

Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg

Bylaws

ARTICLE I Name, Affiliation, Dissolution

I. Section 1.

The name of this religious society shall be the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg, Inc.

I. Section 2.

This Church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of the Thomas Jefferson District.

I. Section 3.

Should this society cease to function and the membership vote to disband, the assets of the society shall be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its general purposes, this transfer to be made in full compliance with whatever laws are applicable.

I. Section 4

Recognizing the diversity inherent in our congregation, it is important that no member or group speak for the entire church on any issue without formal authorization by the membership. We embrace a wide variety of viewpoints and we encourage individuals to freely act on their personal conscience. Any request for the congregation to take a unified stand on an issue must be submitted to the Board for review. If the Board approves this application, it will call a congregational meeting requiring a quorum and two weeks written notice. At this meeting the members can authorize the proposal as an official church position with a 95% vote of those attending in favor of the petition.

This protocol in no way is intended to restrict the minister's free pulpit. In addition, committees & affiliate organizations can take stands acknowledging their affiliation with the church as long as they do not claim to speak for the whole congregation.

ARTICLE II MISSION

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg is a liberal religious congregation. Celebrating our diversity, we covenant with one another to search, to serve, to grow, and to love. By living these ideals, we are changed, empower our children, and transform the world. We invite all seekers to explore our compassionate and vital faith.

ARTICLE III Membership

III. Section 1.

Any person may become a member of this church who is in sympathy with its purpose and program, who contributes to its support, and who signs the membership book after talking with the Minister or President or after attending a New UU class, Coming of Age training, or other membership training programs developed by the Minister, Director of Religious Education, or Religious Education Committee. All of these options include a discussion of the Purposes and Principles, obligations of membership and financial responsibilities.

III. Section 2.

All members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spartanburg are also members of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Thomas Jefferson District. The Church is responsible for paying dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Thomas Jefferson District.

III. Section 3.

The relationship between the congregation and the Minister is defined by the Covenantal documents.

III. Section 4.

Members must be at least fourteen (14) years of age and contribute as they are able to the Church. Anyone under the age of eighteen (18) will be required to have written parental permission in order to become a member.

III. Section 5.

Members must have signed the Membership Book at least forty-five (45) days prior to voting at a congregational meeting.

III. Section 6.

Members whose pattern of participation and level of involvement in church activities indicate withdrawal of interest will be placed on an inactive member list at the member's request or by action of the Board upon the recommendation of the Membership Committee. After being an inactive member for a year, during which time the Membership Committee will encourage the member to return to active participation status, the member may be officially removed from the membership at the member's request or by action of the Board. Members on the inactive member list retain voting status until they are removed from the membership roster.

III. Section 7.

The Church does not discriminate against individuals for membership on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, or handicap.

III. Section 8.

An annual review of the membership roster shall be overseen by the Secretary of the Board. Members may be removed from the active roll by their own written requests or deaths. The Board of Trustees may remove members from active rolls when the member has moved away, cannot be located, or has withdrawn active support.

ARTICLE IV Meetings

IV. Section 1.

The regular meetings of the Church shall be determined by the Church itself, or by any person or persons designated by it.

IV. Section 2.

The Annual meeting shall be held in the spring at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees.

IV. Section 3.

Congregational meetings shall be called by the President, the Board of Trustees, or by petition of ten percent (10%) of the members of the Church, and the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call of the meeting.

IV. Section 4.

Thirty percent (30%) of the voting membership (including absentee ballots) shall constitute a quorum.

IV. Section 5.

Absentee ballots will be available from the Board upon request to voting members unable to attend the meeting. To be counted toward the vote, absentee ballots must be received and validated by the Secretary of the Board prior to the opening of the meeting.

ARTICLE V Officers and Board of Trustees

V. Section 1.

The Board of Trustees (also referred to in this document as the Board) shall consist of four (4) executive officers and five (5) Trustees-at-Large. The Finance Committee Chair and the immediate Past President shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board. All members of the Board shall be voting members of the Church.

V. Section 2.

The President and President-Elect shall be elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting and will serve terms of one (1) year, beginning on July 1 of the year elected. The Secretary and Treasurer will serve terms of two (2) years. Two Trustees-at-Large will be elected in even numbered years and three Trustees-at-Large will be elected in odd numbered years, each for two year terms.

V. Section 3.

A member may serve no more than two (2) consecutive years as a Trustee-at-Large, but will remain eligible after such service, to be elected to one of the four executive offices. A retiring executive officer who has served two or more consecutive years on the Board of Trustees in any capacity may not be elected Trustee-at-Large for at least one year.

V. Section 4.

Vacancies: A vacancy occurring on the Board may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Board members and the person so elected shall serve until the next Annual Meeting.

V. Section 5.

Removal: Any Board member may be removed during his/her term of office by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the other board members.

V. Section 6.

The Board of Trustees, as the duly elected governing body of the Church, shall be responsible for enacting Church policy consistent with the Bylaws. It shall have general charge of the Church property and shall have authority to conduct the business of the Church and to manage financial affairs.

V. Section 7.

The Board of Trustees shall:

V. Section 7. a.

Solicit financial support for the Church; submit an annual budget to the membership for approval; administer the approved budget; provide for an audit of the Church's finances at the end of every other fiscal year (or more frequently at the discretion of the Board of Trustees); receive and administer gifts and trusts.

V. Section 7. b.

Establish and prescribe the responsibilities of committees and specify their purpose and term of service.

V. Section 7. c.

Employ staff members in written job descriptions, establish their duties, and provide performance evaluations.

V. Section 7. d.

Provide general supervision over and support to all activities of the Church.

V. Section 7. e

Approve all legal papers and designate the President and Secretary to sign such papers; the President-Elect may act in place of the President and the Treasurer in place of the Secretary, if approved by the Board.

V. Section 7. f.

Retain authority to shift funds from one portion of the budget to another as needs dictate.

V. Section 8.

Duties of the Officers:

V. Section 8. a.

The President shall preside at the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Annual and special business meetings of the Church, and assist in the functioning of all committees that report to the Board, as needed: namely the Finance Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, Leadership Development Committee, and the Committee on Ministry.

V. Section 8. b.

The President-Elect shall serve in the absence of the President and shall become President should the office of the President become vacant, and succeed by election to the Office of the President at the next annual change of officers. The President-Elect shall serve as Chairperson of the Council of Committees (CoC), is a member of the Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee, and is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee. The President-Elect shall assist in the functioning of all committees that report to the CoC, as needed.

V. Section 8. c.

The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall record the minutes of meetings of the Board and all Church business meetings, oversee the annual review of the membership roster, and perform any other duties usually pertaining to this office.

V. Section 8. d.

The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the Church, and disburse all monies by check upon the authority granted by the Board, and perform any other duties usually pertaining to this office. The Treasurer shall submit annually all books and records of financial transactions to the Board and Finance Committee within two (2) months of the end of the fiscal year. All financial statements shall be prepared at the end of each fiscal year and made available to all active members. Bond in the amount determined by the Board shall be provided for the Treasurer at Church expense. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

V. Section 8. e.

After completion of the President's term, the President shall become Past President and shall chair the Long Range Planning Committee

V. Section 9.

Meetings of the Board of Trustees:

V. Section 9. a.

The Board shall meet monthly unless a majority of the Board agrees to cancel a specific meeting. The time and place of Board meetings shall be established by a majority of the Board.

V. Section 9. b.

Special meetings may be called by the President or any member of the Board upon agreement of a majority of the Board. Every possible effort shall be made to notify all members of the Board of any meeting.

V. Section 9. c.

Minutes of all Board meetings shall be available for examination by any voting member of the Church upon request.

V. Section 9. d.

A majority of the Board members fixed by these Bylaws shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VI Council of Committees

VI. Section 1.

The Council of Committees (CoC) shall consist of the President-Elect and chairs and representatives of the various committees. The President-Elect shall serve as chairperson of the Council of Committees.

VI. Section 2.

The Council of Committees shall have general responsibility for administrative coordination of the committees and their respective programs. This will include providing plans and guidelines for committee activities, and shifting committee responsibilities as necessary.

VI. Section 2. a.

Written monthly reports will be provided to the Board of Trustees, and an annual report summarizing the year's activities will be written and submitted to the Board of Trustees one month prior to the Annual Meeting.

VI. Section 2. b.

The CoC shall meet as often as necessary to perform its function.

ARTICLE VII Committees

VII. Section 1.

There shall be the following standing committees: Membership, Finance, Religious Education, Building and Grounds, Social Concerns, Long Range Planning, Committee on Ministry, Worship, Rainbow Group, Publicity, Adult Programming, Hospitality, Caring, Personnel, and Leadership Development. Subcommittees of standing committees may be created to meet identified needs, with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

VII. Section 2.

Unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws, each committee shall describe the responsibilities and functions of its committee and subcommittee and shall review its responsibilities and activities at least yearly, maintaining an up-to-date Policy and Procedures Manual entry to be passed to subsequent chairs. The Committees shall submit a written report to the CoC on the organization and purpose of the committee structure.

VII. Section 3.

Ad Hoc or Advisory Committees may be created, at the Board's discretion, to handle functions and activities not addressed in the standing committee structure, or to advise the Board on a specified issue or area of concern.

VII. Section 4.

Chairpersons of committees shall be selected by the committee members, except for the Long Range Planning Committee. The President or President-Elect shall have the power to fill vacancies that occur in committee chairs.

VII. Section 5.

A majority of the members of any committee shall constitute a quorum.

VII. Section 6.

Committee chairs shall provide a written report on the activities of their committee to the President-Elect one month before the Annual Meeting; as well as recommend changes, improvements, and modifications with respect to those activities it considers important to the welfare and good of the Church.

VII. Section 7.

Budgetary requests for the upcoming fiscal year shall be provided to the Finance Committee in a timely fashion.

VII. Section 8. The Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of a chairperson, a co-chair, and three (3) or more voting members of the Church. Members are appointed by the Board of Trustees from recommendations submitted by the Finance Chair(s). Additionally, the Treasurer, Minister(s) and President-Elect are ex-officio members of this committee.

VII. Section 8. a.

The committee shall be responsible for receiving, recording and depositing of all funds collected by the Church and plan an annual budget for the Church.

VII. Section 8. b.

The Finance Committee shall propose a budget for each fiscal year, to be reviewed by the Board, which will make such changes as it deems necessary, before presenting it to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

VII. Section 8. c.

The Finance Committee shall plan and supervise the Annual Fund Campaign and coordinate all other fund raising programs and perform any duties pertaining to finances as delegated by the Board.

VII. Section 8. d.

The Board shall retain authority to shift funds from one portion of the budget to another as needs dictate.

VII. Section 9. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of three (3) voting members of the congregation and shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. One member of the Board of Trustees may, in the Board's discretion, serve as an ex-officio member of this committee. Members shall serve three-year, staggered terms and are eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

VII. Section 9. a.

The committee shall be responsible, in consultation with the appropriate supervisor, for administering the church's personnel functions. These duties include, but may not be limited to:

* drafting and recommending personnel policies and procedures to the Board of Trustees;

- * coordinating performance appraisals;
- * recommending and administering, with Board approval, personnel actions to the Board of Trustees (hiring, firing, disciplining, etc.);
- * establishing and maintaining employee records;
- * conducting exit interviews;
- * evaluating compensation systems and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees;
- * managing job descriptions;
- * recruiting new employees: advertising, interviewing, screening (conducting background investigations, reference checks, etc.) and recommending candidates to the Board of Trustees;
- * coordinating new employee orientation and training; and
- * training committee and Board of Trustee members on personnel matters as necessary.

VII. Section 9. b.

The committee will not make personnel decisions or execute personnel actions beyond those outlined above without prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

VII. Section 9. c.

The committee shall provide quarterly written reports to the Board of Trustees summarizing the committee's activities during that period. In addition, the committee shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Board of Trustees one month prior to the Annual Meeting.

VII. Section 10. Leadership Development Committee

The Leadership Development Committee shall consist of five (5) members, including one member of the Board of Trustees. Members will be elected to serve a one-year term and are eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

The President shall appoint members to fill unexpired terms. Membership on the Leadership Development Committee shall not preclude election to the Board as officers or Trustees-at-Large.

The committee shall assist in developing future leaders of the church by offering workshops, promoting attendance at district workshops, and helping to select candidates for Leadership School.

VII. Section 10. a

At each Annual Meeting of the Church, the Leadership Development Committee shall place names in nomination for the officers, trustees and the next Leadership Development Committee in accordance with Article V. The Leadership Development slate shall be published fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Meeting. During the Annual Meeting, additional nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominees.

VII. Section 11. The Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning Committee shall be responsible for the periodic review and update of the Long Range Plan.

VII. Section 11. a.

The committee shall consist of the President, the President-Elect, the Past President, the chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Minister(s) and other interested persons appointed by the Board. The Past President shall serve as the chairperson of the committee. In the event that the Past President is unwilling or unable to assume this position, the current President will select another from the pool of Past Presidents.

VII. Section 11. b.

The committee shall convene at least once per year prior to the annual meeting to review the congregation's progress on the implementation of the Long Range Plan.

VII. Section 11. c.

A written report to the Board regarding accomplishments during the past year and suggested adjustments for the next year will be offered. A copy of the report shall be included in the annual report to the congregation.

VII. Section 11. d.

With approval of the Board, the committee shall recommend updates and changes to the plan that will be submitted to the congregation for approval at a congregational meeting.

VII. Section 11. e.

At least every five years, the committee, with guidance from the Board, shall lead the congregation in a review of the mission, vision and goals of the Long Range Plan. Any revision shall be approved at a congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VIII Minister(s)

VIII. Section 1.

The duties of the Minister(s) are those defined by the letter of agreement and related covenantal documents outlining the ministerial position(s). The Minister(s) shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express his or her opinions outside the pulpit. Each Minister is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees without a vote, and an ex-officio member of all Church committees except the Nominating Committee.

VIII. Section 2.

A new Minister is selected through a search and candidating procedure recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

VIII. Section 3.

Election of a Minister shall be made by a ninety percent (90%) vote of the voting members of the Church present (including absentee ballots) at a meeting called for this purpose in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws. The terms of his/her employment shall be set forth in a written letter of agreement recommended by the Board and approved by the Church.

VIII. Section 4.

The Minister shall be considered to have indefinite tenure.

VIII. Section 5.

The Minister may be dismissed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members of the Church present (including absentee ballots) at a meeting called for this purpose in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws. To dismiss a Minister, forty percent (40%) of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum.

VIII. Section 6.

The Committee on Ministry will consist of five people serving staggered terms of three years. Committee members will be selected by the Board from a list submitted by the minister. Unexpired terms will be filled in the same manner. The Committee will serve in an evaluation and advisory role, as defined by the UUA Department of Ministry.

ARTICLE IX Revision of Bylaws

IX. Section 1.

These Bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or repealed at any congregational meeting of the Church by a majority vote of the voting members of the Church present (including absentee ballots), called in accordance with procedures outlined in Article IV.

IX. Section 2.

Notice of any proposed change to the Bylaws and the full wording of the proposed changes shall be contained in the call of the meeting, to be given at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting date.

IX. Section 3.

At ten (10) year intervals, the entire Bylaws document shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees or a task force appointed by the Board.

IX. Section 4

Bylaws adopted January, 1954

First revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting, April 26, 1964.

Second revision approved and adopted at General Membership Meeting, February 6, 1966.

Third revision approved and adopted at General Membership Meeting, October, 1968.

Fourth revision approved and adopted at General Membership Meeting, April 15, 1984.

Fifth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting, April 30, 1989.

Sixth revision approved and adopted at Special Membership Meeting, December 17, 1989.

Seventh revision approved and adopted at Special Membership Meeting, March 25, 1990.

Eighth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting, April 21, 1991.

Ninth revision approved and adopted at Special Meeting, March 21, 1993.

Tenth revision approved and adopted at Special Meeting, Fall, 1995.

Eleventh revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting May 6, 1996.

Twelfth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting May 11, 1997.

Thirteenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting May 3, 1998.

Fourteenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting, Spring, 2003.

Fifteenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting, May 23, 2004.

Sixteenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Meeting, May 22, 2005.

Seventeenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting May 13, 2007.

Eighteenth revision approved and adopted at Annual Membership Meeting May 18, 2008.