

Percentage of women superintendents on par with clergywomen statistics

Southeastern, South Central jurisdiction trail other regions in women DS's

Twenty-three percent of the district superintendents serving The United Methodist Church in the United States are women. This compares favorably to the 21% of the clergy in denomination who are women (see table on facing page). From this vantage point, clergywomen are represented in positions of leadership across the denomination.


However, not all annual conferences have 23% or more women district superintendents. Only half of the annual conferences (32) have 23% or more of their district superintendent positions filled by women. In the Alaska Missionary, Dakotas, Desert Southwest, New England, Northern Illinois, Peninsula-Delaware, Rocky Mountain, Western New York, and Wyoming conferences, women clergy account for 50% of the district superintendents in each annual conference. Interestingly, only Wyoming, Western New York, and the Dakotas have women bishops. Men oversee the remaining six annual conferences.


The Memphis, North Alabama, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oklahoma Indian Missionary, Red Bird Missionary, Rio Grande, and Texas conferences *have fewer than 10%* of their district superintendent positions filled by women. Three of these annual conferences (Memphis, Red Bird Missionary, and Rio Grande) have no women superintendents. Of these eight annual conferences, only Texas is served by a woman bishop.


The data show that increasing numbers of clergywomen have translated into increasing numbers of women serving as district superintendents. The gains, however, have not been uniform, and much work still needs to be done to increase the role of clergywomen in leadership positions.


This lack of women in leadership positions can be seen most clearly when status-gender pyramids are constructed (see table below). These “pyramids” show the female and male breakdowns in each jurisdiction by


Breakdown by Jurisdiction

North Central Jurisdiction	Female	Male	
Bishops	40%	60%	
DS	30%	70%	
Clergy	23%	77%	
Laity	57%	43%	

North East Jurisdiction	Female	Male	
Bishops	30%	70%	
DS	32%	68%	
Clergy	25%	75%	
Laity	60%	40%	

South Central Jurisdiction	Female	Male	
Bishops	18%	82%	
DS	13%	87%	
Clergy	20%	80%	
Laity	58%	42%	

South Eastern Jurisdiction	Female	Male	
Bishops	23%	77%	
DS	16%	84%	
Clergy	16%	84%	
Laity	57%	43%	

Western Jurisdiction	Female	Male	
Bishops	50%	50%	
DS	36%	64%	
Clergy	33%	67%	
Laity	60%	40%	


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status: lay, clergy, district superintendent, and bishop.

By comparing the data side-by-side—as in a pyramid—it allows, at a glance, the ability to see if a particular status is balanced; that is, if percentages are nearly equal, and if not, to which side it leans.

The pyramids show that with the exception of the laity status, all the other statuses lean toward men rather than women. Although it is worth noting that the status of bishop in the Western Jurisdiction is an equal 50-50% split.

The number of United Methodist laywomen exceeds that of laymen in each jurisdiction. The difference, though, is at most 20 percentage points, with both the Northeast Jurisdiction and Western Jurisdiction leading the way.

The other statuses lean toward male dominance and do so by some very large differences. For district superintendents in the South Central Jurisdiction, there is a 74 percentage-point difference between the number of male district superintendents and female district superintendents. Those numbers are almost identical in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. 

Percent Male and Female District Superintendent and Percent Male and Female Total Membership (Lay and Clergy) by Annual Conference, 2004 (from highest to lowest percentages of women DS's)

Annual Conference	Percent Female DS	Percent Male DS	Percent Female (Clergy and Lay)	Percent Male (Clergy and Lay)
New England	50%	50%	61%	39%
Desert Southwest	50%	50%	60%	40%
Wyoming	50%	50%	60%	40%
Western New York	50%	50%	59%	41%
Rocky Mountain	50%	50%	59%	41%
Northern Illinois	50%	50%	57%	43%
Dakotas	50%	50%	56%	44%
California-Nevada	43%	57%	60%	40%
Oregon-Idaho	40%	60%	62%	38%
North Central New York	40%	60%	61%	39%
Western North Carolina	36%	64%	56%	44%
East Ohio	33%	67%	63%	37%
Greater New Jersey	33%	67%	61%	39%
Baltimore-Washington	33%	67%	61%	39%
West Michigan	33%	67%	60%	40%
Eastern Pennsylvania	33%	67%	59%	41%
Minnesota	33%	67%	59%	41%
Yellowstone	33%	67%	56%	44%
Detroit	29%	71%	60%	40%
West Ohio	29%	71%	58%	42%
Kansas West	29%	71%	56%	44%
California-Pacific	25%	75%	60%	40%
Troy	25%	75%	58%	42%
Wisconsin	25%	75%	58%	42%
New Mexico	25%	75%	58%	42%
Iowa	25%	75%	57%	43%
Illinois Great Rivers	25%	75%	57%	43%
Central Pennsylvania	22%	78%	56%	44%
North Indiana	22%	78%	42%	58%
Florida	21%	79%	59%	41%
Western Pennsylvania	20%	80%	57%	43%
Pacific Northwest	17%	83%	61%	39%
South Carolina	17%	83%	58%	42%
Kentucky	17%	83%	57%	43%
North Texas	17%	83%	57%	43%
Holston	17%	83%	57%	43%
Virginia	17%	83%	56%	44%
New York	14%	86%	61%	39%
Louisiana	14%	86%	58%	42%
Southwest Texas	14%	86%	57%	43%
Tennessee	14%	86%	57%	43%
Northwest Texas	14%	86%	56%	44%
Nebraska	13%	88%	57%	43%
Alabama-West Florida	13%	88%	57%	43%
South Georgia	11%	89%	57%	43%
Arkansas	11%	89%	55%	45%
OIMC	8%	92%	61%	39%
Oklahoma	8%	92%	58%	42%
Texas	8%	92%	58%	42%
North Carolina	8%	92%	56%	44%
North Alabama	8%	92%	55%	45%
Rio Grande	0%	100%	70%	30%
Memphis	0%	100%	58%	42%

The following annual conferences did not submit male-female membership data for 2004: Alaska Missionary, Central Texas, Kansas East, North Georgia, North Texas, Mississippi, Missouri, Peninsula-Delaware, and South Indiana.