

#METOO TOOLKIT

Resources for a faithful response

*Developed by the
General Commission on the
Status and Role of Women*

“There is no longer Jew or Greek,
there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

— GALATIANS 3:28



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 

77 W. Washington St. Ste. 1500

Chicago, IL 60602

Phone: 312-346-4900

Toll-free number: 800-523-8390

www.gcsrw.org

Email: info@gcsrw.org

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
The Nurturing Community	5
What can you do?	6
What can your local ministry do?	7
Book Discussion	8
Liturgical Resources	9
Reflection	11
Resources	12
Joint Statement of The Council of Bishops with The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women	13
Bulletin Insert	15
UM Sexual Ethics Flyer	17



Introduction

Welcome to the #MeToo toolkit for people in all ministry settings. This resource has been developed by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) which joins others around the world in addressing the prevalence and problem of sexual misconduct throughout our Church and society.

The toolkit offers resources of printed materials, links to important websites, as well as suggestions for participatory conversations designed to encourage dialogue to help people identify, understand, and respond to the reality of sexual misconduct. All of which are intended to help guide people to a deeper understanding of the problem of sexual misconduct and resources/beliefs of The United Methodist Church in response to this problem.

Sexual misconduct is fueled by deeply rooted attitudes and beliefs about power, gender, and authority. The resources in this toolkit are offered to promote the conversations and self-reflection necessary to transform these harmful beliefs. We are hopeful you will find the information helpful as you move forward with courage to address the sin of sexual misconduct throughout the Church and society. This ministry is essential for the transformation of the world.



The Nurturing Community

- (F) “We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another...”
- (I) “Violent, disrespectful, or abusive sexual expressions do not confirm sexuality as God’s good gift.”
- (J) “Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship...”
- (P) “Sexual assault is wrong. It does not matter what the person is wearing.....”
- (Q) “We oppose all forms of pornography and consider its use a form of sexual misconduct.”

*¶161 The Social Principles,
The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*

“Sexual Misconduct within ministerial relationships is a **betrayal of sacred trust**. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another.”

United Methodist Book of Resolutions #2044

“The sin of sexual misconduct must be named by the Church at every level of ministry... the Council of Bishops joins with The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to strongly encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment allegations within the Church.”

Statement from The United Methodist Council of Bishops together with GCSRW



What can you do?

Every United Methodist is called to do no harm and do good. How can you respond to this #MeToo moment?

- » Refuse to be a silent bystander when you hear or see someone say or do something that could be harassment. Intervene! How are we holding one another accountable for behavior?
- » Respect and affirm women and men in such a way that they know they will be believed if they choose to confide their experiences. One way to practice and cultivate a culture of respect and affirmation is by supporting women called to ministry. Contact the chairperson of your annual conference's COSROW. Download our free resources¹ and use them in your local setting. Engage and discuss *SHE* by Karoline Lewis² in small groups.
- » Encourage your local church to utilize the resources on page 12
- » The simplest and most profound act of Christian response is this: listening to those who have suffered. By listening to stories, we can learn. And by learning, perhaps we as local church communities can take proactive steps to prevent more abuse from happening and to help survivors find true healing in Christ. As one victim disclosed, "My church helped me to see how God sees me and who I am, instead of who I am not."

“The simplest and most profound act of Christian response is this: listening to those who have suffered.”



What can your local ministry do?

Provide professional counseling services for victims. Additionally, at any Church related education/awareness event, have resources from your community in your event, especially sexual assault or rape crisis counselors.

- » Insist on education within your local ministry about the policy and process for filing a formal complaint³ of sexual misconduct and regarding your state's laws.⁴ Make it an agenda item at your next Charge Conference, and Staff-Parish Relations Committee meeting. Ensure that the Staff-Parish Relations Committee is trained in the policy and complaint process of The UMC.
 - » Have conversation in small group settings (including the youth) and speak from the pulpit regarding...
 - » ¶161 and the Social Principles.⁵ Consider utilizing the #HerTruth Video, Discussion Guide & Church Assessment from the North Alabama COSROW.⁶
 - » The joint statement from the Council of Bishops and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women⁷ in the appendix. Please utilize the Reflection questions on page 12.
 - » Holistic biblical ethics of sex and sexuality.⁸
 - » Expansive language.^{9, 10}
- » Include the bulletin inserts in the appendix and from the General Board of Church and Society in your worship bulletin this week and regularly.¹¹
- » Offer studies for those who have been abused, even years ago. Resource: Is Nothing Sacred? By Marie M. Fortune¹², discussion guide found on page 8.
- » Institute a prevention program at your seminary or campus ministry.¹³
- » Post the Sexual Ethics Flyer from the Appendix in your ministry site.¹⁴
- » Other resources can be found on page 12.^{15, 16, 17}



Book Discussion

IS NOTHING SACRED? BY MARIE FORTUNE

The #MeToo movement has been spiritually powerful because of the overwhelming number of personal testimonies from those who have been on the receiving end of sexual misconduct. Moreover, an overwhelming and shameful number of stories of misconduct have taken place within the realm of the church. These witnesses do not allow us as the hearers, as the community of faith, to forget the human cost of the sin of sexual misconduct. *Is Nothing Sacred?* By Marie Fortune shares faithfully and anonymously the stories of multiple women, each abused by the pastor of their congregation, and offers an opportunity for reflection upon the nuances and varieties of sexual harassment, misconduct, and assault, just by considering one congregation. You are invited to be a receptive and empathetic reader of these stories, opening yourself up to reflection, self-evaluation, and planning for action within your church and society. Below is a discussion guide to participate in on your own or in a small group.

1. What were the various ways that these women were made vulnerable?
2. Were there warning signs that the minister struggled with issues of boundaries and power? What were those warning signs?
3. What common threads do you notice between the stories of the women?
4. How did the women strive to establish or maintain appropriate boundaries? How were they broken and disregarded?
5. Who is ultimately responsible for this misconduct?
6. What (and who) was protected?
7. What changed in the women's perception of their church? Of their pastor? Of themselves?
8. How did the women act or rise against what was happening to themselves and others?
9. What feelings emerged for those who had been victimized?
10. What roles and personal traits did the minister use to his advantage to manipulate the women?
11. Who had the power to shape the narrative about the nature of these relationships? How was that power used?
12. How did people receive the women's various stories? What was helpful? What was not helpful?
13. "Who's going to believe you?" How do we ensure that this threat is always an empty one?
14. How did the women in the story channel their anger and hurt? What made it possible to move from anxiety, flippancy, depression, and immobility to intention and cleansing anger?
15. What feelings did this book evoke in you? What insights did you gain?



Liturgical Resources

Litany Adapted From Psalm 91

Don't we live in the shelter of the Most High?
Don't we abide in the shadow of the Protector?
Only some get to say to the Divine One,
"My refuge and my fortress; my Creator, in whom I trust."
For we did not deliver them from the snare of abuse
and from the deadly shame;
May we cover one another with feathers of the Holy One,
under whose wings the vulnerable find refuge,
whose faithfulness molds us into a shield.

Women and children fear the terror of night,
the harassment that flies by day,
the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
the destruction of their bodies and spirits.

We resolve to work toward a world where abuse will not come near you.
We long to see with our eyes abusers held accountable
and this place become a refuge.

Because you have made known the trespasses against you,
we vow that no evil shall befall you.
Angels have been sent to tend and guard you!
May we, too, bear you up rather than tear you down.

Deliver us from the sin of sexual misconduct!
Answer those who call for help,
by sending us to be with those in distress,
to rescue and honor.

Through abundant life God will satisfy,
and make salvation known.

Alexa Eisenbarth



Prayer of Healing

Strengthen those who finally speak up,
Create safety for stories to emerge,
Embolden our community to examine itself,
Shine the light on abusive power,
Commit to holiness in every relationship,
No matter how small the interaction,
Holy holy holy, may we be.

Rabbi Jill Berkson Zimmerman¹⁸

Call to Worship

God of refuge, prepare us to be sanctuaries.
Spirit of strength, make us into tabernacles.
Christ our shepherd, help us protect the vulnerable,
and discern wolves from sheep.
Uncover the truth in the midst of us.
May it set us free.

Alexa Eisenbarth

Prayer of Confession

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent,
for the sake of Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.

Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer



Reflection

1 John 3:18 *“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”*

The #MeToo movement, founded by Tarana Burke, an African-American activist, has seemed like the Spirit of Truth moving through our world, uncovering that which has been hidden in plain sight for decades. When we turn to our Bibles, we realize that #MeToo stories have been hidden in plain sight for millennia (Genesis 34, 39, Judges 19-21, 2 Samuel 11, 13, Ruth 2:1-9). Muriel Rukeyser, an American poet of the 20th century, prophesied, “What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open.” The world has surely been, is being, and will continue to be split open by the countless people who tell their stories of sexual harassment, assault, and misconduct. As Christians, as United Methodists, we must listen to the Spirit of Truth, and respond with integrity. We are able to bravely enter into this process of listening, repentance, and faithful response because of the power and love of Christ in which our salvation, our identity as beloved, is assured.

1. What actions can we take as a local church to protect the vulnerable, care for the broken-hearted, and seek justice?
2. Are we living up to the value commitments of The United Methodist Church as stated in The Social Principles and The Book of Resolutions (see page one) as a local church? How might we hold our Annual Conference accountable to these commitments and policies?
3. Do the women and children in our midst trust that the church leadership, will believe them if they come forward with the stories of their own experiences?
4. Do we trust, respect, and affirm women and young people in church leadership; communicating we trust them in other areas as well?
5. How does our church talk about restoration or redemption? Who is it for? What is the process of redemption? Is this harmful or helpful? If helpful, for whom?
6. Do we compel people to forgive their abusers without holding abusers accountable? What might this do to someone who has been victimized?
7. What do we do when someone reports abuse to us? What are we supposed to do?
8. What might we say to someone who is behaving or speaking inappropriately? How are we holding one another accountable for our actions? Have we rehearsed how to intervene?
9. Have we hosted a training for our congregation focusing on maintaining healthy boundaries which uphold the dignity of all people?
10. Are we committed to being a refuge to people who experience sexual misconduct, harassment, and assault? Are we committed to their restoration of dignity and wholeness?



Resources

1	Free Resources from The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women	www.gcsr.org
2	<i>SHE</i> by Karoline Lewis: book, discussion guide, and more	https://www.cokesbury.com/product/9781501804946/she/
3	Policies and Complaint Process of The United Methodist Church	<i>The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church</i> ¶362 http://umsexualethics.org/complaint-process/
4	State Laws	www.adultsabusedbyclergy.org/statelaws.html
5	The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church	http://main.umc-gbcs.org/social-principles/161-ii.-the-nurturing-community
6	#HerTruth Video, Discussion Guide, Church Assessment, and The Book of Discipline Appendix from the North Alabama COSROW	https://www.umcna.org/hertruth
7	Joint Statement of The Council of Bishops and The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women	http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/united-methodist-leaders-respond-to-metoo-and-churchtoo
8	“Our Whole Lives,” a curriculum from the Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ for all ages	http://www.ucc.org/justice_sexuality-education_our-whole-lives
9	Expansive Language Liturgical Resources	http://www.gcsr.org/Resources/WorshipResources/LiturgicalResources.aspx
10	God of the Bible, a study on expansive language	http://www.gcsr.org/Resources/Curriculum.aspx
11	Bulletin Insert by The General Board of Church and Society	http://main.umc-gbcs.org/content/articles/Womensrights.pdf
12	<i>Is Nothing Sacred?</i> By Marie Fortune	ISBN: 978-1-55635-862-3
13	Sexual Misconduct Prevention Resources for Seminaries and Campus Ministries	https://preventionnavigator.rainn.org/
14	Sexual Ethics Flyer	http://umsexualethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GCSRW-Sexual-Ethics-Flyer-0420105-Crops.pdf
15	Time’s Up Now Legal Defense Fund	https://www.timesupnow.com/
16	“Sexual Misconduct in The United Methodist Church: US Update”	http://www.gcsr.org/Portals/13/Sexual%20Misconduct%20in%20the%20United%20Methodist%20Church%20revised%20Jan%202019.pdf
17	RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network): Resources for recovery from sexual violence, public policy & education, prevention.	https://www.rainn.org/
18	Prayer of Healing, Rabbi Jill Berkson Zimmerman	http://www.ravjill.com/2017/10/29/healing-prayer-metoo/





Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2018

United Methodist leaders respond to #metoo and #churchtoo movement

Over the recent weeks and months, and continuing on a seemingly daily basis, the media have been saturated with stories of persons coming forward with allegations of sexual misconduct perpetrated by individuals in positions of power and authority. The pervasiveness of the power imbalance is a part of every story being told. Responses have ranged from immediate termination of employment of the accused and bribery for silence to invitations for victims to feel shame.

The Council of Bishops together with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women reaffirm the core beliefs found in The United Methodist Church's Social Principles which clearly state, "sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship and interfering with the moral mission of the Church."

Further we recognize "sexual assault as wrong no matter the circumstances," and "among women and men, [we] reject the erroneous notion [that] one gender is superior to another." Further, our General Rules, founded by John Wesley direct us to do no harm and do good in every possible way at all times. The sin of sexual misconduct must be named by the Church at every level of ministry. Further, we must confront the environment of coarser public dialog and discourse that provides license and cover for sexual harassment, abuse and assault.

We acknowledge that the Church is also a place where sexual misconduct happens when persons in power positions choose to abuse their power. The stories are all too similar. Alleged victims are often reluctant to come forward fearing they will not be believed or they will experience retaliation and the decision to report will be held against them. Sexual misconduct is a symptom of a systemic problem within our Church and society where patriarchy flourishes.

The Church is a place for spiritual growth. Unfortunately, spiritual violence happens every time a person experiences sexual misconduct within the Church. Nothing excuses this behavior.

In November 2017, before the most recent flurry of stories came forward, the Council of Bishops affirmed, through its members, renewed commitment to addressing the

systemic causes of sexual misconduct and abuse of power. Upon invitation, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women provided two training sessions to the bishops during their recent meeting on topics of sustaining integrity in ministry and response to sexual misconduct.

The Council of Bishops is committed to leading The United Methodist Church in the prevention of sexual misconduct, to offering healing to the victims, and to finding paths for Christ's love to be shown to the perpetrator while maintaining standards of accountability.

The Council of Bishops joins with The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to strongly encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment allegations within the Church. Our denomination's website, www.umsexualethics.org offers information and a toll free, confidential number for support through the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

To the extent of our ability, we pledge to do the right thing in every complaint received, including listening well to hear the story and developing a response which holds persons accountable and offers healing for all affected.



Bishop Bruce R. Ough
President
*Council of Bishops
of The United Methodist
Church*



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



Dawn Wiggins Hare
General Secretary
*General Commission on
the Status and Role of
Women of The United
Methodist Church*

###

Media Contacts:

Jenn Meadows

Director of Communications

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

jmeadows@gcsr.org

312.346.4900

Rev. Dr. Maidstone Mulenga

Director of Communications

Council of Bishops – The United Methodist Church

mmulenga@umc-cob.org

(202) 748-5172 (Work)

(585)-455-5683 (Cell)



Our Social Principles on Sexual Misconduct

The following are defined chargeable offenses for laity and clergy as established by the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church:

Sexual misconduct

Sexual Misconduct is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another (The Book of Discipline ¶161)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is “any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.” (The Book of Discipline ¶161.1)

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is a form of sexual misconduct and occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (lay or clergy, pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or volunteer.

Pornography

Pornography is sexually explicit material that portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation for the purpose of arousal. Any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornographic. “We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex.” (The Book of Discipline Social Principle ¶161)

Examples Of Sexualized Behavior Or Sexual

Contact:

- Displaying sexually suggestive visuals
- Making sexual comments or innuendos
- Touching another person’s body, hair or clothing
- Touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another
- Kissing; fondling; sexual intercourse

Guidelines For Determining A Hostile

Environment:

Ask: Is the behavior...

- Sexual in nature or gender specific?
- Unwelcome?
- Severe or pervasive enough to interfere with one’s ability to work, get an education, or participate in ministry?

**Ministerial Leaders (Clergy And Laity)
Are In Positions Of Power. Always.**

UMSexualEthics.org is a dedicated website to provide information for laity, clergy, church leaders, and anyone interested in finding resources on how to respond to and prevent sexual misconduct in The United Methodist Church.

If you believe you have been a victim of sexual harassment, misconduct, abuse, or assault in your community of faith please call GCSRW’s confidential toll free number for support: 1-800-523-8390.

UMSexualETHICS

Raising
awareness,
Preventing
sexual misconduct,
Promoting
healthy boundaries,
Bringing about
**justice and
healing**

The UMC believes sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships represents an exploitation of power and is a betrayal of sacred trust. The UMC defines sexual misconduct as a continuum of behaviors that includes sexual harassment which is the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.

Book of Resolutions ¶2044



The General Commission on
the Status and Role of Women
The United Methodist Church

77 W Washington Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60602

www.umsexualethics.org

1-800-523-8390

Toll-free, confidential



You May Have Experienced Sexual Misconduct If:

- » An incident with a ministerial leader makes you feel uncomfortable or confused
- » You receive inappropriate personal gifts from a ministerial leader
- » Your counseling session with a ministerial leader focuses on their needs and issues, especially details of their intimate relationships
- » A ministerial leader invites you out for intimate, social occasions
- » A ministerial leader touches you in a confusing, uncomfortable, or upsetting way
- » A ministerial leader sends you emails, instant, and/or text messages with sexual overtures
- » A ministerial leader uses theological rationale for questionable conduct

If You Believe You Have Experienced Sexual Misconduct:

- » Pay attention to, and trust your feelings during and after the situation
- » Be direct and tell him/her to STOP the behavior
- » Be safe and leave the situation
- » Remember, you are not to blame
- » Document incidents by keeping and saving a record of dates, times, places, and witnesses of incidents
- » Save emails, letters, cards, voicemail messages, text messages, receipts, or notes
- » Share your feelings of hurt, betrayal, confusion, anxiety, or fear with someone you trust
- » Remember you are not the only person to whom this has happened

Reporting Sexual Misconduct of a Person in Ministerial Leadership:

- » The UMC encourages you to file a complaint if you believe a sexual boundary is violated
- » Submit the complaint in writing, signed and dated, to your Bishop or District Superintendent
- » You may also contact GCSRW's confidential, toll-free number 1-800-523-8390 for support
- » For more information, visit www.gcsr.org or www.umsexualethics.org

