This course attempts to connect the theoretical material learned in formal theological education with the lived experiences in the local parish. Specifically, we will be working to apply theological and ethical teachings to congregational life, especially social practices in the student’s own faith community, the parish neighborhood, and the world. During the first several weeks of class, we will investigate ethical theory in the Christian tradition. The remaining weeks will be spent looking at social issues in the local parish, especially through the lens of the theoretical material presented during the early weeks. An additional subject for study will concern how our social actions and practices can sustain a spiritual foundation. Students will study specifics of activism and organizing for making a difference in the social situations of the local parish. We will especially focus on issues which face the individual congregations represented in our class. Sessions will consist of lectures over material not in the readings or expanding on the readings, as well as class discussions applying readings to individual congregations. Most class sessions will also include a small group discussion period specifically addressing issues of involving our congregations in ministry at the margins of society, and what that means for followers of Jesus Christ and leaders of Christian communities.

**Required texts:**
Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*
Eleanor Scott Meyers, ed., *Envisioning the New City: A Reader on Urban Ministry*
Mary Alice Mulligan and Rufus Burrow, Jr., *Standing in the Margin: How Your Congregation Can Minister with the Poor (and perhaps recover its soul in the process)*
Janet Parachin, *Engaged Spirituality: Ten Lives of Contemplation and Action*
Gregory Pierce, *Activism that Makes Sense: Congregations and Community Organization*

**There are also several required articles from books on reserve:**
Max Stackhouse, Tim Dearborn, Scott Paeth, ed., *The Local Church in a Global Era: Reflections for a New Century*

**** If you have difficulty affording texts or copies of articles, please see me.

**Expectations:**
Let’s agree to come to class each week. The instructor will be prepared to lecture. You should have assignments read and be prepared to discuss how they relate to your congregation. If you must miss class, make sure to notify the instructor beforehand. CTS policy states that 3 classes missed will result in a class failure, so keep in touch.

*** As a courtesy to classmates, let’s turn off cell phones at the beginning of class.
Grades will be based on:

- Class participation, small group discussions*, & eight E.S. responses* 25%
- 3 page paper describing your congregation
- 3 - 4 page paper describing the surrounding community and its needs 25%
- 4 page paper on how goodness happened in Le Chambon
- 10- 12 page research paper on a social issue which affects your local parish 25%
- Final exam (last class session) 25%

* When you break into your small group, each week, one person should be responsible for keeping the group on task (a leader) and another person should keep some record of what happened (a recorder). These brief notes should be slipped under the professor’s office door (room 239) at the end of the session. The leader and recorder roles should rotate around the group.

* Each week, you are required to read one chapter of Engaged Spirituality. After reading the entire chapter, choose one of the “Reflect and Act” suggestions to carry out. Jot down your experience with the suggestion and have it ready to turn in at the beginning of class (about a page should suffice, but make sure it somehow reveals you read the chapter). This is noted in the syllabus as the “E.S. response” each week. ***Note, you are responsible for eight responses out of the ten chapters, although the syllabus notes one due each week. Choose your two “pass” weeks carefully. You may not turn in more than one response per week, and you may only turn in the response assigned for that week. The E.S. responses are graded with a plus, check, or circle. Quality matters.

Specific instructions for the content of assigned papers will be given in class. You may deviate from the stated page limitation by one page without penalty. Please use standard size font (12 pt. Times New Roman) and 1 inch margins.

One out-of-the-building excursion will substitute for a class session in April. You may choose to attend the soup kitchen, Bread & Bowl, at North United Methodist Church, any Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday in February, at 11:00, or their Eatin’ Meetin’ at 6:00, Thursday, February 28.

Class Sessions
January 22   Introduction to Social Issues in the Local Parish; Some Foundations and Presuppositions for this Class

Jan 29   Definitions of Terms; Types of Ethics; Begin Small Groups on Margin Ministry, Time of Commitment.
Assignments for class this day: Have read Ammerman, chapter 3 and p. 196-203 (ends mid-chapter), on reserve.
**Turn in 3 page paper** describing your local congregation.
Have read chapter 1 of Standing in the Margin.
February 5  Definitions of Social Problems and Social Issues; Theological Groundings; Small Groups, questions from chapter 1.
Assignments for class this day: Turn in 3 page paper describing the neighborhood and community surrounding your local church building; Have read chapter 1 of Engaged Spirituality. Turn in first E.S. response. Be preparing to choose one social issue which confronts your congregation.

Feb 12  Moving From Theory to Context; Sign-up Social Issue for Research Paper; White Privilege; Small Groups, material from chapter 2.
Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 2 of Engaged Spirituality. 2nd E.S. response due. Have read chapter 2 of Standing in the Margin. Have read Schweiker and Ottley articles in Stackhouse, Local Church (on reserve), p.23-47. Have read Cone and McIntosh articles (distributed).

Feb 19  Reading Week – No class

Feb 26  Moral Formation and Formation of the Self; The Inter-Related World We Live in; Global Thinking; The Situation in the United States; Small Groups, questions from chapter 2. Confirm topic.
Assignments for class this day:
Have read chapter 3 of Engaged Spirituality. 3rd E.S. response due. Have read chapters 1, 7, 8, & 18 in Meyers, Envisioning.

March 4  The Situation in our Local Churches; Importance of Communal Faith; Small Groups, material from chapter 3.
Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 4 of Engaged Spirituality. 4th E.S. response due. Have read chapter 3 of Standing in the Margin. Be reading chapters in Meyers which relate to your topic.

Mar 11  Catching up; What Difference Can We Make?; What Leaders Need to Do; Getting the Congregation on Board; Small Groups, questions from chapter 3.
Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 5 of Engaged Spirituality. 5th E.S. response due. Submit bibliography of what you are reading which relates to your topic. These will not be graded. Keep researching your topic. May want to begin Pierce book.
Mar 18       Holy Week – No class

Mar 25       First Steps for Congregationally Motivated Social Change; About Power; Small Groups, material from chapter 4.
Assignments for class this day: Read chapter 6 of Engaged Spirituality. 6th E.S. response due.
Read essays in Meyers text which relate to your topic. Consult additional sources.
Have read chapter 4 of Standing in the Margin.
Have read Pierce book.

April 1      Organizing for Change; What Could We Possibly Mean by Success or Failure?; questions from chapter 4. May have discussion of Pierce.
Assignment for class this day: Have read chapter 7 of Engaged Spirituality. 7th E.S. response due.

April 8      Class Discussion of Research Papers; Using the Research Paper as a Teaching Tool; Small Groups Small Groups, material from chapter 5.
Assignment for class this day: Turn in Research paper on social issue confronting your congregation (10-12 pages).
Have read chapter 5 of Standing in the Margin.

April 15     Substitution Week – No Class

April 22     Class Discussion on Pierce and Hallie Material; Social Justice as Spiritual Discipline (Engaged Spirituality); How to Get a Congregation on Board; Small groups, questions from chapter 5.
Assignment for class this day: Have read Lest Innocent Blood be Shed. Submit 4 page paper tracing how goodness happened there.
Have read chapter 8 of Engaged Spirituality. 8th E.S. response due. If you have submitted a response each week, this is your final one.

April 29     What Next?; Review Questions (in-class hand-out); chapter 6.
Assignments for class this day: Have read chapter 9 of Engaged Spirituality. 9th E.S. response due (if needed).
Have read chapter 6 of Standing in the Margin.

May 6       Final exam in class.
If you need to submit an E.S. response from chapter 10, it will be accepted.