. You have faithfully engaged in these ministries of mercy throughout our conference and beyond. The prophet Micah reminds us that God calls us to humbly walk a two-fold ministry of not just mercy but also justice. Doing justice involves reflection, collaboration, and collective efforts. This form invites you to explore what ministries of justice might look like within your context. This form was framed around three main ideas:

- 1. Growth in a biblical discipleship around God's call to us in Micah 6:8**
- 2. Connection to experiences of mercy and justice in our own lives.**
- 3. Exploration of how we, as a church, can seek God's justice in our lives and community.**

PLAN TO SEEK JUSTICE

Please complete this form with a designated group applicable in your setting. Such groups might include: the Church Council, a group of leaders (pastor, lay leader, church council chair, SPRC chair, etc.), a Mission/Outreach team. This group could also be a mix of leaders and other lay persons in church.



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Good Samaritan

Please take time to read Luke 10:25-37 out loud followed by a short period of silent reflection. In that time, ask people gathered to consider the questions below. When the period of silence is over, please discuss the questions as a group.

BASIC CONTEXT

Who are the characters in this passage?

What happens to the characters in this passage?

When/where does this passage take place?

POWER and CONFLICT

How is conflict present in this passage? What parties/characters is the conflict between?

How is power at work in this passage? Who has it? Who doesn't? Where is God's power at work?

HARM and HEALING

How does harm or hurt occur in this passage?

How does healing/hope/deliverance happen in this passage?

EXODUS

Please take time to read the following passages of Exodus out loud. Read all of them and then have a short period of silent reflection. In that time of silence, ask people gathered to consider the questions below. When the period of silence is over, please discuss the questions as a group.

Exodus 2:11-15

Exodus 3:7-12

Exodus 7: 1-13

Exodus 13: 3-5

Exodus 14: 10-14, 19-30

BASIC CONTEXT

Who are the characters in these passages?

What happens to the characters in these passages?

When/where do these passages take place?

POWER and CONFLICT

How is conflict present in these passages? What parties/characters is the conflict between?

How is power at work in these passages? Who has it? Who doesn't? Where is God's power at work?

HARM and HEALING

How does harm or hurt occur in these passages?

How does healing/hope/deliverance happen in these passages?

THROUGH THE LENS OF MERCY AND JUSTICE

After reading The Good Samaritan, the excerpts from Exodus, and going through the questions above, please take a short period of silence to read over the following definitions and questions. When the period of silence is over, please discuss the questions as a group:

Mercy (Hebrew word -CHESED): is about individual acts and expressions of loving-kindness. If a group of people are bleeding from wounds, mercy is intended to stop the bleeding at an individual level. The emphasis is on one's attitude.

Justice (Hebrew word- MISHPAT): is about equitable ways of ordering society and negotiating systemic changes. This approach would address what caused the group's wounds to begin with. The emphasis is on action.

What word, idea, or phrase stands out from these definitions?

What are the similarities between mercy and justice?

What are the differences between mercy and justice?

In the above scriptures from Luke and Exodus, where do you see mercy lived out?

In the above scriptures from Luke and Exodus, where do you see justice lived out?

Before continuing to the next page, please take a moment to read the following prayer:

Holy God, we give you thanks for this opportunity to serve you and we give you thanks for this opportunity to seek justice and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Turn our thoughts. Guide our discernment. Help us to participate in your movement within our church and town. May we feel the warmth of the Holy Spirit filling us with your everlasting love. May that love pour out in everything we say and do. Teach us what it means to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. May we live at the heart of your cross where our vertical love of you pairs perfectly with our horizontal love of neighbor. May we and our community be transformed as we become the people, disciples, and church you call us to be. AMEN.

Church Name _____

****Please complete these last two pages and submit at the direction of the DS.**

REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

We celebrate the many ways our churches are doing mercy work. God calls us to participate in both mercy and justice.

What mission and ministry is your church engaged in that would fit in the category of mercy?

What mission and ministry is your church engaged in that would fit in the category of justice?

What transformations have individuals, your church, and/or community experienced through missions and ministries of mercy or justice?

How is God calling you to deepen your understanding or practice of justice-centered mission and ministry?

Where is God calling you to move current mercy work into the realm justice work?

How can the Network, District or Conference assist you in this ministry or other ministries?

Additional Information Requested

The Pandemic has disrupted many of the ways we traditionally minister.

In what ways have you provided worship during this time? (This includes streaming, recorded, drive-in and written worship/sermons, etc.)

Are there ministries that have adapted or emerged during this time?

What ministries have particularly engaged your community?

***For Church Conference booklets, you may want to include the entire form, Seek Justice.