

News Release

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Social Justice Group Offers Discernment Resource for Episcopal Elections

As United Methodist Jurisdictions in the United States prepare for Jurisdictional Conferences in November, election of new bishops is on many people's minds. Delegates to the conferences are preparing to discern who has the right set of gifts and graces for leadership in the years ahead.

In this atmosphere, the [Western Methodist Justice Movement](#) wanted to be sure there were resources available to raise significant questions of social justice with candidates for the episcopacy. In a July online event, they gathered over sixty people to share in large and small groups about the social justice issues they want to see addressed by candidates.

Out of the group process, fourteen questions emerged. The questions focus on a variety of social justice issues such as racism, decolonizing, multi-cultural appointment, and indigenous populations. They invite candidates to share, not just résumé items, but their values and beliefs on social justice issues that are at the heart of the United Methodist experience today.

Some of the questions are complex, like: *Where do you see connections between colonization and racism in the life of the church? How will you pursue an anti-racist and decolonizing agenda at the different levels of our connection local ministry, conference, jurisdiction, and denomination?*

And some of the questions are short but deep, such as: *What was a Bonhoeffer/Martin Luther King Jr./Tutu/Romero moment for you?*

The Western Jurisdiction has done significant work to re-imagine the role of bishops and clarify Western Jurisdictional values. The WMJM event made use of two of these resources; episcopal values from a task force report, and a values rubric that has been a key part of other Western Jurisdiction reports.

The complete list of the fourteen questions and links to the Western Jurisdiction resources are available at www.wmjm.org/episcopal-discernment.

Western Methodist Justice Movement offers these questions to the United Methodist Community across all jurisdictions as they look forward to episcopal elections.

The [Western Methodist Justice Movement \(WMJM\)](#) is a movement of United Methodists in the annual conferences of the Western Jurisdiction who are committed to carrying out the prophetic statements and actions of the Western Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The core values of WMJM are:

Intersectional Justice – Recognizing that spheres of justice-seeking overlap

Inclusive Community – Working together a larger, more inclusive table.

Beloved Community – Interconnectedness that builds relationships in a healthy way

Solidarity – Coming together in equal power relationship; moving alongside one another

Decolonization – Removing the colonization of power

Spiritual Leaven/Living into Possibilities – Allowing the Holy Spirit to be our change agent.