

## **Church and Society Committee Report**

### **Luz Campos, Chair**

Greetings to the connectional ministries of the United Methodist Memphis Conference.

The report that I want to present to you will be brief.

First, I want to thank our dear sister Robbin McCoy who was a great help to me when I became chair of this committee. With the advice of our sister I was able to converse with Mrs. Edna Boner who gladly told me of her experience with this committee.

With the encouragement and enthusiasm of wanting to work in this area, we convened a first meeting that was held on October 15, 2019. Again, I am thankful to Mrs. Robbin McCoy who guided me through this first meeting. Without her help and advice this meeting would not have been possible. She provided me with the list of committee members whom I convened by email and then by text message. Some responded to our call apologizing because they could not be present, others did not reply at all and others asked me to remove them from the list.

As everything was new for me, I was not discouraged. I continued with the call, having the confidence that someone was going to attend our meetings and we would work together.

We made our agenda for that day and to our surprise two brothers, Pastor Rev. Larry Chitwood (Peace with Justice Representative) and Pastor Rev. Fred Morton (MICAHA and Poor People representative) arrived. We discussed how we could get the other team members involved. We were four people willing to serve on this committee and was hoping others would join us.

We discussed and agreed to continue with our meetings. The next meeting was scheduled to be a zoom conference; to achieve greater participation of leaders of this committee; to reconstitute the Church and Society committee at the Conference. We also discussed that we should invite other interested leaders to the committee. Apart from this agreement, our Brother Larry motivated us to support the work that he was developing in Peace and Justice. In the same way, Brother Fred spoke to us about the work that he develops in MICAHA, Poor People and the lack of funding to develop those areas.

For our Second meeting (December 5) an invitation was sent a month in advance. A reminder was also sent 15 days before the meeting. However, only Pastor Larry, Pastor Fred, and Sister Amy from Trinity UMC participated. I was very grateful that Brother Larry Chitwood could be on this committee as Co-Chair for me, his help was invaluable.

During the meeting, I presented the need to support projects like the one that Brother Fred was carrying out. This was because he previously sent me a letter. However, I received a report of the limited funds in the Church and Society program. In our meeting, we discussed ideas of how we can seek financing for this program. It was decided that Sister Amy could help us find funding for the Church and Society committee. The agreement was that we would meet with Sister Amy's group to learn more ideas about this.

I do not have any more details. I must confess that my first language is Spanish. My English is very basic. I use it only to go and support the members of my church when we visit the doctor or when I take them to the immigration office or school. Unfortunately, to revitalize our group it requires someone who speaks better English than myself.

Despite everything, I was very determined to continue, but we did not have another meeting (due to COVID 19). I know that from their own areas our brothers have been working as Church and Society.

I want to thank you for the opportunity you gave me to coordinate this committee. I would love to continue working with you, but not as a coordinator, just as someone who is part of this committee.

Again, I am grateful for the opportunity that you gave me to be a part of this committee. I will continue working to improve my English.

Brothers and Sisters, thank you and God Bless you!

*Rev. Luz Campos*  
Iglesia Metodista Unida El Redentor

# DISCIPLESHIP TEAM

Jeffrey Rudy, Chair

The purpose of the Discipleship Team is to seek effective ways to increase the capacity of local churches and extension ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Over the last several years, the work of the Discipleship Team has centered on aligning our efforts, training events, and resources with the mission, values, and four areas of focus of the Memphis Annual Conference. Our efforts in the near future will be geared toward discernment in terms of how we adapt in the season of alignment of our Annual Conference with the Tennessee Conference in forming the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference. The design of this team may have to be flexible even as we seek to continue leading in the area of working with congregations and extension ministries in the mission of making disciples of Jesus.

We are tremendously blessed to have excellent leadership in the areas of youth, children, camping, leadership development, family, and scouting ministries.

A strong connection has developed among youth workers throughout the Memphis Conference and among youth themselves. The youth in the Conference continue to take part in the fall and spring retreats, 30-hour famine, and the Youth Annual Gathering (formerly, Youth Annual Conference), which leads up to the Annual Conference in June. Through these opportunities of connection and growth, we are making a difference as hundreds of youth throughout the conference have participated! We have excellent leadership in youth ministry who have taken the initiative to do some preparatory work on forming a youth ministry team for the newly emerging Annual Conference we will be a part of.

Since 2013, the Generative Leadership Academy (GLA) has shown tremendous fruit in developing lay and clergy leaders in congregations, increasing their capacity to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to engage the mission field. In 2017, GLA launched at a new location in West Tennessee at the Natchez Trace State Park. In 2019, there were over 40 new participants for GLA. As our conference transitions into our alignment for the new Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference, we did not prepare a GLA session for 2020. We are in conversation with leaders in the Tennessee Conference

The makeup of the Discipleship Team is more extensive than those mentioned herein, and the impact of the various leaders on this team extends further than the work of this team I am honored to lead. The process of discipleship, ideally, infects all aspects of our Conference's work, since the work of making "disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" is the mission of the Church. Still, as we move forward in seeking for innovative, fruitful, and tangible expressions of making disciples, we invite your prayers for discernment and participation to these ends.

Peace of Christ+

## MEMPHIS CONFERENCE YOUTH MINISTRY

Despite the challenges the end of the 2019-2020 ministry year brought, we are happy to report that we have seen evidence of the Holy Spirit at work within our Memphis Conference Youth Ministry. This is the second year we have lived into the team leadership model as we seek to empower and minister with the youth in our conference. This year Conference Youth Leadership Team (CYLT) has consisted of Amanda Hartmann Westmoreland, Josh Shaw, Brittany Martin, Susan Davidson, Josh McClurkan, and Amanda Crice. We are grateful to have every district and a wide variety of experience represented on this leadership team.

We have given particular attention to sharpening our understanding of our WHY for conference youth ministry and in reflection we have named the following:

- Train, Equip, and Resource Young Leaders and those who work with them at the local, district, and conference level
- Seek God's Justice through Conversation, Education, and Action
- Model Wesleyan Spiritual Formation
- Practice Ministry that is committed to caring for the whole person--body, mind, and spirit
- Foster Connectionalism and Prioritize Diversity that truly reflects the people of our conference
- Align mission and vision across the connection (campus ministry, children's ministry, confirmation, intergenerational ministry, etc.)

It has been our intention to use these pillars as a compass to guide the program ministry we are able to execute. This past fall we welcomed and trained 13 youth from all over the conference to be a part of our Conference Youth Council (CYC): Amber Mathis, Davis Cox, Gage Starks, Jack Cocke, Jonathan Sills, Kirkland Norwood, Kyla Smith, Laura Mobley, Owen Jackson, Sophie Barker, Talon Blackwelder, Virginia Varden, and Emily Koesterman.

These leaders successfully planned and executed a fall retreat at Lakeshore in October around the theme: "Who Do You Say I Am?" using the enneagram to help youth understand their unique gifts and identity in the Body of Christ. There were plans to host this same retreat to more youth from around the conference in March, but that was cancelled due to extreme caution to protect students and their families from the spread of the coronavirus. Our conference youth council met that challenge, though, offering student written devotionals in the early days of quarantine and working together to create a virtual version of this retreat that will be offered to youth around the conference June 10-12.

In January the CYC gathered for worship, service leadership development and planning at St. Matthew UMC in Memphis. There the students made plans for the annual Youth Annual Gathering. Though that has also been affected by the virus, the CYC and the CYLT are working together to help offer something around the new dates of our Annual Conference.

Other work this year has included intentional planning around Youth Lay Servant Training. We celebrate the 36 youth and lay servants representing all four districts who came together this past August to offer a VBS program to neighborhood kids they met during last spring's youth lay servant training event. These young people enjoyed meals provided by Ridgely UMC and worshiped with Tiptonville UMC. Dyersburg UMC helped provide transportation. Together the group served 45 at risk youth in the area. While this year's spring event had to be cancelled, we were excited about the direction of this ministry to include and empower youth in small membership churches and rural areas.

Additionally, this team has been active in our efforts to ensure the WHY behind our ministry is included in the vision of conference youth ministry in the future TWK Conference. Several members of our CYLT and CYC have participated in conversations to help bridge the ministries of the two conferences, and our Conference Youth Council has been intentional to reach out and form authentic relationships with the CCYM youth in the TN Conference. This has included participation in their annual event Warmth in Winter as well as joint zoom calls together in the wake of COVID-19.

We continue to trust and believe that God is up to something beautiful and that the Holy Spirit uses the youth among us in particularly special ways to guide the church into the New Thing God is doing. Thanks be to God for the privilege it is to walk with these youth on that journey.

Respectfully Submitted: Memphis Conference Youth Leadership Team