



Guided summary for the February 21, 2026 Webinar: What does it mean to “Serve Joyfully”? You are invited to watch the archived webinar and use the guided summary below.

[View full webinar on YouTube](#)

Webinar participants:

Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr., resident bishop of the Horizon Texas Conference and Co-Convener of the Leadership Gathering Design Team

Stephanie Henry, lay person in the Pacific Northwest Conference and Co-Convener of the Leadership Gathering Design Team

Rev. Dr. April Casperson, ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church and Director of Enrollment Management at Methodist Theological School in Ohio (Moderator)

Rev. Mark Lewis, pastor and missiologist serving in the Denmark Methodist Conference

Rev. Dr. Shandon Klein, provisional elder in the Minnesota Annual Conference and PhD candidate in religious ethics at Southern Methodist University

Deaconess Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana, Area Liaison for Asia and the Pacific, Global Ministries, serving in the Philippines

Purpose: Explore how mission is practiced in relationship, shaped by context, and grounded in a Wesleyan call to serve with humility, mutuality, and joy.

Opening Prayer:

God of mission and mercy,

We gather from different places, different contexts, and different stories — yet called together by one Spirit and one vision: to serve joyfully in your name.

You are already at work in our communities before we arrive. You are present in the faces of the vulnerable, in the stories of the marginalized, and in the joy of those who have found dignity and hope through the body of Christ.

Teach us to show up — not with agendas, but with open hearts. Not as those who come to fix or save, but as fellow pilgrims walking alongside our neighbors in the way of Jesus, who himself crossed every boundary to dwell among us.

As we reflect on what it means to serve joyfully, free us from the temptation to make mission about ourselves. Remind us that joy in service is born not from ease, but from solidarity — from being present with your people in their truest selves, and from discovering that in serving others, we ourselves are blessed.

Give us the courage to repent of the ways we have missioned with power rather than love, and the grace to begin again — rooted in your prevenient grace, empowered by your Holy Spirit, and shaped by social holiness.

May everything we say and do today help shape a church that serves joyfully, loves boldly, and leads courageously in every place. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.

Amen.



1. What is mission?

[Listen to 1st Clip: 18:34 – 21:23](#)

“The simplest definition I’ve come up with so far is that the gist of mission is showing up. And we believe that this is the urging and the leading of the Holy Spirit, to show up — that is, to be present as ambassadors and as disciples of Jesus Christ wherever these boundaries may exist.”

– Rev. Mark Lewis

Where do you sense the Holy Spirit urging your congregation to “show up”? What boundaries — cultural, relational, or geographic — is God calling you to cross?

2. What is distinctive about mission in a Wesleyan or Methodist way?

[Listen to 2nd Clip: 24:22 – 29:31](#)

“For Wesleyans, mission isn’t just a program for a few enthusiastic people. Mission is what naturally flows out of a community that’s being shaped by grace, and we keep returning to these means of grace — this spirit that grows in us, this character that mission requires: that love, that joy, the patience and courage and deep compassion for our neighbors.”

– Rev. Dr. Shandon Klein

How are the means of grace — worship, scripture, prayer, communion, community — shaping your congregation’s engagement in mission? Where do you see this flowing most naturally?

3. Why is mission important? How do we see the Spirit bearing fruit through the Church’s witness?

[Listen to 3rd Clip: 31:09 – 34:43](#)

“Going to communities means encountering people in their truest selves. And these encounters brought smiles to children and their parents, because once a week, they would be visited by people from the church. They would feel that they are important, valued, and seen.”

– Deaconess Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana

Think of a time when a mission encounter changed you. What did you learn from the people you were serving alongside? How did their witness shape your faith?



4. What does serving joyfully look like, even in difficult or costly work?

[Listen to 4th Clip: 44:20 – 48:13](#)

“If we are not able to laugh or smile in the midst of our work, then we must be in the wrong struggle.”

– Norma, United Methodist deaconess in the Philippines — shared by Deaconess Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana

What makes service joyful even when it is difficult or dangerous? Where does your community find joy in its mission work — not in spite of the struggle, but within it?

5. How does United Methodist theology help us understand mutuality in service?

[Listen to 5th Clip: 1:03:14 – 1:06:24](#)

“Mutuality in service recognizes that we are all human beings created in God’s divine image. And with that truthful reality comes also the recognition that each and every one is endowed with gifts and graces that allow us to do our work in this world. Our task as a mission agency is to accompany our partners and be in solidarity with them — recognizing that they are the experts of their own context.”

– Deaconess Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana

How does your congregation practice mutual mission — serving with rather than for? What assumptions about who holds the gifts, knowledge, or power in your partnerships might need to be examined?

6. How can a Wesleyan, Spirit-empowered approach to mission help us create a more equitable and just future?

[Listen to 6th Clip: 1:21:04 – 1:23:35](#)

“The church experiences and engages in God’s mission as it pours itself out for others. Ready to cross every boundary, to call for true human dignity among all peoples, especially among those regarded as the least of God’s children, all the while making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.”

– Global Ministries Mission Theology Statement, shared by Deaconess Darlene Marquez-Caramanzana

What systemic issues in your local context is your congregation called to address? How does the Wesleyan heritage of social holiness — the belief that there is no holiness but social holiness — challenge or inspire your community’s response?

Upcoming Webinar:

 **Lead Courageously**

March 21, 2026

Christ-centered Leadership

[Find more webinar resources at \[ResourceUMC.org/LeadershipGathering\]\(https://ResourceUMC.org/LeadershipGathering\)](#)

