Fort Smith First
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Resolution Submitted for Church Conference Approval

Resolution of Adoption Merger
First United Methodist Church of Fort Smith, Inc. (GCFA # 721462)
200 N 15th St, Fort Smith, AR 72901

and

Faith United Methodist Church (GCFA #721542)
2901 Massard Rd, Fort Smith, AR 72903

Whereas, the mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;

Whereas, both First United Methodist Church of Fort Smith, Inc. ("FSFUMC") and Faith United Methodist Church ("Faith UMC") have faithfully served Christ and the community through generations of witness, worship, and ministry;

Whereas, the leadership of Faith UMC, in consultation with the District Superintendent, initiated a prayerful process of discernment about the congregation's long-term sustainability and future vitality;

Whereas, FSFUMC was invited to consider adopting Faith UMC as a second campus to extend its mission and reach new people in the River Valley;

Whereas, both congregations have participated in seasons of prayer, discernment, town hall gatherings, and due diligence to evaluate the potential for shared ministry;

Whereas, the Administrative Board of FSFUMC voted unanimously on May 19, 2025, to move forward with the adoption process, and Faith UMC affirmed this merger with the guidance of their leadership;

Whereas, the Arkansas Conference encourages innovative expressions of ministry, including adoption mergers, as faithful pathways for legacy congregations to continue their mission and for healthy churches to expand their reach;

Whereas, this adoption merger is being conducted under the supervision of the Northwest District Superintendent, in accordance with ¶2546 of the 2024 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ("BOD");

Whereas, both churches believe this merger honors the missional heart and legacy of Faith UMC and aligns with the vision and calling of FSFUMC to expand ministry eastward as part of a multi-campus future;

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Now, therefore, be it resolved that FSFUMC and Faith UMC shall merge and become one single congregation effective **September 1, 2025,** with First United Methodist Church of Fort Smith, Inc.,(GCFA # 721462) as the continuing legal and ecclesiastical entity, and the legal successor of the Faith UMC congregation. This merger is an ecclesiastical matter, completed in accordance with United Methodist polity and Arkansas law. *(2024 BOD, 2546)*

Be it further resolved that the following expectations will guide the merger and ministry relationship:

a. The FSFUMC congregation, as the continuing congregation and legal successor of Faith UMC, will faithfully abide by and support the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. *(2024 BOD, 205, 2529)*

b. All members of Faith UMC will be received as members of FSFUMC unless they request transfer or removal from the membership rolls. *(2024 BOD, 228)*

c. All assets, property, and real estate of Faith UMC shall be transferred to FSFUMC. Faith UMC shall transfer all cash, checking and savings accounts, investments, and other liquid and tangible assets as directed by FSFUMC. All gifts held in trust, assets of endowment funds, any designated gifts, legacies, devises, bequests, annuities, and all other designated benefits shall be transferred to FSFUMC, as the successor church, to be maintained in substantial conformity with the specific purpose and intent of the devise or bequest, as the case may be. The District Superintendent and appropriate conference leadership have confirmed that Faith UMC has no outstanding liabilities as of the date of the merger. All real property shall remain subject to the trust clause provision ¶2503 of 2024 BOD. Further, all current operating income and expenses, including but not limited to benefits, invoices, utilities, salaries, leases, and obligations, shall pass to FSFUMC, the successor church, as of the effective date. Subject to the specific terms and conditions set forth within any ongoing written agreement assigned to FSFUMC, all assumed contracts, staff positions, and independent contractor positions will be assessed by FSFUMC leadership and may be modified, renewed, or terminated based on the needs of the ministry and responsible stewardship of financial resources *(2024 BOD, 2538, 2546.3, and 2546.4).*

d. The sanctuary space at the East Campus shall be named Faith Chapel, in honor of the legacy and witness of the Faith UMC congregation.

e. All membership, baptismal, and historical records of Faith UMC (and its predecessor, Massard UMC) shall be transferred to and preserved by FSFUMC, with appropriate archival care and access for genealogy, history, and pastoral purposes. *(2024 BOD, 2546.5)*

f. FSFUMC will launch a second campus at the East Campus site as part of its strategic mission to reach new people and serve the wider River Valley. The timeline for active relaunch will include a dormancy or redevelopment period, often referred to as “going dark” to allow for prayer, planning, facility updates, training, and renewal. Former members of Faith UMC are

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warmly invited to participate fully in the worship, ministries, and community life of Fort Smith First UMC during the dormancy or redevelopment period at the East Campus. *(2024 BOD, 201-204 and 243, concerning the mission of the church and disciple-making strategies)*

g. During the first year following the merger (term beginning in 2026), the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development will seek to invite at least one former member of Faith UMC to serve as a voting member on each of the following committees: Administrative Board, Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), Trustees, Finance Committee, and Lay Leadership/Nominations. This representation may be waived for any committee where no former Faith UMC members are willing or able to serve. For the remainder of 2025, an elected board member of Faith UMC will be seated alongside the Trustees, the Finance Committee, the SPRC, and the Nominations Committee. *(2024 BOD, 258)*

h. The existing governing structures of FSFUMC will integrate a Launch Team and other committees and ministry teams needed to support the new second campus. These bodies shall be amenable to the governing structures of FSFUMC, including the Executive Council, Administrative Board, and administrative committees required by the Book of Discipline. *(2024 BOD, 243-244 and 247.2)*

Be it further resolved that FSFUMC and Faith UMC authorize and direct their pastors and Boards of Trustees to execute any documents necessary to complete the merger and to transfer all real and personal property, along with financial assets, from Faith UMC to FSFUMC, in compliance with Arkansas state law and the requirements of the Arkansas Annual Conference of the UMC. *(2024 BOD, 2529, 2533, 2546)*

Be it further resolved that a capital campaign shall be launched to receive capital gifts for the East Campus, and an East Campus Designated Fund (or Funds) shall be created under the authority of the Board of Trustees of FSFUMC. This fund (or funds) shall:

a. Receive and hold all assets transferred from the former Faith UMC congregation.

b. Receive designated gifts, grants, and donations for the capital, operational, and programmatic ministry of the East Campus.

c. Be used for purposes consistent with the church's mission, values, and strategic vision for the East Campus, as directed by the Executive Council and Trustees, in collaboration with the Merger and Launch Teams. This includes remodeling and/or updates to the East Campus building, based on the availability of monies in the East Campus Designated Fund *(2024 BOD, 2525, 2532, and 2535).*

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On August 10, 2025, at a duly called and held Charge/Church Conference for Faith United Methodist Church (GCFA #721542) an affirmative action was taken to merge into First United Methodist Church, Inc. (GCFA # 721462) for all purposes effective September 1, 2025, with the successor church to be known as First United Methodist Church, Inc. (GCFA # 721462)
The vote taken at Faith United Methodist Church Conference was Yes _____ and No_____.

_____
Secretary of the Charge Conference
Faith United Methodist Church

_____
District Superintendent or Presiding Elder

On August 10, 2025, at a duly called and held Charge/Church Conference for First United Methodist Church of Fort Smith, Inc. (GCFA # 721462) an affirmative action was taken to receive and adopt through a merger Faith United Methodist Church (GCFA #721542) for all purposes effective September 1, 2025.

The vote taken at First United Methodist Church Conference was Yes _____ and No_____.

_____
Secretary of the Charge Conference
Fort Smith First United Methodist Church

_____
Lead Pastor
Fort Smith First United Methodist Church

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District Superintendent or Presiding Elder

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