

United Church of
Christ

United Church of Christ

- Roughly 1 million members in the US (down from over 2 million at their founding)
- Formed in 1957 with the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches
 - Roots are in the Reformed (Calvin), Congregational, Baptist, and Evangelical traditions.
- Theology is vague, extremely diverse, and in flux.
- 12 in the Kansas City area, including 2 in Raytown

Material Principle

LCMS

- Justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ

UCC

- Unionistic Restoration
 - Conciliar movement, in other words, unite the church without denominations
- Building a Just World for All

Formal Principle

LCMS

- Scripture (OT and NT)

UCC

- Draws from Scripture
 - They question everything, even God's omnipotence and omniscience.
- Only right way to believe: having no right way to believe...

Formal Principle cont.

- **We believe the UCC is called to be a united and uniting church.** "That they may all be one." (John 17:21) "In essentials–unity, in nonessentials–diversity, in all things–charity," These UCC mottos survive because they touch core values deep within us. The UCC has no rigid formulation of doctrine or attachment to creeds or structures. Its overarching creed is love. UCC pastors and teachers are known for their commitment to excellence in theological preparation, interpretation of the scripture and justice advocacy. Even so, love and unity in the midst of our diversity are our greatest assets.

God

LCMS

- Biblical Trinity

UCC

- Some Trinitarian
- Some Unitarianism

The Person of Jesus

LCMS

- Incarnation
- Both God and man

UCC

- Incarnation
- Both God and man
 - Muddled – “Even today, some Christians experience Jesus only as God, others only as a human being.”

The Work of Jesus

LCMS

- Redemption
- Reconciliation
- Vicarious Satisfaction/Atonement
- Savior

UCC

- Redemption
- Reconciliation
- A vicarious, substitutionary atonement leads to justification

Doctrine of Man

LCMS

- Fallen sinners in need of redemption, of salvation
- Original sin
- Bondage of the Will
- Total depravity

UCC

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- Moving towards synergism

Salvation/Justification

LCMS

- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Grace Alone
- Faith Alone

UCC

- Personal decision for Christ

Sacraments

LCMS

- A means of grace
- Commanded by Christ
- With a visible element
 - Baptism
 - Lord's Supper
 - Absolution

UCC

- Symbols
 - Baptism
 - Lord's Supper

Assurance

LCMS

- Points you to the means of grace:
 - Baptism
 - Lord's Supper
 - Absolution
- Not based on you or your works, but on God and what He has done for you.

UCC

- A complicated issue:
 - Not all UCC believe in universalism, BUT
 - There are many paths to God, not just Jesus
- Change the question:
 - How do you know you're loved by God?
 - Answer points to your works of mercy (Jesus in Matthew 25:35-40)
- Rev. Michael Stephens,
Southwood UCC in Raytown

Church and Ministry

LCMS

- Church as the Body of Christ
- Visible and invisible church
- Marks of the Church – Preaching and the sacraments
- One divinely instituted office – the Preaching Office or the Office of the Keys
- Auxiliary offices are rooted in the Office

UCC

- Church as the Body of Christ
- Congregational at the congregational level – self-governed and autonomous
- Presbyterian in the higher levels of the church

Last Things

LCMS

- Life after Death
- Bodily Resurrection
- Amillennial

UCC

- Non-committal
- Open questions
 - 2nd coming of Christ
 - Judgment Day
 - Etc.

Current Cultural Topics

LCMS

- Role of Women in the Church
- Age of the earth
- Abortion
- In Vitro Fertilization
- Cohabitation
- Same-sex Marriage

UCC

- Role of Women in the Church
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Miscellaneous

UCC

- “We believe that the UCC is called to be a prophetic church. As in the tradition of the prophets and apostles, God calls the church to speak truth to power, liberate the oppressed, care for the poor and comfort the afflicted.”
- UCC and the Unitarian Universalist Association