

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS:

The central theme of Jesus' teaching is love for God and neighbor. Jesus embodied this message in his life, and charged women as well as men to use their talents significantly to lead others into the fullness of God's love.

This is the demand of our calling as disciples, According to the witness of Jesus Christ:

Jesus surrounded himself with women among his larger circle of disciples who supported the cause. *Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40-41, Luke 8:1-3, 23:49, John 20:14-18*

Jesus dignified women when others did not. *John 4:4-26, John 8:1-11*

It is a woman first to whom the angel appears with news of a messiah to be born. *Luke 1:26 ff*

It is a woman first who leads with the news of the Messiah's resurrection and proclaims it to the disciples. *Luke 24:1-10*

Very soon after the resurrection, Pentecost and the birth of the fledgling church, a number of women began to hold formative leadership positions within new church starts. *Acts 1:12-14, 18:24-26, 21:7-9, Romans 16:1-16*

Most scholarship holds that Paul's directives about women's silence and place in the church were situation-specific for cultural norms of the churches to whom he wrote in the first century A.D.—a context radically different from our own. *cf 1 Corinthians 14:33-36*

Paul makes the broader and radical claim that regardless of society-specific roles, all believers are equal in God's eyes. *Galatians 3:26-29*

WHAT THE UMC SAYS:

The United Methodist Church supports gender equality in all aspects of life and ministry.

We affirm with Scripture the common humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another. We call upon women and men alike to share power and control. We understand our gender diversity to be a gift from God, intended to add to the rich variety of human experience and perspective.

We affirm women and men to be equal in every aspect of their common life. We therefore urge that every effort be made to eliminate sex-role stereotypes ... in all aspects of voluntary and compensatory participation in the Church and society. We affirm the right of women to equal treatment in employment, responsibility, promotion and compensation. We affirm the importance of women in decision-making positions at all levels of Church and society and urge such bodies to guarantee their presence through policies of employment and recruitment.

Adapted from paragraphs 161.E and 162.F from *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012.*



www.ntcumc.org

I AM A WOMAN LEADER

The North Texas Conference affirms the goal of dynamic, diverse, powerful leadership that will ignite unstoppable growth for the transformation of the world.



GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

Does our leadership reflect the diversity of our community?

What messages do our written materials, media and website communicate regarding gender equality?

Is our curriculum, at every age level, consistent with United Methodist theology on equality?

Are we prepared to give witness to our beliefs about inclusion to the larger community in which we live?

What are our daughters and granddaughters hearing in our church about their value and place in the church and the world?



**Bishop's Initiative on Women's Leadership
North Texas Conference Commission on the Status
and Role of Women (COSROW)**

RECEIVING A FEMALE SENIOR PASTOR FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHAT THE S/PPRC CAN DO:

Be intentional about providing theological and biblical resources to the congregation regarding women in ministry/leadership.

Be intentional about welcoming your new pastor. Consider small informal gatherings where she can tell her story and connect with church leaders, perhaps being introduced by the outgoing pastor or by the S/PPRC Chair.

Equip your new pastor with important information about the culture and context of your church.

Open your hearts and decide that you are going to love your new pastor. Publically give her a vote of confidence as she steps into leadership.

Begin praying daily for the new pastor and family prior to her arrival.

Invite church members individually to send cards of welcome and encouragement to the incoming pastor.

Know that welcoming your new pastor in genuine and effective ways lays the ground work for a healthy and vital relationship and the development of stable, long-term ministries together.

Appoint a liaison to whom the pastor can go for help and information during the transition.

Ensure that the previous pastor will be publically supportive of the new pastor and in most cases will not return to participate in church events, funerals or other occasions.

Consider how you can support the clergy spouse and children in the transition.

WHAT THE OUTGOING PASTOR CAN DO:

Be intentional about providing theological and biblical resources to the congregation regarding women in ministry/leadership.

Know you are a key in helping the church embrace their new leader. Consider ways to be publically supportive of the new pastor prior to her arrival. Can you write a newsletter article about her? Can you arrange to be present to introduce her at small church gatherings? Can you help existing church staff be prepared to work with a female leader?

Be intentional about resolving church conflicts prior to the arrival of your new pastor.

WHAT THE INCOMING FEMALE PASTOR CAN DO:

Be intentional about learning the culture and context into which you are moving. Love them where they are while helping them grow into an attitude of full acceptance.

Take advantage of opportunities to be visible in the community (mission field).

Use your support network to provide prayer, encouragement and wisdom. Meet with a coach or experienced female mentor on a regular basis.

Know that you are a pioneer and may encounter resistance. Be prayerful and strategic about how you respond.

Be prepared to stay differentiated in the midst of conflict as the church "family" adjusts to your leadership.