

## Union Church of Istanbul Congregational Profile

*"We see the church as a place where people, wherever they are on their life journey, can become more what God intends them to be through the work of Christ. - This applies to people who live in Istanbul as well as those who are just passing through." (UCI Vision Statement)*

### Congregation

Originally established as a 'home church' in 1840, the Union Church of Istanbul (UCI) is the community of believers that has met in the Chapel of the Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands - the Dutch Chapel - since 1857. UCI is an independent, self-supporting, Protestant church with no denominational affiliation.

The congregation is made up of 101 members, who have accepted the statement of faith of the UCI; 141 registered attendees, who may attend regularly but choose not to become members; and visitors. Over 27 nationalities are represented in membership/attendees with US Americans the largest single national group. A wide range of Protestant denominations are represented including, but not limited to, Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Mennonite, Pentecostal and Reformed traditions. The congregation welcomes, and is enriched by, this diversity of race, culture and faith tradition.

For an international church in a large city, there is a relatively large stable core membership as well as many committed shorter-term members. The congregation has a broad demographic profile with balanced representation of families, youth, young adults and older members/attendees. The congregation includes those seeking and new in faith as well as mature Christians. The overwhelming expressed desire of the congregation is to grow in numbers and maturity as an authentic Christian community that focuses on the preaching and teaching of the Word.

### Ministries

The English language Sunday morning worship services (09:30 and 11:00) at the Dutch Chapel are central to UCI's spiritual life with the preaching and teaching at these services the most highly valued ministry. The church is full to capacity (160) during the 11:00 service. During this service there is a crèche and, at the Union Han, a Sunday school with over 40 children in regular attendance. There is also a regular bilingual service at 13:30. There are other multicultural services associated, to varying degrees with UCI, including Chinese and East African fellowships.

There remain opportunities to enhance prayer opportunities and the music ministry on Sundays as well as develop stronger links with the multicultural fellowships and emerging congregations.

There is an established and thriving Friday night young adult ministry and a growing number of home bible study groups that meet weekly or fortnightly and a men's breakfast. A discipleship group meets after the 11:00am Sunday service and baptismal classes are also offered. Lay leadership is gifted and mature with opportunities to draw on this further. There remains an appetite for more discipleship and leadership training and reaching out to the community. UCI allocates 10% of its giving to service ministries through the service committee which supports refugees and migrants, particularly women with children, which draws many of its volunteers from the congregation and makes use of the Union Han. There are many other needs and opportunities for reaching out into the local and expatriate communities.

There are a number of ad-hoc activities that deepen and strengthen the spiritual life of the church throughout the year including fellowship and newcomer lunches; an annual Church camp; a weekend retreat for the church leadership; participation in ecumenical activities for the week of prayer for Christian Unity; and a programme of Holy week services. UCI aims to be supportive of initiatives that enhance the church community spiritually and in fellowship.

### Administration

The Union Church of Istanbul is governed according to its Constitution, supplemented by the “Procedures of the Union Church of Istanbul” (revised 2012). UCI is a congregational Church, and the congregation elects the Church Council to act on its behalf between annual general meetings. The Pastor is elected and installed by the congregation and the Pastor reports to the Church Council.

The Church Council is supported by various committees covering the primary activities of the church (finance, music, education, fellowship, building, etc.) and includes a Pastoral Relations Committee which shares, with the pastoral staff, the role and responsibility of the spiritual welfare of the church and monitors and nurtures the church’s relationship with its pastor and other members of the staff who serve the church.

The Walter Wiley Foundation, a charitable Trust (Vakif), exists to support UCI. The Walter Wiley Foundation owns the Union Han building which houses the Pastor’s accommodation, church offices and other meeting rooms. The Han also includes a number of leased properties that provide income for the Foundation. The current salaried staffing includes Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Administrator and caretaker.

### Senior Pastor

The congregation of the UCI desires a strong pastor-teacher who will not only see Sunday preaching as a priority but will focus on discipleship teaching and training of members throughout the week. They desire a candidate whose sermons and teaching are Biblical, focused on the Gospel, and relevant to daily life. The congregation seeks a spiritually mature candidate who has cross-cultural experience and will work to make people of all cultures, races and denominations welcome at UCI.

The congregation desires someone who will maintain good relations with the local authorities and the Dutch Consulate and will seek a level of working proficiency in the language. They want a Senior Pastor who will not only strengthen relations with the historical churches, but will seek to see our congregation actively support and encourage the work of the UCI fellowships and “emerging congregations.”

The congregation would like a Senior Pastor who has a strong vision for the church, is committed to equipping its members, and will work together with the church leadership to help UCI grow in discipleship and reaching out to the community. Ideally, someone who is committed to prayer and accountable to others, who will walk with humility, modeling what it means to be Christ’s ambassadors - called to a ministry of reconciliation within the UCI community and the world (II Cor. 5:20).