**5) ACT together: Consciously engage the power of collective action, in the service of God’s healing and justice-seeking work for human communities and the whole creation.**

**Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:**

1. Share a story about a time you acted together with others for a larger purpose. What happened? How did it impact you?
2. In your experience, what kind of resistance did you encounter in the process? Was there external resistance? Internal resistance?
3. People often avoid working together on something important because conflicts and “messiness” so often arise in the process. Do you find that to be true for you? What helps you overcome that resistance?

**Personal:** We discern our unique call to participate with others in organized **actions**, for the sake of mending the brokenness in our communities, and restoring our connection to the places we live.

**Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:**

1. When working for justice with others, we can often feel overwhelmed by the needs and pressured into doing “everything.” Part of mending the brokenness of our communities is honoring the fact that we need each other — no one person can do it all, and we each have unique gifts to offer. What are some of the unique gifts and skills that you bring to God’s healing justice work?
2. What part of God’s healing justice work do you feel most passionately called to? Where does that passion come from? How does that connect with your own story? How might it feel to act only out of that passion and let go of other less-life-giving ways of participating?
3. Often participating in organized actions invites us to stretch into areas of growth that are uncomfortable or make us feel vulnerable. What might be an area of uncomfortable growth for you? What support do you need to nurture that growing edge rather than turning away from it?

**Interpersonal:** As we recognize our deep interconnectedness with earth and diverse human communities, we identify our mutual interests, and we invite those close to us to join us in **acting** on those common interests.

**Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:**

1. As children we often have experiences of acting together from common interests, but don’t recognize them as such (e.g. going with a friend to talk to a teacher about something you both perceived as unfair.) Share a story about a time when you and others close to you acted together out of mutual interest/need.
2. As we develop deeper relationships with those close to us, those in our communities, and the natural world, more possibilities open up for acting together. Share a story about a time you participated in something (an event, e.g.), not because it was your primary passion, but because it was important to someone you love. What impact did your participation have on your relationship? On you?
3. In a culture that thrives on exacerbating differences between people, we can sometimes forget the common interests and needs we have. Though we can’t speak for others, what are some basic human/earth needs that are likely shared people/beings vastly different from us?

**Faith Community:** We nurture relational cultures, identifying common interests and public issues affecting our communities, so that we are ready to **act** together to promote justice and healing for the whole community of creation.

**Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:**

1. Reflect on the readiness of your faith community to act together for justice and healing.
   1. How strong are the relationships within the community?
   2. How practiced are people at telling their stories and hearing other people’s stories?
   3. What kind of intentional listening process have we done? Have common interests been identified?
   4. Do we have experienced leaders within or connected to the community who can mentor newer participants in acting together?
   5. Have we done our research so we deeply understand the issues we are facing and our strategy for making change?
   6. Are we staying grounded in our own faith tradition and rooted in the power of the indwelling God?

**Public Sphere:** We join or develop community organizing efforts, through which we identify mutual interests, research issues, conduct power analyses and **act** together to promote greater justice for human communities and the community of creation.

**Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:**

1. No one faith community can act alone and hope to affect real change. What other faith communities or organizations might be or are partners in a local organizing effort?
2. If there is an existing community organizing effort, what steps do we need to take to discern our participation in that organization?
3. While working with other organizations or institutions is an opportunity and vehicle for affecting real change in our communities, it can also feel threatening to members within our own communities. What intentional steps can we take to continually weave the stories of the community members and the partners together?