

# WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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For more information, visit [www.WesleyWorc.org](http://www.WesleyWorc.org)

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## Leadership change at Wesley United Methodist Church in downtown Worcester

*Church bids farewell to Pastor Shandirai Mawokomatanda after 11 years of ministry, welcomes Rev. Moo July 1*

**Worcester, Mass., June 22** -- After his 11 years of ministry, Wesley United Methodist Church in Worcester bids farewell to Pastor Shandirai Mawokomatanda and welcomes Reverend Byungmoo Lee on July 1.

In the United Methodist Church, pastors are appointed by bishops for years beginning on July 1. Rev. Lee, who prefers to be called Moo, is moving from western Massachusetts, where he has served Wesley United Methodist Church in Hadley since 2016.

A native of Korea, Rev. Lee finished college at Yonsei University in Korea, and came to the United States in 1992. He studied theology and comparative religion at Boston University. He is an ordained elder in the New England Annual Conference. Moo previously served Methodist churches in Warren and Barrington, RI, Tewksbury, MA, and Andover, MA. His pastoral concerns are economic justice and issues of hunger.

Rev. Mawokomatanda, better known as Pastor Shandi, has served as Wesley's Lead Pastor since 2011, after two years as associate pastor. Shandi's background in conflict transformation helped him lead the church to engage in intercultural ministry where people from diverse backgrounds not only learn about their differences but share their lives to build a new and transformed communal identity. In his time as minister, Wesley has transformed its traditional worship experience into an intercultural blended worship experience. Members of Wesley come from more than a dozen countries around the world. Shandi is a native of Zimbabwe and moved to the United States at the age of 13.

The congregation at Wesley has, with Shandi's leadership, made deeper connections with the church's neighbors in a number of ways, including the establishment of a Community Builders group with leaders from Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith communities, a basketball program for at-risk youth, and monthly community dinners and breakfasts for the homeless.

Shandi is moving to Georgia to be closer to family. He leaves at a time when the congregation has not gathered in person for worship since March 15. In conformance with state regulations on group gatherings, the church has held regular Sunday worship services online through the Zoom platform or video recordings. Recent services are available for viewing on the church's website at [www.wesleyworc.org](http://www.wesleyworc.org).

Wesley United Methodist Church is committed to fostering a sanctuary culture where all can feel welcomed, loved, accepted, valued and affirmed for who they are through intentional expressions of empathy, compassion, generosity, hospitality and inclusion. A downtown church founded with the merger of two churches, Wesley first opened its doors to the community in May 1927.

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