

August 26 is Women's Equality Day

Women's Equality Day commemorates the day that women in the United States were granted the right to vote. In honor of this day and reflecting on the recent ruling by the Supreme Court to overturn Roe V Wade, the Peace and Social Justice Committee presents this timeline that traces women's rights as it relates to voting and reproduction and the church's response to the legislation. For more information about how women's rights are related to other social justice issues please listen to this NPR article "A New, Inclusive Look At The Struggle For Women's Equality In The US". <https://dianerehm.org/audio/#/shows/2022-08-19/recounting-a-century-of-struggle-for-the-equality-of-all-women/116816/@00:00>

Women's History in the USA	Date	Women's History in the Presbyterian Church
Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are barred from attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London. This prompts them to hold a Women's Convention in the US in Seneca Fall, NY in 1848	1840	
California first state to extend property rights to women	1849	
Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization dedicated to the goal of suffrage for all regardless of gender or race (1865).	1865-1866	<p>PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OFFICIALLY ORGANIZES</p> <p>The Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), composed largely of members of the former Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, convenes the first PCUS General Assembly in Macon, Georgia, in December 1865.</p>
<p>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Parker Pillsbury publish the first edition of <i>The Revolution</i>. This periodical carries the motto "Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less!"</p> <p>Many early suffrage supporters, including Susan B. Anthony, remained single because in the mid-1800s, married women could not own property in their own rights and could not make legal contracts on their own behalf.</p>	1868	
The 15 th amendment gave black men the right to vote but not women.	1870	<p>FORMATION OF THE WOMEN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY</p> <p>The Women's Foreign Missionary Society, the oldest and largest of the church's women's boards dedicated to the cause of foreign missions, organizes in Philadelphia.</p>
<p>Susan B. Anthony casts her ballot for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election and is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York. Fifteen other women are arrested for illegally voting. Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Battle Creek, Michigan, demanding a ballot to vote; she is turned away.</p> <p>Abigail Scott Duniway convinces Oregon lawmakers to pass laws granting a married woman's rights such as starting and operating her own business, controlling the money she earns, and the right to protect her property if her husband leaves.</p>	1872	
A Woman Suffrage Amendment is proposed in the U.S. Congress. When the 19th Amendment passes forty-one years later, it is worded exactly the same as this 1878 Amendment.	1878	

	1889	FIRST WOMAN MINISTER ORDAINED BY THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Louisa Woosley becomes the first woman ordained by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. However, Cumberland General Assembly refuses to recognize her ordination for two decades.
Wyoming is admitted to the Union with a state constitution granting women the right to vote.	1890	
The Progressive Era begins. Women from all classes and backgrounds enter public life. Women's roles expand and result in an increasing politicization of women. Consequently, the issue of woman suffrage becomes part of mainstream politics.	1890-1925	
Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona adopt woman suffrage	1912	
Suffragists organized a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. The parade was the first major suffrage spectacle organized by the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).	1913	
Nevada and Montana adopt woman suffrage.	1914	
New York women gain suffrage Jeannette Rankin of Montana is the first woman elected to Congress	1917	
Three quarters of the state legislatures ratify the 19 th amendment. American Women win full voting rights.	1920	
	1922	The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA) ratified a constitutional change allowing women to be ordained as deacons in 1922, and as ruling elders in 1930.
1921 Margaret Sanger founded the American Birth Control League 1930s – During the Great Depression maternal deaths increased as a result of botched abortions.	1920-1940	1930 Sarah Dickson becomes the first woman presbyterian elder
Planned Parenthood Federation of America is founded	1942	
	1956	MARGARET TOWNER ORDAINED BY THE PCUSA Margaret Towner is ordained, making her the first woman ordained in the PCUSA.
The Equal Rights Amendment is approved by the full Senate without changes — 84-8. Senator Sam Ervin and Representative Emanuel Celler succeed in setting an arbitrary time limit of seven years for ratification.	1972	
The Supreme Court decision in the Roe v. Wade case ruled in favor of Roe and abortion was legalized throughout the United States.	1973	Presbyterians have struggled with the issue of abortion for more than 30 years, beginning in 1970 when the General Assembly, the national governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), declared that “the artificial or induced termination of a pregnancy is a matter of careful ethical decision of the patient . . . and therefore should not be restricted by law . . .” ⁽¹⁾ In the years that followed this action, the General Assembly has adopted policy and taken positions on the subject of abortion.

President Gerald Ford signs legislation declaring Aug. 26 Women's Equality Day, Washington D.C.,	1974	
Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, banning the use of Medicaid and other federal funds for abortions.	1976	
Ronald Reagan becomes the first U.S. President opposed to a constitutional amendment which provides equal rights for women. NOW organizes the "ERA YES Inaugural Watch" where some 40,000 ERA supporters remind the new President of the overwhelming pro-ERA sentiments in the nation.	1981	
1994 President Bill Clinton signed the Freedom of Access to Clinics Act. The Act makes it a federal crime to physically obstruct the entrance to a clinic or to use force, the threat of force, or physical obstruction, such as a sit-in, to interfere with, injure, or intimidate clinic workers or women seeking abortions or other reproductive health services.	1990s	1994 - 19% of Presbyterian Clergy are women
2002 President George W. Bush signed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, affirming legal protection to an infant born alive after a failed attempt at induced abortion. 2003 House approved the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, which was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Nov. 5, 2003. In 2016, the Supreme Court made a ruling on the Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt case. The final decision dictated that Texas could not place restrictions on abortion services that create an undue burden for women seeking an abortion.	2000s	In 2006, the 217th General Assembly approved language that clarified the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) position on problem pregnancies. When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is intensely personal, and may manifest itself in ways that do not reflect public rhetoric, or do not fit neatly into medical, legal or policy guidelines. Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy. Human choices should not be made in a moral vacuum, but must be based on Scripture, faith and Christian ethics. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us.
In a historic and far-reaching decision, the U.S. Supreme Court officially reversed Roe v. Wade on Friday, declaring that the constitutional right to abortion, upheld for nearly a half century, no longer exists	2022	Statement from the Church: Today, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in <i>Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization</i> . In a 6 to 3 vote, the Supreme Court overturned the historic <u>Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision</u> which confirmed a pregnant person's constitutional right to choose whether or not to terminate during the early months of their pregnancy. We are deeply outraged, saddened, and mortified by this decision! ...While this decision does not make abortion illegal, it removes constitutional protection giving states the ability to issue bans. Over the past few years, states have passed laws that place extreme restrictions on a pregnant person's legal ability to obtain an abortion, some issuing a complete ban. States like Kentucky where our denomination is headquartered, have enacted "trigger" laws that will go into effect immediately limiting or banning access to care. The overturning of Roe v. Wade will have drastic negative impacts on individuals around the nation, with the greatest burden falling on low-income communities of color.