



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Statement from the South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church and Southern Methodist University

The South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church and Southern Methodist University have reached an agreement that provides a clear framework for their relationship moving forward and affirms their shared commitment to the University's mission.

As part of this agreement, Southern Methodist University has filed Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation reflecting the understandings reached by the parties, and the parties have jointly agreed to dismiss the pending litigation. These updates provide clarity regarding governance while preserving the historic and ongoing relationship between the University and the South Central Jurisdiction.

Both institutions recognize the long and meaningful connection between Southern Methodist University and South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church. Southern Methodist University remains home to Perkins School of Theology, a leading seminary for the denomination committed to excellence in theological education, including in preparing leaders who serve churches and communities across the region and beyond.

Jay C. Hartzell, President of Southern Methodist University, said:

"The Board of Trustees, the University, and I are pleased we have reconciled with the SCJC, and we very much look forward to a collaborative and enhanced relationship

into the future. At SMU, we have an unwavering commitment to excellence and the cultivation of principled leadership—a commitment strengthened by our renewed relationship with the SCJC.”

Rev. Dr. Derrek Belase, Chairperson of the South Central Jurisdiction Mission Council, said:

“I am grateful for the spirit of collaboration shown throughout this process, and especially for the thoughtful engagement of President (Jay) Hartzell and Provost Rachel Davis Mersey as we worked toward this agreement. These conversations have not only helped us address important matters but have allowed us to begin imagining what the future of this relationship can look like.

Both Southern Methodist University and the United Methodist Church have been shaped and strengthened by this long relationship. Our shared commitments to faith, service, and community engagement continue to guide us in the work we do together.”

The parties recognize the efforts of their respective counsel for the University and the Conference in their efforts and assistance in reaching this resolution.

The South Central Jurisdiction and Southern Methodist University look forward to continued collaboration in ways that serve students, the church and communities in the years ahead. This agreement reflects a shared commitment to building on a historic relationship with renewed clarity and purpose.

*Jay C. Hartzell
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