

Clergy and lay members to annual conference will vote on four proposed amendments to The United Methodist Church constitution. Ballot 2 refers to inclusiveness of the church, specifically based on gender and abilities.

Background

Article IV of the Book of Discipline speaks of who is included in the life of the church. While it may be obvious to some that all of God's creation is welcome, the realities of society through the ages shows that some people are excluded for arbitrary reasons. The effort to explicitly include gender as a protection to participate in the life of the church, including receiving the sacraments and baptism, has been under way for 30 years in The United Methodist Church. This legislation, sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), finally received overwhelming support at the 2020/2024 General Conference. Language also was added to ensure inclusion of people who are differently abled. In 2016, the General Conference approved adding gender to ¶4, Article IV, but the addition was not ratified because the overall vote was 61%, which fell short from the two-thirds vote required.

What Would Change

[Read the Proposed Constitutional Amendments](#)

If ratified, ¶4 of the Book of Discipline would change to the following:

Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church — The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith,

become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.

Additional Resources

[Webinars](#)

- The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is planning webinars \to help United Methodists across the world better understand ¶4, Article IV. Check the link above for updated schedules.

[In Plain Language](#)

- The amended portion of the Constitution adds ability and gender to existing social categories that clergy in The United Methodist Church cannot use to discriminate against a potential member. Said another way, a pastor may not deny a person membership in the church because they have a disability, are female or male, married or single, young or old. Learn more by reading [this article, shared before the 2024 General Conference session.](#)

[By the Numbers](#)

- Rev. Leigh Goodrich, senior director of education and leadership for GCSRW, shares a look at numbers and their significance for ratification of this amendment for inclusiveness of the church.

[A Mother's Story](#)

- Rev. Carol Blair Bouse of the Detroit Conference Board of Justice, Advocacy and Equity, shares a touching story about her son. This blog was originally shared by the Michigan Conference.

About GCSRW

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women advocates for full participation of women in the total life of The United Methodist Church.

GCSRW helps the church recognize every person — clergy and lay, women and men, adults and children — as full and equal parts of God's human family.

They believe that a fully engaged and empowered membership is vital to The United Methodist Church's mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." [More information is available at GCSRW's website.](#)