**NUUC Bylaws & Policies**

Revised March 2024

**Bylaws of the NORTH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION**

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this religious society shall be the North Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

We gather together in love and fellowship to worship and to foster spiritual growth, to serve humanity, and to understand ourselves and our universe.

**ARTICLE III. NONDISCRIMINATION**

1. The North Unitarian Universalist Congregation seeks to foster a climate of purposeful inclusion of all people regardless of race, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, size, gender identity, gender expression, or affectional or sexual orientation.
2. The Congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of all persons in all its activities, including membership, programming, hiring practices and the calling of religious professionals without regard to race, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, size, gender identity, gender expression, or affectional or sexual orientation.

**ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

1. **Criteria.** Any person eighteen years of age or older may become a voting member of this society who is in sympathy with its purpose, has signed the membership book, and makes an annual contribution of record. Youth fourteen years of age and older may become members if they been actively engaged with the congregation and have had a one on one meeting with the DRE or minister about congregational membership prior to signing the book. Church membership is required of all Trustees and Leadership Development Committee members, the Treasurer, and of committee chairpersons.
2. **Orientation.** Members are encouraged to inform themselves as to the historical evolution and current situation of the Unitarian Universalist movement. Attendance at a New Member Orientation is also encouraged.
3. **Removal.** A member shall be removed from membership when ~~the member has moved away or~~ cannot be located, or when they fail to meet the membership criteria set forth in Article IV.1 above, or upon their request. If a member dies, they are automatically removed from the rolls.
4. **Voting rights.** A new member must wait thirty days from the date of signing the membership book before they may vote regarding official congregational business as set forth in Article VI.

**ARTICLE V. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

This society shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is the intention of this society to make annual financial contributions equal to its full fair share as determined by the Association and the District.

**ARTICLE VI. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

1. **Written notice.** The business to be transacted at all congregational meetings shall be set forth in the written notice of such meeting which shall be sent to all members by mail and/or email fifteen calendar days prior to the meeting.
2. **Moderator.** The annual and special meetings will be moderated by the Board President or by a designated member of the Board who shall vote only in the event of a tie.
3. **Quorum.** Twenty percent of membership shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority vote shall prevail unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws.
4. **Annual Elections Meeting.** The Annual Elections shall be held each year in the month of March at such time and place as is fixed by the Board. Nominations may be made from the floor during the election. The Annual Meeting’s order of business shall include reports of the Officers, the Minister and other executive staff, the election of new Trustees and Leadership Development Committee members, and reports from the committees.
5. **Annual Financial Meeting.** The Annual Financial Meeting shall be held each year prior to the end of the fiscal year at such time and place fixed by the Board. The Annual Financial Meeting order of business shall include the Treasurer’s report and the adoption of the annual budget.
6. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may be called by a majority vote of the Board at a regular meeting, or by written request of any ten percent of the membership submitted to the Board. The Board will establish the time, date, and location of said meeting.
7. **Parliamentary Authority.** The Board of Trustees may adopt such procedures and directives as are necessary to implement these Bylaws, and to govern the day-to-day affairs of the church.

**ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS**

1. **Size and Function.** The Board of Trustees consists of six members which, between meetings of the membership, shall have general charge of the property of the church and the conduct of all its business affairs and the control of its administration, subject to these Bylaws, including the appointment of such committees and committee chairpersons as it deems necessary, and the dissolution of committees as it deems necessary. All members of the Board shall be members of the church.
2. **Elections.** Two trustees will be elected by ballot for a three-year term at each Annual Meeting. ~~Resigned~~ Trustees who resign before their term is up will be replaced by persons named by the Leadership Development Committee and voted upon by the Board. Replacements shall serve until the next Congregational Meeting at which time the congregation will vote to fill the unexpired terms.
3. **Officers.** The Board shall elect its own officers at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. Officers shall hold their office for one year and until their successors have been elected. Officers shall perform the duties usually pertaining to these offices. All shall serve in such office for the church, as well as for the Board.

A Treasurer shall be chosen by the Board from the membership of the church, including Trustees, based upon qualifications, and shall serve ex-officio and non-voting to the Board, if they are not a Trustee.

1. **Board Meetings.** Board Meetings shall be held monthly, at least ten times a year. Time and place for the meetings shall be published in the newsletter or notice given by mail or email at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A simple majority of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

In the event of an emergency which requires action prior to the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting, a special meeting of the Board may be called by the President or by any three members of the Board upon two days’ notice to each member of the Board. Notice of such special meeting shall state the business to be transacted.

Board Meetings are open to all interested persons, except executive sessions that the Board may call at its discretion. During executive sessions, no action may be taken or voted upon.

**ARTICLE VIII. ~~NOMINATING~~ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

1. **Size and Function.** There shall be a ~~five~~- seven-member Leadership Development Committee whose function is to nominate a slate of persons for vacant positions on the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Development Committee, as well as oversee periodic leadership development experiences for the congregation. Two members will be elected by ballot for a three-year term at each Annual Meeting. One of the committee’s members will be the immediate past Board President, who shall ~~be~~ serve as an ex-officio and non-voting member of the committee. If the immediate past Board President is not available to serve on this committee, this position remains unfilled.

The Leadership Development Committee shall interview candidates to evaluate their qualifications and to ensure that candidates understand the position requirements.

The Leadership Development Committee shall publish names of candidates for all elective offices required by these Bylaws to be filled at each Annual Meeting in the written notice of the Annual Meeting to be sent to all members as required in Article VI.1.

The Leadership Development Committee shall maintain records of terms of office of each Board and Leadership Development Committee member; and whether the person was appointed or elected; ~~and the person’s eligibility for subsequent election~~.

1. **Elections.** The members of the Leadership Development Committee shall be elected for three-year terms at Annual Meetings and shall not be members of the Board. Members of the Leadership Development Committee shall be members of the congregation. ~~Resigned~~ Leadership Development Committee members who resign before their term is up will be replaced by persons named by the Leadership Development Committee and voted upon by the Board. Replacements shall serve until the next Congregational Meeting at which time the congregation will vote to fill the unexpired terms.
2. **Chairperson.** A chairperson shall be elected at the first meeting of the Leadership Development Committee following the Annual Meeting.
3. **Meetings.** Leadership Development Committee meetings are open to all members of the congregation.

**ARTICLE IX. MINISTER**

1. **Primary Duties.** The Minister is responsible for the conduct of worship services within the Church and for the Church’s spiritual interests and affairs. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express their opinions outside the pulpit without sanction. The Minister shall act as chief administrative officer and supervise staff. The minister shall be an ex-officio and non-voting member of the Board, and of all committees.
2. **Calling.** The Minister shall be called upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee and by a four-fifths majority of members of the Church present at any meeting legally called for the purpose.
3. **Dismissal.** The minister may be dismissed by a majority vote of members of the Church present at any meeting legally called for the purpose.
4. **Suspension of the Regular Calling Procedure.** The Board of Trustees shall have power of selection and dismissal in the case of a minister placed for a limited time.

**ARTICLE X. MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE**

1. **Size and Function.** The Ministerial Search Committee consists of seven voting members of the congregation. It is the responsibility of the committee to recommend to the congregation one and only one candidate for any ministerial position. The committee continues until a contract is executed with this or a subsequent candidate, or until the committee is dissolved on its own motion or by resolution of the congregation. The committee will seek to cooperate with and follow the recommended procedures of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
2. **Elections.** When a vacancy exists or is anticipated in any ministerial position, the congregation **shall elect** a Ministerial Search Committee of seven voting members of the congregation. Notice of intent to elect a Ministerial Search Committee must be included in the notice of the congregational meeting. The Leadership Development Committee must present names of at least eleven members for election to the Ministerial Search Committee. Additional nominations may be made at the meeting.
3. **Chairperson.** The Ministerial Search Committee shall elect its own chairperson.

**ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced in any Congregational meeting legally called for this purpose and approved by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Notice of any proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.

**ARTICLE XII. DISSOLUTION**

Should this Church cease to function, and the membership vote to dissolve, any assets of the Church will be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association. This transfer should be made in full compliance with whatever laws are applicable.

**ARTICLE XIII.**

Any parliamentary procedures not covered by these Bylaws shall be governed by the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.

**POLICIES**

**Alcohol Policy**

Alcoholic beverages may be served in moderate amounts on the church premises as long as non alcoholic alternatives are made equally available. In the case of events with persons under 21 years of age in attendance, alcoholic beverages must be continuously monitored by a responsible adult.

**Child Safety Policy:**

These policies and agreements help to ensure that our congregational environment is a safe and secure place for the children, youth and adults who are a part of the NUUC community.

**Child Safety Policy: Religious Exploration (RE) Volunteers**

Generally, volunteers will have participated in congregational life of the NUUC community for 6 months prior to volunteering in the RE Program. The Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) may make an exception, including if a person has previously volunteered at another Unitarian Universalist congregation and provides contact information for references from the former DRE or minister.

The DRE determines volunteer teams and strives to make decisions that promote a safe and nurturing environment for all.

RE staff and volunteers are encouraged to have up-to-date first aid and CPR training.

**Child Safety Policy: Reporting Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Threats of Harm**

RE volunteers and staff may develop concerns about a child’s well-being, as a result of a child’s statements, behavior, or other factors. These concerns may include any of the following:

* Suspected child abuse, including physical, psychological, or sexual abuse;
* Suspected neglect; or
* Concerns that a child may harm themselves or someone else.

Any volunteer or RE staff member who is concerned about a child’s well-being shall report their concerns to a minister, the DRE, or a member of the board of directors, who shall report to the DRE or minister. In those cases where cause exists, the minister or DRE will make appropriate reports to child protective agencies, as required by law. In cases where a child has threatened to harm themselves or someone else, the child’s parents/guardians will be notified.

Any member of the NUUC community who is concerned about a child’s well-being is also encouraged to report their concerns to the minister or DRE.

**Child Safety Policy: Supervision of Children and Youth**

There shall be at least two, unrelated adults present for all RE classes and activities. The minister, DRE, and mentors for Coming of Age programs may meet privately with children or youth, with the verbal permission of a parent/guardian.

The NUUC nursery/toddler room is staffed by a single paid childcare provider and is available for children five and under. The door to the nursery shall remain open whenever a child or children is present.

**Child Safety Policy: Accidental Injuries**

For minor injuries, scrapes, or bruises, workers will provide first aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child’s parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up. An incident report will be provided upon request.

For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be contacted. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed.

**Child Safety Policy: Background Checks and Criminal History**

NUUC requires that prior to volunteering in the RE Program, all adults who apply to teach, chaperone, mentor, or work/volunteer in RE or childcare settings must be background checked. The DRE or minister will provide a form for prospective staff or volunteers to complete. Background checks may take up to four weeks to return and the report is valid for three years.

In the event that a background check returns with a criminal record, the minister and DRE will determine whether the individual is permitted to serve as a RE staff/volunteer. NUUC recognizes the disparate impact of the criminal justice system on poor people and people of color. Having a criminal record does not automatically disqualify an individual from serving in RE. The minister and DRE will consider the nature of the criminal offense(s), how long ago the offense(s) occurred, and any other relevant factors in making a determination about whether an individual may serve.

If it is unclear whether a prospective volunteer or staff member is fit for service, the minister and the DRE will prioritize child safety over inclusion of people with a criminal history as RE staff/volunteers. In the event that the minister and DRE determine someone is not permitted to serve in RE, the minister will identify other opportunities for the individual to connect in the congregation.

If an RE volunteer or staff member is charged with a crime, the volunteer or staff member must report the charge to the DRE or minister within 48 hours. The minister and DRE will make a determination about the individual’s continued service in their RE role. Offenses that do not carry a penalty of incarceration, such as many traffic violations, do not need to be reported.

**Disruptive Person Policy**

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination’s purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person’s physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons.

There have been times when the disruptive behavior of an individual within the church building has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child;
2. The disruption of church activities;
3. Diminishment of the appeal of the church to its potential and existing membership.

The following shall be the policy of NUUC in dealing with these issues:

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister and/or the Board President, if available, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required law enforcement may be called. A follow-up letter detailing what steps must be taken before returning to the activities involved will be sent by the Minister and the Board President to the offending party or parties.
2. Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to the Board of Trustees, which will respond in terms of their own judgment observing the following:

a. The Board will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define “acceptable” behavior in advance.

b. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals; stereotypes will be avoided.

c. The Board will collect all necessary information.

d. To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:

DANGEROUSNESS – Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?

DISRUPTIVENESS – How much interference with church functions is going on?

OFFENSIVENESS – How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

e. To determine the necessary response, the following points will be considered:

CAUSES – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?

HISTORY – What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

f. The Board will decide on the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, the following three levels of response are recommended:

LEVEL ONE – The Minister and a member of the Board will meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern.

LEVEL TWO -The offending individual is excluded from the church and/or specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear.

LEVEL THREE – The offending individual is permanently excluded from the church premises and all church activities. If it is decided that expulsion will take place, a letter will be sent by the Minister and the Board explaining the expulsion and the individual’s rights and possible recourse.

NUUC strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruptive behavior compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

**Fiscal, Pledge, and Gift Policies**

The Treasurer and the President of the Board and only the Treasurer and the President of the Board shall be signatories on all accounts. The Treasurer is responsible for keeping account of all church funds. Every six months there shall be a review of the books, consisting of a finance committee member matching the reported balances to the bank records.

Disbursements will be made by the Treasurer and can only be made if the expenditure is part of an approved budget or is specifically approved by a vote of the board.

The administrative staff of the church shall be responsible for keeping records of individual giving, and providing appropriate and timely receipts for the purposes of tax deductions. The administrative staff of the church will also keep records of all pledges, and keep accounts of giving in relationship to pledge. Actual numbers for any donations received and/or pledged shall be held in confidence between the administrative staff of the church and the Chair of the Stewardship Committee.

Members and Friends are advised to check with the Minister and/or Chair of the Building Committee before making material gifts to the church in order to ensure their usability. Material gifts are not counted against pledge commitments. The Minister will supply a receipt for tax purposes for all material gifts that might possibly be greater than $250.00 in value. That receipt will describe the item but not give it a particular monetary value.

**Fundraising Policy**

Financial Support for NUUC comes first and foremost from the Annual Stewardship Drive, which involves the entire membership and provides for the operating budget. A fundraiser is defined as either an effort to raise money for a special purpose or program, or to supplement the income line of the operating budget.

Fundraisers may not be of a frequency or nature as to compete or endanger the success of the Annual Stewardship Drive. Fundraisers involving connection to for profit entities and corporations shall be given special scrutiny as to the compatibility of those entities and corporations with the NUUC Mission. Events taking place on church premises where less than 60% of the proceeds are directed to NUUC will be considered building rentals, and subject to the Building Rental Policy.

Authority for approving any fundraiser other than that of the Annual Service Auction intended to provide income to the general operating budget shall rest with the Minister in close consultation with the Ways and Means Committee (if functional). Fundraisers intended to raise funds for a specific purpose or program outside of the regular budget can only be approved by a vote of the Board of Trustees.

The Minister will inform the Board of Trustees of the approval, control, and monitoring of any scheduled fundraiser for the annual operating budget in a timely matter. Should church funds be necessary to expedite the fundraiser, the Minister will seek approval of the Board of Trustees, who may limit the size of those funds.

**Involuntary Separation Policy**

There are three types of involuntary separation: (a) unsatisfactory performance, (b) serious misconduct, or (c) layoff.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance of an employee, he or she will be informed of the deficiencies and given a reasonable opportunity to correct them. This will be done verbally at first, and, if not corrected within thirty (30) days, with written warning that his or her employment will be terminated in thirty (30) days if the deficiencies are not corrected. The notice will be provided by the employee’s immediate Supervisor. All notices of unsatisfactory performance will be made by the Minister acting as Chief Administrative Officer.

If the deficiencies are not corrected, the employee will be dismissed by the Minister acting as Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Board.

Dismissal in instances of serious misconduct, may be immediate and without notice. However, the decision to dismiss shall be made by the Minister acting as Chief Administrative Officer, after conferring with the employee and then in consultation with the President.

If an employee is dismissed for reasons of layoff, every attempt will be made to give sufficient notice.