

LPC Justice Ministry Update January 2012

Leaders from 30 congregations gathered on November 8 at Mandarin United Methodist Church for ICARE's Community Problems Assembly. Twelve from LPC attended the event. LPC cast six votes to work on the problem of Jobs and six votes for Health Care. The Jobs problem received the most votes (>300) and became the new problem to work on this year. In addition, work will continue on the three problem areas selected last year (Education, Crime, and Homelessness.)

Education Update: Duval County has an unacceptable low graduation rate and needs an effective reading program to aid the 30,000 students in our district who cannot read proficiently. This justice committee is working with school administrators to ensure implementation of an evidence-based reading curriculum called Corrective Reading.

Crime Update: 6,000 youth are arrested annually in Jacksonville, at a cost of \$22,000 per youth for incarceration. 50,000 out-of-school suspensions create a pipeline to prison for our youth. This committee is working with schools and the legal system to establish evidence-based restorative justice programs for youth in schools and in neighborhoods of high crime.

Homelessness Update: On average, 3,910 people are homeless in Duval County, including a rising number of homeless families and children. This committee is working with Mayor Brown to formulate steps for creation of a comprehensive Homeless Resource/Drop-in Center, where individuals can escape the elements, take a shower, receive mail, safely store belongings, wash clothes, and connect with job services, mental health counseling, etc.

Jobs Update: The Jobs Committee had its first research meeting with a professor of economics at UNF and will be meeting with the Director for Small Business Development the first week in January.

LPC's Justice Ministry Network (JMN) has 16 members: Linda Allen, Cathy Barnwell, AmyBeth Gallogly, Belinda Gallogly, Cynthia Graham, Gladys Hillhouse, Carolyn HJones, Erin Jones, Sally Kampfe, Jeremy Lucarelli, Terry Lucarelli, Sara Maguire, Lurline Ragsdale, Katie Robb, Ben Robinson & Cole Succi. God calls on us to act on our faith in many different ways. If you feel led to act on your faith by being part of LPC's Justice Ministry Network, please contact one of our JMN leaders listed above. Building our JMN means we are building our power to be effective in bringing about real solutions to serious problems of injustice in our community.