



April 25, 2019  
 Harriet Jane Olson, JD  
 General Secretary/CEO, United Methodist Women  
 National Office  
 475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor  
 New York, NY 10115

Dear Ms. Olson,

**Circle Up:  
 United Methodist  
 Women for Moms**

- Kaycee Crisp*
- Whitney Thurman*
- Sarah Gutierrez*
- Cassie Gresham*
- Lindsay Liggett*
- Laura Lee Daigle*
- Emily George*
- Darcy Hamre*
- Tegra Swogger*
- Leslie Story*
- Katie Kaighin*
- Melanie Dow*
- Carly Criscoe*
- Erin Scarth*
- Maggie Boyd*
- Jennifer Gius*

We are writing to express disappointment in the UMW's formal response to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. Our local circle, Circle Up for Moms at the First United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, recently took up the mantle of UMW as the core principles and values of empowerment, anti-racism, inclusion, and equity are central to our faith and to our advocacy work on behalf of Texas mothers. The Traditional Plan passed at General Conference is antithetical to these values and has already done irrevocable harm by what it communicates to LGBTQIA people. While we appreciate that you offered a response to the proceedings and decision, we were profoundly disappointed that your response did not offer an explicit condemnation of the Traditional Plan.

As you know, UMW has been on the forefront of women's issues for 150 years. Central to the movement has been a conviction that women belong anywhere that men do. Today, the United Methodist Church has more bishops, clergy, seminary professors, deacons, and leaders of church agencies who are women than any other church in the world. We are convinced that the visibility of women at all levels of denominational leadership can be largely attributed to the organizational power, presence, and witness of UMW. When considering the power of UMW to affect change, it is deeply disappointing and frustrating that the organization has not embraced the opportunity for leadership on the issues of LGBTQIA ordination and marriage. In fact, we consider the lack of explicit condemnation of the Traditional Plan to communicate tacit approval of the continued discrimination and marginalization of gender and sexual minorities by the United Methodist Church.

We recognize the freedom and privilege that our identities as white, cis-gender, heterosexual women provides us; freedoms due in no small part to the work of UMW. We also recognize that this freedom is not ours to hold; rather, we must continue the work of dismantling oppression in all forms, against all peoples, in all corners of the globe. We cannot do this work without an unambiguous denunciation of the Traditional Plan and its discriminatory language. We urge you, as the leader of the largest denominational faith organization for women worldwide, to use your power and platform to publicly reject the harmful Traditional Plan and to call for a way forward that centers the lives, gifts, and well-being of LGBTQIA people worldwide. After all, a foundational philosophy of the Methodist Tradition is the Wesleyan principle of "do no harm."

Thank you in advance for considering our request to clearly and unambiguously reject the denomination's vote to approve the Traditional Plan.

Sincerely,

The women of Circle Up: United Methodist Women for Moms

