



Jon Stuckey named as the ninth president of Messiah University

MECHANICSBURG, Pa. (March 31, 2026) — The Messiah University Board of Trustees has named Jon C. Stuckey, Ph.D., as the University’s ninth president, effective May 1, 2026. Stuckey, who has been serving as interim president since July 1, 2025, was permanently appointed to the presidency on March 27 via a unanimous vote of Messiah’s board.

“As president of the interim,” said Board Chair Rod L. Musser, “Dr. Stuckey demonstrated the qualities that we were looking for in Messiah’s next president, a commitment to integrating intellectual rigor and Christian faith, gracious hospitality, leadership in crisis, strong communication with stakeholders, and navigating challenging issues. Those qualities—along with his confident, yet humble, leadership style, his deep embrace of Messiah’s mission, and a strategic vision for the University going forward—set him apart.”

“The board is extremely grateful for Jon’s faithful guidance during this past transitional year,” Musser continued, “and we are confident that Messiah University, under Jon’s presidency, will continue to advance and lead as a premier institution of Christ-centered higher education.”

“It is the honor of a lifetime to serve and lead at a place that has defined my vocational and personal faith journey for the past 26 years,” said President Stuckey. “Messiah University and our students, educators, staff and alumni have inspired, enriched and encouraged me in innumerable ways,” he continued. “*Christ Preeminent* truly describes not only our legacy and heritage, but also our future. As we move forward together into the next chapter of what the Lord has called Messiah to become, we do so with confidence in His faithfulness and provision throughout our history.”

The search process

The University partnered with DSG|Storbeck, a national search firm, to conduct a six-month search that attracted a broad and highly competitive pool of applicants and nominees from across the

country. Stuckey, who has served at Messiah since 2000 in a variety of administrative and educator roles, was unanimously presented to the board by a presidential search committee composed of trustees, faculty, staff and alumni. He succeeds Kim S. Phipps, Ph.D., who retired as Messiah's eighth president in June of 2025.

Interim presidency

During his interim presidency, Stuckey led the board and campus community in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the University's identity and mission statements—reaffirming their central role in shaping Messiah as a singular institution of Christian higher education. This affirmation has informed his collaboration in recent months with trustees, faculty, staff and students to chart the framework for the University's next strategic plan. This work is focused on strengthening a holistic, Christ-centered educational experience; advancing academic excellence and innovation; expanding access and affordability; and ensuring both immediate and long-term financial sustainability in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape. Stuckey has also been overseeing a related comprehensive campus master planning effort that will guide the strategic development and stewardship of Messiah's physical spaces and facilities for years to come.

About President Jon Stuckey

Stuckey earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in sociology from Case Western Reserve University and his B.A. in psychology from Malone University. Prior to his appointment as interim president in 2025, he served on President's Cabinet since 2023 as Messiah's vice president for advancement, where he oversaw the University's fundraising, alumni and parent relations, and marketing and communications offices. He has served in various leadership roles at the University for the past 26 years, including: associate vice president of development; executive director and director of development; senior development officer; and director of foundation relations and sponsored programs.

Messiah highlights: During Stuckey's leadership tenure, more than \$130 million has been raised at Messiah in support of academic, administrative and athletic facilities, as well as institutional scholarships and endowments. He served as administrative director of capital campaigns from 2007–2022, all of which exceeded their goals. The most recent, *The Campaign for Messiah University*, raised \$83.4 million—surpassing its \$75 million goal and becoming the largest campaign in

University history. Early in his tenure at Messiah, he established the University's first grants office, significantly expanding funding from private and public sources for faculty research and institutional initiatives. Stuckey has also served as an assistant professor of sociology—teaching courses in the Department of Psychology, Criminal Justice and Sociology and in the Department of Human Development and Family Science.

Before Messiah: Prior to coming to Messiah in 2000, Stuckey served for 13 years in a variety of teaching, research and administrative leadership roles at Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio. With a background in social gerontology and medical sociology, Stuckey's published research, which also included presentations at national and international scientific conferences, focused largely on the impacts of faith when caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. Stuckey's work was one of the earliest lines of inquiry in this area of study.

Personal/family: President Stuckey's wife, Shari, has been a high school English teacher for 39 years, and will be retiring in June after teaching for the past 25 years at Hershey High School. When they first arrived at Messiah in 2000, she also taught as an adjunct faculty member, including courses in education, communication and writing. The Stuckeys have two grown daughters. Their oldest daughter, Taylor, and her husband, Justin, are 2017 Messiah alumni. They live outside of Leesburg, Va., with their daughter, Emma—the Stuckeys' first grandchild. Their younger daughter, Blake, works as a social worker in New York City.

About Messiah University

Founded in 1909, Messiah University is a [nationally ranked](#), private Christian university in central Pennsylvania, just 12 miles from the state capital, Harrisburg. The University enrolls more than 3,400 undergraduate and graduate students across 80+ undergraduate majors and 30+ graduate degree and certificate programs. Recognized for its outstanding academics, career preparation and experiential learning programs, Messiah is also known for its championship athletics (22 NCAA Division III teams with 35 national titles since 2000), celebrated arts programs, transformational faith formation, service and global engagement, including study abroad in 40+ locations. Learn more at messiah.edu/about.

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