



Member Book



**University Church**

# A “user’s guide” to your church

Welcome to University Church! We are excited you are a MEMBER and welcome your significant participation in the life of this faith community.

We are honored to be your spiritual home and the location for your transformation!

If you are reading this, you are looking to understand University Church beyond the Sunday worship experience. We want to make it easy to participate and understand how your church is organized and governed.

This “user’s guide” is here to provide a basic walkthrough of the church, its history and governance, and a map of all the opportunities to love God and serve neighbors with us here at University Church.

## Here we go!

# Let's begin here...

University Church is a Christian congregation, and a member of two denominations:

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** and **United Church of Christ**



disciples.org

**Joined in 1894**



ucc.org

**Joined in 1977**



This is our church's logo. See the "U" the "C" and the cross?



**University Church**

# University Christian Church: A SUPER Brief History

University Christian Church (UChurch) began its ministry in 1894 under the leadership of Herbert Lockwood Willett. Dr. Willett came to Chicago at the invitation of William Rainey Harper (then-President of the University of Chicago) to teach Old Testament. He gathered a few people together and formed a branch of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Hyde Park, directly next to the university and the Disciples Divinity House, where Willett also served as dean. One year after the World's Fair in Chicago, University Church was born.

Throughout its history, University Church has sought to address issues of Hyde Park and surrounding neighborhoods, providing a voice of care, challenge and social conscience. Under the leadership of Edward Scribner Ames (the church's 3rd pastor, serving from 1900-1940), the church began to construct a coherent and consistent vision of what University Church should be in the world:

*This church practices union; has no creed; seeks to make religion as intelligent as science, as appealing as art, as vital as the day's work, as intimate as home, as inspiring as love.*

Racial integration became a priority for University Church in the years after WWII, leading this change while the city itself was still struggling with real lines of segregation. As the issues

changed, University Church became a social justice congregation committed to civil rights movements of the 50's and 60's. Evidence of anti-war campaigns and marches for poor people's rights can still be found throughout the church, and a lasting sign of the commitment to social justice came when University Christian Church became dually affiliated with the United Church of Christ denomination in 1977. A second crucial partnership was formed when South Community Church merged with University Church in 1980, together forming an intentionally multicultural faith community.

In 1985, the church joined the Sanctuary Movement for political refugees and victims of violence in Central America. University Church provided sanctuary for two Guatemalan families, and continues the relationship by sending delegations to Guatemala on a yearly basis. University Church is also part of the New Sanctuary Movement.

In 1986, University Church bought a building in the Woodlawn community to ensure affordable and community housing, and the "Covenantal Community of University Church" co-op exists to this day.

University Church was also known for many years as the home of the Blue Gargoyle youth services center, a non-profit group that provided family literacy and skills training, and employment assistance to the surrounding

community. The Blue Gargoyle began with the leadership and vision of members of University Church. Even now, people refer to UChurch as "Church of the Blue Gargoyle." Pastors Charles Bayer, Harvey Lord, Peg Stearn, and Don & Ann Marie Coleman are responsible for the legacy of social advocacy and prophetic witness that became a trademark of University Church during this time.

The commitments of University Church are clear: to provide authentic welcome to all who enter, to proclaim a gospel of justice and peace, and to celebrate and honor the gifts brought by diversity. In the spirit of welcoming all, UChurch is "Open and Affirming", providing opportunities for leadership and ministry with no stipulation of race, class, gender, age, orientation, personality, or ability.

Whoever you are. Wherever you're from. You are welcome here.

# Our Current Pastor

Rev. Julian DeShazier, M.Div



In November 2010, the congregation called Rev. Julian DeShazier to serve as senior pastor, the first African-American pastor in the church's history, and also the youngest, beginning at the age of 27.

Pastor Julian brings a deep commitment to our storied tradition, a fresh energy towards students and the arts, and a covenant to be faithful and active in Chicago and everywhere the love of God is needed!

As a national speaker, advocate and artist, Julian has appeared on ABC, CBS, FOX, and Dr. Maya Angelou's "Oprah & Friends"

radio program. He is also an award-winning musician known as **J.Kwest**, winning an Emmy Award in 2015 for the short film "Strange Fruit." He has appeared in the OXFAM and Bread for the World-produced documentary *The Line*, providing a critical voice against poverty and violence in the US.

The Chicago native and graduate of Morehouse College and the University of Chicago Divinity School is a regular contributor to *Sojourners* and *Huffington Post*; is an adjunct professor at University of Chicago Divinity School and McCormick Theological Seminary; serves on the board of Disciples Divinity House and chairs the Community Advisory Council of the University of Chicago Medical Center. He has spoken at the national assemblies for both the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and performed at the Taste of Chicago and Wild Goose festivals.

Pastor Julian's sermons are posted weekly on the church's website, and you can hear some of his music at: [www.JKWEST.com](http://www.JKWEST.com)

## CHURCH STAFF

University Church has a full-time office manager, a building manager, and a music director, along with a youth pastor and the occasional seminary intern.

Our most up-to-date staff is listed on the church's website:

[UniversityChurchChicago.org](http://UniversityChurchChicago.org)

# What “Membership” Means

Once you inform the church of your intent to join, you are a **MEMBER**. Then we have a series of New Member classes each quarter, culminating in a New Member Sunday, where you will introduce yourself and the congregation will welcome you using a ritual that has been church tradition for generations.

As a way to help us think about what it means to join a faith community, we have 3 basic ideas, using the Bible for help...

## 1. PARTICIPATE IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

...through joining a committee or finding a program that meets your need to serve others. (1 Peter 4:10)

We don't expect you to join and immediately start working, but we each become better when we participate in community. Your faith will grow around others.

## 2. PARTICIPATE IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHURCH

...a **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT**, whether it be the biblical 10% “tithe” (outlined in Genesis 14:20) or any amount that reflects a sincere commitment. Seriously, **ANY** amount that is significant for you, and we believe this is part of living faithfully (Malachi 3:10)

In past generations, churches would ask for your “time, talent, and treasure.” What we ask is that you...

## 3. MAKE THIS CHURCH YOUR CHURCH

...this pastor your pastor, and this ministry your ministry. Use this place to develop your faith. You will hear Jesus' Great Commandment a lot here: “Love Your God with all your heart, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself” - Matthew 22:37-40.

Give of yourself in a way that authentically reflects that.

## Members that Move Away

...happens a lot. When you find a new church near that awesome new job on the North Pole, we'll be sad to lose you but will still consider you a **FRIEND**. There have been thousands of “Friends” in UChurch's history, who still receive correspondence and want to stay connected. If you know you won't be here long, don't let that stop you from becoming a member.

## Members in Discernment

...is how we refer to seminarians and others seeking ordination in either the **UCC** or **Christian Church (DoC)**, and would like to be sponsored by the congregation. We have an active discernment committee that is ready to see you through to ordination!



# Governance

University Church uses a **CONGREGATIONAL** polity, which means we are led by the pastor and governed by the congregation. Plenty of histories on congregationalism can be read, but put simply, we are an **autonomous democracy**.

**AUTONOMOUS** in that we affiliate with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, and participate often in regional and national meetings. Budget and leadership decisions, and all major decisions pertaining to church life, belong in the capable hands of the local congregation.

**DEMOCRACY** because these decisions are made during congregational meetings, where all active members vote. This is why it's important to become a member: only members can vote. The entire congregation meets once a year, usually in December, to vote on the Board, approve the next year's budget, and discuss any other church business.

The **CONGREGATION** will select the **PASTOR**, who will select the **CHURCH STAFF**

The **CONGREGATION** will also elect the church officers and **CHURCH BOARD**.

All of these people work together to fulfill the work of the Church, as led by God and in conversation with one another.





# Church Board & Officers

The Board conducts the business of the Church, approves its programs and establishes its policies subject to the ultimate governing authority of the Congregation.

## BOARD COMPOSITION:

CHURCH OFFICERS  
COMMITTEE CHAIRS  
(6) AT-LARGE MEMBERS

## THESE ARE THE CHURCH OFFICERS:

Moderator  
Vice-Moderator  
2nd Vice Moderator  
Recording Secretary  
Financial Secretary  
Treasurer  
Trustees (3)

These all come from and are elected by the congregation, during the Annual Meeting each December.

## THESE ARE THE OFFICIAL COMMITTEES (11):

Social Justice  
Christian Development  
Outreach  
Christian Education  
Worship  
Hospitality  
Discernment  
Finance  
Staff Relations  
Nominating  
Multimedia

There are also ad-hoc committees that the pastor or church will establish, and these may be asked to report to the board as well.

The board meets monthly, on the 2nd Sunday, after worship.

## Feeling Overwhelmed???

Take a breath, we're about to describe the committees now...

# Official Committees (1/3)

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

...is a vehicle for communication, education, and advocacy for peace and justice issues. Any advocacy action that requires financial support or the church's name for support must be approved by the Social Justice committee. Almost all of the church's justice work flows from this committee. If you are interested in working for justice or have an idea that you'd like to see the church consider, attend the next meeting!

**MEETING TIME: 1st Sunday of each month, after worship**

Chairperson role:  
-convene the monthly meeting  
-provide report at the board meeting (and a written annual report)  
-facilitate event communication and any bulletin/Messenger articles.

Chair term is (1) year.

## ADULT EDUCATION

...is responsible for Adult Christian education. This includes: bible studies, book groups, series and talks around different subjects. If you like to teach bible study or lead devotional times and like to discuss and share theology, this is the committee for you.

**MEETING TIME: (varies, as needed) Most people indicate their interest to teach something, and then we schedule it. If you are interested, speak with the pastor**

Chairperson role:  
-convene meetings as needed  
-coordinate education series with pastor  
-help others to develop special programs and present new ideas for Christian teaching  
-Provide board report (and written annual report)

Chair term is (1) year.

## CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT/ YOUTH

...is responsible for all youth ministry programming, infants thru 12th grade. We have a TEEN group; a group for Elementary kids; junior church (during regular worship); a 2nd floor nursery that provides childcare during worship; a yearly lock-in for all ages; and regular service projects. We want to assist families in the faith formation of their children. If you are a parent, or you have a passion for working with young people, this is the committee for you!

**MEETING TIME: 3rd Sunday of each month, after worship**

Chairperson role:  
-convene monthly meetings  
-plan and coordinate events w/ assistance of youth pastor  
-coordinate communication between church and parents  
-provide a report at the board meeting (and a written annual report)

Chair term is (1) year.

## OUTREACH

...is responsible for building relationships and partnerships outside the Church and hosting programs within the Church for outreach purposes. If you have ever been to an event and thought, "You know, the church should do that!" or consider yourself an event planner, or love having conversations with new people, you should attend our next meeting!

**MEETING TIME: 3rd Sunday of each month after worship**

Chairperson role:  
-convene monthly meetings  
-help plan and coordinate events to interest new members  
-provide a report to the board (and a written annual report);  
-distribute information about new events and programs to the wider community.

Chair term is (1) year.

# Official Committees (2/3)

## WORSHIP

...is responsible for supporting and enhancing the liturgical life of the congregation. They work with the pastoral staff to plan special Sundays; develop a budget for worship materials; consider any suggestions and criticisms concerning worship or the sanctuary aesthetics; and make recommendations to improve all aspects of worship. If you are passionate about worship and church seasons and liturgy, you should attend the next meeting!

**MEETING TIME: 4th Sunday of each month, after worship**

Chairperson role:

- convene the monthly meeting
- provide a report at the board meeting (and a written annual report)
- help plan meaningful worship experiences, traditional and nontraditional.

Chair term is (1) year.

## HOSPITALITY

...organizes social hour after worship; recruits ushers; helps coordinates receptions for special events; sends welcome gifts to visitors as well as cards for birthdays and condolences; helps plan two of the biggest events of the church year: Advent Festival (December) and the annual Attending to Black Culture Soul Food Potluck/cooking contest. If you have a gift for transforming ordinary rooms into aesthetic masterpieces and want to help others feel welcome at church, please come to our next meeting!

**MEETING TIME: 1st Sunday after worship**

Chairperson role:

- recruit volunteers for social hour
- communicate with church staff to provide presence at memorial repasts and special events
- report to the board monthly (and provide written annual report)
- organize ushers for Sunday worship.

Chair term is (2) years.

## DISCERNMENT

...is passionate about future church leadership! This team of advisors nurtures seminarians pursuing ordination, help facilitate the process for those who are certain they want to be ordained, and is the "lay committee" for our field education students. If you love asking questions, think you can serve as a great mentor, or simply want to help nervous interns in their journey then you've found the right place!

**MEETING TIME: (as needed, upon request of students, usually quarterly)**

Chairperson role:

- recommend candidates to the Board for endorsement for ordination
- convene meetings with students
- report to the board when meetings occur (and provide an annual written report); facilitate communication between student and congregation.

Chair term is (2) years.

## FINANCE

...is responsible for overseeing all financial and property dimensions of Church life. They promote stewardship and conduct the annual campaign to secure financial commitments for the next year. The committee will also audit church resources and financial processes. If you have ideas about stewardship, love development, or are familiar with accounting software, this is your committee!

**MEETING TIME: (as needed)  
Typically, the committee doesn't meet until they plan the Stewardship campaign for November and help form the next year's budget**

Chairperson role:

- report to the board monthly (and provide a written annual report)
- present the final budget to the board for approval
- coordinate stewardship campaign for November

Chair term is (2) years.

The Treasurer is a Co-Chair of the Finance committee, per our by-laws.

# Official Committees (3/3)

## STAFF RELATIONS

...serves as a supporting and consulting group for the pastoral staff and is a channel for the congregation to communicate any commentary back to staff. In many ways this is a troubleshooting taskforce, but they also make recommendations to the Board about ministerial salaries, audit staff processes, and provide job descriptions. This is a FUN committee for those who love to get in the nuts and bolts of infrastructure, and can keep confidences and help work through issues when they arise. Members are asked to sit on this committee for (3) years.

**MEETING TIME: (as needed) usually quarterly**

Chairperson role:

- convene regular meetings and work with the pastor (when appropriate) to convene meetings as needed
- report to the Board after meetings
- provide written annual report and annual performance review of ministers.

Chair term is (1) year.

## NOMINATING

...prepares the slate of church officers for the next year. Think of them as the talent agent or casting directors of the church. This committee will seek out future leaders from within the church, which means members may be asked to join a committee! The church also needs people who are willing to attend our national, regional, and local meetings (at our expense, of course!), and this committee will find those faces and voices to represent us. Members are asked to sit on this committee for (3) years.

**MEETING TIME: once before the Fall, and as needed until nominating slate is complete**

The 2nd Vice Moderator convenes the first committee meeting and members select a chair, per our by-laws. This person convenes the committee and presents the slate to the board and congregation at the appropriate time (usually during the Fall).

## MULTIMEDIA

...provides technical support to the congregation in the areas of sound, video, audio, photography, print and aesthetic media. The committee creates quality productions that articulate our values in an artistic way, and also manages communications across the church's various media platforms, including written, electronic and social media. Members of this committee also learn to manage the sound and camera equipment for Sunday worship and special events.

**MEETING TIME: ongoing, as special projects are happening.**

Chairperson role:

- convene committee as needed, often via email, and report to board with progress.
- coordinate communications on social media, bulletin, and Messenger
- provide annual written report to the congregation

Chair term is (1) year.



# Church Officer Descriptions

## MODERATOR

...is the Chair of the Board and Executive Committee  
...prepares agenda for board meetings (and provides written annual report)...convenes said board meetings and annual meeting...appoints ad hoc committees as needed to carry out the mission of the church...meets with pastor regularly to stay apprised of issues, activities and happenings from the pastoral staff...communicates regularly with congregation using all necessary means on a timely basis.

The term lasts (1) year.

## 1st VICE MODERATOR

...acts as Moderator in the Moderator's absence...is a member of the Executive Committee...assumes Moderator position upon resignation or if Moderator is unable to perform duties...is the Board liaison to the Christian Development, Social Justice, Staff Relations, and any ad hoc committees of the church (checks in, makes sure they are doing okay, receives dates for church calendar)...helps plan the church's calendar, with pastoral staff.

The term lasts (1) year, then 1st

V.M. is expected to become MODERATOR the following year.

## 2nd VICE MODERATOR

...acts as Moderator in Moderator's and 1st Vice Moderator's absence...is a member of the Executive Committee...assumes Moderator position upon resignation of 1st Vice Moderator and Moderator, or if Moderators are unable to perform duties...is the Board liaison to the Finance, Hospitality, Nominating, Outreach, and Discernment committees (checks in, makes sure they are doing okay, receives dates for church calendar)...helps plan the church's calendar, with pastoral staff...CONVENES THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE IN THE FALL.

The term lasts (1) year, then 2nd V.M. is expected to become 1st V.M. the following year, and Moderator in that following year.

## TREASURER

...is a member of Executive committee...assures capital funds are managed according to the policies of the congregation...advises the board on financial matters...is Co-Chair of the FINANCE committee meetings...contacts persons behind in their pledges...provides a written financial report at the annual meeting...

The term is (1) year.

## RECORDING SECRETARY

...attends all church Board meetings, congregational meetings, and Executive Committee meetings...records minutes of all attended meetings and ensures that an official file of them is in the church office...- submits drafts of minutes to board (to the pastor for Executive committee)for accuracy...writes letters as requested by the Board...

The term is (1) year.

## FINANCIAL SECRETARY

...ensures that office manager keeps accurate financial records (incl. dispersals and receipts to the budget) ...sends pledge statements on timely basis (so members may use for tax purposes)...provides financial report at each Board meeting...reports on financial matters (as necessary or when asked by the church)...oversees offering counters on Sunday morning...

The term is (1) year.

## TRUSTEE

...is a member of the Board...is in the care, custody, and control of the real and personal property of the Church...can recommend to the congregation the selling of real property of the church (must be approved by congregation)...  
There are (3) trustees.

The term for each trustee is (3) years.



# Wrapping Up...

**By now you should be able to talk with anyone about:**

CHURCH HISTORY (there is a more thorough history - about 100 pages, if you ever want to read - found in the main office)

CHURCH GOVERNANCE, and the various officers and committees of the church

MEMBERSHIP and what it means to be a member

**If it seems like too much, you can digest a little at a time, return to various sections, and ask questions anytime.**

**We want University Church to be as transparent as humanly possible, and we want you, as a member, to be fully informed.**

**You can join a committee, and there are many other ways to get involved in the life of your church.**

## **WANT SOME IDEAS???**

- MUSICIANS/SINGERS - JOIN THE CHOIR OR SANCTUARY BAND
- DANCERS --> DANCE CHOIR
- LOVE TO WRITE OR WANT TO RECITE PRAYERS & LITURGY?
- SERVE COMMUNION
- BECOME AN USHER/GREETER
- HOST A SOCIAL/COFFEE HOUR (SIGN UP IN DINING HALL)
- ATTEND A MEETING ON THE CHURCH'S BEHALF
- LEAD A BIBLE STUDY OR SEMINAR FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
- VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH THE YOUTH MINISTRY

THERE IS AN IDEA THAT YOU HAVE THAT DOESN'T EXIST HERE YET. SHARE THAT IDEA WITH THE RIGHT COMMITTEE, OR SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE PASTOR.

# GET INVOLVED!

**THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS ENTIRE GUIDE – THE THING WE WANT YOU TO REMEMBER MOST – IS THAT WE BELIEVE THERE IS POWER INSIDE OF YOU, AND WE WANT TO GIVE YOU EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BE YOUR BEST SELF WHILE GROWING YOUR FAITH. CHURCH ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT BEING BUSY – BUT WHEN YOU DO FEEL IT IS TIME TO DO MORE...  
AT LEAST NOW YOU KNOW HOW.**





# University Church



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