A How-to Guide to Monitoring

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW)

Contents

How to Use this Guide

This packet was developed as a tool to assist with monitoring the administrative and programmatic functions of The United Methodist Church. Any space that involves gatherings of people and/or decision making can be a place where monitoring occurs. While the tools in this packet are geared towards mid-to-large sized meetings, there are elements that can be adapted to your context.

Previous monitoring processes have focused heavily on demographic tracking. While every process has its time, place, and value, GCSRW wants to bring a renewed focus towards better understanding any barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church. By emphasizing narratives and storytelling, we believe that our monitoring process will be more impactful than ever before.

Purpose of Each Section

Below you will find descriptions of each section in this guide, along with how they may be utilized in your monitoring work.

GCSRW Mandate & Purpose of Monitoring

This section provides insights into the work that GCSRW is mandated to do and explains why monitoring matters.

Preparing for Monitoring – A Timeline

Monitoring preparation should begin as soon as event dates are identified. This timeline will help you work backwards from those dates to ensure that you are as prepared as possible for successful monitoring.

Foundational Definitions

As you monitor for inclusiveness, you may experience, witness, or hear about situations that do not feel equitable. These definitions, along with example scenarios, can help you understand what those inequities are called.

What We Monitor For

Now that you know "the why" and a few technical terms, you will need a broader understanding of what you are looking for. As we continue to gather raw data through demographic information, a shift toward self-awareness, observations, and understanding will be critical to your monitoring process.

How to Monitor

Once you are familiar with what it is you are looking for, you will need to know how to put those thoughts into action. This section will guide you through sample documents and worksheets that will help with reporting, observations, and data gathering.

Best Practices for Gathering & Sharing

Outside of the sample documents and worksheets, you may find that you are looking to obtain data or feedback in other ways. Here, you can find information on how to create charts, develop narratives, and even build surveys.

Training for Monitoring

Are you hoping to host a live monitoring training session in your Annual or Regional Conference? Or, are you seeking other resources to support your monitoring knowledge? Find out what might be possible in this section.

Acknowledging Our Cultural & Contextual Differences

We trust that as United Methodists we each have a commitment to the value that ALL persons shall have voice, representation, and full equity within our beloved Church. As a worldwide denomination, we recognize every region will have different vernacular in how they understand and express diversity as well as best practices in monitoring that diversity. We understand that while certain regions may have the desire and capacity to monitor multiple levels of demographical information, other areas may not be at that same place or have capacity to monitor the same demographical characteristics.

All of our forms are adaptable for your region's needs. Our goal is not to have every region monitor the same information or in the same ways, but that we all monitor for the barriers in our regions that prohibit persons from having full and equal access to serving and participation throughout the life of The United Methodist Church. If filling out a form works best for your regions, use them. If crafting a narrative of what you see and experience works best, then do so. If you are able to do both, even better! Overall, we want to empower you to find the most effective ways to monitor for your region and to share that information with GCSRW. We are graciously open to the continued discovery of new possibilities for how and what to monitor.

GCSRW Mandate & Purpose of Monitoring

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is mandated by the Book of Discipline "to challenge The United Methodist Church, including its general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life."[1]

Through this work, the agency has also been tasked with functioning as a monitor for the programmatic and administrative functions of the Church.[2] This includes gathering data, making recommendations, and suggesting guidelines for action to eradicate discrimination in any form.[3] Monitoring allows us to better understand the barriers that prevent equity and equality between all persons.

To that end, GCSRW affirms that:
- All persons are equal creations of God, made in God's image and worthy of God's blessing.
- All persons should be included in the full life of the Church.
- When expert advice is needed, experts should be sought from diverse backgrounds based on education, talents, and experience rather than on stereotypes.
- All members throughout the full life of the Church should have opportunities to serve in various ways.
- Expansive and inclusive language should be used for people and God.
- Leadership comes in all forms and skills—we should not limit a person's role based on stereotypes.

GCSRW monitors both individual and corporate behaviors. Monitoring fosters collective responsibility for how our subconsciously held beliefs impact our actions. By monitoring, we are asked to intentionally shape our behaviors to reflect our belief in the equal responsibility and participation of all persons in the full life of the Church. Monitoring is not policing, participating in discussion, finger pointing, or shaming.

GCSRW understands that:
- Behaviors are based in attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values that are learned.
- Changing deep-seated beliefs and values is difficult.
- Immediate suggestions of inclusive alternatives are a strong healing strategy.

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[1] The Book of Discipline 2020/2024, ¶ 2102.
[2] The Book of Discipline 2020/2024, ¶ 2102.
[3] The Book of Discipline 2020/2024, ¶ 2103.

- When groups function effectively and respectfully, it is a strong motivator for those within the group.
- Giving immediate feedback on actual behavior in a situation is an effective strategy for changing exclusive behaviors (i.e., action research, *described below*).

Often, we can let the notes from our monitoring speak for themselves. We do not have to make judgments because a presiding officer will see what we have seen in those notes. We literally count or tell the story of the incidences of disparate behaviors and who is impacted by them. This is what equity educators call "action research," and we can feed it back to the presiding officer after the end of the session, in a special conversation later, or in a daily column in a newsletter. We examine the data we collect for general patterns of disparity, remembering these patterns can be the result of learned yet unconscious bias.

Below are several outcomes from action research, exhibiting why monitoring is important:

- Leaders work best on problems they have identified for themselves.
- Leaders become more effective when they are encouraged to examine and assess their own work and consider ways of working differently.
- Leaders work collaboratively.
- Action research promotes leadership development.

Preparing for Monitoring – A Timeline

As Soon as You Know That an Event is Being Planned
- Offer to participate in the planning process. This is an opportunity to raise and resolve potential concerns before they arise at the event itself. - Reach out to the event facilitators to encourage them to include **optional** demographic questions in the registration forms and confirm that they would be willing to share that aggregated data with you (*see Sample Request for Registration Data Collection, p.12).* - Contact event facilitators to request time for speakers to introduce monitoring and give daily progress reports. - For recurring events (e.g., Annual Conference), you may need to plan reaching out on a recurring basis. This could be to your Director of Connectional Ministries, Assistant to the Bishop, or other relevant point person. - For larger events (e.g., Annual Conference), you may consider asking the event facilitators to distribute a survey assessing inclusiveness prior to the date of the event. (*see Sample Inclusiveness Questions)*

Three Months Prior to the Event

- Recruit volunteer monitors for the event. The number of monitors needed will depend on the type of work that is being done, and the layout of the event. If there will be breakout sessions or committee work, it is recommended that there be at least one monitor in each room. Large, plenary sessions may require a monitor in each area of the room.
  - Be sure to consider experience and diversity—ethnic, gender, and geographic, etc.
- Plan a monitoring training event for your team. You may prefer to request an in-person training, virtual training, or watch a pre-recorded training.
- Become familiar with this packet and all sample worksheets for the event.

One Month Prior to the Event

- Host your monitoring training event.
- Develop a method for obtaining anonymous feedback at the event regarding celebrations and concerns around inclusiveness. *(see Feedback Loop Opportunity, p.15)*
- Print out any reports or worksheets your monitors will need. Organizing them all into a folder with a few pens is a simple, effective process.

During the Event

- If you have utilized a feedback loop, make sure it is live. Be prepared for people to "report" things to you once you are identified as a monitor.
- Provide a sense of peaceful presence through your monitoring.
- Give daily reports on your monitoring, if allowable. If not, find a way to share these in other ways (i.e., social media).

After the Event

- Submit your findings and reports to GCSRW by emailing info@gcsrw.org.
- Debrief with your monitors. What worked, what did not, and what can we do better?
- Provide any reports to event leadership and thank them for their assistance.

Foundational Definitions

Term	Definition
Balance	An even distribution in attention, weighing importance, time, and support

Term	Definition
Behaviors	Based in attitudes, opinions, beliefs and values that are learned; changed beliefs and values are difficult
Bias	An opinion before there is a reason for it, a leaning of the mind; partiality; bias comes from subtle messages—about differences, values and/or power between people
Corporate Behavior	Collective actions, interactions, and reactions
Expectations	Anticipation of a specified characteristic or outcome; we get our expectations from others, especially those in authority and power (teachers, parents, etc.); good/bad, positive/negative
Explicit Bias	Attitudes or beliefs that we have about others on a conscious level *Example: A person publicly stating they won't hire people of a specific group.*
Fragmentation/Isolation	By separating issues from the "main" issue implies that these issues are less important and not part of the main component *Example: There is a discussion about the lack of funding and a person says—"In hard times, we don't have time to deal with the side issues of social justice, women's issues, etc."*
Imbalance/Selectivity	Presenting only one interpretation of an issue, a situation, or group of people; it restricts the knowledge of the varied perspectives that apply to any given situation; reality is distorted and complex; differing viewpoints are more freely ignored *Example: When discussing a topic in the legislative committee regarding women's equality, men were speaking on behalf of women.*
Implicit Bias	Attitudes or beliefs that we have about others on an unconscious level *Example: Choosing not to promote a woman because she has a family.*
Invisibility Bias	Certain groups are underrepresented *Example: A delegate complains that the translator talks too loudly and that "those" delegates can't possibly expect to contribute unless they speak English when they come to General Conference; highlighting certain groups while not acknowledging other groups.*

Term	Definition
Leader	A person in a position of influence, privilege, or power that has a direct impact on others' participation and achievement because that person's perceptions and expectations of others shape their behavior towards others. Their behavior also demonstrates their expectations of us which influences others' expectations of us.
Linguistic Bias	Making assumptions about a person based off of the language they use or the way that they speak
Monitoring	A means of observing the behaviors, opportunities to serve and participate, and general inclusiveness of a gathering to bring awareness to the challenges and barriers present; additionally includes providing feedback and recommendations to resolve these issues
Parity	Representative participation within a group comparable to the whole. *Example: The rate of participation of female delegates is comparable (within 5-6%) to their presence in the group as a whole.*
Parallel Language	Not treating diverse persons or groups in comparable and equivalent ways. *Example: Members of General Conference from the U.S. are called "delegates" and members from Central Conferences are called "guests from other countries." Women are called "ladies" or "girls" and men are called "men" or by their titles.*
People-First Language	Prioritizing a person over their characteristics or conditions; addressing people by the names and terms appropriate for them
Perceptions	Detection and interpretation of information from the external world; perceptions of ourselves and others shape our expectations
Stereotyping	Assigning traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group, limiting the potential and abilities of the group by limiting ones'/your expectation of this group *Example: A committee chair prefaces the election of additional officers with the opinion that women are the best committee secretaries because they write so well.*

Term	Definition
Unreality Bias	Presenting biased narratives as definitive reality without acknowledging that there may be other interpretations or information missing. *Example: Speakers chosen to present a special global emphasis before General Conference plenary are all White and speakers of English as their first language.*

What We Monitor For

While monitoring can be done in any place, there are certain conditions that support monitoring efforts best:

- Acknowledging that we all are hurtful to one another at times, and we can seek forgiveness and learn from the experience;
- Creating of an environment that would support each other knowing that we will make mistakes; and,
- Being kind when addressing the hurt (do not assume it was done intentionally).

Once these conditions are established, our monitoring work is often more receptive.

The Goal

When we monitor, our goal is to observe opportunities to serve and opportunities to participate. These are both major areas where disparities and exclusions are often present. As you direct your attention to these opportunities, you may also witness specific types of bias. Below are descriptions of what we monitor, along with thoughts that help us hone our focus.

Serving

Opportunities to serve involve consideration of positions of leadership, authority, and visibility. Thoughtful questions to consider when addressing this focus area are:

- Who is elected as leader of the committee?
- Does the chair "share" presiding time with other officers (especially if they are women or racial/ethnic persons)?
- Does the chair of the committee provide opportunities at the podium in plenary to certain subcommittee chairs and not others?
- Does the leadership of the committee reflect the breadth of voices and experiences in the larger body?

Participating

Opportunities to participate involve consideration of who participates and how they participate. Considerations to keep in mind are:

- Look closely at the behavior of those in authority in the group, usually the officers (especially the person "chairing" or presiding), other officers, subcommittee chairs and officers, parliamentarians, and sometimes even pages.
- Who is recognized to speak, present, or participate in group processes? Who is not?
- Who takes the opportunity to speak by talking without being recognized?
- Are people in a certain part of the room not noticed or recognized to speak?
- Does the presider allow enough time for diverse thinking processes and translation before recognizing the first person to speak?
- Does the presider remind the group of the need to respect diverse linguistic and cognitive needs?
- Are certain people given feedback on their comments by the presiding officer while others are not? Are certain people "scolded" or "discounted" and others are not for similar comments?
- Are "time limits" imposed to curtail certain delegates' participation and not others? Are certain delegates allowed to "go on and on" and others not?
- When a question is posed to the chair for advice on how to proceed, are certain delegates taken seriously and others' requests are not?

Bias

The following are examples of types of bias that can be experienced when participating in places and spaces; there are also questions to help you ponder each:

Exclusive Language
- Do those in authority in the group use "inclusive language" for persons in the group (i.e., humankind instead of mankind)?
- Are people addressed by the names and terms appropriate for them (and if you do not know, are there opportunities for feedback and learning)?
- Are certain persons addressed with informality or familiarity and others with "titles"?
- Is exclusive language used even after attention is raised regarding its use?

Invisibility or Selectivity
- Are delegates who use language interpretation (or English is not their first language) somehow "discounted" as not integral to the process?
- Do chairpersons or delegates complain about the need to allow sufficient time for translation and participation of delegates?
- Are there "favorites"?
- Are certain delegates frequently "ignored" when trying to be recognized?

- Is feedback given comparably to all members of the group?
- Is inclusiveness highlighted by sharing feedback on committee progress with the entire group?

Stereotyping

- Are persons recommended for roles based on their gender, race, culture, national origin, or language?
- Are persons clearly or subtly excluded because of perceived abilities, language facility, gender, race, or culture?

How to Monitor

First, gather all of the forms that you may need. You can find them as PDFs in the appendix of this document (pp.19-32) or in Word format on our website (gcsrw.org). The PDF version does not allow you to edit, but the Word version does.

We recommend having the following forms in preparation for monitoring:

- Sample Request for Registration Data Collection (p.19)
- Sample Opening Report (p.20)
- Sample Monitoring Sheets
    o Worship/Ordination Service Sheets (X & Circle Tracking Options) (pp.21-22)
    o Session Monitoring Sheets (X & Circle Tracking Options) (pp.23-24).
    o Observation Sheets (p.25)
- Sample Daily Report (p.26)

Then, you will want to utilize the worksheets in the above order.

Sample Request for Registration Data Collection

This resource is a template letter that can be used to encourage event facilitators to include demographic information as part of their registration forms. It explains why the data is important, as well as how this can help streamline parts of the event itself.

When monitoring, the goal is for participants and speakers to self-identify the characteristics/demographic information they feel comfortable sharing. Due to the breadth of information that can be shared, this often feels challenging and cumbersome during events. To assist in streamlining, it is recommended that if at all possible, registration forms for the event contain **optional** demographic information. It is also important that this data be shared with the appropriate monitors prior to the event.

If monitors are allowed access to this data, they can simply document the names of the speakers and cross-reference the demographic information later. This leads to a smoother event experience, while providing that self-identified information in a more protected way. Collecting this data beforehand also helps calculate the total number of session members, which can be a burden to obtain otherwise.

Note: It is critical that anyone who has access to this information treat it with discretion and in accordance with privacy laws.

Sample Opening Report

This template was written with your introduction as a monitor in mind. While this particular draft has been geared towards an Annual Conference setting, it can be adjusted to fit your meeting's context. Whether at Annual Conference, Regional Conference, General Conference, or other programmatic and administrative meetings of the Church, having the opportunity to share about who you are and the purpose of monitoring can help set the tone for a positive experience.

On this form, you'll want to fill in any information where there are brackets or a blank line. Once you have done this, you can utilize this script as you address the plenary.

Sample Monitoring Sheets

In the past, we have utilized monitoring sheets to assist with the monitoring process. We have recently revised them to be more streamlined, while providing several versions of the worksheets for you to track your data.

Worship/Ordination Service
For the worship/ordination service sheets, you will have several options to choose from. You can utilize a **Worship/Ordination Service X Tracking Sheet** or a **Worship/Ordination Service Circle Tracking Sheet**. This is completely up to your personal preference. - As you observe worship and ordination services, do your best to identify each of the people who participates in the service, whether preaching, leading music, or those who speak. - Also, consider whether there was inclusive and expansive language/imagery used in the sermon, prayers, scripture, hymns, music, and worship liturgy. Pay particular attention to the language used for God and humans. - There are also several spaces to document your notes regarding inclusivity, trends, whether the leadership reflects those in attendance, and any other thoughts.

Session Monitoring Sheets
For the session sheets, you have two options to choose from. You can utilize a **Session Monitoring X Tracking Sheet** or a **Session Monitoring Circle Tracking Sheet**. This is completely up to your

personal preference. On the **X Tracking Sheet**, you would make an "X" or other mark in each column as appropriate.

On the **Circle Tracking Sheet**, you would circle each characteristic as appropriate. As you make note of each line's information, remember that it is more important to document a person's demographics rather than their name and district information. If a person speaks more than once, we do encourage you to make note of that and other comments in the last column.

Things to document in the Notes column:
- If a person identifies with another characteristic not listed.
- If a speaker goes longer than a minute or so, indicate "L" for lengthy speech. How speakers monopolize "air time" of the group can be a power/control piece.
- Any verbatim examples of exclusive language on anyone's part.
- When a speaker is a "repeater," write an "R." You can also start tracking how many times, if applicable.
  - *Note: You do not need to count the presider or presenter every time they speak.*

At the end of each session, total each column by number on each page, then add the pages together if you have utilized more than one. This raw data can help form the basis for any narrative that you would like to report from the session. Comparing this data day over day, or even session by session, may indicate certain patterns to you.

Observation Sheets

This sheet goes alongside the Session Monitoring Sheet; it is to help document more broad-sweeping observations during these sessions. It is these observations that can provide examples for storytelling in your reporting.

Once you complete your above Monitoring Sheets, you will use that information to populate your Sample Daily Report.

Sample Daily Report

This report is intended for daily use, following the Opening Report previously provided. A recommended time to present this report is the next day at the beginning of the first session. This may require asking the event facilitator for the opportunity to share; it is helpful to do this prior to the event itself. If that is not possible, find a private moment to introduce yourself to the person who is leading the meeting and see what might be possible. Feel free to revise the report as appropriate for your context and consider integrating ideas from the section on *Crafting a Narrative below.* A Sample Completed Daily Report can be found in the Appendix on pp.27-28.

Best Practices for Gathering & Sharing Information

On occasion you may find yourself in need of gathering information outside of the above Monitoring Process. Below you will find additional ways to obtain and share information that may be useful for your local context.

Sample Inclusiveness Questions

It may be helpful to survey an Annual Conference or members of other bodies regarding their perceptions and experiences relating to gender and inclusiveness. One way that this can be done is through an anonymous survey. Questions can be populated into platforms such as Google Forms, Typeform, Jotform, or Survey Monkey in order to provide an easy path for participation. Below are questions that you may consider including in a survey:

> 1. Demographic Questions
>   a. Gender – Female, Male, Non-Binary
>   b. Age Group – Youth (12-17), Young Adult (18-30), Adult (31-64), Older Adult (Over 65)
>   c. Ethnicity – Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latine, Native American, Pacific Islander, White, Multiracial
>   d. Status – Clergy, Laity
>   e. Disability – Yes, No
>   f. District (based on your context)
> 2. Do you hold a leadership position in your local church?
> 3. Are you aware of any sexist behaviors or systemic/structural sexism in the _____ Annual Conference (through your own observation or that you have heard from others)?
> 4. Have you personally experienced overtly sexist behaviors or systemic/structural sexism in the _____ Annual Conference?

It is recommended that these questions be disseminated and responded to prior to the hosting of an event, so that monitors can review the aggregated data and utilize it in their narrative reporting.

Note: These questions were adapted from questions developed by Discipleship Ministries regarding race and culture.

Feedback Loop Opportunity

While you are monitoring, you may find that people may want to approach you and share their stories based on what they have observed or experienced on their own. Having a platform where

people can share this anonymous information can also help you in your narrative reporting. This simple form might include questions like the below:

> 1. When did you experience or witness success relating to equity, diverse representation, wholehearted acceptance, and grace?
> 2. When did you experience or witness marginalization, contempt, insult, or bigotry?
> 3. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

These questions can be utilized in a virtual format, including access to the survey via QR code, or in a hard copy paper format. Simply be sure to explain to participants how they can get their comments to you. A Sample Feedback Loop Responses document can be found in the Appendix (p.29).

Note: Questions 1. and 2. above are modeled from the Greater New Jersey Monitoring Team's work.

Crafting a Narrative

One of the most critical but challenging pieces of monitoring relates to how we share the information we receive back with the larger body. Once you have information and numbers, what might be the most important things to highlight? It depends.

Remember: we are looking at barriers for participation among all persons but we are also looking at potential disparities. Consider what it is your data shows that needs to be shared. What does the data indicate? What are the potential impacts related to said data? Why does this matter?

This is the place where you will want to narrate stories. While charts and data can be striking, it may be easier to remember stories over numbers. Consider whose voices and experiences you are trying to uplift. When it comes time to share this information in your daily reports, striking a balance between data and storytelling is key. This is where the above survey on inclusiveness and feedback loop can be helpful.

At times, the truth will be hard to tell. That is just one of the reasons why the work of monitoring is so important—as we take an honest look at ourselves, our policies, and our practices, we can become more attuned to the work that needs to be done.

Five Considerations for Turning Data into a Narrative

> 1. **Be Prepared to Think Differently.** Switching from numbers to words can be hard! By shifting your mindset from the numbers you've collected and imagining the story you'd like to tell about them is a place to begin. Take a break from the data if you need to, then come back with a renewed mind.

2. **Know Your Audience.** Here, we're speaking to a group of religious people in religious spaces. This is a great opportunity to bring in scriptural grounding! You'll want to tie together how identifying and overcoming barriers relates to reflecting God's kin'dom.

3. **Be Memorable.** Even when numbers and data are shocking, they are often hard to remember. People are more likely to recall the impact that a story had on them. Think about what might be meaningful for you—it may be meaningful to others, too.

4. **Add Visuals.** Don't be afraid to use graphics to share your information. Simple charts can go a long way in highlighting differences in what appears to be a set of numbers. Be sure that you clearly label information on any visuals to avoid confusion.

5. **Practice Makes Progress.** This is not a perfect science; storytelling may come more naturally to some over others. The experiences you have as you are monitoring will occur on a case-by-case basis. As more anecdotes, data, and information come to you, you'll become more seasoned at sharing it with the larger group.

Once you have reviewed the considerations above, get better at this work by taking a look at our Sample Ways to Craft a Narrative worksheet found on pp.30-32.

Training for Monitoring

Now that you have had the chance to review the entire packet, you may find yourself wanting more! Whether you have questions, concerns, or even ideas, reach out to us at info@gcsrw.org and let us know how we can help. We may be able to offer an in-person monitoring training upon request, and we further provide opportunities for virtual training and recordings of previous trainings. You may also wish to tighten your skillsets in ways that complement your work in this space. For example, GCSRW staff can provide workshops on Crafting a Narrative to help you become more comfortable with storytelling.

Appendix

[Name of Event Facilitator]

My name is _____ and I am representing the Annual Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women (AC-COSROW). I heard about the [upcoming event] and will be monitoring for gender inclusion and report those findings back to the [event]. The goal of monitoring is to help the Church hold the most inclusive meeting possible, where every voice is respected and given opportunity to be heard. Monitoring is not policing, participating in the discussion, finger pointing, or shaming.

When monitoring the event, one way to help streamline the type of information typically requested from the floor is by having it be submitted ahead of time. This will allow for a smoother event overall, while also helping myself and my team access data that can better support our monitoring efforts. In order to do this, I would highly encourage you to request demographic information as part of the registration process.

Should you be willing to approve this request, it is important this remain optional for registrants, and that they know that this information will be for aggregate monitoring purposes only. Below are the recommended demographic breakdowns that we hope you might include:

- Gender – Female, Male, Non-Binary
- Race/Ethnicity – Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latine, Native American, Pacific Islander, White, Multiracial
- Age – Youth (12-17), Young Adult (18-30), Adult (31-64), Older Adult (Over 65)
- Status – Clergy, Laity
- Disability – Yes, No

If this information is voluntarily provided ahead of time, we can cross reference it by name instead of having each participant announce this information each time they go to a microphone to speak. This information will be utilized only with the utmost discretion and in accordance with privacy laws.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women appreciates the work of the [event] to ensure that our monitoring data is informed by self-reporting.

Respectfully submitted,

[Monitor]
On behalf of AC-COSROW Monitoring team

_____ Annual Conference, _____, 20__   [Everywhere], [State]

My name is _____ I am a [race], [gender], [age], [status] representing the AC-COSROW. I want to thank you on behalf of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of the United Methodist Church for your commitment to the responsibilities of the BOD Paragraph 2102. We are monitoring for gender inclusion and reporting those findings back to the Annual Conference. The goal of monitoring is to help the Church hold the most inclusive session possible, where every voice is respected and given opportunity to be heard. Monitoring is not policing, participating in the discussion, finger pointing, or shaming.

Monitoring is observing with intentionality and reporting back the observations to assist the members of the Annual Conference in being self-aware of one's conduct toward the other. We will be observing the persons who are called upon to speak, the manner in which speakers address and show respect for one another, and the manner in which others show respect in listening to the speakers.

We will give our attention to the following basic principles during conference meetings:

Language matters. Our monitoring forms include female, male, and non-binary. There are so many different names for God in the Bible. Unfortunately, we too often reference God as male. Humanity is created in the image of God and it is not necessary to always address God as male. Instead, consider a gender-neutral way to reference God, such as Creator, Sustainer, etc.

Which voices are being heard? Is every voice given the same amount of time and respect?

Integrity and ethical behavior require self-awareness and intentionality.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women appreciates the work of the annual conference to make sure all members have the chance to voice their opinions. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our monitoring report and pray it can be helpful. We commend your commitment to strive toward inclusivity and safer space for all to participate.

The Board of Directors of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, together our President, Bishop Delores J. Williamston, are in prayer that these monitoring tools and reports will help each of us be more aware of our conduct towards one another and our intentionality in including all voices equitably in the discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

[Monitor]
On behalf of AC-COSROW Monitoring team

Event:_____ Date:_____

Observer's Name:_____ Start Time: _____End Time:_____

List All Persons Who Speak		Gender			Race/Ethnicity							Age				Status		Disability		Add'l. Observations
Name	District	F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	Notes
Totals																				

Abbreviation Key: **F** – Female, **M** – Male, **NB** – Non-Binary; **A** – Asian, **B** – Black, **H/L** – Hispanic/Latine, **NA** – Native American, **PI** – Pacific Islander, **W** – White, **MR** – Multiracial; **Y** – Youth (12-17), **YA** – Young Adult (18-30), **A** – Adult (31-64), **OA** – Older Adult (Over 65); **C** – Clergy, **L** - Laity

Use of inclusive language/imagery in:

Focus Area	Yes	No	Focus Area	Yes	No	Notes regarding inclusivity
Sermon			Hymns			
Prayers			Music			
Scripture			Worship Liturgy			
God Language			Words for Humans			

Do you recognize any trends among the worship services so far? What are they?

Does the leadership of the worship services reflect those in attendance?

Any other comments/observations to note?

Page _____ of _____

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Event:_____ Date:_____

Observer's Name:_____ Start Time: _____End Time:_____

List All Persons Who Speak		Gender			Race/Ethnicity							Age				Status		Disability		Add'l. Observations
Name	District	F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	Notes
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
Totals																				

*Abbreviation Key: **F** – Female, **M** – Male, **NB** – Non-Binary; **A** – Asian, **B** – Black, **H/L** – Hispanic/Latine, **NA** – Native American, **PI** – Pacific Islander, **W** – White, **MR** – Multiracial; **Y** – Youth (12-17), **YA** – Young Adult (18-30), **A** – Adult (31-64), **OA** – Older Adult (Over 65); **C** – Clergy, **L** - Laity*

Use of inclusive language/imagery in:

Focus Area	Yes	No	Focus Area	Yes	No	Notes regarding inclusivity
Sermon			Hymns			
Prayers			Music			
Scripture			Worship Liturgy			
God Language			Words for Humans			

Do you recognize any trends among the worship services so far? What are they?

Does the leadership of the worship services reflect those in attendance?

Any other comments/observations to note?

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Event:_____ Date:_____

Observer's Name:_____ Start Time: _____End Time:_____

List All Persons Who Speak		Gender			Race/Ethnicity							Age				Status		Disability		Add'l. Observations
Name	District	F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	Notes
Totals																				

Who is the Presider? Who is seated on stage? Who has been a Presenter this Session?

Any other comments/observations to note?

Abbreviation Key: F – Female, **M** – Male, **NB** – Non-Binary; **A** – Asian, **B** – Black, **H/L** – Hispanic/Latine, **NA** – Native American, **PI** – Pacific Islander, **W** – White, **MR** – Multiracial; **Y** – Youth (12-17), **YA** – Young Adult (18-30), **A** – Adult (31-64), **OA** – Older Adult (Over 65); **C** – Clergy, **L** - Laity

Page ____ of ____

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Event:_____ Date:_____

Observer's Name:_____ Start Time: _____ End Time:_____

List All Persons Who Speak		Gender			Race/Ethnicity							Age				Status		Disability		Add'l. Observations
Name	District	F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	Notes
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
		F	M	NB	A	B	H/L	NA	PI	W	MR	Y	YA	A	OA	C	L	Y	N	
Totals																				

Who is the Presider? Who is seated on stage? Who has been a Presenter this Session?

Any other comments/observations to note?

Abbreviation Key: F – Female, **M** – Male, **NB** – Non-Binary; **A** – Asian, **B** – Black, **H/L** – Hispanic/Latine, **NA** – Native American, **PI** – Pacific Islander,
W – White, **MR** – Multiracial; **Y** – Youth (12-17), **YA** – Young Adult (18-30), **A** – Adult (31-64), **OA** – Older Adult (Over 65); **C** – Clergy, **L** – Laity

Page _____ of _____

Event:_____ Date: _____

Observer's Name:_____ Start Time: _____End Time: _____

In as far as you could determine, were there any observations of inclusiveness or exclusiveness regarding gender? *Examples:*	Yes	No
In as far as you could determine, were there any observations of inclusiveness or exclusiveness regarding race/ethnicity? *Examples:*	Yes	No
In as far as you could determine, were there any observations of inclusiveness or exclusiveness regarding nationality? *Examples:*	Yes	No
In as far as you could determine, were there any observations of the presider's inclusiveness or exclusiveness? *Examples:*	Yes	No
As far as you could determine, were the speeches, comments or questions of racial ethnic participants, women, young adults, or people with disabilities treated with the same respect as whites, men, older adults or those without disabilities, respectively? *Examples:*	Yes	No
Were persons using translators given sufficient time? *Examples:*	Yes	No
Was there a particular group of people who dominated the discussion? *Examples:*	Yes	No
Was there a particular group of people who have not had the opportunity to speak? *Examples:*	Yes	No
Are people talking for "others" rather than letting the "others" talk for themselves? *Examples:*	Yes	No
What are the best practices of this session? *Examples:*		
Did you note any ways for persons with disabilities to engage? (i.e., large print options, ASL translators, closed captioning, enough room in the aisles, access to microphones for persons with limited mobility, additional time given or space held) *Examples:*		
Additional comments and observations worth noting:		

General Commission
on the Status and
Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Jurisdiction/Central Conference
Date

Report of the Monitoring Team
The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Thank you for the opportunity to present this daily report and thank you to the leadership who approved the request in compliance with the Book of Discipline. We appreciate [Event Facilitator's Name]'s attention to this matter.

This report contains our observations and the data we gathered, together with recommendations and suggestions as we strive to challenge The UMC to the full inclusion of women's full participation in the total life of the Church.

These sessions were [in the zoom webinar format/in person] which made identifying the speakers and persons raising questions ….

Monitors were _#_ lay and _#_ clergy members of the _____ [annual conference/jurisdictional conference/central conference].

We observed… (incorporate data from the worship/ordination, session monitoring, and observation sheets).

We noted the following…

Speakers: Gender
               Ethnicity
               Age
               Persons with Disability

[Suggestions/ideas for improvements]

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that we work to be intentional in all ways, as we continue our time together.

Respectfully submitted,

[Monitor]
On behalf of GCSRW Monitoring team

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Louisiana Annual Conference
June 15, 2025

Report of the Monitoring Team
The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Thank you for the opportunity to present this daily report and thank you to the leadership who approved the request in compliance with the Book of Discipline. We appreciate Bishop Williamston's attention to this matter.

This report contains our observations and the data we gathered, together with recommendations and suggestions as we strive to challenge The UMC to the full inclusion of women's full participation in the total life of the Church.

These sessions were in person at the Hilton Baton Rouge Downtown which made identifying the speakers and persons raising questions relatively straightforward. As monitors, we were able to see and hear the speakers clearly, with visibility across the room.

Monitors were 2 lay and 2 clergy members of the Louisiana Annual Conference. They are members of different districts and all women. (If you're interested in participating in this work, we'd love to expand this group to include others!)

After our first day of meeting yesterday, our observations are as follows:

We appreciate that there was a Land Acknowledgment by a Native American clergyperson at the opening of this year's Annual Conference. It is important for us to remember and respect those whose ancestors have been present on this land long before those of us who sit here today.

The Opening Worship service was led by a variety of individuals: clergy and lay, white persons, black persons, and Asian persons, youth, young adults, adults, and older adults. Each of these persons had a role to play in reading the liturgy, and helped to reflect the Beloved Community that God has joined us together in.

From a room set-up perspective, we noted that of the four microphones on the floor, one of them was unable to be accessed by wheelchair because the aisle was too narrow. This information was shared with a member of the design team, who worked with the hotel staff to quickly rectify this situation. We are grateful for their efforts in responding so that all can be included!

We also received a comment in our anonymous Feedback Loop that I'd like to share:

"We are grateful for the work that you are doing to help us learn about monitoring during Annual Conference. This concept is very new to me, but I understand its purpose. If you could help us better understand how things work, that would go a long way."

First, we are so glad to hear things like this. It means you are curious. And I guarantee that you are not the only person thinking this! As we continue with our monitoring reports, we will walk you through what our attention has been drawn to and how you can learn and how you can help.

As an example, each day you will hear something similar to the following in our reporting.

We noted the following speakers during our first session:

Speakers: 7 Females, 11 Males
                 1 Asian Person, 2 Black Persons, 15 White Persons
                 1 Youth, 2 Young Adults, 11 Adults, 3 Older Adults
                 11 Clergy, 3 Laity

While we note that Session 1 on Day 1 is often a sharing of information from conference leaders on the stage with less opportunity for comments from the floor, there has been about a 40% Female to 60% Male ratio of speakers, and a 6% Asian Person, 11% Black Person, and 83% White Persons ratio of speakers. Tracking these numbers and ratios help us better understand the voices around us. We have work to do to become more equitable.

As we move forward over the coming days, we hope that you will be self-aware of who is speaking, who gets the opportunity to speak, who we have not yet heard from, who the loudest voices are, and whose voices need amplifying. The main purpose of our monitoring work is to help identify barriers of participation at meetings like these, and we hope that you will join us in being part of addressing any inequities that arise along the way.

Please continue to share any celebrations and concerns that you might witness as it comes to barriers of participation. They can be shared with any monitor verbally, or you can submit through our anonymous Feedback Loop found in the Annual Conference app.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that we work to be intentional in all ways, as we continue our time together.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Katrena King
On behalf of GCSRW Monitoring team

General Commission
on the Status and
Role of Women

1. When did you experience or witness success relating to equity, diverse representation, wholehearted acceptance, and grace?

   Example Responses:

   - *The Presider used a culturally insensitive phrase during a session (i.e., "grandfathered in"). They later brought it up before the whole body and apologized, explaining the historical meaning of the phrase and why it was offensive.*
   - *When debating a touchy subject about race in session, I witnessed people of different races having thoughtful discussion and truly listening to one another's concerns.*
   - *During session, the Presider realized that there wasn't enough aisle space for someone in an electric wheelchair to approach the microphone. They paused the session for a break in order to make sure all 4 microphones were accessible by wheelchair, then explained that inclusion is an important part of the church's work, before then letting the person raise their comment.*

2. When did you experience or witness marginalization, contempt, insult, or bigotry?

   Example Responses:

   - *I noticed that the white clergy and clergy of color did not intermingle when sitting in sessions.*
   - *I overhead someone say that they didn't have time to deal with "these silly women's issues when there are bigger problems to solve."*
   - *The Presider audibly sighed and rolled their eyes when an elderly person called for a Point of Information.*

3. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

   Example Responses:

   - *Thank you for having this option for us to share our celebrations and concerns without fear of judgment.*
   - *The monitoring team is doing a great job! Keep up the good work.*
   - *I am concerned that only one side of the room is being called on to speak. Can this be shared with the Presider?*

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sample Ways to Craft a Narrative

Below are ways of taking examples of information you might have and then reframing that into digestible bits of information for the larger group to think about. A good "formula" for storytelling can include mention of **scriptural grounding, inequities, and the importance of inclusion**. Graphical representations are also helpful for showing numbers in a visual format. You will see each section titled "The Story You Can Tell" reads from the voice of you, as presenter, to the larger audience.

Example 1

Information You Have
Worship Service Data
- 4 Black, 5 White
- 6 Male, 3 Female
- 7 Clergy, 2 Laity

A Comment Shared with a Monitor
- "My grandchild attended opening worship with me and said, 'Why isn't there anyone up there who looks like me?' This really gave me pause. How can we be more inclusive of different cultures so that all feel welcome?"
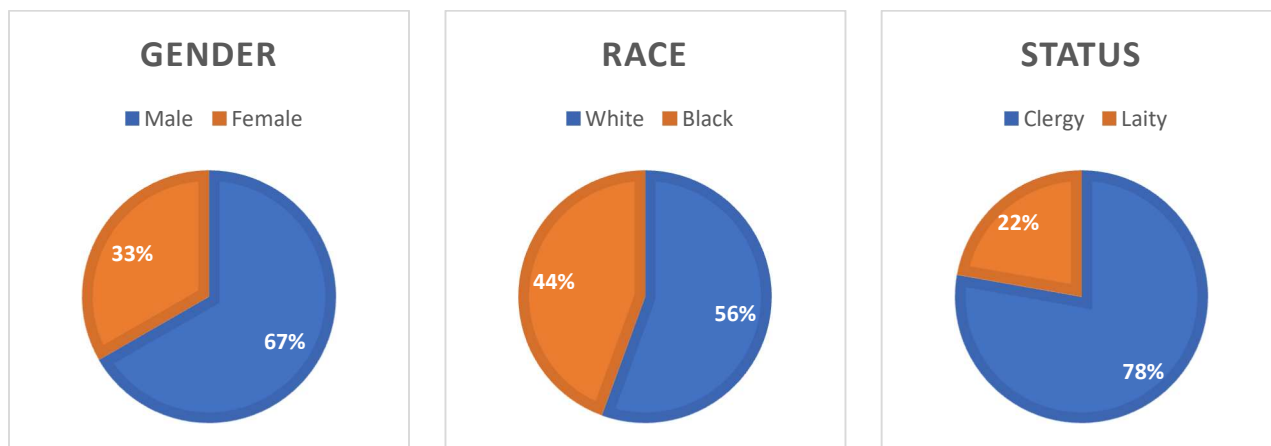
The Story You Can Tell
Scriptural Grounding
Galatians 3:28 states, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." While there are only a few examples listed here, what the scripture is trying to say is that *all persons* have value in the sight of God. As we do the work of Monitors, it is our job to raise awareness to those things that keep us from feeling that value.

Inequities
When there are inequities, there is room for opportunity. Below are charts that show the breakdown of those who led the worship service. Take a look at what information is being shared and take a look at who might be missing. Where can more attention be paid? How can we be more inclusive? Only 1 woman leads for every 2 men. Our racial/ethnic breakdown is coming closer to equal. We know that laity make up the bulk of the membership of the Church, but only 2 shared during the Worship Service.

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

GENDER

■ Male ■ Female

33%

67%

RACE

■ White ■ Black

44%

56%

STATUS

■ Clergy ■ Laity

22%

78%

Why Inclusion is important

Today, a story was shared with one of our Monitors and I'd like to take a moment to share it with you, too. This person shared that they attended the Worship Service with a young relative and that relative asked "Why isn't there anyone up there that looks like me?" This question should give us all pause. Young people are the future of not only the Church, but of the world. How are they to know that they, too, can lead? That they, too, belong? By drawing attention to the people that are missing, we can be reminded of the ways that we need to work to make the Church a more inclusive and accepting place.

Example 2

Information You Have

Session Data

- 2 Black, 10 White
- 7 Male, 5 Female
- 11 Adults
- 8 Clergy, 3 Laity

A Comment from the Anonymous Feedback Loop

- "The Monitoring work is so important. I can already notice a difference in how people are being more thoughtful around listening more than they speak."
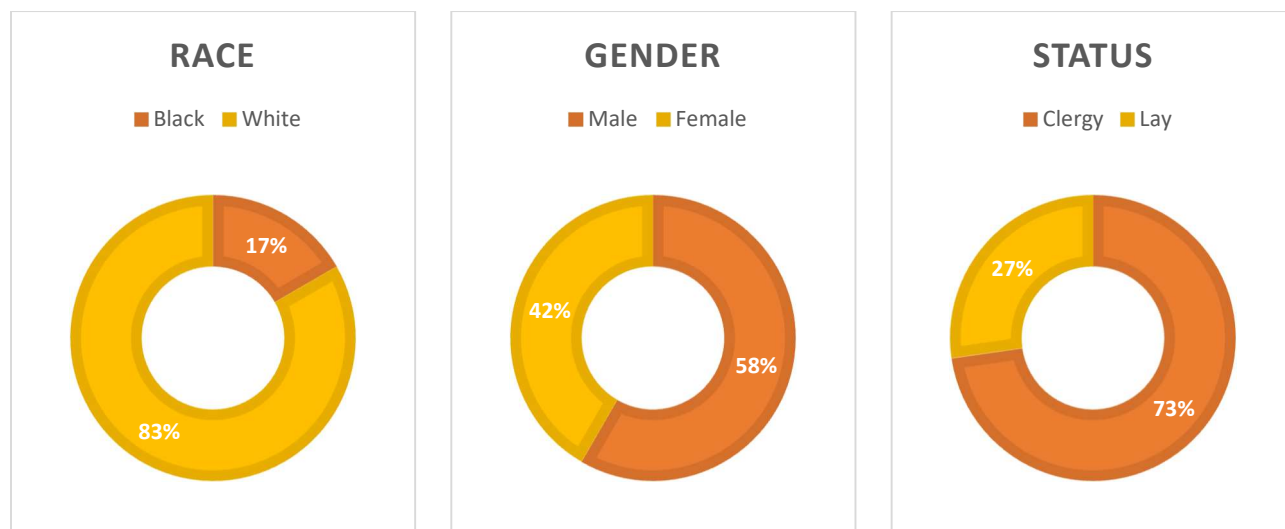
The Story You Can Tell

Scriptural Grounding

James 1:19 states, "My dear siblings, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry[.]"

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Inequities

In today's Session, we heard from differing individuals, some more than others. As I share the next information with you, consider what questions the visuals raise for you, and then consider how you might play a role in contributing toward positive change. When digging into this Session's data, we heard from 2 Black Persons and 10 White Persons. That is a large gap and does not represent the makeup of our Annual Conference equitably. We can do better! We also heard from 7 Males, 5 Females, and 0 Non-Binary Persons. While this is more balanced, it is not equal. And regarding status, we heard from 3 Lay Persons and 8 Clergy Persons. Again, we can do better.

RACE
■ Black ■ White
17%
83%

GENDER
■ Male ■ Female
42%
58%

STATUS
■ Clergy ■ Lay
27%
73%

Why Inclusion is important

Sometimes, we need to listen more than we speak. Friends, I invite you to take a look around the room. Look at your neighbors sitting around you. Have we offered them an opportunity to speak? Have they had the chance? I encourage you to pause a moment before you approach a microphone; offer that space up to someone else before you rise. And to our leadership team, I hope that you'll offer that same space as you guide the conversation forward throughout the day. Being thoughtful does not always mean rushing through things. It takes intention to include those who many not ordinarily have the chance to speak and it takes opportunity for them to do so.