

CLASS ITINERARY

This Curriculum is set up for use as a three-day 90 minute per sessions class or it can be utilized as a 9 session, 30 minutes for use in a Sunday school setting.

Day One

Session 1 Extravagant Welcome

Session 2 UCC History:

Session 3 UCC History 2:

Day Two

Session 1 Local church, Synod, Associations, and Conferences

Session 2 Covenant

Session 3 Statement of Faith and Constitution of the UCC

Day Three

Session 1 Authorized (ordained) ministers

Session 2 Diverse Worship experience

Session 3 The Global Church and into the future

Day One

Session 1

Introductions:

Class itinerary (Timeline)

Have everyone introduce themselves:

Name

Did you come from a different Church Tradition or Background?

What brought you to the UCC?

What is Extravagant Welcome-

<https://youtu.be/not-extravagant-welcome>

<https://youtu.be/the-ejector>

Ask- Have you ever been to a church and felt that way?

Allow for some discussion, let the people share their experiences.

<https://youtu.be/a-place-like-this>

<https://youtu.be/all-the-people>

What are some of the differences that you have seen here at the UCC from other churches?

Session 2

History:

Reference Book: [*Short Course in the History of the United Church of Christ*](#) Excerpted from "A History of the United Church of Christ" by Margaret Rowland Post

Handout#1 [The-Protestant-Reformation-to-UCC](#)

Handout#2 [Origins-of-the-UCC](#)

Handout#3 [KEY DATES IN UCC HISTORY](#)

[The-Beginning-of-the-UCC-four-traditions](#)

[More-than-just-four-traditions](#)

Ask-How do you understand the formation of the UCC?

Do you think the call to unity was a noble one or should the Church stay separate?

Can you see this call for unity in our local church?

Session 3

History 2:

Introduction to the books [*Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ*](#) editor, Barbara Brown Zikmund. And [*Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ Volume II*](#).

[The-American-Missionary-Association](#)

[A-church-of-firsts-faith-and-action](#)

view site- [UCC firsts](#)

Ask-How does it make you feel that our denomination is so young?

What advantages do you see from this young church?

How do you see the traditions from pre-UCC calling us into the present and future?

Day Two

Session 1 Local church, Synod, Associations, and Conferences

[The-local-church](#)

[General-Synod](#)

Ask- How do you see the relationship between the local church and the synod?

Session 2 Covenant

[General-Synod-speaks-to-not-for-the-local-churches](#)

[Covenantal-relationship](#)

Ask- What function does the Synod, Associations, and Conferences have to the local church?

Session 3 Statement of Faith and Constitution of the UCC

Handout #4 [Statement-of-Faith](#)

Handout #5 [The-preamble-to-the-Constitution-of-the-UCC](#)

[Statement-of-faith](#)

[Where-Authority-Resides-in-the-UCC](#)

Ask- How do you see the covenant between the local church and the Synod and conferences?

Day Three

Session 1 Authorized (ordained) ministers

Handout #6 [Ministers Code](#)

What would you do? Case study *(see appendix for Handout #7)

Session 2 Diverse Worship experience

[Worship-in-the-UCC](#)

Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry -- historic step by divided Christian churches towards a common understanding

In 1982 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) published an historic theological statement titled "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM). The statement represents years of ecumenical study and dialogue on the church's sacraments and offices of ministry. BEM explores what can be affirmed together by Christian churches of several (and historically separated) traditions—including churches of the Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican and Orthodox families. It also recognizes that much more work remains before these traditions as they explore the many different accents in sacramental life and the understanding of ministry in the Body of Christ.

In 1985, General Synod received and committed itself to further study of the BEM statement. Both the BEM text and General Synod's response are available here, along with links to other WCC resources.

Session 3 The Global Church and into the future

[Global-Ministries](#)

[The-future-of-UCC](#)

Ask-Who are we as a congregation?

Who is our neighbor?

What kind of church is God calling us to be?

APPENDIX:

Handout #7

United Church of Christ History, Theology, and Polity Rev. David McMahill, instructor

The Case of the Troublesome Goodbye

Rev. Smiley was nearing the time for retirement at First UCC-by-the-Lake in Sand Lake, Minnesota. Smiley was dearly loved by many parishioners---and despised by a smaller number who were counting the days, hours, and minutes until his departure. As the Day drew near, Smiley made this announcement during worship on Epiphany Sunday: "Friends, it breaks my heart to have to do this, but I am hereby announcing my impending retirement from parish ministry. My last Sunday of leading worship here will be on Easter. There are some additional arrangements that I have already cleared with your Moderator. They are that since I am owed vacation for this year and since I never took my sabbatical due me about three years ago, I will still be on the payroll for four months after Easter. Now, the rules of our denomination are that I must stay away from this church for a full year. So, after Easter my wife and I will travel here and there and then return to Sand Lake where we will live in retirement in our little lake-side cottage. I know that this can be an anxious time for you, and knowing how very busy our Conference Minister is, I have already arranged for you to be served for the next year by Rev. Willoughby Smart, the St. Jude's Home chaplain. He'll be half time so you can bank a little money for a rainy day. Finally, your Moderator and I have already appointed a Search Committee who can get to work right away so that you'll have your next pastor as quickly as possible."

This announcement brought tears to many and anger to a few. Some of the "few" said, "Wait a minute. We thought he had to serve for a year after a sabbatical. What gives? And we thought we got to vote on the Search Committee. What about that?" They brought these issues to the attention of the Moderator, who chided them for their pettiness and told them they should trust their leaders more than their questions implied.

The Search Committee got to work right away even before Smiley left. In fact, Smiley offered to meet with them whenever they needed his advice. The Committee chair called the Conference Office to ask for ministerial profiles and was miffed when the Conference Minister expressed surprise at this request. "I wasn't even aware that your pastor was planning to retire," said the Conference Minister. As the committee chair told others in the congregation, "I told him if he wouldn't help us, we'd just find candidates from the internet. They just try to tell us how to do everything!" Eventually, the Conference Minister agreed to meet with them and bring some profiles. They moved fast, and to everyone delight, they found a candidate—Mary Newbie, a seminary senior—who did a call sermon one year to the day after Smiley announced his retirement. Even though she still had a semester of course work to complete and hadn't yet been approved for ordination, she agreed to start work right away. "I should be able to be ordained by

about mid-June,” Newbie told the congregation. “The Committee on Ministry should be able to recognize the need to move along quickly.”

On Newbie’s first Sunday, she was startled during the “Joys and Concerns” time in worship to hear someone announce that Smiley had baptized two of the church’s small children at a service held in a big lakeside lodge down the road from the Smiley’s cabin. The person announcing this said, “For those of you who weren’t there, you would have loved it. The fire was crackling, the scenery through the big window was glorious, and Rev. Smiley snuggled those little ones up close and did the most precious baptism.”

A few weeks later, again during “Joys and Concerns”, someone else spoke about his gratitude for the cards from the church while he was in the hospital and for Rev. Smiley’s visits. This person stressed that Smiley had come just as a friend since he was no longer the pastor.

On Easter, as promised, the Smiley’s came to worship services at First UCC-by-the-lake. Following the service, the Smiley’s held court in the back of the sanctuary. Newbie wondered what she had gotten herself into.

A week later, Newbie called the Conference Minister and said with considerable emotion, “I need you to get Smiley out of my life forever! He is nothing but trouble. How do I file a formal complaint with the Committee on Ministry against him?”

After this conversation, the Conference Minister called Rev. Smiley to discuss Newbie’s concerns. “Look,” said Smiley, “I did everything I was supposed to. I stayed away for a full year. Those baptisms were NOT at the church, they were at the lake in a private lodge in a private ceremony. The hospital call I made as a FRIEND to one of my dearest FRIENDS. Are you trying to tell me I can’t have any friends and can’t do what I want in a private setting? That Newbie, I’ll tell you, is a p-in-the-a.”