



LEGAL AID OF EAST TENNESSEE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2017

NEW LEGAL AID PARTNERSHIP SEEKS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO JUSTICE THROUGH AREA PLACES OF WORSHIP

Chattanooga, Tennessee, June 30, 2017– Legal Aid of East Tennessee, Tennessee Faith and Justice Alliance, Christian Legal Society and Chattanooga Gospel Justice Initiative are among those working together on a new effort to expand Access to Justice in Chattanooga through area places of worship. One such partnership has been created with White Oak United Methodist Church in Red Bank. A pro bono legal clinic will be hosted at the church on July 11, 2017. (More information to follow on the event) The partnership will also include legal issue training awareness for church leadership through the TFJA and pro bono legal clinics at the church. Voluntary pro bono attorneys will be available to counsel on a wide variety of civil legal issues.

The Tennessee Supreme Court formed the Access to Justice Commission in 2009, in an effort to expand access to justice across the state. Improving access to justice was declared a priority in Tennessee. An estimated 1 million Tennesseans face some type of civil legal issue each year and are unable to afford legal representation, qualify for low-income assistance, or simply don't recognize that they have a legal issue that requires the help of an attorney. The Access to Justice Commission created Faith and Justice Alliance on the premise that many individuals with legal issues will first seek assistance at their local houses of worship. The TFJA offers training of partner leadership to bridge the legal gap and build better legal referral networks.

Locally, Legal Aid of East Tennessee and the Christian Legal Society and Chattanooga Gospel Justice Initiative have partnered in this same effort to bridge that gap. LAET and CLS will offer free legal clinics at churches like White Oak United Methodist. LAET will assist those who qualify, while CLS and the Chattanooga Gospel Justice Initiative are currently working to establish a new expanded referral network of attorneys willing to offer pro bono services for those who don't qualify for legal aid. That includes many known as "working poor." The hope is to develop additional partnerships across the greater Chattanooga area.

This first legal aid clinic will be held at **White Oak United Methodist Church on Tuesday July 11, 2017 from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.** The church is located at **2232 Lyndon Avenue, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37405**. Parking is available. The Chattanooga House of Prayer will also be available at the event to offer prayer support and encouragement for participants.



WWW.LAET.ORG



The clinic is free and open to anyone with a civil legal issue or question. People interested are advised to call in advance so that attorneys with an expertise in the specific area of concern can be available to assist.

If you would like more information about this event or the partnership, please contact Paige Evatt, Pro Bono Director at Legal Aid of East Tennessee at 423-402-4758 or email at pevatt@laet.org.

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