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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BREAKING: Karen Georgia Thompson Becomes First Woman to Lead United Church of Christ**

In a Historic Vote, Rev. Dr. Thompson, a Black Woman Born in Jamaica, Elected by the UCC's 34th General Synod

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ made history Monday, July 3, when it elected the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as the first woman, and the first Black woman, to lead the denomination as General Minister and President.

Rev. Thompson is the third woman nominated for the post, after the Revs. Yvonne Delk (in 1989) and Barbara Brown Zikmund (in 1999), but the first to be elected. A Jamaican immigrant, Thompson is the third person of African descent to serve as leader of the denomination.

“Today, United Church of Christ, we created a first together,” she said after the vote. “It won’t be the last first."

Her election took place at the UCC's 34th General Synod in Indianapolis. She will start her new role Aug. 1, taking over from the Rev. John Dorhauer, who has served for the past eight years.

Thompson has been serving as Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and Co-Executive for Global Ministries since 2019. She has served in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ since 2009, previously as minister for racial justice and minister for ecumenical and interfaith relations. Prior to joining National Setting staff, Thompson served on staff of the UCC’s Florida Conference, as a church planter in Florida and in family ministries in New York.

Thompson holds a doctorate in ministry, with a dissertation in religious multiplicity among African Caribbean people, from Seattle University; a master of divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary; and a master of public administration degree from North Carolina Central University.

Read the full story [here](https://www.ucc.org/karen-georgia-thompson-becomes-first-woman-to-lead-ucc-in-historic-vote/).

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The United Church of Christ, a mainline Protestant denomination, has more than 770,000 members and over 4,700 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, it is a church of many firsts: the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.