

Timeline: Selected Dates in Wesleyan/Holiness History of Ordaining Women

1666	Margaret Fell, the "mother of Quakerism" writes <i>Women's Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures, all such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus</i> . Her husband, Quaker founder, George Fox would later ask, "And what spirit is this, that would exercise lordship over the faith of any? And what spirit is this that will neither suffer the women to speak amongst men, nor to meet themselves to speak?"
1819	Zilpha Elaw, African-American holiness preacher, delivers her first sermon at a camp meeting.
1827	Jarena Lee travels 2325 miles and preaches 178 sermons overall. She documented her activities for this and other years in <i>The Life and Religious Experience of Mrs. Jarena Lee, a Coloured Lady</i> . First published in 1836, this is the first personal narrative authored by an African-American woman.
1848	Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organize and hold the first conference on women's rights in a Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, NY. One of its resolution called for the "overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit" held by men.
1853	Rev. Luther Lee, a founder in the abolitionist Wesleyan Methodist Connection preaches at the ordination service of Antoinette Brown (Blackwell) in a congregational church in South Butler, NY. He later published his sermon, "Women's Right to Preach the Gospel," in which he said, "I do not believe that any special or specific form of ordination is necessary to constitute a gospel minister. All we are here to do, and all we expect to do, in due form, and by solemn and impressive service, is to subscribe our testimony to the fact that in our belief, our sister in Christ, Antoinette L. Brown, is one of the ministers of the New Covenant, authorized, qualified, and called of God to preach the gospel of his son Jesus Christ."
1859	Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army, known as "The Army Mother," publishes her pamphlet, "Female Ministry: Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel."
1865	Catherine Booth co-founds a mission on London that in 1878 became the Salvation Army with her husband, William, in which married women and men are equally commissioned to serve at all levels of the organizations. In 1896, more than 50% of all officers in the United States are women.
1860	Phoebe Palmer publishes her book, <i>Promise of the Father</i> , which asserts a woman's right to preach.
1869	Maggie Van Cott, an itinerant preacher, becomes the first woman licensed to preach by the Methodist Episcopal Church.
1883	Traveling Pentecost Bands founded by Vivian Dake of the Free Methodist Church operate in Pennsylvania and the Midwest. In 1892, two-thirds of the nearly 125 evangelists are female.
1891	B. T. Roberts, founder of the Free Methodist Church, publishes <i>Ordaining Women</i> .
1898	The Constitution of the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene states, "We recognize the equal right of both men and women to all offices of the Church of the Nazarene, including the ministry."
1899	Mary Lee Harris Cagle is ordained in the New Testament Church of Christ, which merges with other regional groups in 1908 to form the Church of the Nazarene.

1901	Alma White establishes the Pentecostal Union, which becomes the Pillar of Fire denominations.
1904	Evangeline Booth, daughter of Catherine and William, is appointed commander of the Salvation Army in the United States. She serves for 30 years.
1908	20% percent of all elders and 15% of licensed preachers are women as the Church of the Nazarene is organized. (By 1973 only 6% of clergy are female.)
1925	Women constitute 32% of pastors of the Church of God, Anderson.
1956	The Methodist Episcopal Church and United Presbyterian Churches approve the ordination of women.
1974	The Church of God, Anderson resolves to promote women's opportunities for church leadership.
1974	The four largest Holiness denominations report 4,119 women clergy: the Salvation Army, 3,037; the Church of the Nazarene, 426; the Church of God, Anderson, 272; and The Wesleyan Church, 348.
1980	The General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene adopts a resolution affirming the historic right of women to be elected and appointed to positions of leadership.
1984	The four largest Holiness denominations report 4,105 women clergy.
1992	Church of God, Anderson women clergy hold their first consultation and begin publishing "Women in Ministry and Mission." The percentage of women ministers in the Church of God, Anderson is 15%. Separately, Wesleyan Women in Ministry hold their first conference.
1994	Dr. Susie Stanley convenes the first Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy Conference in Glorietta, NM. Biannual conferences continue to draw hundreds of women from representative denominations.
June 2000	Wesleyan/Holiness denominations affirm the ordination of women , responding to a position under consideration by the Southern Baptist Convention, prohibiting women from the pastoral ministry.