

RELIGION NEWS

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The Woodlands Methodist Church Votes to Join the Global Methodist Church

***— Members ratify leadership recommendation by 96%
in a move to equip and strengthen the new denomination —***

(The Woodlands, TX) On Sunday The Woodlands Methodist Church (TWMC) announced its decision to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church (GMC) following a churchwide vote of members that resulted in the resolution passing by 96%. The vote far exceeded the self-imposed threshold of 66.67% needed to join the GMC and makes the 14,000-member congregation the single largest church to join the new expression of traditional Wesleyan Methodism.

The passing vote follows the unanimous recommendation of TWMC's 15-member clergy team and lay governing boards, and concludes a nine-month study of options following the congregation's disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church in 2022. Using a six-category discernment framework of Theology, Mission, Operations, Culture, Community and Vision, the church now seeks to bolster the GMC with mutually beneficial ministry initiatives.

"I believe joining the Global Methodist Church affords our congregation the very best opportunity to advance and multiply our efforts in a bold new era of ministry together," said Senior Pastor Rev. Mark Sorensen, "not because of what this new denomination can do to serve The Woodlands Methodist Church, but precisely because of all of the ways in which The Woodlands Methodist Church can serve our traditional Wesleyan sisters and brothers across the Global Methodist connection now and for decades to come."

Prior to the congregational vote, Sorensen gathered church members for Vision Night, an evening of inspired music and message that outlined his strategic plan for future ministry at The Woodlands Methodist Church that includes Christian discipleship resource development, missional partnerships, new church planting and training next generation leaders to serve in full-time ministry — activities that are mutually fruitful for TWMC and the GMC.

"I see this as a faithful response to God's call and His provision as we journey together," said Sorensen. "Affiliation will allow us to exponentially multiply our efforts with other like-minded, like-hearted Wesleyan Methodists whose deepest desire is to share Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know Him."

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As part of its discernment, TWMC created an educational awareness campaign for its congregation, branded *Forward in Faith*, that included four live community forums featuring representatives from the GMC and independent Methodist Networks, a discernment guide, blog articles, videos and podcasts hosted on the church's website, twmc.org/affiliation, to help church members learn about the options for affiliation. Since its launch in June 2022, the site has also become a popular resource for other Methodist leaders and churches seeking communications content to share in their own churches as part of the denominational discernment and affiliation process. TWMC has made all of its disaffiliation- and affiliation-related content available for use by other Methodist churches, free of charge.

Citing foundational differences in Christian theology, TWMC was among approximately 300 formerly United Methodist congregations that disaffiliated from the Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church at the end of 2022.

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Founded in 1978, The Woodlands Methodist Church is a 14,000-member congregation located in suburban Houston, Texas. The Woodlands Methodist Church is an orthodox, Wesleyan congregation offering dynamic Christian programs for all ages, placing special emphasis on Christ-centered discipleship and missions outreach. The church runs an accredited preschool and private K-8 school and offers 10 weekly worship services in a variety of styles across two campus locations — its main location in The Woodlands and a campus in Woodforest. The church mission is to Reach People for Jesus Christ, Disciple Them in Faith, and Help Those in Need.

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