

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Explore this resource in church school settings, board meetings, special Lenten groups, or at a retreat. Take an hour or so for each of the five commitments. Each session is organized around the following steps. Adapt the ideas for your own group and setting.

LIGHT A CANDLE (a prayerful and reflective beginning)

- » Begin with prayer. Start your time by lighting a candle and reading the suggested Bible verse. After a time of silence, lead the group in the suggested prayer or join together in unison.
- » Reflect on the initial questions. Invite participants to share their responses to the questions with one other person or with the entire group.

A SHINING MOMENT (imaginatively entering an historic transforming moment)

- » Imagine a shining moment. Invite members of the group to close their eyes and imagine the moment portrayed in the text. Or invite a storyteller to prepare ahead and relay the event in her or his own words.
- » Identify what seems significant about that moment. Ask participants questions such as these: “What seemed to be at stake in this moment?” “How do you think God was involved in this moment?” “How might this moment have changed things for the United Church of Christ?”

OUR TRAVEL IN THE LIGHT (discovering other times and ways we lived out a commitment)

- » Describe our journey. Invite someone to describe how the UCC has continued to live out the commitment. You might invite leaders in your conference, association, or local church who are knowledgeable about the particular commitment. They could lift information from the guide, as well as add their own distinctive experience.
- » Identify what seems especially significant. Ask



questions as: “Over the years, how well have we expressed our commitment?” “What has changed?” “What has God been doing?”

SHINE INTO THE FUTURE (linking your local church with a commitment and with the wider United Church of Christ.)

- » Connect with your local church. Explore the questions in the guide that link with your local congregation.
- » Identify responses to the wider UCC. Reflect on the questions in the guide, and record your responses. Set a time to send your response. Then complete the questions online at <www.ucc.org/50/questions>.
- » Enter into a prayer of discernment and thanksgiving. Invite the group to offer thanks to God for any discoveries from your time together. Pray, “O God, what are you saying to us now? What would you have us do?”
- » Extinguish the candle. As you leave, say something such as, “Now go into the world. Let Christ shine in you! Go in peace.”



Share your discoveries and hopes with others in the United Church of Christ and with the national setting. Go online at <www.ucc.org/50/questions> and complete the questionnaire. You may report after each individual session or after completing all sessions.

For additional in-depth study of six theological emphases of the UCC, see “What Matters” at <www.uccvitality.org>.