



New Member Process

Expectations of Participants:

- Try to read ahead so that we can all chat about the material. If you don't get a chance to read ahead, come anyway! All reading is helpful, but not required for participation.
- Be aware of sharing time with one another. Make space for everyone to speak and get to know one another. Do make time outside of classes to continue conversations with each other, the pastor, or congregants you might meet at worship, fellowship, and other events.
- Try to attend all the meetings. The goal is to get to know the people who might be joining the church with you as well as the work of the congregation and the United Church of Christ. If you can't attend every meeting, but still want to join, you are welcome to do so.

Suggested reading materials:

- You will be given a copy of the book *A Faith of Your Own: Naming What You Really Believe*, by Ronald J. Allen. (The book is free to new member participants, but you are welcome to make a \$15 donation to offset the cost.)
- Selections from "A Short Course in the History of the United Church of Christ" (available online here: <https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>).
- An essay by William C. Placher from the book from *Struggling with Scripture*.

First meeting:

- WHAT TO READ: The UCC Traditional and Robert V. Moss versions of the Statement of Faith (you'll be given a printout).
- WHAT WE'LL LEARN: What it means to make a statement of faith or name your own theology and why that matters in this congregation.
- QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: What is your history with church, if any? What do you love about it, what frustrates you?

Second meeting:

- WHAT TO READ: The Introduction and Chapter 1 of *A Faith of Your Own*.
- WHAT WE'LL LEARN: How to identify a personal theology or get started on that.
- QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: In what ways are you "religious"? Prayer? Bible reading? Mission work? Evangelism? Etc.?

Third meeting:

- WHAT TO READ: "Struggling with Scripture," by William C. Placher in *Struggling with Scripture*, Bruggemann, Placher, and Bount (you will be given a printout).
- WHAT WE'LL LEARN: Why the Bible is really a "foreign language document."
- QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: How do you feel when you read a Bible passage? What barriers to Bible reading would you like help with?

Fourth meeting:

- WHAT TO READ: Choose one of the sections listed below from the UCC Short Course (online here: <https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>, if you need a printout of the section you'd like to read, let the pastor know at an earlier class meeting).
 - Congregationalism
 - German Reformed Church
 - The Christian Churches
 - German Evangelical Synod
 - Evangelical and Reformed
 - Congregational Christian
- WHAT WE'LL LEARN: What makes the UCC unique among denominations, and how this American denomination came to be (we are, indeed, an American church).
- QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: How does your identity as a Christian and with a denomination inform other aspects of your life?