

The title card features a background image of a woman shouting into a megaphone, with other people in the background. A red cross is visible on the right side. The text is overlaid in white and pink. 

# WEBINAR SERIES

# Justice, Love, AND Humility

PASTORING A DIVIDED CULTURE

presented by  AMPLIFY MEDIA

## Episode 3: Grace-filled Accountability: Holding Our Communities Together

Watch this episode on demand [here](#).

### Host

Rev. Lisa Yebuah, Lead Pastor, Southeast Raleigh Table, Raleigh, North Carolina

### Panelists

- Rev. Dr. Jennifer Harvey, Professor and Faculty Director for the Crew Scholars Program, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa
- Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister-in-Charge, Middle Collegiate Church, New York, New York
- Rev. Greg Moore, Executive Director, New Faith Communities, Raleigh, North Carolina

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### Episode Recap

How do church leaders hold space for multiple viewpoints without holding space for harm? How do we hold each other accountable without becoming enemies?

Our panelists began with a rich discussion of why there is a disconnect between believing that justice is part of our calling and the actual work of justice.

- Jesus' ministry was a religion of the marginalized. When it became the religion of the Empire, then blessings fell on the systems – sexism, homophobia, racism, etc. – that keep empires in power.
- Institutions – including our religious institutions – are embedded in these systems of power and injustice. Institutions always pull us into passivity.
- In our American Christianity, the virtue we have honed is charity, not justice. Empire privileges charity over justice.

If we always interrogate our opinions “through a lens of love,” we can avoid creating spaces that enable harmful opinions.

Similarly, we should look to our baptismal vows and our community values – what do we affirm? What do we reject? Outside opinions that go against our values do not have a place in our communities.

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For communities struggling with dissenting opinions, focusing on the history and stories of your local context is important. Talking about the actual local history of your community helps different perspectives understand the material struggles and stories of the people living there.

Churches should create a space for historical truth-telling as sacred proclamation. The God of Empire is not forgiving, so we must work hard to create space for the work of true confession and forgiveness.

People like Howard Thurman and Mr. Rogers are both having a moment because they are practitioners of the internal life. As church leaders, we must both address the internal life of our people and practice spiritual disciplines that lead to love, not a pietistic, “I am right” attitude. We should promote inner and outer practices of love in community, because some of the breaking in of the Spirit can’t happen when you’re alone.

Churches should be bold with their declarations of their values. Young people are looking for that truth and boldness. We must recognize that in a community we are all growing at different paces, so while we meet people in love, we do not stop declaring our values. The church dies when we pretend we don’t know what we stand for.

The panelists ended by talking about what keeps them hopeful during this particular time:

- There were three women – Mary, Mary, and Salome – who were afraid to touch death, but they moved forward anyway. And because they went, they were the first to experience the Risen Jesus.
- We are in apocalyptic times. Humankind is partnering with God to make a new world out of these ashes.
- This year has been one long Lent. During Lent we lose what doesn’t matter and doesn’t work – many times the tools of tyranny. What are we learning in this year about tending to life and not death? What tools do we need in this new creation?