Wellesley Hills Congregational Church

Realm Database
User Guide

Realm Lunch 'n' Learn
October 2024

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Getting Started

What is Realm?

Realm is the new online database being used by the Hills Church. It replaces the former database used by the church with a newer, cleaner, more visual design that makes it much easier to use.

What can I do in Realm?

Realm will allow you to obtain access to an online *Directory* of church member *Profiles* with their mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, and photo (if available). Realm also includes your *Giving* information, including Stewardship pledges and contributions and other gifts. This area is completely confidential and *only* accessible to each individual member.

Realm is also used as a tool for other aspects of church life, including *Groups*, including Support Board and Ministry Team listings; *Events* calendar listings, RSVPs, and Check-in; *Volunteering* and *Serving* sign-ups; and more.

What do I need to do now?

For the launch of Realm we are asking all church members to do three things:

1) Log in to Realm on your home computer
2) Review your Directory Profile (more info below)
3) Download the Realm Connect app on your mobile device and log in there.

Logging In

How do I get access to Realm from my home computer?

To get to Realm on your laptop or desktop computer:

1. Go to the Realm page on the Hills Church website, https://www.hillschurch.org/realm/ Follow the three steps on that page: 1) Read the FAQ document; 2) Watch the tutorial video; 3) Log in to Realm

2. Read the "Hills Church Realm Privacy Statement" – to see the protections and limitations you agree to by participating in the database

3. *If you had an account and logged in to the previous ACS database*: at the Realm "Sign In" page, click on "Forgot Your Password" and follow the instructions to reset your password. Make a note of your new password and follow the steps to log in.

4. *If you never logged in to the previous ACS database or are not sure if you did*: follow the instructions in Step 2 above and if you do not receive an e-mail to reset your password let us know via the support e-mail address (see below).

How do I log in to Realm from my mobile phone or tablet?

There's a mobile app for Realm called "Realm Connect." Access the app following these steps:

1. Go to the Realm login page via Step 3 on the [Hills Church Realm page](#), then click on the App Store or Google Play; (or) Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "Realm Connect." The Apple icon is a turquoise-colored square with a star and mountain; for Android it's a blue square with a star and white lines. Download and open the app.

2. Follow the steps on screen. If you are logging in to Realm for the first time and do not yet have a password, follow the steps above for logging in on your home computer.

3. *You are done!*

Profiles & Directory

I successfully logged in to Realm. Now what do I do?

To review your Profile in the church Directory:

1. On the top right click on your name and go to "My Profile Views" > "Connect"
2. Click on "Edit Profile" and double-check your information to ensure it was entered properly or transferred correctly from the former database. Make any changes you feel are necessary and click "Save" or if you have no changes click "Cancel"
3. Click on "Personal Information" up above on the page and follow the same steps. Note the Skills and Interests lists. For a full checklist with descriptions go to "Serving" on the main menu to the left of the screen, click on the three-dot menu to the right of each area, click on Edit to read the descriptions and select the Skills and Interests pertinent to you. Click "Done" on the lower right when complete.
4. If you do not have a photo showing, you can upload a picture from your computer by clicking on the pencil icon on the circle next to your name and following the steps shown
5. Click on "Manage Privacy" to see the options. The default setting is "Anyone in the church" so that other members can see your profile and contact information. We encourage all members to retain this setting but if you choose you can restrict who sees your profile information. Click "Save" or "Cancel" as needed.
6. *You are done!*

Once I'm logged in to Realm, can I find contact information for other church members?

Once you are in Realm you can explore all the features available. Of interest for many is the member **Directory** with member **Profiles.** To find a church member, either go to the menu on the left and click on Directory of Profiles, or type a name in the search box at the top of the screen. In the mobile app for phones and tablets, select the magnifying glass at the top and type in a name.

Giving

What does the Giving feature do in Realm?
Each Profile in the Realm Directory has access to its own Giving information. This section of your profile tracks past pledges and contributions made during the annual Stewardship campaigns, as well as contributions made for capital campaigns and any other individual donations (e.g., flowers, disaster relief, other) made to the church.

Importantly, you can also make a pledge and process payments via the Giving section of Realm, which can retain, on a secure and confidential basis, a payment method such as a credit or debit card or bank account withdrawals.

How do I access the Giving section?
When you log in to Realm and view your profile in Connect your Giving records are accessible via the Giving link on the main menu.

How often is the Giving information updated?
For those whose member profiles were in the previous ACS database their financial records were ported over from the records maintained by the church. Going forward, the church final team will update your Giving records periodically.

Who has access to my Giving information in Realm?
Your Giving information in Realm is secure and confidential and viewable only by you and church staff. If you choose to share your Giving information with a spouse or other family member that is also an option.

Who do I contact if I have questions about my Giving records in Realm?
Contact John Dooley, Hills Church CFO, dooley@hillschurch.org, or Church Administrator Andrea Bellarosa, andrea@hillschurch.org.

Events

How can I see church events in Realm?
When you log in to Realm Connect the first thing on your screen will be the News feed. All upcoming events will be listed there. You can also go to Events at any time in the main menu.

What church events are listed in Realm?
Both upcoming and some past events (those that have not yet been removed) are viewable in Realm. Different types of events include those that encourage church members to register in advance, known as RSVP events; Small Groups; and any other events listed depending on the church group and who is leading them. Typically event postings, especially for church-wide events, are run through the Church Administrator, Andrea Bellarosa.

How do I RSVP for an event in Realm?
Click on the event in question and click on the button that says "Register by [DATE]." Follow the on-screen instructions.

Will I get confirmation when I register for an event in Realm?
Yes, you will receive an e-mail from the Realm system when you register for an event. Be sure to check your Junk or Spam folder as the e-mail may wind up there.

Can I cancel a registration if necessary?
Yes. Under "Manage Registration" in the specific event listing look for the yellow "Cancel Registration" button, click on it and follow the on-screen instructions.

Can I see who else has RSVP'd for a church event in Realm?
Unfortunately at this time this functionality is not available to all users. Event organizers and select others in the system can access the list of registered participants but at this time most others cannot. We are working with the Realm database provider, ACS Technologies, to see if this can be changed in the future.

Groups

What is the Groups feature in Realm?

Groups is the feature in the Realm database that facilitates formation and interaction among church members who are involved in groups of one kind or another. This includes everything from slate-elected groups involved in church governance, such as Support Boards and Special Ministry Teams, to Ministry Teams, task forces, working groups, small groups, and any other lay- and clergy-led groups in the church.

How do I find Groups in Realm?

On your desktop or laptop computer, choose "Groups" from the main menu. You will see "Your Groups" above. Next to that click on "Find Groups," click on a category to see the groups within it, and click on the group to see more. In the Realm Connect mobile app, click on "More" (3-dot menu in the lower right), click on "Groups," and follow the steps above.

What can I do in Groups?

Once a Group is formed in Realm it is included in the list of "All Groups." For those individual members in that group the following functions are provided:

- List of Participants - with contact info
- E-mail Communication – to the entire group or individually
- Resources – posting of and access to documents pertinent to the group, by anyone in the group
- Events – listing of group events, sending out invites to events (e.g., to a group meeting), tracking attendance at events if desired.

What Groups appear in Realm at launch?

At launch in spring 2024 the following Groups and their participants are included in Realm:

- Church Council
- Support Boards
  - Christian Service
  - Faith Formation
  - Spiritual Care/Deacons
  - Stewards
- Special Ministry Teams
  - Participation & Involvement

I'm the leader of a Ministry Team, Special Ministry Team, or other group in the church. How can I start a Group in Realm for my team?

If you feel your group would benefit from establishing a group presence in Realm, contact the Realm Launch Team via the support e-mail realmsupport@hillschurch.org and we will help facilitate formation of your group.

Group membership changes over time as individual members come and go. How will that be handled going forward?

For those groups in Realm that have slate-elected positions the group members will be updated in Realm by Church Administrator Andrea Bellarosa after the Annual Meeting each year. For all other groups the designated group leader can create a Group in Realm for their team and add and delete group members as needed. Note that when deleting a group member leaders should click on "Keep History" for database record-keeping purposes.

Volunteering & Serving

How do Volunteering and Serving work in Realm?
The Volunteering and Serving feature of Realm, which is on the main menu to the left of the screen, is the latest database feature we have launched at the Hills Church. As such we are at the initial stages of exploring this feature of Realm's capabilities and its fit to our needs. As we learn more we will hope to adopt it more widely for volunteering and serving activities, of which there are many, throughout the church.

What church groups are included in Realm for signing up volunteers?
The initial pilot volunteer program we are exploring in Realm is Ushering which, as part of our worship services, falls under the purview of the Deacons/Spiritual Care Support Board. Should the test of Ushering in Realm prove acceptable then volunteer sign-ups for ushers will most likely move into Realm. However, as of this writing we are just in the initial stages of setting up and testing Ushering in Realm and will not make a final determination until sometime later.

If I or my group are hosting a church event, can we add Serving to it in Realm?
Yes. In Realm you can link Serving Teams to an Event. An existing Serving Team can be added to one or multiple events, or a Serving Team can be created and used for a single event. This can be useful for larger events requiring volunteers to help staff it, for example for food purchasing, set-up, serving, clean-up, etc.

Will all church volunteer sign-ups be in Realm now? What about Sign-up Genius?
This is yet to be determined. Some volunteer and serving activities may work well in Realm, while others may be less well suited to the system. It is possible for the foreseeable future, while we come to fully understand the strengths and capabilities of the Realm system in this area, that we will have a hybrid system with some volunteer activities in Realm and others still in Sign-up Genius.

Realm Support

Your first stop should be to the Realm page on the Hills Church website. Much of the information you need will be found there, including a short, step-by-step tutorial video on how to get started in Realm:
https://hillschurch.org/realm/

For any questions or concerns with Realm, please contact the
Realm Launch Team at:
realmsupport@hillschurch.org

We look forward to seeing you in Realm!

The Hills Church Realm Launch Team

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(Rev. 10/18/24)