



JOINING ALL SOULS

THIS TWO-PART CLASS CULMINATES IN
MEMBERSHIP AND COVENANT WITH ALL
SOULS CHURCH, UNITARIAN.

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Mission and Goals

The **mission** of All Souls Church is to create a diverse, spirit-growing, justice-seeking, Beloved Community that transforms ourselves and our world into one great family of all souls.

Goals

Adopted at the annual meeting in 2022, the people of All Souls Church promise to use our time, talent, and treasure toward the fulfillment of these goals:

1. Become a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-generational spiritual community that is grounded in authentic relationships, trust, and belonging.
2. Welcome all people of goodwill with radical hospitality and inclusion.
3. Deepen our spiritual lives through learning and creative expression.
4. Act accountably to dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.
5. Connect with each other and our neighbors in new ways and in a well-maintained historic building.
6. Serve the needs of those in our city in partnership with local organizations.
7. Love and care for one another across the lifespan in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

Realm – The All Souls Church Database

How to Access Realm:

<https://onrealm.org/ascu/Account/Start?ReturnUrl=%2Fascu>

Account:

When your visitor card was entered into the database, you should have received an invitation to create an account with Realm. If you did not receive this invitation, or you are unable to login, please contact the Membership Manager for assistance.

You may also use the link above and click the blue button that says **Sign Up** to request access. Complete the form on the next page and your request will be sent to the database manager to process. If you use the Sign Up button and have not been issued an account within seven business days, please contact the Membership Manager for assistance.

Why Do You Need Realm Access?

Profile Updates: You can update and control your personal information that the church has access to through Realm. This includes your basics (name, address, email, phone), your relationships (family member information), and your giving information (account numbers, credit cards, amounts, etc.).

Serving Groups: You are also able to see which lay groups and ministries you are involved in at the church, and sign up for others.

Events: You are able to register quickly and easily for church events that require registration. You are also able to pay for those events that may have a registration fee with pre-saved financial information to make the process faster. You may also cancel registrations that you are no longer able to attend. Realm may also be used to check people in to registration events, if the church chooses to take attendance for certain events or take tickets virtually.

Social Connections: Realm also has a newsfeed for upcoming events with registrations, meeting events, and more. Your first sources of information should always be the newsletter and the website, but Realm is also a place where you can find some of the upcoming events.

Directory: Realm is the repository for all church participants information. As a lay leader, you are able to email all group members listed in your lay group from Realm, update events and meetings, and more. Some information is restricted to staff and certain lay leaders only to protect the privacy of the congregation. If you need information that is not available to you, please contact the Membership Manager.

Who Is Eligible for Membership?

As per the church bylaws, Article IV: All persons who are members of the Church on the adoption of these Bylaws, or who thereafter sign its Membership Roll and maintain a continuing interest in its worship and work, shall constitute its membership. No doctrinal test shall be required.

Membership shall be open to anyone who:

- is at least sixteen years of age or has completed UU Rites of Passage (Coming of Age)
- has participated in some form of new member orientation, including discussion of All Souls' Mission and Goals statements, and
- is prepared to make a financial contribution to the Church and participate, as able, in its ministry.

What are the responsibilities of Membership?

Mission, Values, and Goals of the congregation: The Church explicitly commits to eliminating racism and promoting genuine multicultural integration/collaboration in its membership, its organization, and its activities. Members are asked to live into the mission, values, and goals of the congregation, and support efforts throughout all aspects of church life to do so.

Voting at Church Meetings: At meetings of the Church the right to vote may be exercised by each member present who has been a member for at least thirty days and has made a financial contribution of record to the Church in the previous fifteen months.

Stewardship: Church members make a commitment to use their time, talents, and treasures, when possible, to assist in the continuation and health of the congregation. See the financial section of the membership handbook to learn more.

What are the benefits of Membership?

Ministerial Services: A minister of All Souls Church will be available to church members at no cost for the member's wedding and the member's memorial service. All Souls requires that individuals sustain membership for one full calendar to be eligible for these services at no cost. If membership has not been sustained for a year, then the member will receive a significant financial discount when arranging for these ministerial services.

Use of the Church Building and Equipment: Members are welcome to rent space within the church for private functions at a significant discount on our regular rental rates. Use is arranged based on availability and must be scheduled in advance with the church's Event Manager.

History of All Souls Church, Unitarian

Acknowledging Those Who Came Before Us:

All Souls recognizes that our city and our church was built on lands taken from Indigenous people. We lament this injustice. The closest village to our church site was Nacotchtank [Na-COTCH-tank], from which the name Anacostia is derived. The residents were part of the Piscataway [Pis-CAT-away] group of tribes still present in the DC and Maryland region today. For all of us who aren't native to this land or the land where you reside around the world, one way to practice our commitment to the Eighth Principle is to go beyond acknowledgement and find out what Native organizing is happening in your area and how you can support it.

Our History

All Souls was founded in 1821 as First Unitarian Church by some of Washington's most prominent White men, including Secretary of State and future President John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War and future Vice President John C. Calhoun, Architect of the Capitol Charles Bulfinch, and newspaper publisher, city alderman, and future mayor Joseph Gales. Some of the founders were enslavers; others strongly opposed slavery.

Bulfinch designed the church's first building, at Sixth and D Streets NW, close to City Hall. President James Monroe donated \$100 toward the bell, which was forged by Paul Revere's son, Joseph Revere, and served as a sort of town bell. During the Civil War, the church was used for a time as a hospital.

In 1878, the congregation moved to a new building at 14th and L Streets NW, and took on a new name: All Souls Unitarian. The church arrived at its current location in 1924, a building patterned after London's St. Martin-in-the Fields Church. Among the guests at the dedication services were President Calvin Coolidge and Chief Justice William Howard Taft and their wives.

During the 1960s, All Souls worked with Planned Parenthood to set up a birth control clinic in the church; launched an anti-poverty effort called the Girard Street Project; and established a clothing center in cooperation with the DC Commissioners' Youth Council. The congregation supported the Poor People's March in 1968; set up a Center for Surplus Food Distribution; developed a breakfast program for needy neighbors (open until 1994); and in 1970, formed the All Souls Housing Corporation, which worked with Change Economic Development Corporation to build 406 units of affordable housing in Columbia Heights. All Souls has long been a welcoming place for the LGBTQ community, including housing out-of-towners in Washington for Gay Rights marches.

Today, All Souls Unitarian Church remains a progressive, social justice-seeking leader in the community. After 9/11, Rev. Rob Hardies, then the brand-new senior minister, consoled Americans both in the pulpit and on radio, and challenged the U.S. invasion in Iraq with a bell-ringing program that called attention to the moral cost of the war. He led continued support for affordable housing and funding for the Columbia Heights neighborhood and, as one of the

earliest gay ministers in the area, spearheaded efforts for marriage equality and LGBTQ rights alongside a multi-racial council of some 100 members of the clergy. In 2009, Mayor Adrian Fenty signed DC's Marriage Equality Act into law in All Souls' sanctuary. All Souls members are just as active and engaged as the ministers and staff. For example, hundreds of volunteers helped rebuild New Orleans after Katrina; supported Florida's Parkland School students in their gun control efforts; and are organizing support for immigrants and refugees.

To learn more about our church history, visit <https://all-souls.org/about-us/history/> for several areas of in depth looks at various ministers, ministry areas, and more.

More than 50 years ago, longtime All Souls Executive Director Laurence C. Staples wrote his history of our church called *Washington Unitarianism*. The Archives Team revised this book in 2022, now entitled: *Washington Unitarianism: A Bicentennial History of All Souls Church*, adding three brand-new chapters covering the 50 years since the original publication, with lots of new photographs. They are available for purchase online or at the front desk of the church if you are interested in learning more.

Church Covenant

To covenant with one another is to engage in the spiritual and everyday practice of loving better. Although this document expresses our written promise to each other, our true covenant lives and breathes in our actions. In times of growth, we will use it to deepen our bonds with one another; during times when we are loving well, it will inspire us to love better; and in times of conflict, we will use it to guide us. We expect this covenant to be challenging, but we also expect it to inspire us to strengthen our relationships and deepen our sense of community. The spirit of the document and the specific examples of behavior come directly from contributions of the All Souls community. We commit to living and working with this draft covenant, adjusting the ideals, and expanding the examples to make it truly our own.

Our Ideals and our Living Practices, with Examples from the Congregation:

Welcoming and Hospitality: We practice hospitality, welcoming all those who enter. Greet people warmly; get acquainted with others; treat visitors as fellow worshipers; welcome newcomers into conversations; treat one another kindly outside of church as well as inside.

Furthering Diversity: We work to foster a multicultural and multigenerational community that sees diversity in all its manifestations as a sign of our strength. Engage with those who are different from us; challenge bigotry in all its forms; work to empower those who are disempowered; actively confront our assumptions through critical and studied examination of the forces that disadvantage some and privilege others.

Listening and Speaking: We listen with respect and attention and speak with care. Assume that people have good intentions; listen intentionally and compassionately; encourage people to speak without blaming or judging them when they do.

Serving Our Church Community: We serve our church community with generosity and good humor, and we will acknowledge the service of others. Honor all levels of service to the church; solicit the input of others; encourage people to make choices that balance their needs with the needs of others; invite others to join us in our activities; honor the right of others to say no.

Working with Conflict: We resolve conflicts directly, using openness and compassion. Make every effort to settle differences directly and openly; stay engaged with each other through difficult conversations; hold ourselves responsible for hearing all sides.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and are willing to forgive those of others. Acknowledge our own and others' imperfections; forgive ourselves and others; be accountable for keeping our promises; lovingly call each other to account for behavior that is hurtful to others.

Solidarity and Accompaniment: We support each other in times of joy and need. Help each other in times of crisis; recognize each other's talents; remind others of the spark of divinity within them; embrace our different cultural and faith traditions; challenge each other to grow.

Committee on Right Relations

The Committee on Right Relations (CRR) exists to help process conflicts between congregants and between congregants and the church's staff, its executive team, and its board of trustees.

The CRR has designed a conflict resolution process for disagreements between congregants, or congregants and staff, or committees/groups. Most conflicts can be addressed either by:

1. Parties involved work it out. Parties resolve differences themselves. They receive education/training and apply Right Relations Guidance Coaching – one or both parties may benefit from the help of a person experienced with conflict resolution to help them gain additional skills or techniques to resolve the situation themselves.

2. Facilitated discussion with the help of a Right Relations Team member. In some instances, parties may simply wish to have a third party lead a conversation for the purpose of assisting parties in understanding/mediation.

If you would like to start a conversation, please email crr.allsouls@gmail.com. Confidentiality is assured. The CRR will neither disclose the names of parties involved nor the content or substance of matters brought to it unless disclosure is reasonably believed to be necessary to avoid physical or substantial financial harm, or is required by law.

Learn more about the church covenant and the Committee on Right Relations here:

<https://all-souls.org/about-us/governance/right-relations/>

Governance

The congregation of All Souls Church Unitarian is, like all Unitarian Universalist congregations, self-governing. We elect representatives to our Board of Trustees and officers to perform specific duties, vote to approve our budget and call our settled ministers, and decide the content of our bylaws and other governing documents.

Nine trustees (a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and five other trustees) serve three-year terms on the church's board (beginning immediately after being elected during the Annual Meeting); each year, some cycle off and others are elected in their place. The trustees represent the congregation.

Six officers are elected each year to fill functions necessary to smooth operation of the church: a moderator, a treasurer and assistant treasurer, a secretary and assistant secretary, and a membership secretary.

The Church Council is the collection of all lay leaders of the church, including representatives from all of the church's ministries and groups. The Church council and the Board of Trustees will work together to implement programs and policies throughout the lay groups and ministries, to provide feedback to the board, and to sustain leadership at all levels throughout the church. The Moderator leads the Church Council.

To learn more about Church Governance, meet the current officers and trustees, and to read the bylaws and policies that currently govern All Souls, please visit <https://all-souls.org/about-us/governance/>.

Church Meetings

Voting Member: A Voting Member is a member who has completed the membership classes/Coming of Age program, signed the Membership book, and made a financial contribution of record within the 15 months prior to the meeting they wish to vote in.

Childcare is provided for all church meetings that require a vote. Parents must inform the Director of Childrens & Youth Religious Education with notice of how many children require care.

Annual Meeting: The All Souls bylaws currently require that the Annual Church Meeting be held on the first Sunday in June of each year. The congregation gathers to hear a report on the state of the church, elect new trustees and officers, and approve the next fiscal year's budget (July 1-June 30). They may also vote on bylaws changes and other matters concerning the governance of the church.

The bylaws require a quorum of Voting Members to be present for the annual meeting in order to vote on the issues and topics presented during the Annual Meeting. Hybrid options have been made available whenever possible.

Special Meetings: On occasion, there are special circumstances that require a Congregational Meeting and Vote. These meeting will be announced well in advance, materials shared about the topic and vote, and may also require a quorum of Voting Members to hold the vote. An example of a special meeting is the vote to Call a Minister.