



# ***Our Core Values: What We Believe***

*A summary of UALC's teachings*

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## ■ **GOD**

We believe in God revealed in the Bible, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is holy, all-knowing, all-powerful, and loving. (*Genesis 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16-17; John 10:30*)

## ■ **FATHER**

We believe that God the Father created the universe from nothing. In love, He sustains His creation and desires an intimate relationship with all people. (*Genesis 1:1; John 3:16-17*)

## ■ **JESUS THE SON**

We believe that because of His love for us, God became a human being, Jesus Christ. Being fully divine and fully human, He lived the life of a servant, and in His death on the cross, Jesus suffered the punishment we deserve for our sin. In His death and bodily resurrection, Jesus won for us victory over death and the power of the devil. Only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can we experience forgiveness, be made acceptable to our Holy Maker, and enjoy a close relationship with Him. (*Romans 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Peter 1:18; 2:24*)

## ■ **HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that God the Holy Spirit works in people's lives and brings them to faith in Jesus Christ. He desires to be so fully active in believers that they are filled to overflowing with His presence and are empowered with His gifts to witness to Jesus and to do the work of the Church. (*Acts 1:8; 2:1-42; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)

## ■ **THE BIBLE**

We believe and have experienced that the Bible is the living Word of God. In the pages of these 66 books, God reveals His character and will, we see our own sinful reflection, and we learn of God's offer of eternal life in Jesus Christ. The entire Bible is inspired by God and is the final authority in faith and life. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*)

## ■ **HOW WE READ THE BIBLE**

We believe Christians should read the Bible in the light of

Jesus Christ, through the lens of both Law and Gospel, and by interpreting Scripture with Scripture. God's Holy Spirit can lead Christians through His written Word to eternal truths which transcend cultural contexts. Living under the whole counsel of God in the Bible, Christians can know God's will and be led in truth.

## ■ **SIN**

We believe that sin separates us from God. Sin is our rebellion against His will and our brokenness in relationships—with God, others, and ourselves. We sin in thought, word, and deed because we are born sinful and are naturally self-centered. (*Isaiah 59:2; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 6:23*)

## ■ **GRACE**

We believe that we enter into a relationship with God not by anything we do, but solely by what God has done for us through Jesus. Knowing that we are sinners, we trust completely in God's amazing grace (unearned merit and favor) to save us from condemnation and to give us an eternal home with Him. (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16*)

## ■ **JESUS' RETURN**

We believe that, as He has promised, Jesus is coming back to earth. Although, we don't know when, we do know why. Jesus is coming to judge the living and the dead and to fulfill His promise to give all believers eternal life. We desire to share this hope we have in Jesus with all people. (*Acts 1:11; Mark 13:32-37*)

## ■ **FAITH AT WORK**

We believe that our primary call from God is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by baptizing and teaching others what He has commanded us. We engage in actions of love and mercy as a demonstration of God's love, not to earn God's approval, but because we are thankful for eternal life received in Jesus. (*Matthew 28:18-20; 1 John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-10*)

## ■ **THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD**

We believe that as disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to interact with others in the world as salt and light. This means

we are to relate in such a way as to induce a thirst for God through lives of love and integrity. As light, we are to bring clarity to issues by speaking the truth in love. We do not relate to the world by means of intimidation or manipulation, rather by persistent, loving witness to Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 4:15*)

### ■ HUMAN SEXUALITY

We believe that our sexuality is a good gift from God. Sexual intimacy is blessed by Him when expressed according to God's design, within the context of monogamous heterosexual marriage. Outside of that context, sexual intimacy, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is sin. All who desire to turn from sin, sexual or otherwise, can be forgiven and renewed by the grace of God in Jesus. (*Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 1:26-32*)

### ■ CHURCH

We believe that those who honestly rely on Jesus are the Church, Christ's body. Calling us together in local communities, God empowers believers with differing gifts for the purpose of service together. We cherish our unity with all believers, locally and around the world, who preach, teach, and live the Good News of Jesus Christ. (*1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:3-8*)

### ■ BAPTISM

We believe and have experienced that through the sacrament of Baptism, which is commanded by Jesus, God adopts us as His children. Because being part of God's eternal family is entirely His doing and not our own, and because all humans are born with a sinful nature, we affirm the practice of baptizing infants as well as adults. (*Romans 6:4-6; Matthew 18:1-6; Acts 2:39; Acts 16:30-33*)

### ■ COMMUNION

We believe that in the sacrament of Holy Communion, God comes to love and forgive us. Through this meal, He brings us His love in a tangible way and renews us in our relationship with Him. As He promised, Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine. Jesus has instructed that we remember Him when we celebrate this meal. As we come to communion, we bring to Jesus our sin with a sincere desire to be forgiven and to be changed to be more like Him. (*1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 6:53-56*)

### ■ HUMAN WORTH

We believe that every human life (born and unborn) is precious, being created in the image of God. Because Jesus Christ chose to die for us, every person is loved by God. Since life is sacred, abortion is not pleasing to God and Christians are called to value life as God does. Our worth is determined by God's view of us which is demonstrated in Jesus, not by our own self-estimation. (*Genesis 1:27; John 3:16; Psalm 136; Psalm 139:13-16*)

### ■ PRAYER

We believe that the Lord is powerful and desires to be active in our lives. Because Jesus died for our sins, we have the privilege to pray directly to God. He desires that we speak with Him often as part of a growing relationship with Him. More than just speaking, prayer involves listening to God because prayer is two-way communication. Since one way God speaks is through His written Word, regular reading of the Bible is an integral part of daily prayer. (*Luke 11:1-13; Matthew 5:33*)