



**Messiah University President Kim Phipps announces
plan to retire in June 2025**

(June 4, 2024) — Kim S. Phipps, Ph.D., president of Messiah University since 2004, publicly announced today that she will retire following the end of the 2024-25 academic year. Dr. Phipps' presidency concludes a 40-year career in Christian higher education, culminating with 27 years at Messiah in various leadership roles.

Phipps officially notified the Messiah University Board of Trustees of her plans to retire at their winter board meeting in January 2024. At that time, she informed the trustees that she would not be extending her current contract, which ends on June 30, 2025, for another term.

“Serving as Messiah’s president for the past 20 years has been a joy and an honor,” said President Phipps in an email she sent today to students, employees, alumni, parents and other friends of the University. “Much has been accomplished at Messiah during these past two decades and all of you have played a significant part in fulfilling these goals. I will be forever grateful for the immense privilege of being a part of the Messiah community.”

“Dr. Phipps’ visionary presidency has significantly transformed Messiah over the past 20 years—strategically leading us into the 21st Century and advancing Messiah College on its trajectory to becoming Messiah University,” said Dr. Craig Sider, chair of the Messiah University Board of Trustees. “Her commitment to the integration of educational excellence and Christian faith and service, combined with her distinctive collaborative and student-centric leadership style, have positioned Messiah as a premier institution in the national higher education landscape.”

“It is impossible to recognize Dr. Phipps’ presidency without also recognizing the contributions of her husband, D. Kelly Phipps, who has served Messiah for the past 25 years in a variety of professional roles, including director of development, adjunct instructor of business law and pre-law advisor,” said Sider. “Kelly also served as president and CEO of Rider Musser Development, LLC, a for-profit real estate development corporation seeded by the university endowment. The board is deeply grateful to both Kim and Kelly for all that their partnership has accomplished for Messiah University, and for the legacy they leave for future Messiah students.”

“President Phipps has the rare combination of being able to lead with courage and grace, decisiveness and compassion all the while building an enduring campus culture of deep love for each other and, most of all, for Christ,” said Dr. Shirley Hoogstra, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU). “Dr. Phipps brought that same rare combination to her leadership at the CCCU. As one of the longest-serving directors from 2004 to 2013, she also generously served as chair of the board of directors. She will be greatly missed and her impact at Messiah and in Christian higher education will continue for generations to come.”

Kim Phipps holds a Ph.D. in communication studies from Kent State University and was named the eighth president of Messiah College, now Messiah University, in December 2004. She is the first woman to serve as the institution's president. Prior to her appointment, Phipps served as Messiah's interim president, provost and academic dean. Before coming to Messiah, she served in a variety of leadership roles at Malone University (formerly Malone College) in Canton, Ohio, including professor and chair of the department of communication arts, acting dean of the college, and associate dean for faculty development.

Phipps will be fully engaged during her final year, assisting with transitional planning and advancing several important priorities. These include integrating Messiah's incoming provost, Dr. Christine Gardner, into the university's senior leadership team; the assessment and revision of Messiah's internal governance model; and continuing the remaining initiatives in the university's current strategic plan for 2021-2025, titled "University Rising," which seeks to expand Messiah's influence as an institution of educational excellence committed to Christ-centered learning for life.

Board of trustees launches national presidential search

The Messiah University Board of Trustees is in process of forming a search committee and identifying a search firm to help find the most qualified candidates nationwide and assist trustees with their goal of hiring a new president before Phipps officially retires on June 30, 2025. The board will release additional details about the search committee and the structure and timeline for the search at a later time.

"We are launching this presidential transition from a position of strength," said Sider. "During her tenure, President Phipps has raised Messiah's visibility as a nationally recognized private Christian university and has created a solid foundation for Messiah's growth and future," he added. "The board is committed to finding the right person for the presidency who can faithfully lead and effectively continue to advance Messiah University's distinctive Christ-centered educational mission."

Highlights of the Phipps presidency

"It is difficult to imagine Messiah University today without the tremendous impact that Kim Phipps has made on the Messiah community," said Sider. "She is a uniquely gifted, relational leader and generations of students and alumni will benefit from the innovation and growth of resources, facilities and programs launched during her presidency."

Academic initiatives: During her tenure at Messiah, President Phipps promoted numerous significant academic initiatives including: the addition of innovative new majors designed to meet career goals of students and demands of employers, such as finance, Chinese studies, digital media, cybersecurity and robotics engineering; the implementation of a School of Graduate and Professional Studies—including the opening of a new campus location at Winding Hill—and introducing Messiah's first doctoral degrees in nursing and physical therapy; the launch of online curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; the expansion of three-year degree opportunities, accelerated 3+ and early assurance programs; expansion of dual enrollment and other pre-college programs to create early connections with high-school students.

She additionally expanded Messiah's base for international student recruitment, developing key partnerships with institutions abroad, such as Methodist College of Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

During her presidency, Phipps has focused on reconciliation as a core institutional value, appointing Messiah's first vice president for diversity affairs, creating the university's first Office of Diversity Affairs and launching a campuswide commitment to inclusive excellence, rooted in a comprehensive, candid survey of campus climate related to a wide range of diversity aspects. And with the creation of the university's first Office of University Partnerships in 2023, Phipps' presidency cultivated Messiah's growing network of educational, corporate and nonprofit partners, culminating in the launch of the Bridge Center for Continuing Education.

Financial stewardship and campus expansion: Phipps' presidency has also presided over the completion of five major institutional fundraising campaigns totaling \$177 million—most recently the Campaign for Messiah University, which generated an unprecedented \$83.4 million. Altogether, these campaigns have raised historic levels of funding for student scholarship aid and program endowments and have transformed the campus with the addition of facilities that are now an essential part of daily life and learning at Messiah: Boyer Hall; Larsen Student Union; The Calvin and Janet High Center for Worship and Performing Arts; the Falcon Fitness Center; renovations to Sollenberger Sports Center (including Jordan Court, Sawyer Gymnasium and Fredricksen Natatorium); the Ralph S. Larsen Finance Lab; the Kim S. Phipps Admissions and Welcome Center; and the expansion of the Engle Center for Counseling and Health Services.

Strategic planning and national visibility: Leading the historic transition from Messiah College to Messiah University is a hallmark of Phipps' presidency. Given the comprehensive growth of Messiah's undergraduate curriculum and the expansion of its graduate school to include doctoral-level programs, Messiah's board of trustees, in October 2018, unanimously approved the move to university status effective July 1, 2020. She also initiated Messiah's "see anew" national brand campaign in 2010, based on the research of the University's multiyear strategic branding initiative—a campaign that was refreshed and relaunched when Messiah became a university in 2020. She also presided over the celebration of Messiah's Centennial celebration in 2009-2010, and the hosting of The Compassion Forum in 2008, a nationally televised, unprecedented conversation with presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, on the integration of faith and public policy.

Service and engagement: During her presidency, Phipps has positioned Messiah as a highly visible and engaged partner in serving the common good through her service on numerous local and national boards including: The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (chair); the Council of Independent Colleges; AICUP; Partners for Campus-Community Engagement; the United Way of the Capital Region; the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg; Keystone Human Services; the Highmark Regional Advisory Board; the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra; and the Susquehanna Art Museum.

Awards and honors: In recognition of her contributions to Christian higher education and local community involvement, President Phipps has been awarded several honors including being:

- Named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania which recognizes “extraordinary women for their outstanding service and contributions to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania” (2023)
- Inducted into the Central Penn Business Journal’s Circle of Excellence, a recognition for women who are “the icons of their industry and hold a sustained leadership role in their organization and the community” (2019)
- Distinguished by Christianity Today as one of 50 women leaders shaping the evangelical church and North American society (2012)
- Recognized with the Athena Award from the Harrisburg Regional Chamber/CREDC for her demonstration of excellence in her profession and commitment to mentoring women leaders (2012)
- Honored by the Salvation Army of the Harrisburg Capital Region for exemplary service and social responsibility (2012).

“Much like the ‘see anew’ brand platform that Messiah launched under her presidency,” said Sider, “President Phipps has worked tirelessly to build trusted relationships with students and their families, alumni, donors and friends, community leaders and partners, and the higher education community at large to help them see the potential and future of Messiah University in new and exciting ways.” The university and the board will be announcing opportunities for these important groups to connect with President Phipps in the year ahead and recognize her contributions to Messiah and the broader community.

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