Thank you for joining the Christian Homeschoolers of Union County and welcome to the group! As you have taken this step into the journey of educating your children, we hope you will find the support you need here. As parents, we want what is best for our children because we love them and have a personal interest in their lives. We also know that God has given us the duty for the proper upbringing of our children, including their education. It is an awesome responsibility, but it is also a privilege.

If this is your first homeschooling experience, there is no need to worry or be in a hurry. Take time to prayerfully consider your curriculum choices, your teaching style, and the structure of your new homeschool. Methods range from traditional to relaxed. The home provides a convenient, integrated learning environment. Every day is another opportunity to instill a love for learning that will last a lifetime. Materials for home education are plentiful and varied. They include textbooks, workbooks, unit studies, correspondence courses, video lessons, co-ops, and computer instruction. Items from different sources may be combined to create your own eclectic curriculum. Libraries and bookstores have many home education how-to books as well.

There are over 3.1 million homeschoolers nationwide (including between 40,000 to 60,000 home educated students here in New Jersey), and the figure continues to grow. Homeschooled students as a group generally exceed national norms on standardized achievement tests. They demonstrate good real-life social skills and tend to relate better to people in all age groups. Many colleges and universities welcome homeschool graduates. From the moment our babies are born, we are on a journey to teach them. We train them to walk, to talk, to say please and thank you. So, why should the school ages be any different? Now we teach them to read, write, study, and be good citizens. Just as the baby phase passes quickly, so do the school years. Enjoy!

Hopefully this membership packet will answer some of your questions and provide enough information to get you off to a good start. You are welcome to contact us via email at info@chuc.org or visit our website at www.chuc.org. Feel free to ask any other questions that are not answered here.

Sincerely,

The Christian Homeschoolers of Union County Board

Who are we:

Christian Homeschoolers of Union County aka "CHUC" was founded in 1989 to provide support to homeschooling families living in the Union County, New Jersey area. We have a current membership of around 50 families, including some from other counties. CHUC provides member families with support and activities to enhance homeschool education, as well as opportunities to develop valuable connections with other homeschool families. CHUC also provides information, support, and encouragement to those in the general public who are seeking information on homeschooling. This group is governed by volunteer homeschooling parents who are elected to the General Board. Throughout the year, as a homeschool support group, we work together to enhance and help each other out in our homeschooling journey.

What to expect at our monthly parent meetings:

• Sit at the table applicable to the age group of your child (PreK-2nd, 3rd-5th, middle school, or high school) for small group discussions
• Please make yourself comfortable and grab some coffee or tea
• A welcome from the host, followed by monthly announcements for events and a devotional
• Small group discussion & fellowship (sometimes a guest speaker or a special themed meeting).

Advantages of joining this local support group:

• Gain assistance and guidance in your homeschooling journey.
• Great encouragement and support from other homeschooling parents.
• Get to know like-minded families - with the same values, principles, etc.
• Receive advice from veteran homeschool moms.
• Allows more group opportunities to exchange ideas, plan group outings, and share in the overall experience of homeschooling!
• Great group discounts for activities, field trips, and lessons.
• Stay current with what is occurring in our nation and know what laws and issues are occurring which are relevant to homeschooling families.
• Password protected members-only access to our website.
• A forum and directory through the website that helps members communicate with one another.
• Classified section where you can buy and sell items (homeschool or not) and much more.

New to Homeschooling? Here are some answered questions:

Where do I begin?
Pray! Homeschooling requires commitment and diligence from parents as well as students, but the rewards are priceless.

Decision made…I'm ready to homeschool:
You are now administrator, principal, and teacher of your homeschool! Rest assured that there are plenty of resources available to help you successfully educate your child. Beyond the enormous responsibility of your child's education are the joys and rewards of watching your child learn, having time to enjoy and get to know your child, and being their source of character training and maturity, to name just a few.

Do I need to notify my school district if my child has never attended the public school system?
If your child has never been in the public school system, you do not need to inform your district of your plan to homeschool. Homeschools in the state of NJ are not regulated by the state. As a homeschool, you are required to give an "equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school," including the home. (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25) You are required to teach reading, math, spelling, and grammar. You are not required to give standardized tests although many choose to do so.

Do I need to notify my school district?
If your child has attended public school, you will need to inform the school of your intent to homeschool to avoid any truancy violations. A notification form is available from HSLDA (www.hslda.org) for this purpose. If you are contacted concerning your homeschool for any reason, explain your choice as one that offers your children a positive educational experience. It is best not to speak negatively about public school. Be aware that you are not required to let anyone into your home without a warrant and it is best not to do so. You are also not required to have your curriculum examined or approved by anyone in the public school system.

How to choose curriculum?
Many homeschoolers say that choosing curriculum is one of the most challenging aspects of home education. Your choices are many! Most curriculum suppliers offer merchandise catalogs. A partial list of suppliers, their numbers and some websites is attached. Suppliers' catalogs are usually free. Reference books by Cathy Duffy and Mary Pride offer curriculum evaluation as well as other information that may be helpful to new homeschoolers. Be sure to check out the local library for some of these books and don't forget interlibrary loan if the book is not available at your branch! The public library does not have curriculum, but has many books about how to teach some subjects

and also is a great source of informative books on any subject. Talk with other homeschoolers, or, if possible, attend one of the book fairs held in your area. The more you read and the more you talk with veteran homeschoolers, the easier it will be to discern the best curriculum for you and your child. Most curriculums have teacher guides and/or lesson plans available. For those who prefer more guidance, umbrella schools provide curriculum, teacher support, record keeping and testing.

How much does it cost to homeschool?
The cost to homeschool each child varies considerably and can range from $100 to $1,000 per year. The dollar figure is usually proportional to the preparation time needed--the more the cost, the less preparation time required.
You, the parent, know your home situation best. If you have several small children at home, you may need more help. Allow plenty of time for delivery of your curriculum (up to six weeks). Unless you choose an umbrella school, know that you are not locked into a particular curriculum or lesson plan. Family life is an important variable that you will want to accommodate in a reasonable fashion. It is a learning experience in and of itself.

How do I plan a homeschool schedule?
After choosing your curriculum, plan a calendar for your school. Choose a starting date and a finishing date. Allow for holidays, sick days, teacher planning days, field trips, extracurricular activities, etc. Some homeschoolers operate on a year 'round plan and choose to homeschool only 4 days per week with holiday breaks throughout the year. Once you make your calendar, stick to it as much as possible. Gradually you will learn what works best for your family. Be patient with yourself and your students since you are all making adjustments. And don't be afraid of what you don't know. Many veteran homeschoolers can tell you of the great joy and special bond between parent and child as they learn together.

What do I say to my friends, family and neighbors?
Prepare yourself for every eventuality before you begin this new adventure. It is very likely that you have already experienced questions from friends, family and neighbors as you have considered this excellent choice of education.

How do I become a member?
Review all the forms in your membership packet, hand in your signed membership agreement form with dues and request web membership by creating a family profile at www.chuc.org

Christian Homeschoolers of Union County (CHUC)
Organizational By-Laws

(updated 08.14.24)

I. VISION

CHUC is a Christian-based organization and exists to provide support to homeschooling families through monthly parent meetings and activities, such as the annual graduation ceremony, curriculum fairs, co-ops, clubs, educational events, field trips, etc.

II. MEETINGS

A. Monthly meetings are scheduled from August through May by the Board, before the first official meeting of the school year.

B. Meetings are typically scheduled for the 3rd Monday of every month. However, meetings may be scheduled for the previous or following Monday to accommodate holidays.

C. Rescheduling of meetings is at the Board's discretion.

D. Meetings begin with prayer and a devotional (maximum 10 minutes).

E. Hosting (also, see "Guidelines for Hosting a Meeting")

1. The CHUC President will host the first and last meeting of each school year (Aug and May).
2. Board members and/or Encouragers will host remaining meetings.
3. Host tasks may be delegated. However, ultimate responsibility for the meeting may not be delegated.

III. MEMBERSHIP

A. Full Members ("Members") Must:

1. Be born-again believers
2. Sign the Doctrinal Statement of Faith
3. Pay annual membership fee, which means the member is in "good standing"
4. Attend a minimum of 3 meetings annually
5. Help to host a meeting once per year as Encouragers

B. Members may:

1. Attend monthly meetings
2. Access the CHUC website
3. Organize, coordinate, and/or participate in all activities, including clubs, field trips, and co-ops
4. Be a member of CHUC Committees
5. Be nominated to serve on the Board
6. Take on other leadership roles as determined by the Board

IV. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Individuals who are not born again believers and/or whose beliefs preclude them from signing the Doctrinal Statement of Faith, may choose to become Associate Members.

A. Associate Members must:
   1. Pay annual membership fee
   2. Attend a minimum of 3 meetings annually

B. Associate Members may:
   1. Attend monthly meetings
   2. Access the CHUC website
   3. Participate in clubs, field trips, and co-ops

C. Associate Members may not:
   1. Be nominated to serve on the board nor lead a monthly meeting
   2. Organize or coordinate activities, including clubs, field trips and co-ops

V. MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

Membership can be terminated for the following reasons:

A. Membership can be terminated upon request. The most common reasons are: your student is no longer being homeschooled, your student has graduated, or you have moved out of the area. In order to provide the best homeschool support group experience, any other membership termination requests will be reviewed by the CHUC board.

B. Membership that has lapsed due to unpaid membership fees, will be parked/de-activated on the CHUC website. Membership can be reinstated when dues are paid.

C. Membership can be terminated at the discretion of the CHUC board, if a member's communication and/or conduct is found to be offensive, abusive, or divisive. If that action is deemed necessary, the CHUC board will inform the member of its decision.

VI. THE BOARD

A. Board Member Requirements
   1. Current member in good standing for a minimum of two years, who is currently homeschooling their child/children.
   2. Voting Board members must be homeschooling in the current year.
   3. Prior Board members may continue on the Board as Non-voting (Honorary) Board members, at the discretion of the current Board.

B. Term of Office, Succession & Removal, and Resignation
   1. Board will nominate candidates: 3 candidates for the 1st open position, 1 additional candidate for each position thereafter. The candidates will then be interviewed and chosen by the Board.
   2. Term of office: to be determined; once in office, Board members are

expected to serve a complete academic year (August to June).

3. The first six months of any new board appointment is considered provisional, as a training period to ensure that this candidate is a good fit for the position.
4. Board members may be removed for just cause by a Board majority vote.
5. Number of current Board members: 5
6. Offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Web Administrator
7. Resignation: Apart from catastrophic emergency, Board member resignation should be announced to the Board in person and with 6-month's notice in order to ensure a smooth role transition, as needed

C. Responsibilities of Officers

1. President
    a. Schedule, announce, and run the first and last monthly meeting of the year as well as Board meetings (at least two per year, spring and summer)
    b. Oversee graduation planning process and ceremony
    c. Ensure that graduation committee members are experienced
    d. Ensure all graduation guidelines are followed (receive briefing of committee meetings from leaders)
    e. Respond to questions from members and prospective members in a timely manner
    f. Make announcements on behalf of CHUC
    g. Coordinate with Treasurer regarding CHUC banking transactions, bill payment, etc.
2. Vice President
    a. Purchase supplies (Tags, holders, ID card, folders, pens, etc.)
    b. Handle insurance matters
    c. Keep documents
    d. Update, maintain, and print membership papers & cards
    e. Maintain any social media and Facebook site
3. Treasurer
    a. Remind members to pay dues (deadline by the October meeting)
    b. Develop the annual expense report, covering membership fees collected, church donation amount, website payment, insurance payment, and paper/printing expenses
    c. Collect all membership monies
    d. Make bank deposits/withdrawals/charges and handle payments
    e. Record and maintain CHUC bank ledger for all banking transactions
    f. Approve membership requests and send out "custom" email from website
    g. Park (activate)/Un-park (deactivate) members

4. Secretary
    a. Write and edit all official CHUC pronouncements and materials, including official correspondence and materials posted on website (all writing and edits to be approved by Board before publication)
    b. Keep minutes of Board meetings
    c. Write a monthly meeting invite/follow up message through website forum
    d. Insert meeting dates and monthly topics from minutes onto website calendar
5. Web Administrator
    a. Update, monitor, and maintain CHUC website
    b. Approve website membership requests, in coordination with Treasurer

VII. ENCOURAGERS

Encouragers are members in good standing who are willing to take an active role in helping provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere at each monthly meeting.

A. Responsibilities
    1. Help coordinate and manage the monthly meetings, Oct. through May
    2. Meet and greet newcomers
    3. May take on other leadership roles, as requested or deemed necessary by the Board

B. Term of Office, Succession, and Removal
    1. Board will appoint 4 Encouragers at the beginning of the new school year
    2. Term: one year; they may choose to continue at the end of the year
    3. May be removed for just cause by a Board majority.

VIII. GRADUATION COMMITTEE

A. The committee will be composed of four parents who are current members of CHUC, are in good standing, and are parents of participating graduates. One board member will monitor graduation meetings.
B. The committee will be formed at the September meeting.
C. The graduation guide, which outlines the ceremony and procedures, should be updated every year.

IX. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

A. In the event of an emergency, CHUC meetings will follow the protocols set forth by the host church and/or local and state authorities, as appropriate.

X. ADDITIONS & AMENDMENTS

Additions, amendments, and deletions may be made at the discretion of the Board majority.

Doctrinal Statement of Faith

The Christian Homeschoolers of Union County has purposed that the organization and all of its activities, meeting, and publications will be consistently and forthrightly Christian to the honor and glory of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- We believe that there is only one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Virgin Birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe in the sanctification and holiness of heart and the overcoming life as God's design for the Church, which is the "Bride of Christ."
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved, unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe that salvation is offered as a gift, free to the sinner. This gift must be responded to in an individual faith, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, by the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus Christ alone.

Must check off one of the boxes below:

☐ **Member** - As a condition of my membership in the Christian Homeschoolers of Union County, my signature indicates that I am in full agreement with the CHUC Doctrinal Statement of Faith, and I also understand and agree to comply with the by-laws.

☐ **Associate Member** - As a condition of my membership in the Christian Homeschoolers of Union County, my signature indicates that I am NOT in full agreement with the CHUC Doctrinal Statement of Faith, but I understand and agree to comply with the by-laws.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

☐ **I have received a copy and have read the CHUC by-laws**

- Yearly Membership Fee $50
- ½ Year Membership Fee $25 (this is a one-time discounted fee for new members joining January-May)

Office Use Only

Payment Date: _____

Check # _____ Amount $ _____

Cash Amount $ _____

How To Register through CHUC.org

Congratulations on officially becoming a member! You've handed in your Doctrinal Statement of Faith & Membership Dues - next up is registering through our website to stay connected! In addition to the website, if you're on Facebook, search for **CHUC Christian Homeschoolers of Union County** & request to join (please fill out all the questions so that we know it's you!) and follow us on Instagram **@ChristianHomeschoolers** (we love reposting stories, so don't forget to tag us!)

- Go to www.CHUC.org
- On the top right menu, click the last icon (it's an arrow pointing to a bracket)
- A drop down menu will open. At the bottom, click *Request Website Approval*
- Fill out the form in its entirety and click continue
- Our Board will approve your request to join as soon as possible
- You'll receive an email from homeschool life to create a User Name & Password and from that point, you'll have full access to the site.
- First, add all of the meeting dates for the school year to your calendar. They're located at the bottom of the home page.
- A good place to start is the *Main Menu*. From there, click the arrow beside *Primary Menu*. The *How To Use Website* link will walk you through a few important sections of the website. The Secondary Menu is where you'll find each of the sections mentioned.