

**Church and Society**  
**Rev. Keri Cress, Chair**

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Church and Society team has worked hard at understanding the scope of our work and developing teams to take the lead on the focus areas of Civil and Human Rights, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Health and Wellness, Peace with Justice, Women and Children, Education, and Advocacy.

Our chair was able to attend a leadership training among other Church and Society team leaders in September at the General Board of Church and Society headquarters that are located in Washington D.C. This training included vital information about resources to help this committee equip our conference churches to get more involved in social issues in our community as inspired by our faith and our United Methodist Social Principles.

Over this past year our team was able to organize and activate clergy and lay members surrounding the issues of Gun Safety. This included a letter writing campaign, two panel events, and collaborating with Tennesseans United for Gun Safety for a Day on the Hill where over seventy of our TWKUMC members participated.

This team was also able to promote advocacy in letter writing and phone calls to legislators surrounding the current action in Tennessee on education vouchers that would take away funding from public schools, negatively affecting some of our most vulnerable and marginalized families in this state.

All these initiatives were based on our faith, our scriptures, and on our United Methodist Social Principles. We hope to continue living out our call as faithful United Methodists through actions as these as well as equipping the clergy and laity of our conference to continue these efforts in their local contexts. Some of our goals for the upcoming months are strengthen our relationships and connection with our rural congregations so that we can know how to best equip and stand alongside them, strengthening our conference efforts to relating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Church, communities, and the world in which they live, bringing the whole of human life into conformity with the will of God, and showing that reconciliation involves personal, social and civic righteousness.