

A Missional Manifesto for the People Called United Methodist

We the people called United Methodist, confessing that we are a people in need of God's transforming grace, lift up the following vision as a means for guiding our practice and mission.

For more than 250 years, God has been sending people from the Wesleyan tradition into the world for the express purpose of "spreading scriptural holiness across the lands." This vision of holiness is not domesticated in any nationalistic mission, but is rather found in announcing the good news of God's reign in the whole of creation. It is in response to this good news that we are also called to form one another in the ways of Jesus Christ (making disciples) so that God's kingdom may be revealed "on earth as it is in heaven" (and the world therefore transformed).

As heirs to this tradition, we have been blessed with the radical love and grace of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—which empowers us to likewise be a blessing to the world. This is both a joyful opportunity and a sober responsibility. It is our call, as Wesleyan Christians, both to proclaim and embody the kingdom of God marked by love, reconciliation, peace, forgiveness, and hospitality for all people and in all times and places.

It is through practice of the means of grace that we are gradually formed into the vessels that embody this distinct kingdom of God. And it is through mutual accountability, rooted in love and grace, that we hold one another accountable to living lives that strive to exemplify holiness of heart and life.

Therefore it is with humility and sound resolve that we declare the following to be sign and symbol of our calling as Wesleyan Christians:

We believe...

God sends

- God sent Israel forth in the world as a covenant people revealing to the world God's character.
- God sent Himself in Jesus Christ as the embodiment of love and grace so that by His baptism, death, and resurrection God's unfailing love and grace were lived out for all humanity and the powers of sin and death were broken.
- Jesus sent his followers into the world to proclaim the reign of God and teach the way of Jesus.
- God now sends us, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

God sends United Methodists

- United Methodists affirm the teachings of John Wesley, a man born into a Puritan household, raised in the Anglican tradition, inspired by Moravian piety, and devoted to the Arminian understanding of free grace.
- United Methodists assert that God's love, not our sin, is the most important truth we know and the starting point for the story of salvation. Everything that follows is out of response to this truth.
- United Methodists uphold the primacy of God's grace: prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying as the center of human life, empowering all to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
- United Methodists hold together the love of God (personal piety) and love of neighbor (social holiness) as the holistic understanding our salvation, embodied and lived out.
- United Methodists believe we are saved by grace alone through faith, and we are saved so we might do good works. All works of piety follow as a response to the radical grace of God.

God sends United Methodists to proclaim the reign of God

- The reign of God burst into the world with the death and Easter resurrection of Jesus.
- The reign of God pours forth on the apostles at Pentecost thrusting them out from behind closed doors into all the world.
- The reign of God is both here and yet to come, inaugurated into our world by the coming of Christ and finding the ultimate fulfillment in the return of Christ.
- As witness to the reign of God, we are called to embody it in our Methodist communities as a sign to the whole world.

God sends United Methodists to proclaim the reign of God and to make disciples

- Disciples bear the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given for the building up of the body of Christ and in service to the church and the world.
- Disciples of Jesus Christ witness to the love and grace of Jesus and follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Disciples participate regularly in the Means of Grace, which are tangible signs of the reign of God breaking forth into our daily lives.
- Disciples in the United Methodist Church hold Wesley's General Rules as a common rule of life.

God sends United Methodists to proclaim the reign of God and to make disciples for the transformation of the world

- The transformed world is one in which Christ's prayer "God's kingdom come. God's will be done" is fulfilled "on earth as it is in heaven."
- The transformed world glorifies God in all things and is marked by the unity of love and justice, peace and wholeness, personal and social holiness.
- The transformed world bears witness to the interconnectedness of all people and values sacrificial love (agape) as the means by which this is lived out. This sacrificial love stands in contrast to any pursuit of power sought through coercion.
- The transformed world is one where even institutional growth and power are subservient to the vision of love, peace, justice and reconciliation.

Therefore...

As United Methodists sent by God to proclaim God's reign and to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit, we call on our brothers and sisters across the world to repentance for our failure to faithfully carry out our God given mission, and to affirm God's call to proclaim and make disciples by engaging in practices that live out this calling in the world.

Likewise we pledge our commitment to living out the ideals of this manifesto in our daily lives, agreeing to structure our mission, our ministry, and our lives around the demands of discipleship. As disciples in the United Methodist tradition, we commit to engage in acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, and to live under John Wesley's General Rules as our way of life. We go forth as a people sent by God to carry out God's vision for the people called United Methodist.

Offered with love to our church by:

Kenneth Carter, Ben Gosden, Mike Lindstrom, John Meunier, Michael Rich, Amy Shipley-Yarnall, Jen Unger Kroc, Jay Voorhees and many others who have offered input along the way.