

Apology from General Conference to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

James 5:16—For this reason, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

1. In the 2016 *Book of Resolutions*, there is the “Invitation to the Lord’s Table: Practice”. When Holy Communion is celebrated, it is important to always begin with the words of Invitation, including Confession and Pardon. If these are omitted, all those present may not understand either the openness of the Table of the Lord or the expectation of repentance, forgiveness, healing, and entrance into new life in Christ (p. 742).
2. Apologies are the first step toward justice – the making right of a wrong. A public apology would be the first step in a journey of reconciliation and restitution.
3. Many people who are survivors of sexual misconduct have not heard an apology from any person of authority in The UMC or an institutional apology from the denomination.
4. The acknowledgement of the harm experienced by survivors of sexual misconduct is a crucial first step to healing, especially for those who are unable to file a complaint due to time limits.
5. This apology piece acknowledges the harm experienced by survivors who believed there was a sacred trust that was broken.
6. One of the goals of this petition is to show an act of convicted humility from the institution.
7. The petition names the sin of sexual misconduct and indicates that the UMC accepts the responsibility for any wrong the survivors have experienced by clergy and lay leadership.
8. This apology does not seek to admit liability by The UMC; in the US, approximately 35 states and the District of Columbia have apology laws with a scope of wide-ranging applicability