

UNITED METHODIST REVISED SOCIAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2024

UMC GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Pending review and adoption, here are talking points to bring the message and story of UMC social holiness to life.

Since its founding, The United Methodist Church engaged in social issues of the day, as an expression of the Wesleyan commitment to social holiness. Over many decades, Methodists continued to address social concerns via the Social Creed. In 1972, United Methodist Social Principles were created and adopted at the General Conference. The process to keep our Social Principles current and relevant continues today.

MAIN TALKING POINTS

1. The Revised Social Principles are not official documents of the United Methodist Church Yet

- After an eight-year journey that began in 2012, the Revised Social Principles document was completed in 2020 and **is now pending adoption** at The General Conference 2024.
- The Revised Social Principles have circulated in draft form within UMC over the past four years, causing some confusion about their use – however, they must be adopted by General Conference to become part of the United Methodist Church’s official social teachings.

2. The Revised Social Principles is a globally relevant document with strong theological and biblical grounding

- The revised document’s global perspective is a resource for mission and ministry, equipping churches to do ministry in their local contexts.
- The principles are aligned with references to the United Methodist Book of Discipline and are biblically grounded.
- The process created a more globally relevant and coherent document.
- This is a document for the whole church for Sunday school classes, Bible studies, preaching from the pulpit, and teaching in seminary classes.

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CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

MAIN TALKING POINTS

3. UMC Social Principles advocate for social justice that dates to John Wesley, founder of Methodism in the 1730's.

- Starting the Methodist movement in the early 18th Century, John Wesley advocated for prison reform, the abolition of slavery, ending hunger and poverty and the elimination of child labor.
- In 1908, Methodists continued the Wesleyan commitment to social holiness by adopting the Methodist Church's (North) first Social Creed.
- When the new United Methodist denomination was born in 1968, the General Conference authorized a commission to draft a statement of the church's Social Principles blending perspectives from the Evangelical United Brethren, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the formerly segregated Central Jurisdiction.
- In 1972, the General Conference adopted the first Social Principles document.
- Every four years, individual Social Principles are added, amended and updated.
- 2020 is the first time since 1972 that the Social Principles document has been reviewed and edited as a whole, bringing our identity as a global church to life.

4. Reflecting the Church's convictions, the Revised Social Principles document has four main sections: Community of All Creation; Social Community; Economic Community; and Political Community

- The Revised Social Principles embodies the heart of the Social Creed by continuing to address today's important issues facing communities and individuals in a practical way.
- This document stands in the Wesleyan method of theological development based on Scripture, along with tradition, reason and Christian experience to live out the Gospel in every arena of life (the Wesleyan Quadrilateral).
- For each area, a Wesleyan quote and Scriptural reference grounds the section, as well as a reasoned, experienced understanding of a topic.

5. The Social Principles Revision process is a uniquely United Methodist approach and experience

- Church and Society built a diverse faithful, global, worshipful, covenanted, conciliar and ecumenical network of United Methodist leaders to craft multiple drafts together.
- The experience of the revision process exemplified Methodist values of conferencing, connection, and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.
- 52 writing team members from: Philippines Central Conference, Africa Central Conference, Congo Central Conference, West Africa Central Conference, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, and all five U.S. Jurisdictions.
- Over 4,000 United Methodists read, reviewed and commented on the first Social Principles draft.
- The document was strengthened through global conversations and input on how the Social Principles impacts everyone's life.

6. Church and Society was the UMC agency called to steward the Social Principles Revision Process

- The General Conferences 2012 and 2016 mandated Church and Society to convene the revision process nearly 50 years after the first Social Principles document was created and adopted.
- Managed by Church and Society, a diverse audience of Wesleyan theological and global Christians celebrated their common faith and identity as United Methodists with the development of the Revised Social Principles, reaffirming the church's tradition of social holiness and our call to witness for justice and peace today.
- In the spring of 2019, the board approved the final document for adoption at The General Conference 2020, which was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

