

HOLY CONFERENCING IN OUR CHURCHES

GATHERING REFLECTION FOR HOLY JUSTICE

The Lord has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

--Micah 6.8 NIV

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

*--Martin Luther King, Jr. paraphrasing
a sermon by Theodore Parker*

CALL TO GOD'S JUSTICE IN HOLY CONFERENCING

Presider: In the beginning, God created everything and said that it was 'good'. Even today, God shares with us all that is good in this world. God is good!

People: **All the time!**

Presider: All the time!

People: **God is good!**

Presider: For the sake of all that is good, God affords us the compliment and privilege of requiring our full participation.

'How Shall I Come Before the Lord'

Will finest gifts bring God's delight?

Will wealth bring favor in God's sight?

What must we be? What must we do?

What does the Lord require of you?

--#3124 W&S (Tune: GIFT OF LOVE)

Presider: What does God require of us?

People: **To act justly...**

Presider: What does God require of us?

People: **To love mercy...**

Presider: What does God require of us?

People: **To walk humbly with our God.**

'How Shall I Come Before the Lord'
**Let justice shine in all our ways.
Let loving kindness rule our days,
that, as this earthly path we trod,
we shall walk humbly with our God.**

--#3124 W&S adapted

Presider: I hereby call the Church Conference of [*church name*] into session and ask for your response.

People: **We are here as a United Methodist community of God to account for our ministries, to order our life together, and to resolve that in the year ahead we will answer the call of Jesus Christ to his disciples, leading this church into active ministries of love, truth, and justice.**

Presider: Knowing that we are all called to ministry together, lay and clergy alike, let us enter into the business of your Church Conference.

DISCERNMENT OF GOD'S JUSTICE

1. Election of Secretary
2. Approval of Minutes of 2018 Church Conference
3. Approval of Audit/Fund Balance Report from 2018

Holy Conferencing Ministry Questions

Presider: In two to three words, what is God longing for and working toward for a more just world? What acts of justice has God required of us?

Scriptural Prayer

Reader: This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.'

People: **Amen.** *--from Zechariah 7 (NIV)*

9. Candidates Reports

- a. Reaffirmation of Candidates for Ministry
- b. Examination and Paper Ballot Vote for any New Candidate for Ministry
- c. Examination and Recommendation of Candidates for Church Related Vocations

10. Clergy Reports

- a. Retired Minister(s) Report
- b. Extension Minister(s) Report
- c. Pastor's Report(s) with Membership Report

11. Other business or additional remarks

Holy Conferencing Ministry Question

Presider: How have we walked humbly with God this past year?
How are we required to walk humbly in the coming year?

Scriptural Prayer

Reader: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, we clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

People: **Amen.** --from Colossians 3 (NIV, adapted)

**TABLE FELLOWSHIP
WITH GOD'S MICAH 6.8 PEOPLE**

'How Shall I Come Before the Lord'

**How shall we come before the Lord
and bow ourselves with hearts outpoured?
And shall we come with offering?
What shall we give? What shall we bring?**

--#3124 W&S adapted

Presider: We approach this sacred meal with hearts for justice and in a spirit of humility, praying that God will hear us, show mercy to us and through us, and receive us.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND PREPARATION

All are welcome to the bread and cup of communion who desire to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in Christ Jesus even as we care for each other and all the world.

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, O God, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is no longer just bread. This is my life which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is no longer just a cup of wine. This is my life in the new covenant, poured out for you & for many for forgiveness. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, we remember. We offer ourselves in joyful and sacrificial service, just as Christ offered himself.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, and on these gifts of bread and juice from the vine. Make them be for us Christ, that we may be for the world Christ, redeemed & set free.

In this freedom, make us one with each other, one with Christ Jesus, and one in ministry to all the world. Renew our communion with all your saints, especially those whom we name before you aloud and in our hearts.

Holy Conferencing Communion Question

Presider: Who has passed into glory in the last year?

We remember them by name.

(Please share names then hold a moment of silence.)

Scriptural Prayer

Reader: Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

People: **Amen.**

--from Psalm 25 (NIV)

Presider: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
strengthen us to fulfill your ancient requirements of us
anew in your world as we pray:

People: **O God, just as the disciples heard Christ's words of
promise and began to eat the bread and drink the wine
in the suffering of a long remembrance and in the joy of
a hope, grant that we may hear your word, spoken in
each thing of everyday affairs:**

**Coffee, on our table in the morning;
the simple gesture of opening a door to go out, free;
the shouts of children in the parks;
a familiar song, sung by an unfamiliar voice;
a friendly tree that has not yet been cut down.
May simple things speak to us of your mercy and tell us
that life can be good.**

**And may these sacramental gifts make us remember those
who do not receive them:**

**who have their lives cut every day, in the bread
absent from the table;
in the door of the hospital, the prison, the welfare home
that does not open;
in sad children, feet without shoes, eyes without hope;
in war hymns that glorify death;
in deserts where once there was life.**

**Christ was also sacrificed; and may we learn that we
participate in the saving sacrifice of Christ when we
participate in the suffering of his little ones. Amen.**

--Rubem Alves

LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING BREAD AND SHARING CUP

'We Are Called'

**Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God!**

Refrain We are called to act with justice,
we are called to love tenderly,
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God!

Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
so all hatred and blindness will be no more! Refrain

Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers united in love! Refrain

--#2172 FWS

GOING FORTH IN GOD'S JUSTICE

FORMAL MOTION TO ADJOURN THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

Presider: As our time together comes to an end,
I declare this Church Conference adjourned.

People: **We look to the future filled with God's hope for the
kingdom where righteousness is RIGHT IN US
and holy justice JUST IS! Thanks be to God!**

BLESSING

Presider: Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

OUR WORSHIP IS OVER. OUR SERVICE BEGINS.

NIV = New International Version Bible translation
UMH = United Methodist Hymnal 1989
FWS = Faith We Sing
W&S = Worship and Song

The Reflection's second quote is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s paraphrasing of a portion of Theodore Parker's sermon entitled "Of Justice and the Conscience" printed in a collection in 1853. Martin Luther King, Jr. first employed his version of the saying in a periodical article in "The Gospel Messenger" in 1958.

The Call is inspired by Genesis 1 and Micah 6.8

Some of the transitional language for this document was taken from the script written by Marcia McFee for the Church Conference season of 2016.

The Great Thanksgiving is Jill Colley Robinson's adaptation of 'Word and Table: Service I, For All Saints and Memorial Occasions' in The United Methodist Book of Worship by Abingdon Press ©1992, combined with an adaptation of 'A Service of Word and Table V With Persons Who Are Sick Or Homebound' in The United Methodist Hymnal by Abingdon Press ©1989.

The prayer at the conclusion of the communion liturgy, called 'Bread and Justice' is by Rubem Alves, Brazil, 20th c. found on #639 UMH.

The Blessing has been attributed to John Wesley, or as being in the spirit of his teaching and preaching. This attribution has been contested, but another source has not been identified.