



***What Does the Lord Require? A Pastoral Letter grounded in Micah 6:1–8
To the people of God in the Desert Southwest and New Mexico Conferences and beyond***

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who hears the cries of the oppressed and calls us to walk in the ways of justice, mercy, and humility.

In recent days, our siblings in Minneapolis have endured immigration raids that have led to senseless deaths, unrest, and violence. Families have been torn apart. Children have watched parents taken away. Children themselves have been taken away. Indigenous neighbors, immigrants, and communities of color continue to face harassment, intimidation, and fear. The weight of these events presses heavily upon our collective spirit.

Into this moment, the prophet Micah speaks with piercing clarity.

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Micah’s words are not abstract ideals. They are a summons—a divine insistence that faith must take shape in the world, especially when human dignity is under assault.

Do Justice

Justice is not vengeance. Justice is not domination. Justice is not the unchecked exercise of power. Justice is the recognition of the image of God in every person—regardless of citizenship, language, skin color, or place of birth.

The raids we have witnessed do not reflect justice. They reflect fear. They reflect systems that value control over compassion. They reflect a disregard for the sacredness of human life.

As people of faith, we must name this truth without hesitation: No policy, no order, no enforcement action justifies the terrorizing of families or the loss of life. Justice demands that we stand with those who are targeted, silenced, and pushed to the margins.

Love Kindness

Kindness is not weakness. Kindness is courage in the shape of compassion. In these days, kindness looks like:

*Standing with immigrant families at vigils, court hearings, and community gatherings
Offering sanctuary, accompaniment, and protection
Creating safe space to listen to the stories of those who live in fear
Supporting Indigenous communities whose sovereignty and dignity continue to be violated
Providing financial support and basic necessities and supplies
Refusing to let cruelty become normal*

Kindness is the steady, stubborn insistence that every person deserves safety, respect, and belonging.

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Walk Humbly with God

Humility is not silence. Humility is the willingness to be guided by God's heart rather than our own preference. To walk humbly with God is to recognize that we are bound to one another. It is to confess that our liberation is tied to the liberation of our neighbors. It is to acknowledge that we cannot claim to love God while ignoring the suffering of God's children. Humility calls us to listen—to the cries of those who mourn, to the resilience of immigrant communities, to the wisdom of Indigenous elders, to the truth-telling of people of color who have long named the violence woven into our systems.

Standing in Solidarity Across Our Region

Although these most recent tragedies have unfolded in Minneapolis, we who serve in Southern Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas stand in full solidarity with our siblings there. Their grief is our grief. Their fear is our fear. Their struggle is bound to ours.

For we know that these same patterns of raids, harassment, and racialized violence are not confined to one city or one state. They are happening in Las Vegas, where families live with the constant threat of being torn apart. They are happening in Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma, where immigrant communities navigate daily fear and surveillance. They are happening in Las Cruces and El Paso, where border communities—rich in culture, resilience, and faith—continue to bear the weight of policies that dehumanize and divide. What we witness in Minneapolis is part of a larger, painful reality across our country. And so we declare, with one voice and one heart: ***We are bound together. We will not look away. We will not abandon one another.***

A Word to Those Who Have a Different Perspective

Beloved, I also want to speak directly—and respectfully—to those among us who believe that immigration laws should be upheld and that enforcement is necessary. I know that many who hold this view do so out of a desire for order, safety, and fairness. I respect that. I am not asking you to abandon your political convictions or to change your party affiliation. That is not my purpose.

My appeal is deeper than politics. My appeal is spiritual. I ask you to consider whether the methods we are witnessing—the midnight raids, the militarized presence, the separation of families, the fear sown in entire neighborhoods—reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ or the values we share as people of faith.

We may differ in our political approaches, but we are united in our belief that every person is created in the image of God. We are united in our conviction that human dignity is non-negotiable. We are united in our calling to love our neighbor, protect the vulnerable, and seek the well-being of the stranger in our midst.

We can support the rule of law and still insist that enforcement be humane. We can value secure borders and still reject practices that traumatize children. We can hold varying political views and still say, “This is not who we are as followers of Christ.”

I am not asking you to change your politics. I am asking you to let your politics be shaped—first and foremost—by your faith, your compassion, and your commitment to the sacred worth of every human being.

Appealing to Our Common Humanity

Before we are citizens, we are human. Before we are divided by borders, we are bound by breath. Before we are sorted by race or status, we are woven together in the fabric of God's diverse family.

We share a longing for safety. We share a desire for our children to grow without fear. We share a hope for communities where dignity is honored and peace is possible.

Let us reclaim these shared values. Let us refuse narratives that dehumanize. Let us resist policies that destroy families. Let us reject the lie that some lives are worth less than others.

A Call to the Church

Church, this is our moment to embody the Gospel. Let our sanctuaries be places of refuge. Let our prayers be bold and unrelenting. Let our advocacy be grounded in love and courage. Let our witness be clear:

We stand with the immigrant.

We stand with Indigenous communities.

We stand with people of color.

We stand with all who are harmed by violence and harassment.

Micah reminds us that God is not impressed by empty rituals or pious words. God desires a people who live justice, breathe kindness, and walk humbly. May we be such a people.

A Prayer for This Moment

God of justice and compassion,

Hold the grieving, protect the vulnerable, strengthen the weary.

Expose the roots of violence and uproot the systems that harm.

Give us courage to act, wisdom to discern, and humility to follow your way.

Make us instruments of your peace and partners in your justice.

We pray for Minneapolis, as we pray for Las Vegas, for Phoenix, for Tucson, for Yuma, for Las Cruces, for El Paso, and for every community across our country where families live under the shadow of enforcement that disregards human dignity.

Bring an end to the raids, the fear, the violence, and the trauma inflicted upon your children.

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amen.

Beloved, may we move forward with resolve, tenderness, and holy courage. The work is hard, but we do not walk alone. The God who calls us to justice walks beside us, before us, and within us.

Your fellow disciple,



Bishop Carlo A. Rapanut