



and want to become a UB member, we won't make you get baptized again.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, we want to be around you. We cooperate with other denominations in mission work, starting new churches, and other ministries. In short, we embrace as partners Christians in all kinds of churches and organizations who are trying to be faithful to Christ.

5. We uphold the family.

We want family relationships to be healthy and permanent. You might say we're very traditional, or old-fashioned, in this area. We just believe God is displeased by premarital sex, by adultery, by divorce, by homosexuality. But God is a forgiving God, and our churches make room for people who need a church family and are seeking spiritual health.

Families take many forms, and we want to include all of them in our church family. There are single parents struggling to raise children, persons who have never been married, divorced and widowed persons, remarried couples blending children from previous marriages. All of them are important to us and to God.

6. We believe it's vital to win people to Christ.

People who die without knowing Christ will spend eternity in hell. Our most important task is showing people how to spend eternity with God in heaven. So we've got to get the word out.

We emphasize missions, which involves taking Christ's message to the world. In recent years, we have started new mission work in India, Thailand, Costa Rica, Myanmar, Mexico, El Salvador, and Macau—places where United Brethren churches hadn't existed before.

We know we can't focus on ourselves—our pretty buildings, our nice programs. We must look beyond

ourselves to find the people who, unless we do something about it, are going to hell.

7. We are a denomination.

Every United Brethren church is part of something larger. And as a denomination, we are able to do things which churches wouldn't be able to do on their own.

Like mission work. The movement that began in that Pennsylvania barn in 1767 has spread around the world. Your UB church is a partner in a worldwide effort which includes churches in 12 countries. That wouldn't have happened if we were a bunch of disjointed churches doing their own thing on limited resources. There really is strength in numbers.

Yes, we're a pretty fine bunch of people.



Sure, we have our share of shortcomings, failings, inconsistencies, and conflict.

But in general, United Brethren people are okay.

We cling unwaveringly to the Bible, and especially to its key doctrines.

We don't get hung up on secondary issues.

We have a big view of the worldwide Christian church, embracing as brothers all who claim Jesus as savior.

We are not a complacent, status-quo kind of people. We want to see things happen.

And in heaven, we want to meet a lot of people who are there because of us.

7 GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE United Brethren CHURCH



1. We began during an exciting period of American religious history.

During the 1700s, a revival movement swept through the colonies. It was called the Great Awakening. God was grabbing hold of countless people, shaking them up real good, and getting them to be serious about their faith.

Christians from diverse backgrounds would attend huge gatherings, which they called Great Meetings. At one of those meetings in a barn in Lancaster, Pa., in 1767, a Mennonite named Martin Boehm preached a sermon which impressed a Reformed minister who happened to be there, William Otterbein.

The two men were different in so many ways—stature, background, abilities. But Otterbein realized they

were alike in what really mattered. So when Boehm finished, Otterbein went up to him, grabbed his hand, and proclaimed with joy, “We are brethren!” (Except, being German, it came out, “Wir sind Brüder.”)

The two men continued working together... and that’s how we began. We were the first denomination to actually begin in the New World, rather than be transplanted from Europe—other denominations might have been here before us, but they didn’t start here. For whatever that’s worth.

That’s who we are—people from many backgrounds, many denominations, many religious traditions, many



cultures. People who rally around the essentials of the faith, and who can grab each other’s hands and proclaim, “You and me—we’re brothers in Christ!” *United Brethren.*

2. We won’t budge from the basic doctrines.

If the Bible says it, that settles it for us. And the Bible says:

- There’s a real heaven and a real hell, and everyone will end up in one place or the other.
- Apart from faith in Jesus Christ, you won’t get to heaven.
- Jesus was both God and man, and never sinned.
- Jesus died, but rose from the dead three days later.
- God is real, he loves us greatly, and he wants to have a personal relationship with each of us.
- Jesus will return to earth someday to take Christians to spend eternity with him.
- God exists as three entities: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All are God and all are equal. We call this the Trinity.
- God wrote the Bible, and it’s the main way He speaks to us.

All of these points are found in our Confession of Faith—a simple, concise statement of the key beliefs we adopted clear back in 1815.

3. We try hard not to get hung up on gray issues.

We recognize that on various issues, the Bible isn’t clear. Maybe because God didn’t think the issue merited a “Thou shalt do it this way,” or maybe because he just wanted us to wrestle with the issue. At any rate, committed Christians can have legitimate disagreements on certain issues while agreeing on the core essentials.

And we’re okay with that. While many denominations take stands on issues which aren’t clear in the Bible, we avoid doing that. Things like which Bible translation to use (just pick one

and read it), the method of baptism (dunked, poured, sprinkled—whatever), the second coming of Christ (he’ll return someday, but we don’t have the details figured out), or worship style (we have contemporary, traditional, and everything in between).

We have a statement which says, “The church’s historic position has been to stand firm on biblical absolutes, allow freedom where the Bible allows freedom, and maintain unity when disagreements arise.” That’s us.

4. We know that the worldwide Body of Christ is bigger than us.

We realize we are part of a worldwide family of Christians. Within that family are Christians who differ with us on some doctrines, who worship differently, who come from cultures and races and backgrounds that we don’t know much about. But they are our brothers in Christ. While we hold strong beliefs, we assume that we’re not right on everything. And we know that we can learn from other Christians.

For that reason, you don’t need to be a United Brethren member to participate in communion (the Lord’s Supper). If you visit a UB church, you can participate as long as you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That’s enough for us. If you were baptized in another denomination

