

Union Christian Church

Foundations Class

Welcome to Union Christian Church

We are glad you are interested in learning more about our church. We believe as the church grows and new people come in from different backgrounds that it is vital for us to lay down our plans based off of God's overall plan for the church. In this handbook you will find out what we believe as a church, what we hold sacred and what can be identified as questions that come up over time that cause division.

It is our goal through this class to give you a clear understanding on where UCC is and how we identify ourselves through scripture. We believe the church must come together as a team with the same goals in mind to accomplish a far greater purpose. Ultimately, we are commanded to live out the Great Commission given to us by Jesus.

Our goal for this class is that you will be able to identify with and uphold the core values and beliefs held here at UCC.

Our Foundations Class is divided into four parts:

1. Our Common Salvation Message
2. Our Beliefs
3. Our Structure
4. Our Vision, Mission, Core Values and Discipleship Process

Biblical Terms and Definitions:

God's definition of the word "church" (Greek: Ecclesia) is: **the called out ones.**

Church: It's not a building you visit. It's a group of people in relationship. It's people in the spiritual kingdom of God.

1. The church is a body.

Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Colossians 1:24 (ESV)

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,”

Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

2. The church is a family.

Ephesians 2:19 (ESV)

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

3. The church's purpose is to make disciples.

Matthew 28:18-19 (ESV)

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

A Christian who is not joined to a body and is without a church family, does not yet understand the full picture of what Christianity is all about.

Our purpose for this class is to bring clarity about the beliefs we hold at UCC.

Unity of the Body

The Church

There is a war going on between Jesus and the devil.
There is a body of believers—the Church.
Jesus' body is going to win.
The gates of hell are stationary—we go and they can't stop us.

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

What is the problem? How did we get here?

Many have strayed from “The Bible”.

- We have changed the rules of the game.
- We have decided we don't want to listen to Jesus and His message.

Many don't function as a church body.

- We are not shooting for God's goals. Rather, we're concerned with personal agendas and comfort.
- We do not define success the same way.

Many don't understand their roles and responsibilities.

- The pastors have become paid employees and the people have become consumers.
- The church has become about a performance attended 1.6 times a month.

As a result, the church loses.

- There are great individuals in a church, but they don't work together.
- They spend their time fighting against each other.

- The enemy plays better, so we lose.

It doesn't have to be that way. If we get the following things right, we are a launching pad; and army for God.

John 17:20-23 (ESV)

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Part I

Our Common Salvation Message

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to clearly convey God's original plan for man, man's choice and resulting sin problem, and God's solution to that sin problem – Christ Jesus.

This is important for three reasons:

First, some of you reading this may not have a good understanding of the message of salvation and your need for a Savior. For those, we want to give them the opportunity to accept Christ.

Second, others of you will benefit from reading and getting a clear presentation of the Good News so that you can more effectively share Christ with those God places in your life.

Third, it's important that as a body we all understand and agree on what the Bible says about becoming a Christian. We must deliver the same message throughout the church or we are not really a unified body.

Resources: Included in this section is: Sharing the Message of Salvation, which you can refer to when sharing Christ with others. This takes you step-by-step through the entire salvation message giving you Scripture references for each point and includes a sample prayer, baptism information, and other important tips.

Searching and Being Found

Galatians 3:26-28 (ESV)

“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

*Remember, there are no denominations in Christ

Figuring out the rules:

- Most people live year after year with no idea of why they exist or God's purpose for their lives.
- The most basic question a person can ask is: "what's the meaning of life?"

The world tells us that life is all about us and our purpose is to make ourselves happy. People try many ways to accomplish this:

- Some look for happiness by **acquiring possessions**.
- Some look for happiness by **experiencing pleasure**.
- Some look for happiness by **gaining prestige and power**.

Real joy and peace comes from understanding our real **purpose** in life.

Why Am I Here?

1. We were **created** by God in His image. We are not a product of **chance**.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

2. God created us for a purpose: To be in **relationship** with Him.

Jeremiah 31:3 (ESV)

the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Genesis 3:8a (ESV)

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,

3. God created us for a **purpose**: His glory and our good.

Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

4. When man lived in relationship with God in a sinless world everything was **good**.

Genesis 1:25 (ESV)

And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

If this was how it was meant to be, then what happened?

1. God gave us a **choice**.

Genesis 2:16-17 (ESV)

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

2. Man sinned and as a result, **all men fell**.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

3. Sin breaks **relationship** with God.

Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)

but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

4. God is life. Separation from God is **death**.

Romans 5:12 (ESV)

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

5. Sin breaks our relationship with **others**.

Genesis 3:12 (ESV)

The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

6. Sin caused the **curse**, even on the world we live in.

Genesis 3:17-19 (ESV)

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Romans 8:22 (ESV)

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

7. Separation from God has led to a world filled with **pain** and despair.

Romans 1:29-32 (ESV)

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

The Result: a broken, lonely, sinful world.

People know there is a problem. They can feel it and see it.

Some try to find peace with God in their own way.

Proverbs 16:25 (ESV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

Some may say...

“It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”

“I will just be a good person.”

“I will earn it.”

“I will be better than everyone else.”

Even people who believe in Christ don’t always understand Christianity.

“I will be religious.”

“I will go to church.”

“I was born to a Christian parent.”

“I was born in a Christian nation.”

The problem: God is righteous and holy. God’s standard is perfection. Because of our sin, we can’t measure up and, on our own, are lost with no way to restore our broken relationship with God. We need a solution—God’s solution—a Savior!

What is the Solution?

It’s a problem only God can solve. How can God be righteous and just, and at the same time loving?

1. God had to make a **way**.

Romans 5:6-8 (ESV)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2. God showed His **justice** and His **love** in ONE person.

Romans 3:26 (ESV)

It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Isaiah 53:10-11 (ESV)

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

3. The Solution is a Person.

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. This was always God's plan. (The Passion)

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his
wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have
turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the
iniquity of us all.

If any other way would have worked, Jesus would not have had to come!

What is Our Part?

The Disciple Makers' Part:

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The People’s Part:

Acts 2:37-38 (ESV)

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Breakdown of Acts 2:37-38

Verse 37: They **believed** the message and were cut to the heart.

John 3:16 (ESV)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 4:3 (ESV)

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

Verse 38: There told to **repent**, which is a natural result of faith.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 (ESV)

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what

earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Verse 38: They **confessed** Jesus as their Lord. (A natural result of faith)

Romans 10:9-10 (ESV)

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Verse 38: They were commanded to be baptized. Baptism is the time and occasion one receives the forgiveness of sins (justification) and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:21 (ESV)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

What is Baptism?

The Greek Word for baptism is: **baptizo**. The definition is: to be **immersed**, to be buried in, to be sunken as a ship, to dip, to be put under. The Bible does speak of a spiritual baptism which is God's part. Our part is the physical baptism in water by immersion.

A Picture in Scripture

Mark 1:9-10 (ESV)

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

The word **baptism** was changed in about 400 A.D. to include sprinkling.

The Denominational Fathers Agree:

Martin Luther: "I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies."

John Calvin: "The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

John Wesley: "Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. Christ and the Apostles commanded it.

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. The early church believed it was important.

In the Book of Acts, when someone believed the message, repented and confessed Christ, they were immediately baptized. We want to respond with the same sense of urgency as the first century church had regarding baptism following a confession of faith.

Acts 8:35-39 (ESV)

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

3. Baptism is where you receive the mark of God. It’s when you receive the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It’s a picture of a new birth; a starting point.

John 3:3-5 (ESV)

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

4. The Church has a common message: a unified body

1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Those who **believe** and have **repented**.

Mark 16:15-16 (ESV)

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

At Union Christian Church, we wait until our children are old enough (age of accountability), to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we

baptize them. A baby or a young child cannot understand sin or the need for Christ. It must be their decision, and their decision must be accompanied by faith and repentance.

At Union Christian Church it's a **membership requirement** that every member be baptized the way Jesus demonstrated (immersion), even though many of us were sprinkled as children.

When Should I Be Baptized?

As soon as you possibly can!

Acts 2:41 (ESV)

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 16:31-34 (ESV)

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Q: Can I have my friends/life group and family be present?

Many desire to have family and friends/life group present at their baptism. That's great! However, in keeping with the early church's sense of urgency regarding baptism; please make these arrangements as soon as you possibly can.

Q: Can my family be baptized together?

Yes! So long as each family member fully understands the meaning of baptism and they have personally placed his or her trust in Christ for salvation. (We encourage children to meet with one of our ministers prior to being baptized.)

It is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith and obedience, not a family tradition. It's usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ.

Q: What should I wear when I'm baptized?

Please wear something modest. Shorts and t-shirts are fine. Swim suits with t-shirts are fine too.

Q: Will I have to say anything?

Yes. We will ask you to confess that you repeat "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior." We will lead you through this at the time of your confession.

Q: What if I was baptized in another church?

That's fine, as long as you were baptized by immersion in the name of Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. If that's the case, you do not need to be baptized again. Note: If you were baptized in a cult, then you will. Need to do it again. (Any religion that does not recognize Jesus as the son of God, who died on the cross for our sins, and rose again and is the only way to God.)

***God is the ultimate authority! We acknowledge that He may be satisfied with other forms of baptism. However, scripturally, there is only one method of baptism modeled therefore, in obedience-and so we can be a unified body-we ask that everyone who wishes to join our church be baptized by immersion.**

Action Step: Decision:

If this is something you wish to discuss further or have decided that you want to give your life to Jesus please contact one of the Staff, Elders, or Deacons.

Part II

What Unifies Us As A Church Body?

Our Beliefs

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to clearly outline what we believe as Church—our core doctrine. These beliefs are divided into two distinct camps: essentials and non-essentials. As a church body, we will be unified in the essentials and will give grace in the non-essentials (agree to disagree).

We cannot be a unified church body if we're divided in our core beliefs and are fighting amongst ourselves about these things. Moreover, we cannot accomplish God's plan and purposes unless we are in agreement and moving forward together in unity. Therefore, if you can't agree and commit yourself to these beliefs, you cannot be a part of this church body. However, you need to find a church body to be a part of and we will be happy to help you find the right place for you.

Resources: As each of the areas we discuss in our belief statement are very important and can be extremely complex, we want to provide our church with the opportunity to ask questions if needed. Please contact Mark at the church office with questions.

Our church has been growing and continues to grow; why? The answer—God! Accts 2:47 (ESV) “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

We have made it our mission as a church to be unified in the essentials. We want to give liberty and grace in the non-essentials and to love God's way in everything.

We try to be a place of truth and a place of love. We believe we glorify God by doing this.

John 17:20-22 (ESV)

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,

1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

God: God is one being in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is the source of all creation (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-2), which He sustains (Col. 1:17) and is in the process of redeeming (Rom. 8:19-22). God the Father loves us and desires that we have fellowship with Him as His children (I John 1:3).

Jesus: Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnation of God the Son. He is the Word become flesh (John 1:14), and He now holds all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). He is Savior and Lord. He made human salvation possible through His life, death on the cross, and resurrection. He ascended into heaven, where He is now our high priest and advocate. He is head of the Church.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit works actively in the world, seeking to glorify Jesus. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come (John 16:5-11). The Holy Spirit indwells believers individually and corporately in the Church. The Holy Spirit develops within the Christian a pure heart, which results in Christ-like character expressed in private and public conduct and action.

The Bible: The Bible, the Old and New Testament Scriptures, is the uniquely inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21). The Bible is the rule of faith and practice for Christians. We affirm that Scripture is the authoritative revelation from God by which we know God’s will and Christ’s authority. We seek to assert what the Scriptures clearly assert and allow freedom in other cases. We seek to understand divine intent, through authorial intent, and we seek to apply its teaching to the contemporary church and culture.

Union Christian Church

Statement of Faith

Church: The Church is the body of Christ on earth, the community of believers throughout the world. Upon surrender to Christ, a person is added to the Church. In addition, the priesthood of all believers means each Christian is called to be a serving minister (1 Peter 2:9-10). The Church's mission is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

Humans: Human beings were created by God to walk in fellowship with Him. However, all (except Jesus) have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and must rely on God's grace and forgiveness. Every human from the moment of life is in the image of God (*imago dei*), a person to be nurtured, protected, and developed.

Salvation: Salvation is by God alone through Jesus Christ alone. One accepts Christ as Savior through a conversion process that includes faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Acts 2:38, 8:12, 10:47-48; Rom.10:9, etc.).

Baptism: In baptism, a believer is immersed, crucified and buried with Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), receives forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), is resurrected (Col. 2:12) and clothed with Christ (Gal. 3:27), and becomes saved (1 Peter 3:21) because of God's free gift of grace received by faith.

Communion: The Lord's Supper is the celebration of the New Covenant, in which the Christian community remembers Christ and celebrates the covenantal relationship they have with Him and with each other. Congregations in the fellowship typically celebrate the Lord's Supper at least weekly (1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7).

Marriage: We believe that marriage is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman. God's intentions for marriage are outlined for us in the Bible. The marriage relationship is to function as a picture of God's grace-filled covenant relationship with His church. We believe that all sexual intimacy outside the

context of marriage between one man and one woman is in direct violation of God's Word.

Gen. 2:20-25; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18,19; Heb. 13:4

Final Coming: The Final Coming of Jesus is a time when Christ will personally come again as savior and judge of the world. At that time there will be the bodily resurrection of the dead believers to eternal life with God and unbelievers to eternal judgment. Sin will be no more and believers will live in fellowship with God forever (I Thess. 4:13-18 and Rev. 20:11-15).

Spiritual Gifts:

Few areas of theology within the church have caused more division than the subject of spiritual gifts. Some in our church believe all of the spiritual gifts spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12-14 are for today. Others believe some of the gifts are for today. And there are those who believe none of the gifts are for today. **You can see the potential problems.**

The non-negotiable:

We do not believe that this subject constitutes a salvation issue.

You can believe some of the gifts are for today and be wrong and still be a Christian.

You can believe that all of the gifts are for today and be wrong and still be a Christian.

You can believe that none of the gifts are for today and be wrong and still be a Christian.

Remember, for those who believe that the gifts are present today, the Spirit of God does not work contrary to the **Word of God**.

Behavior that Unifies:

At Union Christian Church, it is okay to believe differently on this issue, but we will act in this way:

Because this is a non-salvation area of contention between believers, we will not have a place in our church where the gift of tongues is encouraged or practiced.

We will not allow the discussion of a non-salvation issue to destroy the Lord's work.

We do believe God does miracles and answers our prayer and through the work of the Holy Spirit, empowers us to serve Him and do good works.

The following are Scripture references for churches where the gift of tongues and prophecy are used. These are rules for their use:

If someone speaks in a tongue, it will be one at a time. 1 Corinthians 14:27, 33, 40

There must be an interpreter. 1 Corinthians 14:28

There must be one who discerns whether it comes from God. 1 John 4:1

If it is a prayer language, there is a place to pray. Matthew 6:6

All the gifts must be used to edify the church, not the individual. 1 Corinthians 14:4-5, 26

No one has all the gifts, but the church is to be a body. 1 Corinthians 12:27-30

For those who believe prophecy is a gift active today, then the rules of a prophet apply. Deuteronomy 18:20-22.

Eternal Security:

This is a non-salvation issue. You can be wrong about this issue and still be a Christian.

Arminian Perspective:

Arminians believe salvation can be gained and lost.

Arminians do not believe that a bad decision means you lose your salvation.

The way you can tell a person is a Christian is by their fruit.

Scripture References: Luke 15; Romans 11:22-23; Hebrews 6:4-7; 2 Peter 2:20

Calvinist Perspective:

Calvinists believe God chooses some to be saved and some to be lost.

Calvinists believe salvation cannot be lost as it was given by God.

Calvinists do not believe you can do whatever you want and be a Christian.

If a person is not showing fruit and growth, then they were never saved to begin with.

Scripture References: John 10:28; Romans 8:29-30; 1 John 2:9

Both camps agree that Christians are known by their fruit. At Union Christian Church we encourage everyone to grow in Christ—we're not the judge of your salvation.

Communion:

Communion at Union Christian Church is defined as Scripture defines it.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV)

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Communion is a **memorial**.

Communion is a **new covenant**.

Communion is a **proclamation**.

When we take it, we do so in a worth manner.

1 Corinthians 11:27-28 (ESV)

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

We do this by self-examination.

Do I have any sins to confess? (1 John 1:9)

Do I have relationships to repair? (Matthew 5:23-24)

Do I need to recommit my life? (Romans 12:1)

It is a distinctive of our church that we take communion every week. We do not believe you have to take communion every week. However, when you take it, you are to do so in a worthy manner. (1 Corinthians 11:25-28)

Who should take it?

Only those who believe.

With regard to children, we believe a child should not take communion until they can understand the concepts of sin and salvation, and have accepted

Christ. However, we do believe communion is a teaching opportunity to explain the concepts of sin and salvation, and our need for Jesus.

The Priesthood Of Every Believer:

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry.

Every believer has direct access to God through bible reading/study, prayer, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is to be a disciple developing relational environments in which they share their faith with those around them by word and action.

Revelation 1:6a (ESV)

and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

End Times:

We have people with many views on this issue in our church. Some are pre-millennial, others are a-millennial, and there are various other differing views. This is not a salvation issue.

We believe there will be a literal return of Christ and a judgment day. We also believe there will be a literal rapture (a catching up of the saints). How and when this will happen has been a source of great debate. We believe the details are in God’s hands and this is not a salvation issue.

Scripture References: Matthew 12:36; John 5:22, 16:8; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 6

Man:

Man is made in the image of God to be like Him in character. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called “sin”. This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:27; Psalms 8:3-6, Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 3:23

Eternity:

People will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is eternal death in hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life in heaven. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

Biblical References: John 3:16, 14:17; Romans 6:23, 8:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9; Revelation 20:15

Stewardship:

At UCC, we believe every Christian should give a portion of their income on a regular basis. Because tithing **is not** a requirement placed on Christians in the New Testament, we at UCC do not place a requirement of tithing on our members. However, we do follow the examples and practices of New Testament **giving**.

The word tithe simply means 10%. We see this figure as a helpful guideline for the amount one should give. However, it is not a rule or a law that is binding on Christians.

The tithe was part of the Law of Moses. Its purpose was to support the priests and for maintenance of the temple. Now that we are under the New Covenant, we are no longer bound by the Law of Moses.

You will not find a designated amount one should give in the New Testament. We do, however, find that Christians ought to give in proportion to their income. 1 Corinthians 16:2, "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper." 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each one of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver."

We give because God gives.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

We give because everything belongs to God anyways. Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." We must recognize that we are not owners of what we have, but stewards. Our role as Christians is to use what God has given us to His glory. That includes our finances.

What about Matthew 23:23? "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

We must recognize the Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees who were still obligated to follow the Mosaic Law. Therefore, the tithe was still binding on Jews during the time of this passage.

Request Help: If you have questions or concerns about any of the information covered in this section, we would like the opportunity to discuss these things with you. This can be accomplished over the phone or in a face-to-face meeting- whichever works best for you and your schedule. To schedule a meeting, please contact one of our staff members at the church office or by email.

Part III

What Unifies Us as a Church Body: Our Structure

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to help our church body fully understand how we are structured as a church, the process we use in installing leaders, and our expectations and qualifications of our leaders.

We will also discuss how each member of our church body agrees to resolving disputes within the church in a way that honors both God and each other. Additionally, we want those who have questions to know where to go to get the answers.

Resources: You can always reach out to an Elder or the Senior Minister if you have any questions regarding the content of this class.

1 Corinthians 14:33a (ESV)

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

This church is built on a biblical foundation.

We are a non-denominational, independent, elder-led church. We have appointed biblical elders.

Titus 1:5 (ESV)

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—

Scripture References: Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:2

Biblical Qualifications of an Elder

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (ESV)

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

(See also Titus 1:6)

Based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7, an elder must:

Be a man.

Desire the responsibility.

Meet the job description outlined in Scripture.

An Elder is a Servant

Matthew 20:25-28 (ESV)

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

An Elder is a Teacher

2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

And Elder is a Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:2-6 (ESV)

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

Responsibilities of the Elders:

Theological doctrine. (Oversee)

Philosophical Direction. (Life Groups, etc.)

Spiritual direction. (Prayer, Church discipline, etc.)

Hiring and termination of key staff positions.

Budget (Approval and oversight)

Building and Grounds

Missions

How Elders are chosen:

Identified and selected by acting leadership in the church.

Interview process by Elders

Presentation to congregation (Two week objection period e.g. biblical reason why this person should not be installed as an Elder in our church.)

Voted on by the Church body

Ordination (if no biblical objection is found)

2 year term of service. (consecutive terms can occur upon approval of the Elders and the congregation every two years)

Biblical Responsibility of the Congregation.

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Biblical Qualifications of a Deacon

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Based on 1 Timothy 3:8-13 a Deacon must:

Be a man.

Exhibit the moral qualities listed in this passage.

Meet the job description outlined in Scripture.

Responsibilities of Deacons:

Aid the Elders wherever needed to help further the mission of the church.

Acts 6:1-6 (ESV)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we

should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

How Deacons are chosen:

Identified and selected by acting leadership in the church.

Interview process by Elders

Presentation to congregation (Two week objection period e.g. biblical reason why this person should not be installed as a Deacon in our church.)

Voted on by the Church body

Ordination (if no biblical objection is found)

2 year term of service. (consecutive terms can occur upon approval of the Elders and the congregation every two years)

Part IV

What Unifies Us as a Church Body: **Our Vision, Mission, Core Values and Discipleship Process**

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to introduce and convey our vision, mission, core values and discipleship process so that every member of our church body knows exactly where we are going as a church (what winning is) and exactly how we're going to get there (gameplan).

This is more than catchy phrases we throw around. This is who we are and what we're all about as a church. Each of our church members need to be completely sold out for our cause and willing to get involved and join us in this journey!

Vision Statement:

Hope Lives Here

Mission Statement:

Love God. Love People. Serve Both.

Core Values:

The Bible is our authority.
Reaching people is our priority.
Generosity is our joy.
Community is our way of life.
Unity is our foundation.

What is a disciple?

A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus. (Matthew 4:19)

What is disciple-making?

Disciple-making is entering into relationships to intentionally help people follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join the mission of Jesus. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Who is a disciple-maker?

A disciple-maker is a disciple of Jesus who enters into relationship with people to intentionally help them follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join the mission of Jesus.

What is a disciple-making Church?

A disciple-making Church is a Church whose beliefs, habits, and narrative focus on disciple making to such an in-depth level that it quickly becomes clear to everyone, including newcomers, that disciple making is the mission of this church.

How do disciples live in the world?

Disciples of Jesus live in the world but are not of it. They are distinctive even as they permeate a dark world with light.

Levels of Discipleship That Jesus Modeled

Level one: one to one with John (John 19:26)

Level two: one to three with Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1)

Level three: one to twelve with the apostles (Matthew 10:2-4)

Level four: one to seventy two with the disciples on the limited commission (Luke 10:1)

Level five: one to five hundred to whom Jesus appeared after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6)

Level 6: one to thousands or multitudes in settings such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1)

Jesus focused most of his attention upon levels one to three, while most modern churches focus primarily upon levels four to six. Converts are made at levels four to six. That's not the mission. **Disciples are made at levels one to three.**

Our Primary Goal of Discipleship:

“So that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” Colossians 1:28 ESV

Discipleship Pathway



Congratulations on completing Union Christian Church’s Foundations Class! If you are not a member and would like to become one, we encourage you to speak with one of our Elders or the Senior Minister. We would love to have you join the Union Christian Church family!

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