

Proposed Restructure of United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women and Global Ministries are bringing legislation to General Conference 2012 that will implement a comprehensive plan to restructure United Methodist Women. The 140-year movement of women organizing for mission looks forward to another century of spiritual growth and action.

In their proposed restructure of The United Methodist Church, the Connectional Table gave an early nod to these proposals, recommending that United Methodist Women stand on its own within the structure of The United Methodist Church. The proposed restructure will strengthen the ties between United Methodist Women members, their national structure and the ministries they support around the world. It will also provide flexibility to local, district and conference United Methodist Women as they organize for mission.

The following is a synopsis of the new structure components organized by appropriate reviewing committee with associated proposed legislation, paragraph number.

National level United Methodist Women

Committee: General Administration
Petition title: United Methodist Women Organization
Petition: #20042-20050
Discipline paras.: #1318-1325

Upshot

- **United Methodist Women’s national policymaking body, now the Women’s Division, would operate as an autonomous organization of the United Methodist Church and not as a part of the General Board of Global Ministries. It would be empowered to raise funds for mission, as United Methodist Women has always done. (Petition #20048/Discipline para. #1324)**

In January 2009 Women’s Division was assigned direct oversight of mission work and programs funded by United Methodist Women’s Mission Giving funds. Prior to that, the General Board of Global Ministries (Global Ministries) administered these mission relationships. As an autonomous organization of The United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women’s national arm will continue to work in partnership with Global Ministries and other agencies of the church.

Women’s Division and Global Ministries are already forming new “tables” where staff share



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information and plan coordinated work. The proposed change will allow our participation in expanding concepts of mission and the global ministries of the church.

- **United Methodist Women's national policymaking body, now the Women's Division, will be renamed United Methodist Women. (Petition #20042/*Discipline* para. #1318)**

The name change would reflect the fact that under the new structure United Methodist Women's national policymaking body would no longer be a division of Global Ministries but an autonomous organization of The United Methodist Church.

- **United Methodist Women will be governed by a 25-member board of directors elected by United Methodist Women members. (Petition #20045/*Discipline* para. #1321)**
- **The board would be advised on matters related to program by a 70- to 80-member Program Advisory Group comprised of United Methodist Women members and mission partners. (Petition #20048/*Discipline* para. #1324)**

These changes will give United Methodist Women members a more direct connection to their mission work, as every conference would have a representative in United Methodist Women's national organization, and it will facilitate a connection with the board of directors.

The board of directors would include (Petition # 20050/*Discipline* para. #1325):

- **20 women** elected to the board of directors in United Methodist Women jurisdictional meetings.
- **Five women** nominated by a special nominating committee to ensure diversity of age, race, language, physical ability and working status. The board would be responsible for managing the organization's program policies, finances—including investments, budget, property, financial policies—and its chief executive staff person.
- **The 70- to 80-member Program Advisory Group would include (Petition #20048/*Discipline* para. #1324):**
- **United Methodist Women's 25-member board of directors.**
- **The five United Methodist Women jurisdictional presidents.**
- **A representative from each conference not already represented** on the 25-member board.
- **Representatives from Global Ministries and other United Methodist agencies, the deaconess and home missioner community, and, with voice but no vote, United Methodist Women regional missionaries and representatives of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and the federation's North America region.**

The Program Advisory Group would help set mission priorities and actions, support mission education work and provide program guidance for United Methodist Women.

Local level United Methodist Women

Committee: Local Church
Petition title: United Methodist Women
Petition: #20031
Discipline para.: #256.5

Upshot

- United Methodist Women shall be organized in every local church, and this organization will directly relate to the district, conference and national organizations of United Methodist Women.
- **Local organizations of United Methodist Women would be called the “local United Methodist Women” organization.** Currently, local United Methodist Women groups are referred to as “units.” This change reflects the reality of many local churches where the life of United Methodist Women is in its circles and recognizes the emergence of teen, university, retirement center and even seminary circles as well as online and district members.
- The United Methodist Women PURPOSE remains the same: United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.
- Local United Methodist Women are still empowered to raise funds for mission and all of these funds belong to the local organization and shall be disbursed only in accordance with its constitution and by its order.
- **Local United Methodist Women members shall elect a leadership team that includes at least, but not limited to, a president, a treasurer, a secretary and one member at large.**
- **Local United Methodist Women may form other teams or committees as needed to fulfill the PURPOSE in accordance with the constitution and guidance from the national organization of United Methodist Women.**
- **Under the proposed changes, local United Methodist Women members will have greater flexibility in organizing for mission.**

Jurisdiction, Conference and District levels United Methodist Women

Committee: Global Ministries
Petition titles: United Methodist Women in the Jurisdiction (#20032/#536)
United Methodist Women in the Annual Conference (#20033/#647)
United Methodist Women in the District (#20034/#669)
Petitions: # 20032-20034
Discipline paras.: #647, #536, #669

Upshot

- **The proposed changes will allow district, conference and jurisdictional United Methodist Women more flexibility to organize in their mission context.**
- Each jurisdiction, conference and district shall continue to have a jurisdiction, conference and district organization named United Methodist Women and have the authority to promote their work in accordance with the program and policies of the national organization of United Methodist Women.

- District and conference United Methodist Women shall elect a leadership team that includes at least, but not limited to, a president, a treasurer, a secretary and a Committee on Nominations. Districts may have other teams or committees as needed to fulfill the PURPOSE.

Deaconesses and Home Missioners

Committee: Global Ministries
Petition title: Deaconess and Home Missioner
Petitions: #20035-20041
Discipline paras.: #1314-1317

Upshot

- **There shall continue to be an Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner in The United Methodist Church.**
- **United Methodist Women’s national organization shall staff that office and be responsible for the oversight and coordination of the lay ministries of Deaconess and Home Missioner program.**
- Those serving as deaconess and home Missioners will be members of the local church and conference where their appointment is located and be a voting member of the charge conference of that church.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this work. These proposed changes launch United Methodist Women forward into another century of service as a mission organization with a special emphasis on the needs and concerns of women, children and youth, who are the still most vulnerable of populations around the world.