

HISTORY, POLITY, & THEOLOGY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An online course offered by
The Center for Progressive Renewal

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to explore the history, polity, theologies, and practices of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor denominations. The course will include an exploration of denominational identity, hidden histories within the denomination, case studies around current issues of polity and structure, current ecumenical conversations, emerging trends within the United Church of Christ, and more. Successful completion of this course will fulfill the history and polity requirement for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ in most associations and conferences. However, perspective class participants need to contact their own association for confirmation that this fulfills their requirements. The class will be led by Rev. Heather Fosburgh as lead instructor with Rev. Jim Keat as IT Support.

Over the years this has been offered for credit at the following seminaries among others: Candler School of Theology, Vanderbilt School of Theology, Columbia Theological Seminary, Phillips Theological Seminary, Hartford Theological Seminary, Brite Divinity School, Iliff Theological Seminary, Christian Theological Seminary, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and Union Theological Seminary (NYC). The number of credits granted is determined by the seminary granting the credit. Arrangements to take this course for credit must be made in advance with the facilitator, Heather Fosburgh, and the Registrar's Office of the Seminary. Those taking the class for credit will be expected to complete an additional paper of 10--12 pages in length at the end of the class. Those seeking to only fulfill the Committee on Ministry polity requirement for authorized ministry do not have to do a final paper. The cost of the course is \$629. The fee for the class is refundable for a week after registration is closed.

In order to be fully engaged participants, all learners are expected to have a sufficient level of proficiency in the technologies which will be used. They must have at least a DSL level of internet connectivity to participate in the course. Training and ongoing support will be offered in the instructional platform, and in the use of Zoom including the video conferencing feature. We will provide individual consultation concerning the use of the instructional platform, and webinars to provide general orientation. Participants are expected to take advantage of this training and support. A lack of proficiency in the use of these technologies will compromise the learning experience. You may be helped in assessing your readiness for online learning by going to the following link: www.waol.org/prospective_students/isonlineforme.aspx.

The class is designed to develop an online learning community with participants from across North America. Therefore, participants are expected to be fully engaged on a weekly basis in the class discussions online, and to complete written and reading assignments on time in order not only for their benefit, but for the benefit of the other participants as well. They will also be expected to be present for their entire cohort's webinars. Initial discussion posts are due on Sunday of each week. Assignments and responses to forum postings are due on Tuesday. Discussion posts not entered by Friday following the Tuesday they are due will be given an automatic "0". Discussion posts entered after the Tuesday deadline will result in a reduced grade for the week. Likewise, all written assignments that are not completed by the Friday after their due date will receive a "0". Excused tardy assignments must be approved in advance. All participants will receive a weekly letter grade within five days of

submission. Participants are to save their work before submitting it. A certificate of completion will be issued only if the course has been fully paid for, and if the participant has submitted all assignments and fully participated in the discussions, has earned a grade of C or higher.

The class facilitators can be available for telephone consultation with any of the class participants by advance appointment. We will also have available a conferencing call number which students can use to arrange for conference calls among one another if they wish, with or without the facilitator present.

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS:

History, Polity and Theology of the United Church of Christ engages learners around six vital themes in the life and faith of the denomination. The course is being offered in an asynchronistic distance learning format. At the beginning of the class, participants are to view videos for orientation on the technology and our expectations of class participants. There will be four scheduled webinars for the class, one at the beginning, another at the end, and two interspersed during the class. Attendance on these webinars is required. There will be a group project in the fourth week of the class, in which the discussion groups will each collaborate to develop a Statement of Faith together. The course facilitators will guide the groups through the process of developing this statement.

Other requirements, including reading assignments and activities, will be completed on-line in a collaborative learning format. Written assignments and postings to the class discussion can be completed on the participant's own schedule of convenience within the week.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE CLASS:

As previously noted, the purpose of this course is to explore the history polity theology and practices of the United Church of Christ, and to be introduced to its predecessor denominations. Successful completion of this course fulfills the history and polity requirements for authorized ministry in most associations and conferences of the United Church of Christ.

The classes are typically composed of a diversity of students of wide ranging backgrounds in education, theological orientations and knowledge, gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Some students are seminary trained, and others are seeking authorization for lay licensed ministry, commissioned ministry and ordained ministry through other paths of preparation for ministry.

Because this course is designed to develop an online learning community among the participants in the class, there are many opportunities for online interaction among the students and with the facilitators. The foundations for the successful accomplishment of this community are spirits of collaboration, trust, and respect. Students are reminded that they are preparing for Christian ministry which is marked by ethical and loving behavior toward others.

To these ends participants affirm this **Code of Conduct**:

- All interactions among students are to be characterized by respect. Students are expected to listen to one another carefully, speak thoughtfully and engage differences with others without judgment. Students are to respect the dignity and rights of all in the course.
- All submitted work should be produced by the student, reflect the thoughts of the student, and be produced specifically for this course. Students are prohibited from submitting the same work in this course as they have in any other course, without the knowledge and consent of the lead facilitator.
- Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Students must acknowledge and cite another author's language, thoughts, and ideas as being those of that author. For purposes of the discussion threads, citation of course material only need include the author and page number. For written assignments and the final paper, full citation must be used.

- For more information on plagiarism, what it is and how to avoid it, visit https://www.otc.edu/Documents_Academic_Integrity/Avoiding_plagiarism.pdf.
- For more information on correct citation practices visit the Chicago Manual of Style's Guidebook: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- When using the information learned or materials shared within this course for purposes outside this course, proper attribution and citation must be used. Failure by the student to do so is plagiarism. This includes information from the video lectures, written resources, assignment prompts, facilitator feedback, in addition to the sources named above. False statements to the facilitators or other participants in the course are considered a breach of this Code.
- The facilitator will discuss any incident which appears to be a breach of the code with the student and will notify the Director of Online Learning that there a possible breach has occurred. The facilitator and Director of Online Learning will determine a remediation or penalty. The student may request an appeal to the Executive Director of the Center for Progressive Renewal if it is felt that the response is unjust.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The texts are to be ordered to be received by the first webinar. Most of the books are available from UCC Resources (<https://www.uccresources.com/collections/all-books>), and can be found by searching for them by title. The one book not available through UCC Resources is "On the Heels of Freedom" by Joyce Hollyday. This book is available on Amazon, or you can order it through Heather Fosburgh for \$15.00 including shipping.

Hollyday, Joyce, C. *On the Heels of Freedom: the American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*

Post, Margaret Rowland, *History and Program, Revised and Updated*

Thayer, A. and Jacobsen, D., eds. *Christ Creed and Life*

Walker, Randi, *The Evolution of a UCC Style*

Zikmund, B. ed., *Hidden Histories in the United Church*, Vols. 1-2 (available online)

Web resources to be accessed as assigned.

Recommended: *Book of Worship, UCC* (Some service available on UCC website)

Living Theological Heritage, Vols. I-VII Ed: Barbara Brown Zikmund

(Available on flash drive from UCC Resources for \$49.99)

Week 1: Introductions & Orientation, A Denomination of Pilgrims, Overview of the Four Traditions

Reading Assignment:

- Review the Map of the Origins of the UCC (available on the course website)
- Begin to read *History and Program*, Revised and Updated, pages 9-59
- Begin to familiarize yourself with the UCC website and the website for your conference.
- Watch Rev. Cameron Barr in Exploring the UCC Series, *Beginnings of the United Church of Christ: Our Roots in Four Traditions* (available on the course website)
- Watch Rev. Joyce Hollyday in the Exploring the UCC Series, *The American Missionary Association* (available on the course website)
- Watch the UCC Tribute Song (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Write an introduction of yourself to share with the whole class in the discussion forum.
- Make every effort to become well acquainted with your classmates by reviewing their introductions! This will be important to week four's assignment of drafting a common statement of faith.
- Please respond to at least three of your classmates' posts.

Written Assignment:

Write a reflection addressing the following three questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences between the tradition in which you were raised and the UCC?
2. If you were raised in the UCC, what tradition was your local church before being UCC? If your church was established after 1957, with which of the four organizing traditions does your congregation most closely identify?
3. How has being a part of the UCC changed your church's identity, if it has changed?

Week 2: We Are a People of God's Extravagant Welcome (The Four Traditions)

Reading Assignment:

- Complete reading *History and Program*, Revised and Updated, pages 9-59
- Read *Evolution of a UCC Style*, Chapter 1.
- [Read "We Are a People of Extravagant Welcome"](#)
- Add "Read Chapters 1--5 "On the Heels of Freedom"
- Watch lecture on the Four Traditions with Rev. Dr. Timothy Downs (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Using the first chapter of "The Evolution of a UCC Style," write and post to the forum a brief discussion of Walker's critique of the myth of the four traditions. We are looking for a summary of the main points within her critique, as well as your own thoughts in response to the reading.
- Respond substantively to three other posts.

Written Assignment:

Write 500-750 word paper that answers the question "How do you imagine each of the four traditions' (Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed) respective histories and polities have shaped the current UCC?"

The 500-750 word limit is a recommendation. If you need to exceed that limit to do justice to the assignment, you may do so. No more than three pages single spaced (6 double spaced).

Week 3: We Are a People of God's Extravagant Welcome (Hidden Histories of the UCC)

Reading Assignment:

- Read Chapters 6--12 "On The Heels of Freedom..."
- View the lecture by Rev. Dr. Tim Downs reviewing the history of the AMA (available on the course website)
- [Explore the section on *Hidden Histories in the UCC*, volumes 1 & 2](#)
- Read *The Emergence of Mercersburg Theology Within the German Reformed Church* by Scott Siciliano (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Write a reflection on the forum on the following question: "What 'hidden histories' have I been surprised to discover and how has this changed or enhanced my understanding of the United Church of Christ?"
- Respond substantively to three other posts.

Written Assignment:

Either choose one story from *On the Heels of Freedom*, or one essay from either of the volumes of *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ*.

Write a 500-750 word paper that reflects upon the history considering the questions: "How does this story connect with the larger story of the UCC?" or "How does this story reflect the values and commitments of the United Church of Christ and or one of its predecessor denominations that I have discovered in my reading?"

Week 4: We Belong to Christ

Reading Assignment:

- Read Thayer, A., and Jacobsen, D., eds. *Christ Creeds and Life*
- Read Elizabeth Nordbeck, "On Being an Unfinished Church: Reflections on Diversity in the United Church of Christ Today" (available on the course website)
- Read "The Big Tent and the Great Parade" by former UCC General Minister and President John Thomas. (available on the course website)
- View "The Statement of Faith: A Testimony not a Test" featuring Rev. Kenneth Makuakane (available on the course website)
- [Explore UCC Theology Resources](#), including but not limited to the following:

Reading on historical backgrounds in the UCC:

UCC Statement of Faith 3 versions

- Shinn Historical Reflections on the UCC Statement of Faith (available on the course website)
- Steckel on the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ (available on the course website)
- [Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ](#)

Optional reading:

- Heidelberg Catechism
- Schaff: Principle of Protestantism
- Cambridge Platform
- Burial Hill Declaration
- Kansas City Statement of Faith

Group Faith Statement:

Once a working draft has been developed, each group will select one person to consolidate and post the statement of faith for the entire group. It is easiest to copy and paste the statement from the Google Document into a Word document (or export the Google Document as a Word document) to submit under the written assignment module. Please include the names of all group members at the top of the document.

You will not receive an individual grade this week; rather your group will receive a grade on your corporate statement of faith. You are expected to participate actively in the drafting of this statement and the staff will be monitoring this carefully.

Group Assignment:

Group Statement of Faith Project

This week is a group project and serves as both your written and discussion assignments for the week. You will work with your discussion group to draft a joint statement of faith. Your group will engage in an exchange of ideas on a Google Doc, assisted by the class facilitator.

Instructions:

Write a statement describing essential elements of your personal faith and post it to your assigned Google Document by noon on Thursday September 28. (For help in this task see the assigned readings, other examples you find on the internet, or your own religious/cultural heritage and passions.) Through your group's working document, read & engage the statements of others in your group. Please note your initial posting must be up no later than Friday to give fellow students the opportunity to respond to your statements with their own.

By Saturday/Sunday, after you've had a chance to engage each other's personal statements, you will begin to develop a collaborative Statement of Faith. The Google Document will allow you to comment on one another's posts and maintain dialogue (we are aware this system is not perfect – we ask that you

would engage one another respectfully and graciously throughout the project, especially when it comes to differing beliefs). There may be points in your respective individual statements that are not reconcilable. Put those aside and work on the areas where you can come to agreement for your group statement.

The facilitator will be available to answer questions and give gentle direction throughout the weekend, but this project should be largely initiated by the group. If you would like to organize a time for your group to meet over Zoom, let Heather know and she will organize a link for you. Please be advised that this is not required, so if members of your group cannot join a live meeting, they will not be penalized. Once a final draft has been developed, each group will select one person to post the statement of faith for the entire group. It is easiest to copy and paste the final statement off of GoogleDocs into a Word document to submit under the written assignment module. Please include the names of all group members at the top of the document.

You will not receive an individual written assignment grade this week; rather your entire group will receive a grade on your joint statement of faith. You are expected to participate actively in the drafting of this statement and the facilitator will be monitoring this carefully. Your level of participation will affect your week's discussion grade. Your final group Statement of Faith is due on Tuesday, October 2 at midnight, again to be submitted by one group member, in their Written Assignment module.

If you are interested in the work / progress of other groups on this assignment, you are welcome to look at their Google Document.

Week 5: We Are One in Baptism and the Table

Reading Assignment:

1. Read “*Sacrament of Christian Vocation*” (available on the course website)
2. Read “*Sacrament on Discipleship*” (available on the course website)
3. Read the *Introduction to the Book of Worship* (available on the course website)
4. Review the slides from “*Worshipping Into God’s Future*” (available on the course website)
5. Familiarize yourself with worship resources on the SEC and UCC websites [including *Worship Ways*](#)
6. Watch the lecture on worship and sacraments (available on the course website)
7. Visit a UCC congregation that worships in a tradition substantially different than your own; your conference website should have a directory of congregations. Alternatively, find a UCC congregation online which worships in a tradition other than your own. There are wide varieties. We suggest that you visit Cathedral of Hope, Dallas, TX, Trinity UCC, Chicago, IL, The Riverside Church, New York, NY, Old South Congregational UCC, Boston, First Congregational UCC, Berkeley, CA, City of Refugee UCC, Oakland, CA, Plymouth Congregational UCC, Oklahoma City, OK or any other of the many UCC churches that either live stream or post videos of their worship. If you have commitments at your own church on Sunday mornings: Trinity UCC offers a Wednesday evening service that may be live streamed. The Riverside Church and Cathedral of Hope and many of the other listed churches post an audio or audio and video of their worship on their website. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to the diversity of worship styles within the UCC, and help you “know yourself more fully by becoming acquainted with the other.”
8. [Review sample of orders of services from “*United Church of Christ Book of Worship*”](#)

UCC Book of Worship is a resource which seeks to reflect essential UCC values such as inclusivity, theological diversity, a rootedness in tradition and yet a spirit of innovation. The Table of Contents and Introduction to the Book of Worship, an excellent overview and review of contents:

- *Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament I, a liturgical yet less formal service*
- *Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament II, somewhat more liturgical than the first*
- *Order for Services of the Word, without communion*
- *Order for Baptism, a rich and substantial service with bold dramatization allowing for immersion, pouring or sprinkling*
- *Order for Foot Washing: new to our tradition, but profoundly moving when practiced. Often this is performed on Maundy Thursday.*
- *Order for Healing for Congregational Use, intended for use in conflictive settings.*
- *Order for Corporate Reconciliation*

Discussion:

- Choose a service in UCC Book of Worship and write a brief reflection, “interacting” with it from your tradition(s) and experiences. Does it offer you a new perspective on liturgy, music, sacraments or rites in worship?
- Respond substantively to at least three other posts.

Written Assignment:

Submit a reflection (minimum of 500) words about your experience worshipping in the UCC church of a tradition other than your own which you visited as a part of this assignment (see *Reading Assignments* for this week). Briefly describe what the essentials of worship are, and how they are present in the service you watched/attended. How are they present in the worship service with which you are most familiar?

Week 6: We Are a United and Uniting Church

Reading Assignment:

1. Read *UCC Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations* (available on the course website)
2. Read *Ecumenical Partnership with the Christian Church* (available on the course website)
3. Read the *Formula of Agreement* (available on the course website)
4. Read *A Formal Motion of Affirmation of Relationship with the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries* (available on the course website)
5. Read *Relationship Between the United Church of Christ and the Jewish Community* (available on the course website)
6. Read *Relationship Between the United Church of Christ and the Muslim Community* (available on the course website)
7. Read *Report of the Joint Partnership Committee of the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada* (available on the course website)
8. Watch *A United and Uniting Church* lecture (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Share in the Discussions for this week some of the themes that you have identified in the various statements of partnership and relationships which the UCC has with other denominations and faith traditions.
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

Write a reflection on your understanding of what it means for the United Church of Christ to be a united and uniting church. Reflect not only on the readings for this week, but also readings about creeds and confessions of faith. How has the UCC evolved from its identities rooted in the original four traditions which came together in the height of ecumenical optimism into its identity as a united and uniting church today? What do you observe about the many ecumenical and interfaith relationships in which you see the UCC currently engaged?

Week 7: We Are a People Who Work at Home And Globally for Justice and Peace

Reading Assignment:

1. Browse [the Congregational Library exhibit on ABCFM](#) for a historical view of global ministries
2. Read "We Thank God by Working for a Just and Loving World" (available on the course website)
3. Watch the talk by Sunitha Mortha on the spirit of global ministry (available on the course website)
4. Explore the [Global Ministries](#) website, especially the [About Us](#) page
5. Read the [Guiding Principles](#) of the Global Ministries
6. Read the [History](#) of the Global Ministries
7. Read the Origin and Legacy of the Common Global Ministries Board (available on the course website)
8. Read the Global Ministries Strategic Plans (available on the course website)
9. Focus your reading by choosing a part of the world that is of interest to you other than the United States. How is the UCC present in those places? Who are our ecumenical partners there?

Discussion:

- How have you thought of "mission" in the past? How is what you have learned from the readings for this week fulfilled your image of mission, and how has the global ministry to which you have been introduced this week been the same as or different from what you have thought of as mission?
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

Choose a part of the world particularly interesting to you and write a 500-750 word reflection on the UCC global ministry in that setting. Who serves there? Who are the partners in ministry in this setting? What are some of the particularly striking characteristics of this ministry? How can I use this story in worship or in program in my local church to help make mission become more real to the congregation?

Week 8: We Are a People of Covenant

Reading Assignment:

1. Read *Evolution of a UCC Style*, Chapters 5 and 6.
2. Read Freeman, D., *Autonomy in Covenant* (available on the course website)
3. Read Hulteen W., *Covenantal Relationships* (available on the course website)
4. Read Northern California Nevada Committee on Ministry, *Definition of Covenant* (available on the course website)
5. Watch "A Commitment to Covenant" featuring Rev. Brigit Stevens (available on the course website)

Optional reading for historic background on covenant:

- Read Russell, R. *Covenantal Theology, Covenantal Church Life* (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Share three key points about the nature of covenant as you have understood it from our readings for this week.
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

Write a brief reflection, of a minimum of 500-750 words answering the questions: What are the characteristics of a covenant? How do the characteristics of covenant get expressed (or not) within the UCC.

Week 9:

Reading Assignment:

1. Review *History and Program Revised and Updated*, Post, pages 73-82
2. Review the UCC Constitution and Bylaws. Look for definitions of the role of General Synod (UCC Constitution, Article IX. UCC Bylaws, Article III) making notes on the essentials of what you see. (available on the course website)
3. Explore the videos of, the schedule, resolutions, and other resources that are posted for the most recent General Synod. ([click here](#))
4. Listen to a perspective on General Synod offered by Rev. Edith Guffy (available on the course website)
5. Listen to the lecture by Heather Bardole introducing General Synod (available on the course website)
6. Listen to lecture by Tim Downs, *The Evolving Structure of the United Church of Christ* (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- Post a one paragraph reflection about a resolution of interest to you. If applicable, perhaps you might reflect on how the General Synod is the same as or different from the national governing body of the denomination in which you were raised.
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

In 500—750 words describe the role of the General Synod in relationship to the associations, conferences and local churches of the United Church of Christ. What observations do you have to make about the business of the General Synod? About the resolutions which it is considering?

Week 10:

Reading Assignment:

1. Watch *Framing the Conversation* with Phyllis Tickle where she lays the groundwork for understanding why the church is changing and the church's need to adapt. (available on the course website)
2. Read Rubin Sheares article on covenant within UCC polity (available on the course website)
3. Explore the definition and roles of conferences and associations as found in the UCC Constitution (available on the course website)
4. Read the article on conferences in the UCC by Don Severson and Rollin Russell (available on the course website)
5. Explore the website of your conference, and if your association has one, your association. What new things have you learned about the role and ministry of your conference (and association) in this exploration?
6. Listen to the Lecture by Rev. Heather Bardole on the role of conferences and associations in the United Church of Christ (available on the course website)
7. Visit the websites of conferences that are in conversations about greater collaboration with one another. These conferences include Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island in one conversation, Pennsylvania Northeast and Penn Southeast, and South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa.

Discussion:

- Share some of the things you have learned about your conference with others. How does it appear to be different from or the same as other conferences? Investigate one other Conference to compare to your own Conference.
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

Write a reflection of a minimum of 500—750 words on the role of the conference (and association) in the UCC, and its significance to the local church. Using your own church as a case study subject, how would you describe the strengths and assets of your congregation's relationship with the Conference? What would you consider its growing edges? Reflect on the role of covenant in the shaping of these relationships.

If you are not currently serving or attending a UCC congregation, reflect on the question "how is the structure of the UCC similar to your own denomination?" What strengths do you see in the structure? What weaknesses?

Week 11:

Reading Assignment:

1. Review the definition and roles of the local church within the United Church of Christ in the UCC Constitution, articles III. and V. (available on the course website)
2. Read in *United Church of Christ Manual on Church*, pages 8-12 and 14-15
3. Review the Fall 2017 Statistical Report (available on the course website)
4. Review the Report on United Church of Christ Congregational Vitality and Ministerial Excellence. Note particularly the introduction, and the comments of Holly MillerShank, Bill McKinney, and Cameron Trimble. (available on the course website)
5. View the lecture by Rev. Laura Robinson on "*Perspectives on Local Church in the UCC*" (available on the course website)
6. View lecture by Dr. David Greenhaw on Exploring the UCC Series: "*The Local Church, Membership, Organizations, Freedoms and Responsibilities*" (available on the course website)

Additional Assignments for the Week:

- Watch *Renewing a Church: Interviews between Rev. Mike Piazza and Rev. Ann Ralosky* (available on the course website)
- Listen the interview with Rev. Violet Little on the church she started in Philadelphia (available on the course website)

Discussion:

- How do you think this blended congregational/covenantal form of governance really works for the local church in the context of the denomination? What are its strengths? Its weaknesses?
- Please respond to at least three other postings.

Written Assignment:

Reflecting on the lectures by Rev. Greenhaw and Rev. Robinson, how does your local congregation measure up in the exercise of its freedoms and responsibilities within the larger UCC? How might your local church strengthen its relationship with other UCC congregations? With the Conference? With the national setting of the UCC?

If you are not in a UCC congregation: How does the the responsibilities and freedoms of the local church in the UCC compare to the local church's relationship with the national setting of the denomination you are a part of? How are they similar? Different?

Week 12:

Reading Assignment:

On the UCC website there is a resource which we have introduced to you in bits and pieces over the course of this class. Developed by the MESA team, it is entitled "The United Church of Christ, Exploring our History Polity and Theology". There are a good number of short lectures and accompanying study guides designed to be used in various settings of the UCC, including among local church members, Members in Discernment, Committees on Ministry, Search Committees and others. This week we will ask you to design a project using these resources.

- [Explore the UCC Polity resources on the UCC website.](#)
- Take notes on things that might be of particular interest to you given what you have learned (or not learned) in this course.

Written Assignment:

Design a six week course of study using the Exploring the UCC Series resources to present the UCC to your congregation. Knowing you cannot include everything you have learned, what parts would be important for you to include? Which would not be?

Discussion:

- Using the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers which Marks are ones you excel at? Which are growing edges? Pick one or two Marks for each and unpack them a little.
- Respond substantively to at least three others.

Week 13:**Written Assignment:**

Write an essay not exceeding 500 words reflecting on your growing understanding of the UCC. What has surprised you? What questions remain unclear or unanswered?

Discussion:

- Write a brief reflection of your call and post to share with the class. Include in this reflection a response to the question; "Why is the United Church of Christ the context of my calling?"
- Please respond to at least three other postings.