

How to Become a Member of the United Methodist Church

Explore this Article ■ [Arranging to Become a Member](#) ■ [Becoming a Member](#) ■ [Questions & Answers](#)
■ [Tips and Warnings](#) ■ [References](#)

Co-authored by **wikiHow Staff**

Last Updated: May 6, 2021

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is one of the larger mainline Christian denominations based in the United States as well as a major Methodist denomination participating in the World Methodist Council. Considered a faith that is firmly grounded in the essentials of traditional Christian thought and tradition, the denomination also allows room for members to come to their own conclusions regarding a number of issues. United Methodist congregations often invite others to be a part of their movement, allowing UMC membership to be attained at a number of different levels.

Part
1

Part 1 of 2: Arranging to Become a Member



1 Attend services. Find Methodist congregations in your area and attend church services at each. Engage with other attendees and members and ask about their experiences with the church. Decide which one best fulfills what you're seeking.



2 Speak with the pastor. Ask if their church offers any specific programs designed for prospective members seeking to join.^[1] If not, inquire about the congregation's process for joining the church.



3 Understand what it means to be a member. Inquire about what will be expected of you. At the very least, expect to:

- Attend both regular services and additional activities.^[2]
- Support the church financially.^[3]
- Serve the church's mission locally, regionally, and/or worldwide.^[4]
- Live your life in accordance to a commitment to Christ. ^[5]



4 Decide on a level of membership. Speak with the pastor about the level of commitment you intend to pledge to their congregation. Decide between being a full member, an affiliate, an associate, or a preparatory member.

- **Full members** join a new congregation on a permanent basis, with full voting privileges and the ability to run for church offices not held by clergy.
- **Affiliate members** join a new congregation on a temporary basis while maintaining full membership in another Methodist congregation. They may vote on issues effecting the United Methodist Church as a whole, but not on issues that solely effect their new, temporary congregation. To become an affiliate, provide the pastor with the name and contact info of your permanent congregation for notification of your new affiliation.
- **Associate members** join a new congregation on a temporary basis while maintaining full membership in another Christian denomination. They may not vote on issues pertaining to either their new congregation or the United Methodist Church as a whole. To become an associate, provide the pastor with the name and contact info of your permanent church for notification of your new association.
- **Preparatory members** are baptized children under the age of 18 who are still awaiting confirmation within the Methodist faith.^[6] While adults are welcome to join the UMC immediately upon receiving baptism, there is a delay for children so that they have the time to mature and absorb what it means to be a member and then make up their own mind about moving forward. Children generally begin taking classes to prepare for confirmation around the age of 12 or older. Speak with the pastor about attending classes.



5 Discuss baptism. In order to join the UMC at any level of membership, you need to have been baptized within the Christian faith.^[7] Inform the pastor if you've already been baptized, since the UMC accepts baptisms performed by other Methodist congregations as well as other Christian denominations, so they won't require you to repeat it in either case.^[8]

- If you've already been baptized by another Christian church, either show the pastor a certificate or some other record of baptism, or contact that church and ask them to send you proof.
- If you've never been baptized, the pastor will do so during the service in which you become a member. Talk about your options beforehand. The UMC uses three methods for baptism: sprinkling water over your head, pouring water over your head, or immersing your entire body. Sprinkling is the most common, but if you prefer one method over the others, let the pastor know.^[9]



6 Choose when to become a member. Though most if not all services will include an opportunity for new members to join the church, speak with the pastor ahead of time to make sure all prerequisites have been fulfilled and preparations can be made; for example, if the pastor typically baptizes people by sprinkling water, but you choose to be fully immersed, arrangements will probably need to be made in advance. Decide with the pastor on a Sunday service to accept membership.

Part
2

Part 2 of 2: Becoming a Member



1 Attend a Sunday service. Wait for the congregation to sing the hymn of response during service. When the pastor invites prospective new members to join the church, present yourself.



2 Accept baptism. If you've never been baptized before, allow yourself to be now. If you've already been baptized and shown proof, skip this step.



3 Confess your faith. Affirm your acceptance of Jesus Christ and your commitment to the United Methodist Church. Answer the following questions in the affirmative when prompted by the pastor:^[10]

- "As a member of Christ's universal church, will you be loyal to Christ through the United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries?"^[11] ^[12]
- "As a member of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?"^[13]



4 Meet your new congregation. Join the pastor at the end of service to greet your fellow worshipers as a full member of the church.^[14]



Community Q&A

Question

Do you need to pay a certain percentage of your income to become a member?



Community Answer

Not necessarily, but one is expected to make donations and attend services. Complete failure to attend or contribute financially over an extended time (two or more years) can result in being removed from the church's roll of active members, but this action is fairly uncommon, and has no real meaning.

Helpful 8 Not Helpful 1

Question

Does a youth have to complete confirmation in order to become a member?



Community Answer

No. Young people are free to become members whether or not they complete confirmation. However, confirmation classes provides youth the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the practices, beliefs, and statements of faith of the church.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 1

Question

How long can I miss services before becoming a non-member?



Community Answer

It depends on the church. Some have a very short time period, while others have a longer term. Ask a church leader about it.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

[See more answers](#)



Tips

- With rare exception, baptisms performed by any Christian body who accepts the beliefs found in traditional Christian creeds are considered valid by the UMC. Baptisms conducted under the auspices of Christian bodies that hold to different interpretations of beliefs concerning the Trinity and other key doctrines may not be considered valid, requiring the individual to be baptized by UMC clergy as part of the process for becoming a member.
- Baptized children of full members are automatically received as preparatory members.
- Members' children who have not been baptized are included in the church's constituency roll.

References

1. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
2. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
3. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
4. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
5. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
6. ↑ <http://www.fairfaxumc.org/services/membership/>
7. ↑ <http://www.firstmethodistmansfield.org/im-new/membership/>
8. ↑ <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/does-the-united-methodist-church-accept-the-baptism-of-other-denominations>
9. ↑ <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/is-sprinkling-the-only-way-that-united-methodists-baptize>
10. ↑ <http://www.fairfaxumc.org/services/membership/>
11. ↑ <http://www.fairfaxumc.org/services/membership/>
12. ↑ <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/new-membership-vows-and-ritual-revised-and-corrected>
13. ↑ <http://www.fairfaxumc.org/services/membership/>
14. ↑ <http://www.fairfaxumc.org/services/membership/>

About This Article



Co-authored by:
wikiHow Staff
wikiHow Staff Writer

This article was co-authored by **wikiHow Staff**. Our trained team of editors and researchers validate articles for accuracy and comprehensiveness. wikiHow's **Content Management Team** carefully monitors the work from our editorial staff to ensure that each article is backed by trusted research and meets our high quality standards. This article has been viewed 66,342 times.

★★★★☆
79 votes - 92%

Co-authors: **11**
Updated: **May 6, 2021**
Views: **66,342**

Categories: **Christianity**

<https://www.wikihow.com/Become-a-Member-of-the-United-Methodist-Church>

The text and visual content in this PDF is intended only for your personal, non-commercial use. Any commercial reproduction of the contents of this document without the express written permission of wikiHow, Inc., is prohibited.