

The way of a church member

There are three commitments which mark a church member of Union Chapel...

A commitment to a continuing journey of faith

The way of a member is to continue with their journey of faith and action in the world, and encourage others to do the same. They will have a commitment to engage with the bible and a willingness to share their own life journeys with one another so they can grow and learn from each other.

A commitment to care

The way of a member is to pray for and care for other church members and the wider Union Chapel community. A member will be aware of the overall responsibility to care for the building and will take an active interest in the Union Chapel Project, the appointment of directors for the board and making wise decisions concerning the future life of Union Chapel. A church member will happily subscribe to the values of the church and will always try and work towards protecting and fulfilling those values.

A commitment to share

The way of a member is to have a willingness to share their resources as they are able. Offering some of their time, money and skills where needed. A church member will also have a commitment to attend gathered times of worship and church meetings when they are able to.



Congregational Church Membership

What is church membership all about?

There are many different ways in which people feel they are a part of the Union Chapel community. Some belong because they work or volunteer at the chapel, some belong because they have become a 'friend' of the chapel, some belong just because they come along regularly to gigs, or to enjoy food and friendship within the Margins project. Those who gather regularly to worship together on a Sunday and at other times during the week form a special kind of group to belong to within Union Chapel which we call the Union Chapel Congregational Church. This small gathered community of believers are committed to the spiritual life and growth of Union Chapel and they carry the ultimate responsibility of looking after the community within the building, the building itself and all that goes on in it.

At Union Chapel we hold the value of inclusivity as being very important and we would want to feel that as soon as you visit us you are warmly welcome and are invited to belong in whatever way feels right for you. Within the church it is important though to be able to identify those people who want to give a special commitment to the life and work of Union Chapel, these people we call church members.

Church membership can be seen as a somewhat old fashioned way of working these days but we feel it is important for us to keep on with the tradition of church membership for these reasons.

- Membership signifies a commitment to the spiritual life of the chapel.
- Membership provides a helpful structure for the core group of the church to work under.
- Membership encourages a greater responsibility to care for that to which you belong to.
- Membership offers an opportunity to build relationships and make promises and commitments to one another affirming that feeling of belonging.
- Membership provides a vehicle for people to know they are a part of a diverse family which begins at Union Chapel but extends across the worldwide Christian Church.



The values of Union Chapel Congregational Church

At Union Chapel we recognise that everyone is on a different journey and so we welcome difference in belief and theological view, there are however some things which we hold very dearly which we would not like to compromise on:

1. A church which is free from hierarchy.

We have no hierarchical structures, we work towards making all major decisions by consensus within the church meeting, hearing one another's voices on things is very important and setting aside our own agendas in order to move forward as a community often happens.

2. A church which is inclusive and accepting.

Difference is all around us, we seek to allow people to be different from ourselves even when this might feel uncomfortable. We are committed to openness to others and to work on relationships when they are strained, recognising our own prejudices.

3. A church which continually searches for God's presence

We are committed to seeing God in unconventional places, in Christ like actions, amongst those who believe and those who do not.

4. A church which celebrates Christ

The life and teachings of Jesus Christ inform us and help us to know how to live in this world, our worship together is a celebration of Jesus whom we seek to follow.

5. A church which doesn't conform

In not conforming we are free to challenge and help change things in order to engage positively with the modern secular society that surrounds us.

6. A church which seeks to discover and promote love.

Churches, just like any community can experience a traumatic breakdown in relationships, we are committed to learning how to love our neighbours as ourselves and even at times to love our enemies.