IRS 501(c)(3) Group Exemption FAQ

What is 501(c)(3) status? A specific federal tax exemption designation granted by the IRS to non-profit organizations.

Does my church need to apply for 501(c)(3) status?
A church is automatically considered a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and does not have to file with the IRS; however, official IRS recognition provides proof of non-profit status with an official letter and inclusion on the IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search web page. This recognition can enhance donor trust and may be required by some institutions, including state and local tax governments, vendors, and banks.

What Is an IRS Group Exemption Ruling?
An IRS group exemption ruling allows a denomination to obtain federal tax-exempt recognition for its eligible affiliated churches under a single group ruling. Rather than requiring each church to apply separately for recognition of its tax-exempt status, the denomination maintains a list of churches covered by its group exemption.

Why is establishing the group exemption important for the GMC?
Many churches were under a group exemption from their prior denomination, and without a GMC group exemption each church must apply individually to receive the benefits of official 501(c)(3) recognition from the IRS. Establishing and maintaining our group tax exemption is another way we can support our congregations and strengthen the connectional ministry of the Global Methodist Church.

What happens if my church already holds its own IRS determination letter recognizing its tax-exempt status?
Joining the group exemption means giving up that individual recognition. The IRS does not permit an organization to hold its own recognition of exemption and be included in a group ruling at the same time.

Why Is It Important to Respond Now?
The Global Methodist Church is preparing its initial group exemption submission, and we want to include as many eligible congregations as possible. We strongly encourage every church to submit the required information by December 20, 2026, so it can be included in our group exemption. While the Global Methodist Church can send updates to the IRS throughout the year, responding by the deadline will help your church avoid unnecessary delays in obtaining recognition under our denominational group exemption.

What Happens Next?

Each local church will receive an email from churchconnect@globalmethodist.org on November 16, 2026, with a link to our IRS group exemption form. If the message does not appear in your inbox, please check your junk or spam folder. Once the form is completed by your administrator and then digitally signed and submitted by your designated signer, our denominational office will review the information and determine its eligibility for inclusion in the initial group exemption submission. Please understand that completing the form itself does not constitute IRS approval or guarantee inclusion. However, submitting accurate and complete information by the deadline is an essential step toward being included. The group exemption will not take effect until the IRS notifies the Global Methodist Church that our application has been approved. We will notify all participating churches once we receive approval.