News 17 November 2026 | English article

Highland Park Methodist Church Sues United Methodist Church Over Its Own Name

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Highland Park United Methodist Church"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Highland Park Methodist Church in Dallas - the largest United Methodist congregation in Texas, with more than 15,000 members and a history of 110 years - has asked a court to stop the United Methodist Church's Horizon Texas Conference from using its former name, "Highland Park United Methodist Church". Court documents filed on 10 November 2026 seek a temporary restraining order, and the church calls the conference's use of the name trademark infringement.

The problem is simple to state and painful to live with. There are now two churches in Dallas answering to almost the same name, a few miles apart. One is the congregation that has worshipped for over a century in its own building at Hillcrest Road and Mockingbird Lane. The other is a new congregation meeting at University Park United Methodist Church. Members and donors, the exiting church says, no longer know which Highland Park they are giving to.

The church says the HPUMC name belongs to it after more than 50 years of use. It issued two cease-and-desist letters before going to court, and has now filed a Texas Rule 91a motion to dismiss, a temporary restraining order application and counterclaims. The denomination, it argues, is fundraising from its members under its legal identity.

That last claim - that the conference launched a near-identical website and is raising money from the exiting church's members - comes from the church's lay leaders in a statement dated 13 November 2026. It is the church's claim, not an established fact, and the court will have to weigh it. But the confusion itself is not in dispute: two Highland Parks cannot both be Highland Park.

Highland Park Methodist Church Name Lawsuit: Two Churches, One Name

The dispute began in August 2026, when the conference sued the church in Dallas County District Court over 2022 changes to its governing documents - a restated certificate of formation from November 2022 that concentrated authority in the church council. A non-jury trial in that case is set for October 2027.

The congregation voted in October 2026 to leave the UMC and dropped "United" from its name, now worshipping as Highland Park Methodist Church in its own building. The Horizon Texas Conference called the vote invalid, saying there is no provision for leaving in the UMC rulebook. Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. Then recognised those who voted to remain - about 10 percent of the nearly 5,000 members who voted - as a continuing congregation, Highland Park United Methodist Church, meeting under the Rev. Andy Lewis.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment a complaint withdrawn under threat -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

Continue on FaithStories -- the complete article, with sources and related stories:
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/news-910.html?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=organic_pdf

More from FaithStories

FaithStories - Home
https://faithstories.onrender.com/

(Spanish) 3500 pastores de las Asambleas de Dios se reúnen hoy en San Luis Potosí
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/es/news-915.html

(Portuguese) Aline Romualdo deixa a cadeira de rodas em culto e filhos choram: "Jesus curou"
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/pt/news-916.html

(French) Secours Catholique fête ses 80 ans et lance sa collecte pour la Journée mondiale des pauvres
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/fr/news-917.html