

Becoming a Member of The First Congregational Church of Whitman

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” -1 Corinthians 12:12



Why Join? What does membership mean? Do I have to believe certain things?

- Many of us find our relationships become deeper, richer and fuller for having made a covenantal commitment to membership . **Something important happens to us when we decide to make a public declaration about our involvement and our faith.**

“This is my spiritual home. These are my people. This is where I want to anchor my journey!”

- As a congregational church, members vote on congregational matters during meetings such as budget, election of officers and board members, the calling of pastors, and other policies. Sharing of our time, talent, and treasure are essential.
- As a part of the United Church of Christ, you also have a voice in the greater church.
- As a member, we make Covenantal Promises to God, to each other, and to our faith.
- We view creeds and statements of faith as *“testimonies not tests.”*

How do I get started?

- **Jump In wherever you feel most comfortable!** By attending our worship services, joining us for fellowship, or participating in any of our programs, you’ve already started your journey to becoming a part of our church family. We respect each individual’s spiritual journey, *“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!”*
- **Attend an “Exploring Membership” gathering!** This is a time to meet members, hear why they decided to join, share stories, learn a bit about our church’s congregational history and our relationship to the United Church of Christ denomination.

Do I have to join to participate of the life of the church? No. You can participate in nearly every aspect of the church’s life without becoming a member. We are happy you are here!

What’s the process? Once you’ve decided to become a member, you’ll join our congregation during one of our Membership Sundays. We introduce and welcome new members through what we call the *“Right Hand of Fellowship.”* New members and the congregation make Promises to each other, to care for and support one another on our spiritual journey together. We will have follow up meetings to help you discover ways that you can bring your gifts and passions into the ministry.

MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY PROMISES

* New Members

Leader: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to continue in your journey of faith, to be Christ's disciple, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

Response: I promise, with the help of God.

Leader: Do you promise to participate in the full life and mission of this community of God's people, that as far as you are able, you will share regularly in worship and offer your time, talent and means to further the ministry of this church and the larger church of which we are a part?

Response: I promise, with the help of God.

*Promises from the congregation

Leader: Siblings in Christ, do you promise to help these new members find their place in the body of Christ, to pray with them and for them, to welcome them fully in holy friendship, to be angels for them in times of distress and servants to them in times of need?

Church Members: We promise, with the help of God

First Congregational Church of Whitman UCC Statement of Faith —adapted by Robert V. Moss

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit,
who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:
God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image,
and sets before us the ways of life and death.
God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
God judges all humanity and all nations by that
will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.
In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,
God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the
whole creation to its Creator.
God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.
God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the
service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers
of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.
God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and
rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.
Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen.