

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2020

PREFACE & PREAMBLE

Worship & Liturgy

Hymns: UMH 545 The Church's One Foundation
UMH 568 Christ for the World We Sing
TFWS 2184 Enviado Soy de Dios

Scripture: Genesis 2:7-15
Matthew 25:31-46
Romans 8:38-39



Sermon Starters:

The Preamble invites us to live in gratitude for God's forgiving, sanctifying love that draws us by grace to aspire toward a perfect love for all as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Illustrate specific ways the congregation is called by Jesus, "to wholehearted discipleship: opening our hearts to the people we encounter daily; practicing compassion with our families and neighbors; honoring the dignity and worth of all people near and far; recognizing the systems that destroy human lives through poverty, war and exclusion; and advocating for justice and care in our churches, communities and social structures."

Offer a dialogue sermon with two members of the congregation and assign them to reflect on portions of the Preamble in light of the Scriptures.

Teaching

The **Preface** explains that we can trace our expression of social witness through the 1908 Social Creed, the Evangelical United Brethren, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) and the Methodist Protestant Church.

While the Social Principles are not law, "they represent the prayerful and earnest efforts of the General Conference to speak to issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation that is in keeping with the best of our United Methodist traditions."

The **Preamble** prompts us to practice John Wesley's General Rules with courage and perseverance and a spirit of unity: "do no harm, do good, and follow the ordinances of God."

The Preamble also invites us to recognize that "differences are a precious gift and a daunting challenge". Because the Triune God is the center of our lives, we seek God's will together in the midst of our differences.



SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2020

PREFACE & PREAMBLE

Advocacy

- List your congregation's ministries of mercy and justice in the community
- Choose one ministry in your congregation that responds to what the **Preface** calls, "systems that destroy human lives through poverty, war and exclusion." Does this ministry address both the causes and effects of an unjust social systems?
- To learn more about the distinctions between mercy and justice, take a look at the [Guidelines for Church & Society: Advocate for Peace and Justice](#).



Your Response

Share the good news for the **TRANSFORMATION** of the world...

Pray lines from the Preamble with one other person every day for two weeks. Share what images and messages you received through prayer.

Record a daily journal the affirmations in the Preamble. Write where you have seen evidence of:

- the Holy Spirit transforming life and creation;
- places where we have not loved God with our whole hearts, souls, minds and strength;
- where we have loved the least of these (**Matthew 25:45**);
- and how we celebrating the differences in Christ's body, including ethnicities, cultures, communities, abilities, age, sexual orientation, and gender.

Create a visual image of what it looks like for your congregation to live out the Preamble's public theology in your community.



For more information contact:

sp2020@umcjustice.org

www.umcsocialprinciples2020.org

General Board of Church and Society

100 Maryland Ave, NE Washington, DC 20002

© 2019 General Board of Church and Society of
The United Methodist Church