



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Introduction

Sexual misconduct is a current and real problem within The United Methodist Church. Today, we acknowledge there are people here who have been mistreated, abused, and assaulted by clergy and lay leaders in the Church.

We honor those who have shared their stories and those who have sat with their stories in silence. We commend the courage of all survivors of sexual misconduct to walk a path they did not choose.

Too often those who suffer from sexual misconduct are silenced, ignored, or not believed by the Church.

Sexual misconduct includes psychological, emotional, and spiritual abuse. This apology is a beginning point for confession and hope in prevention and response to sexual misconduct in The United Methodist Church.

Apology

The United Methodist Church apologizes for the times we allowed our desire to protect the Church to outweigh our desire to care for victims and survivors of sexual misconduct. We have allowed polity and protection of the institutional Church prevent us from holding persons accountable, thus perpetuating harm within our local churches and other ministry settings, and damaging the whole United Methodist connection.

We apologize for the times we have not listened to you, doubted your stories, ignored your wounds, and have not tended to your pain. We believe this has contributed to allowing an unsafe culture to exist.

An apology is worthless without a commitment to the challenging work which must follow. The United Methodist Church pledges to:

1. Apologize in every annual conference across the connection.
2. Educate Church leaders regarding sacred trust in ministerial relationships and power imbalance within those relationships.
3. Provide healing resources to all affected in accordance with ¶ 362. Complaint Procedures.
4. Develop a trauma-informed response to complaints of sexual misconduct.

This apology alone is insufficient for healing. The United Methodist Church accepts our responsibility and publicly states our commitment to carry out the steps named to do no more harm. May God's blessing and never-ending love guide our work and see it through.