



**Church
goes
public**

**church
remains
public!**

UCC Forum

September 11 and 12 2020

online conference

Church goes public – church remains public!

In order to present and discuss issues and questions from both churches, the UCC working group annually invites to a UCC forum. This year will be the first without mutual visits. The UCC forum is still taking place – digitally.

Church is public: as a public law institution in Germany.

Church remains public: the gospel seeks communication.

This claim has been criticized for years: Faith is seen a private matter, politics none of the church's business. Pastors ought to focus on spirituality and pastoral care. The UCC in the USA is a rather small church and says: "Church goes public!" Church can only be a church if it remains public! The UCC forum on September 11 and 12 discusses the following: To what extent must the church be public? In times of Covid-19? In diaconia? In preaching? As a part of the community? In today's academic debate? In its management actions and through its members? Thirty years ago, in 1990, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia and the United Church of Christ in the United States signed a joint declaration of full communion (Kirchengemeinschaft). For the first time in 30 years, mutual visits and personal encounters are not possible. Thanks to the internet, however, we can hear, see, and encounter each other and celebrate community even in these difficult times. At the online conference, tried-and-tested elements from previous conferences are taken up and continued. New elements will be added. The UCC working group cordially invites all interested parties to take on this challenge together.

We're looking forward to that!

Dr Christel Weber

Dr Elga Zachau

Thomas Krieger

Venue:

Online

Attendance fee:

However, it is necessary to register in advance as the number of participants is limited due to software licence restrictions.

Requirements:

To participate, you'll need a computer with a camera, speakers/headphones, an internet connection, and software that can be downloaded and installed in advance. A tablet or smart phone may be sufficient. During the conference, there will be German/English translation available.

For recent information and registration, visit:

<http://ekvw.de/uccforum>

For your registration, please use the document provided at the website above.

Deadline is August 20.

The confirmation of your registration will only be sent to you after the deadline, providing any further information necessary such as log in data and technical hints.

Right now, the conference is still emerging. During the upcoming weeks, more and more details will be found on our **UCC web site**.

Tentative program:

(Please acknowledge that the forum starts and ends later than usual due to time differences to the U.S. There will be sufficient breaks between the different sessions, so nobody needs to constantly sit in front of their screen.)

Friday, September 11

5:00 pm / CEST Welcome/greetings and warm-up on the subject of **“Church goes public”**

6:00 pm **1st keynote: „Church goes public“**

Dr. Frederike van Oorschot (Center of the Evangelical Studies Community in Heidelberg)

6:40 pm **Feedback and discussion on the keynote address**

with Simon de Vries (blogging pastor)

8:00 pm **„Celebrating the public church together“**

Evening of the Kirchengemeinschaft

(celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Kirchengemeinschaft between the Evangelical Church in Westphalia and the Indiana/Kentucky Conference + Heartland/former Ohio Conference) with Christa Kronshage, John Krueger, Traci Blackmon, John Dorhauer, David Long-Higgins, Chad Abbott, Young Ambassadors, and many more

9:00 pm **Evening prayer**

with David Long-Higgins (Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference)

Saturday, September 12

4:00 pm / CEST **Warm-Up – Getting ready for day two.**

4:30 pm **2nd keynote: „The UCC goes public“**

Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister United Church of Christ (UCC), Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries followed by a discussion

6:00 pm **Working groups: „so many ways to go public...“**

- White privilege curriculum (Eleanor McCormick, UCC Kansas and ecumenical co-worker in Baden/Germany)
- „Community work“ – helping locally (Dr. Ingo Habenicht, Bielefeld, Chair and CEO of the Evangelisches Johanneswerk)
- Belhar Confession and Barmen Declaration: 2 examples for a church taking its stand publicly (Dr. Hanns Lessing, World Communion of Reformed Churches)
- „church goes viral“ (Simon de Vries, blogging pastor, Nordhorn/Germany)
- „Wir schicken ein Schiff“/“we’re sending a ship” ... to save people from drowning in the mediterranean sea (Katharina Stamm, Gründungsmitglied „United4Rescue“)

7:30 pm **„WE go public“** – a triologue with Traci Blackmon, UCC; Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Chair of the Council of the EKD; John Dorhauer, General Minister UCC

9:00 pm **Closing prayer / Blessing**

with Stefan Berk, Nina Ciesielski, Thomas Krieger

