

# UMC clergywomen numbers increase

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GCSRW is happy to report that in 2011, the year of the most recent available data (from the General Council on Finance and Administration), The United Methodist Church in the United States has experienced a 13% growth in the number of women clergy, to 11,368 from 10,128 in 2006. The growth comes despite a net decline in overall clergy (men and women) of 53 people in the same time frame, a 0.1 percent decline.

## A third -- or more

The table to the right illustrates the profound gains of women clergy in the UMC. (The full table is available at the end of the article)

- In 2006, 22% of annual conferences (13 out of 59<sup>[1]</sup>) could boast that women comprised 30% or more of clergy positions, only 2 of which could report at 33% or more.
- In 2011, 34% of annual conferences (19 out of 56) reported that women comprised 30% or more of clergy positions, 10 of which can brag of 33% or more.

Percent of Women Clergy 2006-2011				
Annual Conference	2011	Rank	Annual Conference	2006
New England	38%	<b>1</b>	New England	36%
Rocky Mountain	37%	<b>2</b>	North Central New York	33%
Peninsula-Delaware	36%	<b>3</b>	Wyoming	32%
Nebraska	35%	<b>4</b>	Kansas East	32%
Kansas East	34%	<b>5</b>	Rocky Mountain	31%
California-Nevada	34%	<b>6</b>	Oklahoma Indian Missionary	31%
Oregon-Idaho	33%	<b>7</b>	Northern Illinois	31%
Northern Illinois	33%	<b>8</b>	California-Nevada	31%
Upper New York	33%	<b>9</b>	Baltimore-Washington	30%
Baltimore-Washington	33%	<b>10</b>	Troy	30%
Wisconsin	32%	<b>11</b>	Greater New Jersey	30%
North Texas	32%	<b>12</b>	Western New York	30%
Central Texas	32%	<b>13</b>	Oregon-Idaho	30%
Pacific Northwest	32%	<b>14</b>		
Minnesota	31%	<b>15</b>		
Southwest Texas	31%	<b>16</b>		
New York	30%	<b>17</b>		
Missouri	30%	<b>18</b>		
West Michigan	30%	<b>19</b>		

## What affected the numbers?

### 1) Decline in local clergy membership

In 2006, GCFA reported a total of 44,979 clergy, and in 2011 it reported 44,926 clergy. The decline of clergy in the church nationwide was negligible for a five-year period (~4650 lost

overall and ~4600 added). However, some annual conferences experienced a concentrated portion of this shift. For example, Nebraska's clergy membership was reduced by 46%, with a net loss of 220 people, only 38 of whom were women, thereby increasing the membership of clergywomen by 30%, bringing them into the top

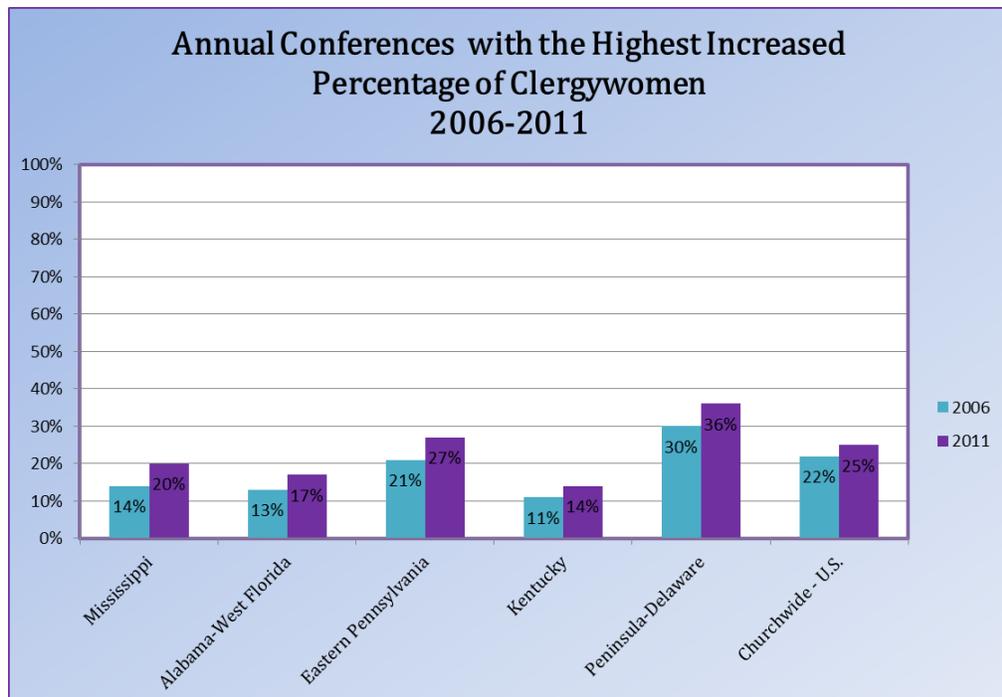
ranks. The clergy membership of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference fell by 24%, a net loss of 17 people, where women were lost at a rate of 32% and men at a rate of 22%, which caused it to fall below the 30% floor.

## 2) Merged conferences

From 2006 to 2011, several annual conferences split and/or merged with other nearby conferences. For example, in 2010, the front runner New England conference gained a part of the Troy conference, which contributed to its top rank in 2011. Meanwhile, the Wyoming and

North Central New York (who had the second and third highest percentages in 2006 respectively) contributed numbers to the newly formed Upper New York annual conference, placing it within the 33% or more range.

Paragraph 142 of the 2012 Book of Discipline defines clergy as 'individuals who serve as commissioned ministers, deacons, elders, and local pastors under appointment of a bishop (full- and part-time), who hold membership in an annual conference, and who are commissioned, ordained, or licensed.'

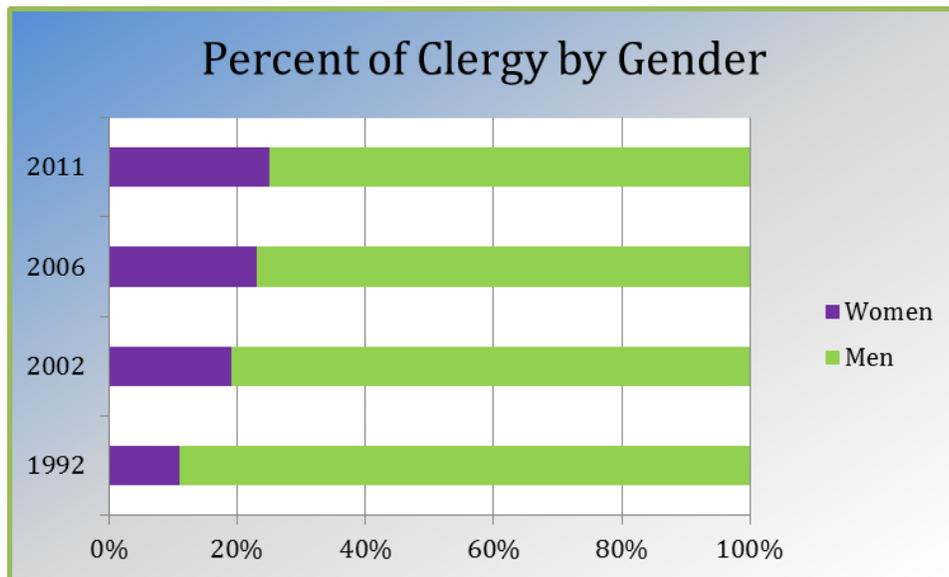


GCSRW would also like to highlight the five annual conferences that have most increased their clergywomen percentages from 2006 to 2011 [\[2\]](#)

- Mississippi had a net gain of 67 women in their clergy membership, a 44% increase.
- Alabama-West Florida had a net gain of 36 clergywomen, a 39% increase.
- Eastern Pennsylvania had a net gain of 53 clergywomen, a 35% increase.
- Kentucky had a net gain of 31 clergywomen, a 34% increase.
- Peninsula-Delaware had a net gain of 36 clergywomen, a 30% increase.

## The Big Picture

Women now make up 25% of the total U.S. clergy population due to the 13% increase, a net gain of 1,240 women. This is a significant advancement from the 11% clergywomen population in 1992 and 19% in 2002.



## Next Month

Next month, Women by the Numbers will examine sexual ethics attitudes among clergy. Clergy statistics will return in subsequent installments as we examine jurisdictions, elders/deacons, racial-ethnic backgrounds, and leadership positions such as district superintendents, DCMs, and treasurers.

[1] The numbers reported by the General Council on Finance and Administration for 2011 and 2006 were gathered from annual conferences who self-reported their data, during these years some conferences split and merged with other conferences, changing the total number of conferences calculated in this set to 56 from 59. Some conferences were not included in the calculations at all due to a lack of submitted data. As a result, overall totals may be inaccurate. For this reason, some conferences are not included in the lists that may have been otherwise. Conferences not included in the data set are: Alaska Missionary, Red Bird Missionary, and Rio Grande. [2] Nebraska was excluded from this list because of the default gain from the large loss of clergy membership.

<b>% of Clergy Who are Women</b>				
<b>Annual Conference</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Annual Conference</b>	<b>2006</b>
New England	38%	1	New England	36%
Rocky Mountain	37%	2	North Central New York	33%
Peninsula-Delaware	36%	3	Wyoming	32%
Nebraska	35%	4	Kansas East	32%
Kansas East	34%	5	Rocky Mountain	31%
California-Nevada	34%	6	Oklahoma Indian Missionary	31%
Oregon-Idaho	33%	7	Northern Illinois	31%
Northern Illinois	33%	8	California-Nevada	31%
Upper New York	33%	9	Baltimore-Washington	30%
Baltimore-Washington	33%	10	Troy	30%
Wisconsin	32%	11	Greater New Jersey	30%
North Texas	32%	12	Western New York	30%
Central Texas	32%	13	Oregon-Idaho	30%
Pacific Northwest	32%	14	Wisconsin	29%
Minnesota	31%	15	Peninsula-Delaware	29%
Southwest Texas	31%	16	Central Texas	28%
New York	30%	17	Minnesota	27%
Missouri	30%	18	New York	27%
West Michigan	30%	19	Southwest Texas	27%
Kansas West	29%	20	Pacific Northwest	27%
Greater New Jersey	29%	21	West Michigan	27%
California-Pacific	29%	22	Nebraska	27%
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	28%	23	North Texas	26%
Detroit	28%	24	Kansas West	26%
Iowa	28%	25	Detroit	25%
Desert Southwest	27%	26	Missouri	25%
Susquahanna	27%	27	Iowa	24%
Eastern Pennsylvania	27%	28	Yellowstone	24%
Western North Carolina	25%	29	California-Pacific	24%
Yellowstone	25%	30	Louisiana	24%
Texas	25%	31	North Georgia	23%
North Carolina	25%	32	West Ohio	22%
Louisiana	25%	33	Dakotas	22%
Virginia	24%	34	North Carolina	21%
South Carolina	24%	35	Western North Carolina	21%
East Ohio	23%	36	Virginia	21%
West Ohio	23%	37	Texas	21%
New Mexico	23%	38	East Ohio	21%
West Virginia	22%	39	Eastern Pennsylvania	20%
North Georgia	22%	40	Illinois Great Rivers	20%
Dakotas	22%	41	South Indiana	20%
Illinois Great Rivers	21%	42	Central Pennsylvania	20%
Indiana	21%	43	Oklahoma	20%
Oklahoma	21%	44	West Virginia	19%
Florida	21%	45	North Alabama	19%
Western Pennsylvania	20%	46	South Carolina	19%
Arkansas	20%	47	Tennessee	18%
Tennessee	20%	48	North Indiana	18%
Mississippi	20%	49	New Mexico	18%
Alabama-West Florida	17%	50	Florida	18%
Holston	17%	51	Arkansas	18%
Memphis	16%	52	Western Pennsylvania	16%
North Alabama	15%	53	Holston	15%
South Georgia	15%	54	Memphis	15%
Kentucky	14%	55	Mississippi	14%
Northwest Texas	14%	56	South Georgia	13%
		57	Northwest Texas	13%
		58	Alabama-West Florida	13%
		59	Kentucky	11%