

Number of U.S. women bishops down by 1

U.S. racial-ethnic women bishops reduced by 2

By Craig This and Elaine Moy

The 2008 U.S. Jurisdictional Conferences elected eight clergypersons (six men and two women) to replace the seven retiring (and one resigning) bishops (five men and three women). As a result, the total number of active U.S. women bishops dropped by one, from 15 in 2005-08 to 14 currently.

There are 50 active U.S. bishops serving the United Methodist Church, all elected for life terms and assigned to specific episcopal areas. The U.S. bishops, plus 30 active bishops in the Philippines, Africa and Europe, and the 86 retired bishops constitute the international Council of Bishops.

Three women bishops retired as of this fall: Violet Fisher of the New York West Area and Beverly Shamana of the San Francisco Area (both African American), and Sharon Brown Christopher of the Springfield (Ill.) Area (who is white).

Delegates in this year's round of voting elected two white clergywomen as bishops: Elaine Stanovsky, assigned to the Denver Area (Western Jurisdiction), and Peggy Johnson, assigned to the Philadelphia Area (Northeastern Jurisdiction). No women of color were elected by U.S. jurisdictions.

As a result, only two U.S. women of color serve as active bishops on the council: Minerva Carcaño of the Phoenix Area, a Latina, and Linda Lee of the Wisconsin Area, who is African American. The denomination has yet to elect a woman bishop from the Asian-American, Native American, or Pacific Island community.

Overall UMC Rank, 2005	Annual Conference	Lay Membership, 2005	Bishop, 2009-2012	Gender	Race
North Central					
9	West Ohio	230,626	Ough	M	W
11	Iowa	193,637	Trimble	M	B
14	East Ohio	180,463	Hopkins	M	W
21	Illinois Great Rivers	149,003	Palmer	M	B
31	South Indiana	111,320	Coyner	M	W
32	Northern Illinois	107,161	Jung	M	A
35	Detroit	102,427	Keaton	M	B
36	North Indiana	98,292	Coyner	M	W
38	Wisconsin	93,736	Lee	F	B
45	Minnesota	81,890	Dyck	F	W
49	West Michigan	67,894	Keaton	M	B
56	Dakotas	42,133	Kiesey	F	W
Northeastern					
10	Baltimore-Washington	196,487	Schol	M	W
12	Western Pennsylvania	191,593	Bickerton	M	W
23	Central Pennsylvania	146,564	Middleton	F	W
27	Eastern Pennsylvania	126,739	Johnson	F	W
28	New York	124,527	Park	M	A
33	West Virginia	105,348	Lyght	M	B
34	Greater New Jersey	102,755	Devadhar	M	A
37	New England	95,742	Weaver	M	W
39	Peninsula-Delaware	92,281	Johnson	F	W
46	North Central New York	77,742	Matthews	M	B
51	Wyoming	63,683	Hassinger	F	W
53	Western New York	57,091	Matthews	M	B
54	Troy	51,636	Hassinger	F	W
South Central					
5	Texas	283,483	Huie	F	W
6	Oklahoma	244,880	Hayes	M	W
15	Missouri	173,794	Schnase	M	W
17	Central Texas	160,039	Lowry	M	W
18	North Texas	159,762	Bledsoe	M	B
24	Arkansas	138,309	Crutchfield	M	W
26	Louisiana	126,826	Hutchinson	M	W
29	Southwest Texas	119,657	Dorff	M	W
43	Kansas West	85,796	Jones	M	W
44	Nebraska	83,015	Sherer	F	W
47	Kansas East	74,966	Jones	M	W
50	Northwest Texas	65,772	Whitfield	M	W
57	New Mexico	39,218	Whitfield	M	W
60	Rio Grande	14,468	Dorff	M	W
61	Oklahoma Indian Missionary	6,237	Hayes	M	W

Race: W=White, B=Black, A=Asian, H=Hispanic

Source: 2005 lay membership data provided by www.gcfa.org

e numbers

Women bishops by jurisdiction

Women bishops comprise 28% of all active U.S. bishops (14 of 50). The North Central Jurisdiction saw its total number of female bishops drop from 4 to 3, while the remaining jurisdictions retained the same number of female bishops.

In terms of total denomination-wide membership, women account for more than 50% of U.S. United Methodist members. Overall, then, U.S. women are underrepresented at the bishops' table. The one exception is the Western Jurisdiction, where half the current bishops are women and half are men.

In the North Central and Northeastern jurisdictions, male bishops outnumber female bishops 2 to 1. In the Southeastern Jurisdiction, male bishops outnumber female bishops 3 to 1, and in the South Central Jurisdiction male bishops outnumber female bishops 4 to 1. For the most part, these ratios remain unchanged from 2004.

Where do women bishops serve?

Within the South Central and Western jurisdictions, women oversee the largest episcopal areas (Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, Houston Area, and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Los Angeles Area). In the Southeastern Jurisdiction, Bishop Charlene Kammerer leads the Richmond (Va.) Area, the second largest area in that region, and bishops Mary Virginia Taylor (South Carolina) and Hope Morgan Ward (Mississippi), each serve areas of 100,000-plus members.

In the Northeast Jurisdiction, Bishop Jane Allen Middleton (Harrisburg Area) also oversees a 100,000-member area (Central Pennsylvania). However, in the North Central Jurisdiction, the three women bishops (Bishop Deborah Lieder Kiesey, Dakotas Area; Bishop Sharon A. Brown Christopher, Illinois Great Rivers; and Bishop

Overall UMC Rank, 2005	Annual Conference	Lay Membership, 2005	Bishop, 2009-2012	Gender	Race
Southeastern					
1	North Georgia	341,813	Watson	M	W
2	Virginia	341,264	Kammerer	F	W
3	Florida	321,849	Whitaker	M	W
4	Western North Carolina	293,090	Goodpaster	M	W
7	South Carolina	241,664	Taylor	F	W
8	North Carolina	236,544	Gwinn	M	W
13	Mississippi	188,783	Ward	F	W
16	Holston	167,340	Swanson	M	B
19	North Alabama	153,703	Willimon	M	W
20	Kentucky	152,193	Davis	M	W
22	Alabama-West Florida	147,942	Leeland	M	W
25	South Georgia	137,831	King	M	B
30	Tennessee	117,358	Wills	M	W
41	Memphis	88,265	Wills	M	W
63	Red Bird Missionary	1,406	Davis	M	W
Western					
40	California-Pacific	88,665	Swenson	F	W
42	California-Nevada	85,925	Brown	M	B
48	Rocky Mountain	68,796	Stanovsky	F	W
52	Pacific Northwest	57,497	Hagiya	M	A
55	Desert Southwest	43,003	Carcaño	F	H
58	Oregon-Idaho	33,752	Hoshibata	M	A
59	Yellowstone	15,754	Stanovsky	F	W
62	Alaska Missionary	4,000	Hagiya	M	A

Race: W=White, B=Black, A=Asian, H=Hispanic

Source: 2005 lay membership data provided by www.gcfa.org

Sally Dyck, Minnesota) administer three of the four smallest membership conferences. 🦋

Craig This is data analyst in the Department of Institutional Research at Wright State University in Ohio.
Elaine Moy is associate general secretary of GCSRW.