



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Statement of Support for Paragraph 4, Article IV

May 7, 2025

Throughout our sacred Scripture we see that women and persons with disabilities are lifted up as examples of faithfulness, included in ministry and restored to their rightful place within community. King David gives his beloved friend Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, who is disabled, a place of honor at his table (2 Samuel 9). Ruth who is a widowed, foreign, Moabite woman is welcomed into the Hebrew community and placed in the lineage of David and then Jesus (Ruth 4 and Matthew 1). The woman disabled by her never-ending flow of blood is restored to her place of belonging within her community and Jesus praises her faith amidst a crowd who by religious law would have denied her inclusion (Luke 8).

These are but a few examples that undergird our deep desire to see the words **gender** and **ability** explicitly added to the list of reasons why someone cannot be denied membership within our beloved United Methodist Church.

We offer our enthusiastic and united support for the ratification of constitutional amendment Paragraph 4, Article IV (Ballot #2), which seeks to amend the constitution of The United Methodist Church to include "gender" and "ability" in the list of reasons that someone cannot be excluded from the membership of the church. This important step will strengthen the inclusivity and justice of our denomination, aligning us more closely with the values and actions of Jesus who is our model for ministry as we seek to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

As representatives of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the Disability Ministries Committee, the General Council of Finance and Administration, United Women in Faith, the Connectional Table, Discipleship Ministries and Wespath we are committed to advocating for those who have been historically marginalized or excluded from full participation in the life of the Church. Our shared mission is to ensure that all people are treated with the inherent dignity and worth that God bestows upon them, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or abilities.

This amendment represents a crucial opportunity to affirm that The United Methodist Church is a place where all people, specifically women and persons with disabilities are welcomed, included, belong and serve. By adding "gender" and "ability" to the list of reasons for non-exclusion, we are making a clear statement that our doors are open to everyone, embracing the diverse gifts and perspectives that each person brings to the body of Christ. These words are not simply a matter of policy—they are an expression of our commitment to a more just and loving community.



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Throughout our work, we have seen firsthand the contributions of women and those with disabilities to the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church. Yet we also

know that there remains much work to be done to ensure that all people are fully embraced and their gifts utilized. **This amendment is a vital step toward that goal.**

We believe that this amendment, if ratified, will send a powerful message of hope to women and persons with disabilities who have felt the sting of exclusion. It will create a more open and welcoming Church, one that reflects the inclusive love and ministry of Jesus Christ and offers a place of belonging to all of God's children. **We urge all members of The United Methodist Church to vote "Yes" in favor of this amendment and join us in our commitment to a Church where we not only name in word, but also in practice that all persons regardless of gender and ability are loved, belong and their gifts are included in our Church.**

You can find best practices, training and resources regarding **gender** and **ability** provided by [The Disability Ministries Committee](#), [The General Council on Finance and Administration](#) and [The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women](#). These resources seek to help make sure your congregation is compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), welcoming to persons with disabilities and inclusive of women within the leadership of The United Methodist Church.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration in supporting Paragraph 4, Article IV, Ballot #2.

With hope for our future,

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The General Commission of the Status and Role of Women

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