



ABOUT ALL SOULS

YOUR FIRST STEP TOWARD MEMBERSHIP

Learn more about All Souls Church, our mission and values, and how the congregation operates!

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All Souls Church, Unitarian

Mission

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.”

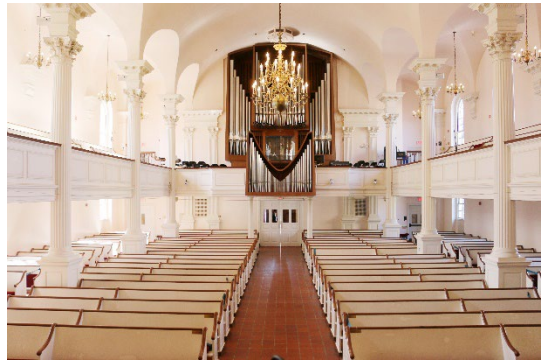
Goals

The people of All Souls Church will use our time, talent, and treasure to 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.

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 Sanctuary of All Souls Church, Unitarian.

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 Living Practices

Welcoming and Hospitality

We practice hospitality, welcoming all those who enter.



Our Caring Cards table and volunteer.

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.



Members of the Luncheon Committee cooking.

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.

Five Areas of Practice



CYRE Youth acting in a Story for All Ages.

Spiritual Practices – worship services, opportunities for service on Sunday mornings, practices that nurture the spirit and the spirits of others.

Community Building – the ways in which we come together at All Souls as a ‘community of communities.’ Whether through affinity, common demographics, or just being together there are many ways to meet, mix, and mingle with others at All Souls.

Social Justice – our justice seeking community engages across a number of issues, causes, and heartfelt practices that are antiracist, equity seeking, and deeply important to our community and our world.

Governance – there are numerous opportunities for individuals to fill leadership roles at All Souls, and all are necessary to the health, longevity, and spirit of All Souls.

Lifespan Religious Education – Religious education at All Souls begins with nursery care through high school level and coming of age. It continues through life long learning and spiritual practices for all ages, experiences, and needs. From our 8 UU Principles to our Core Curriculum, there is something for everyone to help them on their spiritual journey.

Develop Your Credo – A Voluntary Exercise

We ask our Youth to take the Coming of Age class to be eligible for church membership. Part of that classwork is to develop a spiritual/religious credo; an outline of their personal beliefs and what guides them on their spiritual journey. It helps solidify their religious and spiritual journeys and is a wonderful way to articulate some of what they are thinking and feeling.

We also encourage those adults who are on the path to membership with All Souls to write a statement of their religious identity, or a credo, setting forth their ethical and religious identity as it stands now, understanding that this credo will change, grow, and adjust as you do.



Cookies decorated by CYRE classes.

The goal is to help new members sort out their ethical and religious identity (recognizing that some people do not feel religious at all), so that they may make rational decisions about the kind of person they are and who they strive to become on this spiritual journey. We have three objectives that help us reach this broad goal:

1. We want participants to have fun, and to bond with a community of people who share similar moral and spiritual values.
2. We hope to help participants articulate their own ethical and religious identity, gain a deeper sense of identity and present that identity through whatever moves them (writing, art, meditation, etc.).
3. We encourage participants to engage in direct experience, including interactions across the wider areas of church life, so they can live into their religious and ethical values in the church, community, and wider world.



The All Souls Choir singing in the balcony.

When you're ready to take the New Member class, bring your credo with you to the next session to share with other new members! We will be talking about our religious and spiritual journeys and how they brought us to All Souls. This is an individual process, but you're also welcome to create a family credo as well!

This is a voluntary assignment to help you organize your thoughts and feelings as you proceed further into church life. Youth in the Coming of Age program are assigned a mentor to help with their

credos; let us know if you would like to meet with a mentor or a minister!

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.



The third and current All Souls Church location.

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.



Homecoming Sunday, 2022

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, scan this QR code to 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.

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 by scanning the QR Code: <https://all-souls.org/about-us/governance/right-relations/>

