



## General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

For twenty-eight years, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) has attempted to pass an amendment to The United Methodist Constitution protecting the rights of women to membership in the local church. Our legislation, which was modified by the General Conference, passed by the necessary two-thirds majority at General Conference 2016 and was forwarded to each individual annual conference across the connection for a vote. A two-thirds aggregate vote was needed for ratification of the decision of General Conference.

On Monday, May 7, 2018, the Council of Bishops released the results of the church-wide votes on the five Constitutional Amendments that passed General Conference. The two Amendments that sought to claim language that both women and men are created in the image of God, that committed our church to work for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, and that sought to assure an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the local church for women did not receive the two-thirds necessary vote.

For the last several days, we have taken time to grieve.

Today, we give thanks.

We give thanks for the tireless efforts of our board members, colleagues, and allies across the church, including Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women, United Methodist Women, the Division on Young Peoples' Ministry, and DisAbility Ministries, who not only worked for the passage of this legislation, but who work every day in ministry to teach young girls that they are of sacred worth, who nominate and elect women into positions of leadership within and beyond the local church, who encourage women to use their gifts, and who welcome women pastors.

We give thanks for [the Council of Bishops and its statement making an unequivocal commitment to the equality of women](#) and their full inclusion in our Church.

We give thanks for the [women bishops of the church who issued a pastoral statement](#) (and for the men bishops who unanimously affirmed their statement) committing themselves "to researching why these amendments failed and what actions we can take to create a world where all people are able to live in safety, justice, and love."

We give thanks for the transparency that the Council of Bishops shared in releasing the [breakdown of the annual conference votes on the amendments](#).

We ask that you not point fingers, but reflect and examine what the data of the votes shows for each annual conference by making the following inquiries:

- 1) What is my annual conference doing to encourage the full inclusion of women in leadership?
- 2) What is my local church doing to teach girls and boys, women and men, that they are all created in the image of God and are of sacred worth and have a right to an equal place in the full life of the local church?

As mandated by The United Methodist Book of Discipline, we, The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women challenge The United Methodist Church to do more that “talk the talk.” We challenge the church to “walk the walk.”

We, at [The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women](#), commit ourselves to continue to advocate for women individually and collectively within The United Methodist Church, to work to be a catalyst to redress inequities of the past and to prevent future inequities against women in The United Methodist Church, and to monitor to ensure inclusiveness in the programmatic and administrative functioning of the church by providing resources and support.

As mandated by Christ, let us live fully into the gospel promise that “there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28) Therefore, we call on the people of The United Methodist Church to develop and fund programs, resources, and ministries within each annual conference to help us be who Christ has called us to be.

Take time to grieve. Take time to give thanks. Take time to act!

Blessings,



**Bishop Tracy Malone**  
President of the Board  
*General Commission on the  
Status and Role of Women  
of The United Methodist Church*



**Dawn Wiggins Hare**  
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