

## EPISCOPAL PRESENCE AT UNCSW 65

**“Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life,  
as well as the elimination of violence,  
for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”**

**March 15<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021**



### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### What is “UNCSW” and what happens there?

The [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women \(UNCSW\)](#) is an official, two-week UN meeting that meets annually, since 1946, to study the conditions facing women and girls around the world, promote women’s and girls’ empowerment and women’s rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields, and to make recommendations on urgent problems they face. In 1995, the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) adopted the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), a global policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women that set out 12 Critical Areas of Concern. Ever since, it has been the policy framework reference for the annual UNCSW meetings. Each year, a priority theme and a review theme provide the context for dialogue and decision-making during this important two-week meeting.

The official UNCSW meeting is preceded by preparatory regional meetings throughout the year and then the annual two-week meeting in the spring at UN headquarters in New York City. The annual meeting consists of an ongoing plenary session and side events organized by member states and UN entities. In addition, there are public, “parallel” events that occur at the same time as the UN meeting. These events may take place in the immediate vicinity of the UN, or elsewhere – but they are “parallel” in that the happen alongside, at the same time as the official meeting. All the events relate to the themes of the official meeting.

The [65th session of UNCSW \(“UNCSW 65”\)](#) will be held from Monday, 3/15 to Friday, 3/26/2021. The priority theme for this year’s session will be “Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”.

#### Why and how do Episcopalians engage at UNCSW? How will they this year?

Episcopalians (and their wider Anglican family) are interested in taking part in UNCSW because they care about women and girls and want to be part of the global dialogue that seeks to empower them and improve their status worldwide.

There is a long, proud history of Episcopal engagement with the UN since its founding, and with UNCSW for many years. Many Episcopal and Anglican women were present at the Fourth World Conference on

Women that birthed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A very special chapter opened in the 2000s, when women from the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada joined together to bring Anglican women from around the world to UNCSW. Our engagement has grown and changed since then. It includes grassroots engagement and official, institutional engagement with two accredited delegations, one representing the Anglican Communion and one representing The Episcopal Church. All these efforts, together, have contributed to a sense of community and knowledge of what happens at the UN. Our presence helps our parishes and communities understand how their local ministry contributes to this global dialogue and how, as Episcopalians, we carry that back home once we have been at the UN.

In 2014, The Episcopal Church experienced an important upgrade in its institutional relationship with the United Nations, when it was granted consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council. As a result, since 2015 The Episcopal Church has been able to bring up to 20 accredited representatives to observe the official UNCSW plenary meetings. Every year since 2015, a delegation appointed by our Presiding Bishop has represented our Church and advocated on behalf of General Convention policies at UNCSW.

However, Episcopalians continue to come to UNCSW in the same ways they always have. They come to learn, to share their stories and experience, to meet new people and make new connections, to follow their own advocacy agenda, to represent other organizations, and for many other reasons. Their grassroots engagement is vital. One organic and important aspect of this ongoing engagement is that some Episcopalians, who have attended UNCSW year after year, return annually to share their knowledge, train and raise up newcomers.

In 2021, the Anglican and Episcopal presence will continue virtually, with participants and delegations representing a variety of countries.

### **How can Episcopalians get involved in UNCSW's 65<sup>th</sup> session?**

Because of the ongoing pandemic, the full two-week **UNCSW 65 meeting and related parallel events will be held virtually** (except for two in-person meetings limited to government representatives). This allows greater access for Episcopalians who can participate remotely.

- *Educate yourself about the issues* and follow UNCSW 65 developments on [UN Women's UNCSW 65 webpage](#), updates on [UN Women's website](#) and read up on the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#). Read about The Episcopal Church's position in the written statement submitted by the Presiding Bishop to UNCSW 65.
- *Follow UNCSW 65 developments* on and social media using hashtags #CSW65 and #GenerationEquality.
- *Watch the UNCSW 65 official meeting live* at [webtv.un.org](#). The entire two-week meeting is livestreamed and can be viewed afterwards, along with past sessions as well.
- *Attend virtual "parallel events" in the UN vicinity*. There are literally hundreds of free, public events on offer that relate to the UNCSW themes. Most of them are coordinated by the [NGO Committee on the Status of Women \(NGO CSW\)](#) and this year, they will happen virtually. To sign up for all the events via one blanket registration, visit their website and register for the "[NGO CSW/NY Forum](#)". Note that registration is individual and not via The Episcopal Church, and you do not need to become a member to register.
- *Attend virtual official "side events" at the United Nations*. While the UNCSW meetings are not open to the public, it is often possible to attend UNCSW side events that, this year, will be held virtually. Look for the [list of side events on the UNCSW 65 website](#) to be posted in mid- to late- February. Be sure to RSVP early, as they fill up quickly.

- *Participate in virtual Episcopal Church events and joint Anglican/Episcopal events.* You are warmly invited to join Episcopal Church-hosted events, with the participation of our wider Anglican and faith-based family! Click on this link for the [flyer](#) and RSVP to [EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org). Additional events offered by Episcopal Relief & Development and the Anglican Communion are listed in the [Fact Sheet](#). If you or your church are hosting a virtual event, please let everyone know by submitting an event listing to the [Episcopal News Service Events page](#).
- *Become a delegate with the Presiding Bishop's delegation.* All are welcome to apply to be considered as a Presiding Bishop's delegate, an accredited representative who observes UN meetings, represents and advocates on behalf of the Presiding Bishop. The application process is announced in spring or summer the year before the UNCSW session, via a Public Affairs press release and the Episcopal UN social media, with a link to the application on the [Episcopal UN webpage](#). The application process closes and the Presiding Bishop announces his nominations in the fall.
- **Participate remotely with another group or your parish**
  - *Join an Episcopal Church group that is participating remotely.* Many Episcopalians choose to participate in UNCSW individually or with a group, such as National and New York-based Episcopal Church Women, parish youth groups, and others.
  - *Organize an event in your parish, school or local community that relates to the UNCSW theme.* Share your event online via #CSW 65, #EpiscopalUN and #EpiscopalCSW.
  - *Pray for fellow Episcopalians and Anglicans engaged in UNCSW's work, and all participants from around the world.* Pray that the decisions made at UNCSW will further women's and girls' empowerment, gender equality and gender justice.
  - *Follow Episcopal and Anglican engagement at UNCSW via social media and share your own experiences, stories and thoughts* via hashtags #EpiscopalUN (all things Episcopal Church and the UN) and #EpiscopalCSW (our Episcopal Church involvement at CSW, continuous reporting from year to year).
  - *Submit a guest blog to our [Episcopal Church UNCSW webpage](#).* Send articles of 250-500 words + photo to [EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org).

### **What Episcopal and Anglican events are happening in New York City during UNCSW?**

As UNCSW 65 is happening virtually, there are no physical events being organized by The Episcopal Church or the Anglican Communion at the Episcopal Church Center in New York. If your group or venue is offering a UNCSW-related event that you would like to publicize, please let us know via [EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:EpiscopalUN@episcopalchurch.org).

Please check back in late February for an updated schedule of events on the [Episcopal Church UNCSW webpage](#).

### **What UNCSW-related events are taking place outside New York City?**

We would love to know! Are you hosting a UNCSW-related event in your parish or local community? Publicize your event on the [Episcopal News Service Events page](#) and use the #CSW65, #EpiscopalUN, and #EpiscopalCSW hashtags to share with the wider Church.

Whether you are interested in participating in UNCSW as a Presiding Bishop's delegate, on your own or with a group, you are welcome.

Updated March 1, 2021