



# Human Rights in Christian Perspective

An Adult Education Series for  
Communities of Christian Faith

Christian faith and scriptures call us to emulate God's love for justice. Perhaps we have explored what this weighty matter of justice entails. We may also have an idea about "human rights," and a sense that this is part of the justice equation. But how do we, as people of Christian faith, bridge the worlds of biblical justice and modern human rights? And what will this mean for how we engage matters of faith and justice in public life?

This flexible, interactive Christian adult education course offers insight into human rights from theological, spiritual, historical, and legal perspectives. Available as a multi-week series or a day-long workshop, this six-hour course is designed to introduce participants to the concept of human rights and the rich support it finds in the Christian tradition. This program includes an introduction to the international law and institutions that serve as safeguards to universal human rights, and includes tools and opportunities for putting understanding into action by upholding human rights in our own neighborhoods and beyond.

## SESSION I

### The Idea of Human Rights: Christian Theological Foundations

This session begins with a foundational working definition of human rights and discussion of the core characteristics of human rights. It invites participants to consider Christian beliefs (from imago Dei to God's love for humankind to Christ's incarnation) that speak to the concept of human dignity and worth, which grounds the modern understanding of human rights.

## SESSION II

### Human Rights Under International Law: The Universal Declaration

This session provides an introduction to the recognition and protection of human rights under international law, focusing on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It considers the contributions of Christian supporters, including American first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, whose life of faith informed her leadership of the committee that crafted this historic declaration. The UDHR outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms protected under international law.



### SESSION III

#### **The International Bill of Rights: United States & Ecumenical Engagement**

This session introduces participants to the International Bill of Rights, including key human rights treaty agreements on civil and political as well as economic and social rights. It explores the extent of U.S. engagement with international human rights law, as well as diverse Christian support for human rights.

### SESSION IV

#### **Free and Equal: Ensuring Human Rights for All People**

Beginning with study of Christ's ministry and teaching, this session explores the ideal of universal and equal human rights for all people. Using racial and gender justice as focal points, it considers the historical and ongoing struggle to uphold the principles of equality and nondiscrimination, which are central to international human rights law and owe a considerable debt to Christian influence.

### SESSION V

#### **Care for the Poor: Economic & Social Rights**

Using homelessness and the right to housing as a case study, this session examines economic and social rights in greater depth, exploring how these rights can be advanced in the context of the United States' political and economic systems. This session outlines historical and contemporary Christian support for economic rights, and examines recent UN reports on poverty and homelessness in the United States.

### SESSION VI

#### **Light to the Nations: Rights of Migrants, Refugees & Asylum Seekers**

This session considers global mass migration and examines recent changes in U.S. policy on responding to migrants at our Southern border. Reflecting on biblical and theological perspectives, the human rights of migrants under international law, and global Christian responses to "people on the move," this session invites conversation about faithful understandings and responses to contemporary dilemmas and debates.

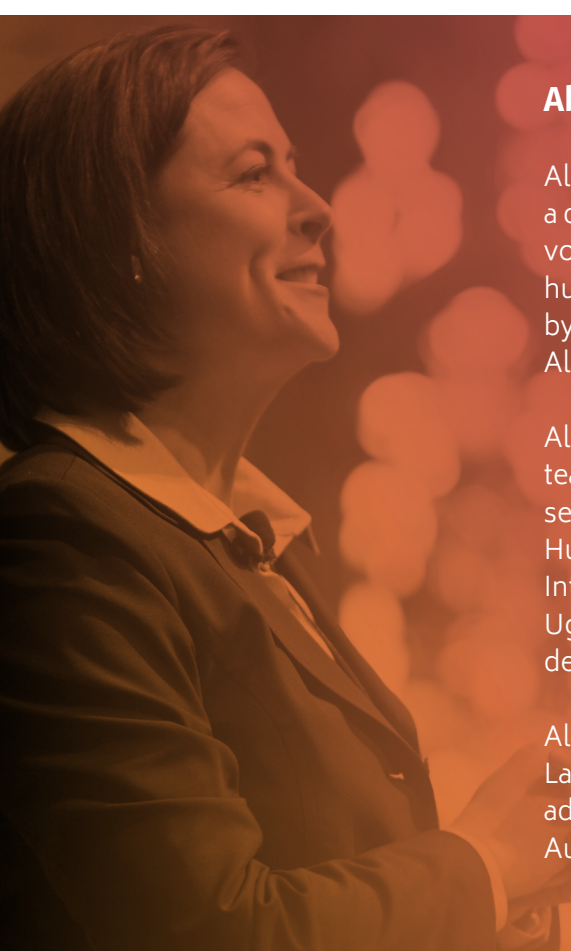
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#### **About Your Facilitator**

Allyson McKinney Timm is Founder and Executive Director of Justice Revival, a diverse, inclusive community of Christian faith dedicated to serving as a voice for human rights in the United States. She is a theologically trained human rights lawyer, whose commitment to justice ministry has been inspired by her faith journey. In 2018 the Center for American Progress recognized Allyson as one of "ten faith leaders to watch."

Allyson lived and worked in Sub-Saharan Africa for a number of years before teaching human rights and earning her Master of Divinity degree at Yale. She served as the Robert M. Cover-Allard K. Lowenstein Fellow in International Human Rights Law at Yale Law School, where she taught in the Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic. Before that, Allyson established and led the Uganda Field Office of International Justice Mission, innovating a program to defend the property and inheritance rights of vulnerable widows and orphans.

Allyson began her career as an associate with the international law firm of Latham & Watkins LLP. While there, she was part of a team that successfully advocated for reform of unlawfully poor conditions in the California Youth Authority juvenile prison system.



## Details

This course is designed for adult audiences. Because it is interactive and participative, we recommend class sizes of around 25 or 30 participants, so that all may be part of the conversation. We are also happy to provide sermons or presentations to larger audiences in conjunction with this series.

## What People Are Saying

"Our members loved the Justice Revival series on Christian theology and human rights. The classes were engaging and have sparked new interest in how we address human rights concerns as a congregation. Allyson is a gifted teacher and provides the crucial academic and spiritual connections between legal/political frameworks and the collective work of faith."

**Billy Klutz, Worship Leader,  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, McClean, VA**

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"[Allyson] brings a wealth of professional experience, but more importantly, an engaging and open approach to the subject. She encouraged participation and skillfully directed the group discussion. We would certainly hope she could join us again to delve deeper!"

**Tracy Rankin, Education Committee,  
Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, MD**

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"It was a thoughtful, well-prepared, thought-provoking discussion and we are grateful you could be with us."

**Jim Beall, Education Committee,  
Old Presbyterian Meeting House, Alexandria, VA**

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**[justicerevival.org](http://justicerevival.org)**

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"...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

