

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: We have our own Nurture and Outreach Committees already in place—why would we need to add ANOTHER committee for these kinds of issues?

*A: The Local Church and Society Committee is **NOT** the same as your Nurture and Outreach committees. A Church and Society committee will focus on different areas. These include:*

- ~ The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church
- ~ Oklahoma House and Senate Bills
- ~ Work with the Conference Board of Church and Society
- ~ Social, Environmental and Restorative Justice issues in and beyond the local church.

Q: Wow, there are a lot of focus areas in the Social Principles. How can we do justice work in ALL of these areas?

*A: You can't! You shouldn't try and tackle every area of the Social Principles—you will become overwhelmed. Instead, find anywhere from **one to three** issues to address at a time. Some things that your committee will address will be temporary ones (Ex. The local library isn't as accessible to children in the summers as it needs to be) while others will remain on your committee's heart and mind for a long time (Ex. Our church needs to adopt a child/children in a war-torn area of the world). Whatever the case may be, know that committees whose focus is smaller are more effective committees.*

Q: What does the Conference C&S ambassador do, again? Also, what about the Legislative member(s)-at-large?

A: Over the course of every year, two things will always happen: 1) The Conference C&S Board will want to send out materials pertinent to your local committee; and 2) the State House and Senate will be proposing bills that you may want to respond to. The C&S ambassador will help the co-chairs handle communication with the Conference Board and the Legislative member(s)-at-large will make proposed bills known to the committee and will help with phone calls and letter writing to your representatives.



Oklahoma Annual Conference Board

Church and Society

Q: Isn't Church and Society a Commission?

A: No, not anymore. We are now a full Conference Board with all the benefits and responsibilities thereof as listed in the Book of Discipline.

Q: Are Peace with Justice, Environment and Immigration separate committees?

A: No. Peace with Justice and Immigration are task forces contained within the Conference Board of Church and Society. The Environmental Coalition is also a partner with Church and Society. Task forces and coalitions are organized to address specific needs with intentionality and purpose. This is something your local committee might want to try, also!

Q: Can we attend your meetings?

A: We'd love to have you! As the new committees' initial minutes begin pouring in, we will send information about our meetings to your new C&S ambassador.

Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church Conference Board of Church and Society

Oklahoma Annual Conference Board of
Church and Society

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. The People
of the
United Methodist Church.

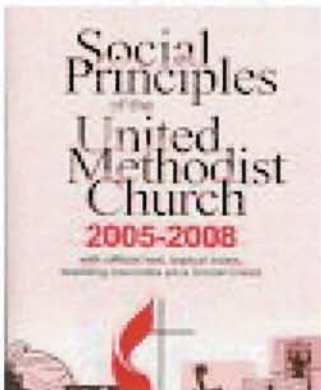
How to Create a Local Church and Society Committee



By: Rev. Adam Shahan
Chairperson: Rev. Kirt Moelling

We Act in Society

EVERY COMMUNITY IN OKLAHOMA IS DEALING WITH TOUGH ISSUES



IN OUR CURRENT DAY—HOMELESSNESS, HUNGER, ADDICTION, ABUSE, IMMIGRATION, INCARCERATION, INCLUSIVENESS, WAR—THE LIST GOES ON AND ON. THE OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY IS ENCOURAGING ALL LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE CONNECTION TO APPROVE AND FORM LOCAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEES TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES IN OUR STATE AND IN YOUR OWN LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

THESE COMMITTEES HAVE THE POTENTIAL

TO BE THE VOICE OF YOUR OWN LOCAL CONGREGATION TO YOUR COMMUNITY, TO YOUR LEGISLATORS, TO YOUR PASTORAL STAFF AND TO THE CONFERENCE BOARD. WE WANT TO SEE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH SPEAKING OUT AGAINST THE INJUSTICES THEY FIND, BOTH LOCALLY AND AT THE STATE LEVEL.

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT EVERY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN OKLAHOMA WILL FORM SUCH A COMMITTEE, ONE THAT WILL BECOME EDUCATED ON, AND RESPOND TO, THE *SOCIAL PRINCIPLES*; USE THE *GUIDELINES FOR LEADING YOUR CONGREGATION: CHURCH AND SOCIETY*; ENGAGE IN SOCIAL AWARENESS, ADVOCACY AND ACTION; AND BE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE.

How to Begin (from the *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Church and Society* booklet, available at Cokesbury)

- 1) Read carefully the description of responsibilities in *The Book of Discipline* (§ 120) (§ 125-137) (§ 217-221) (§ 254)
- 2) If your church does not already have a Church and Society committee, it will need nomination of members from the nominations/lay leadership committee and approval by the Church Council.
- 3) The nominations committee should work intentionally to find members who are passionate on issues of social, political, economic and/or environmental concern.
- 4) When members have been selected and the committee has Church Council approval, meet as a committee and elect officers. There must be at least one chair (and a treasurer, recording secretary, conference ambassador and at least one legislative member—at-large are encouraged by this Conference's Board of Church and Society)
- 5) The **ambassador** will act as a contact between the local committee and the conference board
- 6) The **legislative member-at-large** will make the committee aware of legislation that s/he feels will need a response from the church, whether by phone, letter, e-mail or otherwise.
- 7) The **chair** should read carefully *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Church and Society*. Your pastor may own this. If not, have the church purchase the *Guidelines* set from Cokesbury. The committee is strongly encouraged to go over *The Book of Discipline* paragraphs mentioned and the *United Methodist Social Principles* together.
- 8) Explore your church's current involvement in social issues. Use this exploration as a foundation with which to address your new committee's actions in your church.
- 9) Explore what is going on in your local community. What are its issues? Strengths? Weaknesses? Use this exploration as a foundation with which to address your new com-

mittee's actions in your local community.

- 10) Develop a sound proposal to bring to the Church Council concerning your realistic goals for social involvement by your church. Narrow your focus to be most effective. Use focus points from the *Social Principles* and from *Guidelines* to increase your effectiveness.
- 11) Be involved in special days in the Church (like Human Relations Day, Martin Luther King's birthday, Peace with Justice Sunday, and so on) with bulletin inserts, social testimonies, opportunities for social action or offerings.
- 12) Have a **clear understanding** of your committee's mission within the church and community. **Be focused**—don't take on too many projects at once. **Educate, serve, witness and act.** Use the passion of your team, the information in *The Book of Discipline*, *The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*, and *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Church and Society* to promote awareness, advocacy and action.
- 13) Send a roster of officers and members to lakesideumc@coxinet.net so that the Conference Board will know who the chairpersons, ambassadors and legislative advocates.

Resources are Available!

- ~ *The Book of Discipline*
- ~ *The Book of Resolutions*
- ~ *The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*
- ~ *Faithful Witness on Today's Issues* Series
- ~ *Christian Social Action* Magazine
- ~ *The Interpreter* Magazine

General Board of Church and Society—www.umc-gbcs.org, 202-488-5600

(look for a new Conference Church and Society website on the Church and Society tab of the Conference website coming soon!)