

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST **MEDIA KIT**



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Congregations: 5,000

Members: Nearly 900,000

Ministers: 9,897 total; 49 percent women

National Officers:

General Minister and President: The Rev. John C. Dorhauer;

Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries: The Rev. Traci Blackmon;

Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries: The Rev. Jim Moos.

Origins:

The historical roots of the United Church of Christ reach back to some of the first Christian communities in the United States – Pilgrims, Puritans and German settlers. Two churches, each the product of an earlier union, joined together in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ – the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Since 1957, the denomination has grown to more fully realize its goal of becoming a multiracial, multicultural church that is inclusive of all, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or differing ability. Our congregations today include an increasing number of African-American, Latino/a, Native American, Asian-American, Pacific Islander and biracial communities. We are a bold, public, progressive voice in the religious landscape.

The United Church of Christ (UCC) has a fierce commitment for the equal rights of all, including its clergy. In 1972, the UCC became the first Protestant denomination to ordain an openly gay man, and in 2005, the Church formally affirmed “Equal Marriage Rights for All,” becoming the first mainline Christian denomination to support samegender marriage. In 2013, the UCC was the first mainline denomination to vote to move toward fossil fuel divestment as one strategy to address climate change. The UCC is also active on issues related to immigration reform, racial justice, and literacy.

Organization:

“Congregational” and “free church” best describe the United Church of Christ’s form of governance. The denomination’s Constitution says Jesus Christ is the “sole Head” of the church and the local congregation is its “basic unit.” Local churches call their own pastors and make their own decisions about membership, worship, budget, programs and other matters. UCC congregations cooperate in “conferences,” many of them encompassing one or more U.S. states.

Governance:

The main deliberative body of the UCC is its General Synod, whose 750-plus delegates meet every two years. In between the Synod, the 52-member United Church of Christ Board conducts the business of the denomination. Ms. Dale Bonds is chair of the UCC Board; Mr. Frank Bolden is vice-chair.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Purpose of the United Church of Christ

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. (Mt. 22)

The Vision of the United Church of Christ

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

The Mission of the United Church of Christ

United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

Core Values

We believe in God's continuing testament. We are committed to hearing God's ancient story anew and afresh in our lives and in the world today. We try to remain attentive to God's creative movement in the world. Religion and science are not mutually exclusive, and your head and heart are both welcomed into our places of worship. We prepare our members and leaders to be engaged in ministry in the present and future church, and we embrace all kinds of communities and new modes of thinking.

We believe in extravagant welcome. This is why we insist that God's communion table is open, not closed, and God's gift and claim in baptism are irrevocable. Our perspective is global, not provincial. We work with — not against — people of other faiths. **No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.**

We believe the church's mission is to change lives — individually, systemically and globally. We work to make transformation possible, but trust in God's grace. This is why we insist that churches must be places of vitality in worship, learning and advocacy. We are committed to working for justice, and we believe that lives are changed through global experiences and friendships.

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and **IMMIGRATION & REFUGEES**

We are called as people of faith to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor. The United Church of Christ has a long history of affirming the dignity of immigrants and working for a comprehensive U.S. immigration policy. Since 1995, the General Synod has repeatedly called for a fair and humane approach to U.S. immigration policy that protects families and respects the humanity of our immigrant brothers and sisters. For General Synod 2017, a proposed resolution encourages the UCC and its congregations to become Immigrant Welcoming as the denomination recognizes the ongoing struggles of refugees and migrants who come to the United States seeking safety, security, freedom and opportunity, but instead experience suffering as they fear raids, deportation, and witness their families being torn apart.

Recently, President Trump has issued multiple executive orders that target some of the most vulnerable members of our global family — immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and Muslims. Plans are being made to build a border wall and more detention centers, and undocumented community members have been caught up in immigration raids, including a father of three in Phoenix who had previously gained relief through sanctuary with Shadow Rock UCC, a mother in Colorado, multiple DACA recipients, and men coming out of a church shelter ministry.

The faith community opposes both building a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and increasing detentions and deportations of undocumented immigrants. Policies that wall off America, separate families, and abandon those in need are contrary to our nation's values of family unity, fairness, and equality.

Through the Sanctuary Movement, a way to be in solidarity with undocumented immigrants, faith communities can powerfully enact and embody their commitment to justice while confronting unjust laws and calling for immigration policy reform.

The U.S. faith community has seen a surge in congregations engaged in the sanctuary movement - growing from 400 to 800 nationwide since the 2016 elections. Within the UCC we have gone from 15 congregations to nearly 100 which are part of this movement.

As the world faces the largest recorded displacement crisis in global history, now is the time to live out the American values of compassion, hospitality, and welcome. The Trump budget request for 2018 would cut refugee resettlement services by 30 percent, hurting local U.S. communities that promote refugee integration and provide services for refugees. The UCC calls on Congress to restore funding for international poverty-focused assistance and refugee protection and resettlement, and to reduce DHS funding that harms and divides communities.

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and **RACIAL JUSTICE**

The UCC believes that all people are created in the image of God. Racism and the use of racist imagery is an affront to basic human rights and dignity.

In America, the topic of race continues to be difficult to discuss in many social settings. Very few Christian churches are acknowledging and leading courageous conversations regarding historical and contemporary issues regarding race and racism. In 1993, The Nineteenth General Synod called upon UCC in all its settings to be a true multiracial and multicultural church. Twenty-five years later the call continues to go forth. Sacred Conversations on Race remains a relevant resource for member churches to engage and seek guidance in constructively talking about race guided by trained facilitators.

The *White Privilege: Let's Talk* adult curriculum, developed by the UCC in 2016, is a valuable resource addressing the roots of white skin privilege and its historical and contemporary impact on communities of color. The UCC affirms all sisters and brothers as fully human and equally valuable. However, there is still work to do to educate Church and society on the pervasiveness and oftentimes intractable nature of structural, institutional, and individual racism. Racial justice remains a priority of the church, evidenced by General Synod resolutions acknowledging prejudice and ending segregation by affirming diversity, establishing multicultural and racial ethnic ministries, and moving away from paternalism by becoming anti-racist and recognizing oppression.

The UCC remains a faithful witness and advocate for criminal justice reforms and an end to the disproportionate number of people of color within the prison industrial complex. For more than 40 years, the General Synod has affirmed its commitment to improving the criminal justice systems of state and federal governments. As a faith community, we reject the General Attorney Jeff Sessions decision to reinstitute a war on drugs as a cover to disproportionately target people of color, and low income communities further by instructing prosecutors to pursue the strictest charges and sentences in the handling of drug cases. The criminal justice system is a societal structure that disproportionately affects communities of color and the disenfranchised. African Americans comprise 13 percent of the population in the United States. However, African American men comprise 37.8 percent in federal prisons, and 38 percent in state prisons.¹ UCC justice advocates continue to engage with ecumenical partners to develop advocacy strategies to address government leaders in calling for criminal justice reform. The goal remains to have bipartisan consensus in Congress and support from the American public.²

The UCC has a long history of confronting discrimination and condemning the use of Native American imagery for sports team mascots, names and logos. In 1991, the General Synod of the UCC passed a resolution calling upon its members to work for the elimination of negative stereotyping of Native Americans and the use of Native American imagery for sports team mascots, names and logos. In June 2015, the 30th General Synod of the UCC passed a resolution calling for a boycott of the Washington Redskins NFL team's games and merchandise until the team changes its name and logo, which are deemed offensive to the Native American community. The church for the past 20 years, has been a vocal opponent of the professional baseball franchise the Cleveland Indians and its Chief Wahoo logo, protesting the name and image and Opening Day events. Recent developments to remove the logo seem hopeful as Major League Baseball officials and Commissioner Rob Manfred began new discussions with principals of the Cleveland baseball team.³

¹ <http://www.ibtimes.com/white-men-vs-black-men-prison-statistics-2016-why-are-more-african-american-males-2426793>

² http://www.ucc.org/news_mass_incarceration_conference_04132015

³ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/05/08/for-maine-tribe-lasting-sting/5InebLcSdUdRXI5EWKKimO/story.html>

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

The United Church of Christ has been a leader in the environmental justice movement for more than 30 years. In 1982, the UCC's Commission for Racial Justice accepted an invitation from Warren County, N.C., residents to oppose a PCB landfill in a predominantly black community. There, the terms "environmental racism" and "environmental justice" began to be used.

Environmental issues have spawned several dozen General Synod resolutions, addressing topics including farm workers' rights, climate change, energy resources, toxic dumps, mountaintop removal mining, fossil fuel divestment, and more.

In 2013, the UCC became the first denomination to pass a resolution⁴ calling for divestment from fossil fuel companies, among other strategies, to confront climate change. This call aligns our investments with our values, while also revoking the moral license of corporations to continue practices that damage our climate and God's creation.

In 2013, thousands of UCC members across the country participated in Mission 4/1 Earth, the UCC's 50-day church-wide earth care initiative that took place from April 1 to May 19. Together as one church, UCC congregations generated nearly 615,000 earth-care hours, planted more than 140,000 trees worldwide, and wrote almost 53,000 environmental advocacy letters.

In March 2017, the UCC formed the largest faith contingent at the Standing Rock march in Washington, D.C. In April, the UCC again formed a large presence at the Climate March with over 200 participating. As the sign of the denomination's growing climate advocacy, a partnership has been formed with 350.org, a leading climate organization cofounded by Bill McKibben. The green teams of churches are now being encouraged to become 350 affiliate groups. The UCC Environmental Justice program is also partnering with the Sierra Club and Everyday Democracy in launching a community discussion guide entitled "Clean and Affordable Energy to Create More Livable Communities for All."

⁴ <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs29-6.pdf>

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and **LGBTQ RIGHTS**

The United Church of Christ has a history that spans back more than 40 years of supporting equality and justice for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. In 1972, the UCC was the first main-line Protestant denomination to ordain an openly-gay minister, the Rev. William R. Johnson, and was the first denomination to affirm marriage equality for all people, regardless of gender, at its General Synod in 2005.

The resolution, adopted July 4, 2005, states that “the 25th General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms equal marriage rights for couples, regardless of gender, and declares that the government should not interfere with couples, regardless of gender, who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities and commitment of legally recognized marriage.”⁵

In April 2014, the UCC filed suit against the state of North Carolina, arguing that the state’s marriage laws violate the First Amendment rights of clergy and the principle of “free exercise of religion.”⁶ In October 2014, a federal judge ruled the state’s marriage laws as unconstitutional, giving the UCC and its co-plaintiffs a monumental and historic victory for equality for all people. The landmark lawsuit, General Synod of the United Church of Christ v. Reisinger, was the first-ever challenge by a national Christian denomination of a state’s marriage laws.

The UCC stands with thousands of same-sex couples across the life the church, affirming their freedom to marry the person they love. UCC clergy have honored these commitments, officiating over covenantal vows or blessings, long before same-sex marriage was approved nationwide.

The Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ (formerly known as the United Church of Christ Coalition for LGBT Concerns) advocates for the LGTBQ community in the UCC, and equips UCC congregations to become welcoming and accepting of all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. There are currently more than 1,400 Open and Affirming (ONA) UCC congregations and ministries nationwide, comprising 28 percent of UCC churches and 42 percent of the UCC’s membership.

⁵ <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/2005-EQUAL-MARRIAGE-RIGHTS-FOR-ALL.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.ucc.org/ido/index.html>

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and **ISRAEL - PALESTINE**

The places of Israel and Palestine are dear to the United Church of Christ as Christians—because of the Biblical history centered there, because of the people (brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as Jews and Muslims) who are suffering there, and because of the call we accept to seek justice and pursue peace.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is one of the most enduring conflicts of our time.

Through its historic connection, the UCC remains deeply concerned about the violence perpetrated through acts of terror and by Occupation. Realities on the ground contradict the vision for resolution of the conflict we share. The UCC has participated in ministry with Palestinian Christians for decades, and engages in mission partnerships with Palestinian and Israeli organizations.

The UCC has been consistent in statements and positions on the Middle East through recent decades. In the setting of General Synod, delegates have been clear in their visions and hopes for Israelis and Palestinians, dating back to 1967.

In addition to voicing opposition of violence perpetrated in the region, the UCC General Synod has affirmed Israel's right to exist within a secure and internationally recognize boundary (1987, 1991); asserted Palestinians' rights to their own state in an independent, contiguous and viable state neighboring Israel (1987, 1989, 1991); called for the end of settlement expansion (1991, 1997); criticized the separation barrier (2005); and called for the use of economic leverage to promote peace (2005).

The 2015 General Synod adopted a resolution on actions for a just peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that calls the church to divest from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestinian land, boycott products made by companies that operate in illegal Israeli settlements, advocate to Congress to ensure Israel's compliance in receiving \$3.1 billion annually in military aid is compliant with U.S. laws in light of Israeli human rights violations in the occupied territories, study of the Kairos Palestine document and strengthening interfaith relationships with Jewish and Muslim communities.

All of the UCC's General Synod resolutions related to Israel/Palestine can be found online.⁷

UCC leadership joined ecumenical colleagues in 2012 in calling on Congress to examine Israel's adherence to US law, related to the \$3 billion worth of military aid the US send Israel annually. The denomination remains committed to interfaith relationship, having previously condemned anti-Semitism in all forms, affirmed its relationship with the Muslim community, and expressed solidarity with Muslims who have been vilified.

The UCC was well-represented at a major conference hosted by the Carter Center in Atlanta in April 2016. It was called, "Pursuing Peace and Strengthening Presence: The Atlanta Summit of Churches in the USA and the Holy Land," which resulted in a final Summit declaration of commom committments.⁸

A comprehensive summary of the UCC's witness on peace between Palestine and Israel in the last 10 years, prepared by the national officers of the church, is available on the UCC website.

⁷ http://www.globalministries.org/israel_palestine_resolutions

⁸ http://www.globalministries.org/u_s_palestinian_churches_lay_groundwork_for_future_collaboration_to_strengthen_advocacy

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The United Church of Christ has been calling for economic justice since its inception in 1957. We believe our faith requires us to work for a world where all people and creation thrive and live in the fullness of life. We seek a society where everyone shares in God's abundance and is able to become the person God created them to be.

The UCC, as expressed through actions taken by the General Synod, supports living wages, good jobs for all, and the right of workers to form unions. We support fair trade that levels the playing field between multinational corporations and workers around the world including the United States. In 2004 we joined with 214 other denominations in 107 countries to declare "that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization." We support the eradication of poverty and a strong social safety net to lift up people on the margins.

Activists within the UCC have come together as the UCC Economic Justice Movement to work locally, regionally, and nationally for these goals. In the past few years, we have put our beliefs into action by working to defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the proposed trade agreement that would have harmed workers, consumers, and the environment in 12 countries around the Pacific Rim. We support the Fight for 15, the worker-led movement for \$15 per hour and a union, and farm worker-led efforts for better pay and working conditions in the fields. We support tax reform to boost corporate tax revenues and close loopholes, raise tax rates on capital gains, and strengthen the estate tax. We support a federal budget that prioritizes the common good, the wellbeing of all people and creation. In this extremely wealthy country we seek to ensure that all people participate in the abundance that is given, by God, to be shared among us all.

**AT A
GLANCE****The United Church of Christ and
GOVERNANCE**

Twice in the history of the United Church of Christ, the denomination has restructured to adapt the denomination's various ministries to better serve the members of the church. The first restructure came in 2000, and the most recent restructure took effect in 2013 at the conclusion of General Synod 29 in Long Beach, Calif.

The latest structure combined five existing governance boards into a unified governing structure, the 52-member United Church of Christ Board. The board members represent people from across the life of the church and are called to serve the church with principles of good governance. The members of the board come from a variety of settings of the church and from different backgrounds. Having one decision-making body opens the possibility for more effective and faithful discernment and promotes transparency, a core value of the church, with appropriate lines of responsibility and accountability.

The current list of the United Church of Christ Board members can be found online.⁹

Nominations for UCC Board members take place every two years and are open to anyone in the denomination. Nominations for the six-year terms can be submitted by conferences of the UCC, ministers, members of historically underrepresented groups, and even self-nominations by people hoping to serve the church. The General Synod Nominating Committee selected 13 new candidates to join the Board of Directors to serve six-year terms from 2017 through 2023. The full General Synod, which convenes June 30-July 4, 2017, will vote to approve the candidates during the biennial gathering.

⁹ <http://www.ucc.org/about-us/united-church-of-christ-board.html>

AT A GLANCE

The United Church of Christ and

STATE OF THE CHURCH

The United Church of Christ, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, is a mainline Protestant denomination with nearly 900,000 members and 5,000 congregations nationwide. The UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline Protestant denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American.

The UCC's motto ("That they may all be one" [John 17:21]) and tagline (God is still speaking,) support the church's long-standing commitment to social justice issues and its extravagant welcome to all, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey.

Similar to other Protestant denominations, the UCC has experienced a decline in the numbers of congregations and members in recent decades. In the past five years, 195 congregations were removed from denominational records. Congregational decline has slowed in recent years, however. In 2006 and 2007, the UCC experienced a loss of nearly three congregations per week on average; but from 2008 through 2015, only one congregation was eliminated from denominational records per week on average. In total, 100 congregations received standing and were added to the UCC over the last five years. A new congregation (a church that received standing, affiliated, or merged with another congregation) was added every 2 1/2 weeks on average. (Source: UCC Statistical Profile, Fall 2016)

BIOGRAPHIES**REV. JOHN C. DORHAUER**

General Minister and President
The United Church of Christ

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, author and theologian, currently serves as ninth General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

Before his election at the 30th General Synod in June 2015, Dorhauer was the Conference Minister of the Southwest Conference of the UCC, the regional body that provides support and services to 47 local UCC congregations and clergy within Arizona, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas.

Prior to his role at the Southwest Conference, Dorhauer served as associate conference minister in the Missouri Mid-South Conference, and also served First Congregational United Church of Christ and Zion United Church of Christ, in rural Missouri. Dorhauer received a B.A. in Philosophy from Cardinal Glennon College (1983), and has a Master of Divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary (1988), the same year he was ordained in the United Church of Christ. He received a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary (2004), where he studied white privilege and its effects on the church. His second book, *Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World*, was released in June 2015. His first book (written with Sheldon Culver), *Steeplejacking: How the Christian Right is Hijacking Mainstream Religion*, was published in June 2007.

Dorhauer is passionate about justice. Two statements that shape his theology are: “God is love. God is just.” He is also passionate about the future of the denomination, insistent “that the Holy Spirit envisions a future in which the United Church of Christ matters.” During his tenure, he is calling on the denomination to rethink itself and to consider new ways of “being church” in light of reduced societal interest in institutional religion, and the steep decline in the membership of the UCC since the 1960s. He says alternatives to institutional churches, what some call the “emergent church,” will not immediately supplant, but will grow alongside the institutional church for a long time.

Under his leadership during his first year in office, UCC congregations addressed racism through the Black Lives Matter movement and the denomination’s White Privilege curriculum, released in September 2016, which Dorhauer initiated; campaigned against discrimination, including that aimed at the LGBTQ community; and offered extravagant welcome and visible public support for Muslim neighbors through its Building Bridges initiative.

Along with his passion for justice, Dorhauer has a passion for and love of baseball – specifically the St. Louis Cardinals – music, literature and poetry. He has been married to his wife for nearly 31 years and they have three children.

Dorhauer was chosen as the GMP candidate by an 18-member search committee in February 2015. His candidacy was confirmed by the UCC Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote in March. He was elected at the 30th General Synod, which met June 26-30, 2015 in Cleveland. Dorhauer replaced the Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Black, as the ninth person to lead the UCC since the denomination was formed in 1957.

Dorhauer was the first person to conduct a legal same sex wedding in the state of Arizona when he performed the wedding service of David Laurence and Kevin Patterson on October 17, 2014. In June 2015, facing verbal threats while standing across from 250 armed bikers targeting a local mosque, Dorhauer, as nominee for United Church of Christ general minister and president, joined 250 inter-religious supporters from Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths opposing a protest outside the Islamic Center of Phoenix. In October 2015, in one of his first directives as

BIOGRAPHIES

REV. JOHN C. DORHAUER

General Minister and President
The United Church of Christ

general minister and president, Dorhauer issued a call to leaders of the United Church of Christ to stand against planned demonstrations in their community targeted at Muslims and their places of worship. That same month Dorhauer also went to a Kansas City high school to rally with students countering a protest of Westboro Baptist Church, which opposed the school's decision to crown a transgender girl as homecoming queen.

BIOGRAPHIES**REV. JAMES MOOS**

National Officer
The United Church of Christ

Executive Minister,
Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ

Co-Executive,
Global Ministries, UCC and
the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Christ

The Rev. James Moos is Executive Minister of the UCC's Wider Church Ministries and Coexecutive of UCC/ Disciples' Global Ministries.

Following his ordination in 1986, Moos served Adams County Parish, UCC, in North Dakota. In 1991, he became senior pastor at Bismarck (N.D.) UCC, where he served until 1991. After that, he served as senior pastor of Bismarck (N.D.) UCC for 15 years.

Moos' involvement at the Conference and national levels includes serving as chair and several other positions with the Northern Plains Conference council, and on the Wider Church Ministries/Common Global Ministries Board of Directors (1999-2005).

A Global Ministries short-term volunteer to East Timor in 2002, Moos also has served as president of the East Timor Education Foundation, a funding agency for Global Ministries. In 2005, Moos began a six-year stint on the UCC Executive Council, including two years as its chair.

Moos enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1976 and was on active duty until 1980. Five years later, he became a reserve chaplain for the Air Force, and served for 18 years.

Growing up on a farm near Streeter, N.D., Moos earned his B.A. degree from Seattle Pacific University in 1983 before obtaining M.Div. (1986) and Ph.D. (1996) degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Moos is married to Sharon Moos, a health care administration professional.

BIOGRAPHIES**REV. TRACI DeVON BLACKMON**

Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries
The United Church of Christ

Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be the hero. ~ West African Proverb

Rev. Traci Blackmon is the Acting Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries of The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO.

Initially ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Blackmon served in various ministry capacities for nine years prior to becoming ordained in the United Church of Christ and installed as the first woman and 18th pastor in the 159-year history of Christ The King United Church of Christ. A registered nurse with more than 25 years of healthcare experience, Rev. Blackmon's clinical focus was cardiac care. In later years, her focus shifted to mobile healthcare in underserved communities, with the greatest health disparities being in her region. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Birmingham - Southern College (1985), and a Master of Divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary (2009).

As pastor, Rev. Blackmon leads Christ The King in an expanded understanding of church as a sacred launching pad of community engagement and change. This ethos has led to a tripling of both membership and worship attendance over the last seven years, expanding membership engagement opportunities, and the establishment of community outreach programs. Community programming includes a computer lab, tutoring, continuing education classes, summer programming, a robotics team, children's library, and girls' mentoring program. All housed in the church.

Regionally, Rev. Blackmon's signature initiatives have included Healthy Mind, Body, and Spirit, a mobile faith-based outreach program she designed to impact health outcomes in impoverished areas. Sacred Conversations on Solomon's Porch, quarterly clergy inservices designed to equip local clergy to assess physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health concerns within congregational life. Sista SOS Summit, an intergenerational health symposium for women and girls. In addition to, Souls to the Polls STL, an ecumenical, multi-faith collaborative that was successful in providing over 2,800 additional rides to the polls during local and national elections.

A featured voice with many regional, national, and international media outlets and a frequent contributor to print publications, Rev. Blackmon's communal leadership and work in the aftermath of the killing of Michael Brown, Jr., in Ferguson, MO, has gained her both national and international recognition and audiences from the White House to the Carter Center to the Vatican. She was appointed to the Ferguson Commission by Governor Jay Nixon and to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships for the White House by President Barack H. Obama.

Rev. Blackmon toured the nation with Rev. William Barber II of Moral Mondays and Repairer of the Breech, Rev. James Forbes of The Drum Major Institute and Pastor Emeritus of The Riverside Church in New York, and Sister Simone Campbell of Nuns on the Bus, proclaiming the need for a Moral Revival in this nation.

BIOGRAPHIES**REV. TRACI DeVON BLACKMON**

Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries
The United Church of Christ

Rev. Blackmon is a graduate of Leadership St. Louis and currently serves on the boards of The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Chicago Theological Seminary, and WomanPreach!

This year, Rev. Blackmon co-authored the newly released White Privilege curriculum through the United Church of Christ and has received several awards and recognitions, inclusive of:

- The White House President's Volunteer Service Award
- The St. Louis American Stellar Award
- 2015 Ebony Magazine Power 100
- Deluxe Magazine Power 100
- St. Louis University - Community Leader of the Year
- 100 Black Men of St. Louis Community Leader of the Year
- The Coalition of Black Trade Unionist - Drum Major Award
- NAACP - Rosa Parks Award
- Rosa Parks Award - United Trade Unionist
- The Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis Woman in Leadership Award
- National Planned Parenthood Faith Leader Award
- The United Church of Christ - Antoinette Brown Leadership Award
- Honorary Doctorate, Eden Theological Seminary

Rev. Blackmon currently resides in both St. Louis and Cleveland, and was recently named as one of St. Louis' 100 most influential voices. Rev. Blackmon is the proud mother of three adult children: Kortni Devon; Harold, II; and Tyler Wayne Blackmon.