

Essential Elements

in a (one term) United Church of Christ Polity Class

History

- Origins, development, significant documents, major events, important persons in the four primary constituent traditions (Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, Reformed)
- Selected other traditions and/or groups within the United Church of Christ (especially, but not necessarily limited to, African American, American Indian, Pacific Islander/Asian American, Hispanic)
- Founding of the United Church of Christ
- Developments in the United Church of Christ from 1957 to the present

Theology

- Theological documents and texts (e.g. Statement of Faith, *Basis of Union*, *Prism* articles, various working papers of the national setting, ecumenical documents, pronouncements of General Synod, etc.)
- Worship (including *Book of Worship*, *New Century* and other hymnals)
- Ecclesiology (the nature of the church)
- Creeds and confessions (“testimonies, not tests” of what is commonly held among us)

Polity

- Constituent parts of the United Church of Christ—i.e., local church, conferences and associations, national setting, General Synod (*Constitution and Bylaws*)
- Past and present structure of the United Church of Christ (“covenantal polity”)
- Patterns of accountability and autonomy in the various settings of the church

Ministry (*Manual on Ministry*)

- Forms of ministry—licensed, commissioned, ordained; ministerial partners (CC/DoC); emerging patterns for authorized ministry; ministry of all the baptized
- Structures and patterns of accountability—i.e., ordination, standing, discipline
- Ministerial ethics (*Ordained Minister’s Code*, in MOM; other ethics documents)
- Understandings of ministry in the UCC: “embodiment” and “empowerment” models

The Ethos of the UCC

- Diversity: commitment to be a multi-racial, multi-cultural church
- Justice and witness concerns
- Ecumenical commitments and partnerships (esp. partnership with Christian Church/Disciples of Christ)
- Mission