

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF HILLSBOROUGH

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

As Approved by the Committee of the Whole, June 4, 2017

I. IDENTITY, MISSION & COVENANT

Adopted by the Committee of the Whole by consensus, 12/11/2011

Identity: We are a welcoming community of diverse, open-minded individuals seeking spiritual expression, exploration, and ethical growth. We provide a nurturing home in which to work for trust, understanding, social justice, and universal peace. As Unitarian Universalists, we are bound not by creed, but by covenant. The heart of covenant is the commitment to a way of being rather than to a statement of belief.

Mission: Our mission is to: Partner with the earth, Embrace justice, Advance freedom of thought, Connect in love and Enrich our spirits

Covenant – In order to live into our mission, we, the members of UUCH, covenant to:

- Partner with the earth by adopting lifestyles that support and sustain the web of life. We will help preserve our environment by re-using, recycling, repairing, and restoring its precious and limited resources, and by reducing our use of these resources.

- Embrace justice through service, education, witness, advocacy, and community organizing. We will commit to a congregation-wide service project each year that addresses an issue of social/cultural justice in our community.

- Advance freedom of thought by building a religious community that supports each individual's search for truth and meaning. We will find ways to connect with those who might benefit from our message and community and invite them to join us in celebration.

- Connect in love by accepting and supporting one another with open minds and open hearts, caring for and respecting each other, sharing our sorrows and celebrating the joys of life together, and working together in cooperation and harmony. We will create a welcoming and diverse community, open to all people without regard to ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, political persuasion, age, disability, or religious belief. We will embrace our Congregation's Covenant of Right Relations.

- Enrich our spirits by making participation in communal worship a high priority in our lives. We will grow spiritually through practices and activities that lead to spiritual maturity, exemplified by greater generosity, compassion, courage, gratitude, and humility.

This covenant is based upon the mission of this Congregation, and requires making promises and taking responsibility. We covenant with humility, knowing that we are promise-breakers as well as promise-makers

and promise-keepers. We recognize and affirm the need for a community of accountability that will call forth the best in us. We recognize that accountability includes the support of our Congregation by sharing our time and energy, our creativity and imagination, our talents and skills, and our financial resources.

II. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

- A. The Congregation shall maintain membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors).
- B. It is the intention of the Congregation to make annual financial contributions to the UUA and to the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) in an amount at least equal to the Congregation's annual G.I.F.T. contribution as determined by the UUA and the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors).
- C. The Congregation may affiliate with, or become a member of such other religious or non-partisan organizations as described in Section X, Paragraph D.

III. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in the Congregation shall not be conditioned upon adherence to any particular religious creed or statement of belief.
- B. Membership in, and participation in all activities of the Congregation shall be open to all persons without regard to ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, political persuasion, disability, or religious belief.
- C. Membership in the Congregation implies sympathy with the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the mission and covenant of the congregation, and the Congregation's **Covenant of Right Relations**. A member who covenants to support the Congregation personally and financially within their means may become a member of the Congregation by signing the membership book.
- D. Any member may resign from membership at any time by giving written notification of their withdrawal from membership. Membership may be revoked only through the process outlined in the **Guidelines Regarding Inappropriate Conduct** or the **Membership Policy**.

IV. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- A. All meetings will be conducted in a manner which (1) allows full, open, and free discussion of issues, (2) seeks consensus on all actions and decisions, (3) respects the rights of each member to free expression and freedom of conscience, and (4) promotes the timely disposition of business.
- B. Believing that the process of consensus will result in the best possible decisions for our Congregation, all decisions and actions of the Committee of the Whole, the Governance Council, and all Congregational committees will be made by consensus, outlined in the **Consensus Policy**.

V. THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- A. All active members of the Congregation are members of the Congregation's Committee of the Whole. Friends who contribute or participate in the activities of the Congregation may attend and speak at meetings of the Committee of the Whole but may not participate in the consensus decision. Final authority with respect to the governance of the Congregation, the conduct of the Congregation's business, and the administration of the Congregation's affairs is vested in the active membership of the Congregation acting through the Committee of the Whole.
- B. Decisions and actions by the Committee of the Whole are binding on the Governance Council, the Minister, Congregational committees, affiliated organizations, members of the Congregation, and employees.
- C. The Committee of the Whole retains, and may not delegate to the Governance Council or to any Congregational committee or team, the authority and responsibility to (1) ordain ministers, (2) call a minister to serve the Congregation, (3) dismiss the minister, (4) approve contracts and other matters related to the purchase, sale, or mortgage of real property, (5) approve contracts and agreements relating to the purchase or sale of personal property, equipment, or services in an amount in excess of \$10,000, (6) borrow money in an amount in excess of \$10,000 or for any period in excess of one year, (7) accept restricted donations or gifts of property in excess of \$10,000, (8) adopt the Congregation's operating budget, (9) approve the appointment or removal of the members of the Governance Council, (10) amend the Congregation's Articles of Association, (11) approve a long-range plan for the Congregation.
- D. The Committee of the Whole retains authority and responsibility or may delegate to the Governance Council or to a Congregational committee or team, the authority and responsibility to (1) hire and dismiss all persons employed by the Congregation (other than the Minister(s)), (2) select delegates to the UUA General Assembly and to the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) annual meeting, (3) determine the manner in which the Congregation's vote for UUA and Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) officers or trustees will be cast, (4) determine how the Congregation's vote on resolutions before the General Assembly or Region annual meeting will be cast, (5) establish Standing Committees.
- E. The Committee of the Whole retains the authority to review any action or decision made by the Governance Council, Minister/s, or by any Congregational committee or team, and to amend or revoke the action or decision made by the Governance Council, the Minister/s, a committee or a team, except to the extent that the action or decision by the Governance Council, the Minister/s, or a committee or a team is final and amendment or revocation of the action or decision by the Committee of the Whole would violate the legal rights of other parties under binding contracts or agreements made on behalf of the Congregation or subject the Congregation to legal liability.

VI. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- A. There will be at least one annual meeting of the Committee of the Whole. The meeting will be held within one month prior to, or within one month after, the beginning of the Congregation's Governance Year (see XII. Church and Fiscal Year). It will include the approval of the budget and the affirmation of Officers and Standing Committee Representatives.

- B. Additional meetings of the Committee of the Whole shall be called by the Governance Council, or by the Moderator within thirty days of a written request by at least three members of the Congregation, to allow consideration of other business by the Committee of the Whole, to enable members of the Congregation to discuss issues affecting the Congregation, to provide information to the members of the Congregation regarding the activities of the Congregation, to discuss or set goals and objectives for the Congregation, or to deal with other matters involving the Congregation, the denomination, or the community.
- C. All members of the Congregation will have at least ten days notice of all meetings of the Committee of the Whole. Notice of the meeting must include the date, time, and place of the meeting, and the proposed agenda for the meeting including specifying which items are decisions and which items are informational.
- D. Items may be placed on the proposed agenda by the Governance Council, or upon written request of any member of the Congregation. At the beginning of each business meeting, the Committee of the Whole will review the proposed agenda and may add or delete items from the proposed agenda. Only those matters on the final agenda may be discussed or acted upon.
- E. All active members and friends of the Congregation are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings of the Committee of the Whole whenever possible. A quorum for meetings of the Committee of the Whole shall consist of at least 20% of the active members of the Congregation.

VII. THE GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

- A. The Governance Council shall consist of the Moderator, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Minister, and the Representatives of Stewardship & Leadership. All members of the Governance Council must be active members of the Congregation, will be appointed for a three year term, and may be reappointed for an additional 3 year term. In the event that an officer-elect is appointed during the final year of an officer's term, that year will serve as the first year of the new officer's term. All officers and officers-elect will be appointed by the Committee of the Whole.
- B. The Governance Council shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities: compile an annual report to the Committee of the Whole, develop annual vision statements, prepare a long-range plan for approval by the Committee of the Whole, establish policies consistent with and in furtherance of the purposes of the Congregation (contained in the **UUCH Governance Policy Book** which holds the policies, procedures, guidelines and operative details of UUCH). and exercise additional powers and duties delegated to the Governance Council by the Committee of the Whole.
- C. The Committee of the Whole grants the Governance Council the power to affiliate the Congregation with Community Partnerships (CPs) and to set contribution levels with those organizations, commit the Congregation to positions on public or political questions, and provide oversight of the Congregation's resources through regular monitoring and evaluation as defined in the UUCH Policy Book.

VIII. OFFICERS

A. The officers of the Congregation are the Moderator, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. In the event of the resignation, death, or removal of an Officer during their term, the Governance Council shall appoint a member of the Congregation to serve as Acting Officer until such time as the Committee of the Whole can act to fill the vacancy.

B. The Moderator

1. The Moderator is responsible for presiding at all meetings of the Committee of the Whole and at all meetings of the Governance Council. If the Moderator is unable to preside at a meeting, the Governance Council shall designate another member of the Congregation to serve as Acting Moderator at the meeting.

2. In presiding at Congregational meetings and meetings of the Governance Council, the Moderator is responsible for ensuring that the rules of procedure are followed, for conducting the meeting in an open, fair, and timely manner, and for assisting the Committee of the Whole and Governance Council to reach consensus.

3. The Moderator is responsible, at the direction of the Governance Council or the Committee of the Whole, for executing all agreements, contracts, mortgages, deeds, or other legal documents on behalf of the Congregation and carrying out such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Governance Council or the Committee of the Whole.

C. The Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for taking, keeping, and distributing accurate minutes of the Governance Council meetings and carrying out such other duties as may be assigned by the Governance Council or the Congregation.

D. The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible to ensure the following: (1) keeping accurate financial records of all income and expenditures by the Congregation, (2) preparing periodic statements for individual contributors, (3) making regular financial reports to the Finance Committee and the Governance Council, (4) reconciling bank statements with the Congregation's financial records, (5) collecting, maintaining, and disbursing all funds belonging to the Congregation and (6) performing such other responsibilities as required by the Finance Committee, the Governance Council, or the Committee of the Whole. The Treasurer also serves as the representative of the Finance Committee to the Governance Council.

IX. MINISTRY COUNCIL

A. The Ministry Council will consist of the Minister and team leads of each ministry team. There are no term limits for Ministry Council members.

- B. The Governance Council delegates its authority to manage the work and resources of the Congregation, except as limited by the policies outlined in the **UUCH Governance Policy Book**, to the Minister as head of the ministry teams. In the absence of the Minister, the Moderator is the responsible party.
- C. The team concept is flexible, in that new teams may be added and existing teams reorganized at the discretion of the Minister. Each ministry team will have a Charter detailing the responsibilities and duties of that team, which can be found in the **UUCH Governance Policy Book**.

X. COMMITTEES, TEAMS, TASK FORCES AND AFFILIATED GROUPS

A. Standing Committees.

1. The Congregation shall have at least three Standing Committees: (1) Stewardship (2) Finance, (3) Leadership. Additional Standing Committees may be established by the Committee of the Whole or by the Governance Council (if authorized by the Committee of the Whole).
2. Each Standing Committee shall consist of at least three members or friends of the Congregation. Any member or friend of the Congregation who expresses a willingness to participate in the work of a Standing Committee may become a member of any Standing Committee.
3. Each Standing Committee is responsible for appointing one member of the committee as its representative to the Governance Council, appointing one of its members as a chair who will be responsible for convening the committee (this person may also serve as Governance Council representative), maintaining a list of its members, recruiting Committee members, recruiting volunteers to assist in the work and activities of the Committee, administering the Committee's budget subject to the supervision and direction of the Committee of the Whole and the Governance Council, establishing an annual work plan or goals for the Committee, making an annual report to the Governance Council, carrying out the duties and responsibilities included in the Committee's approved job description, and carrying out other responsibilities and duties assigned to the Committee by the Governance Council or the Committee of the Whole.

B. Ministry Teams

The Ministry Council, led by the Minister, will consist of ministry teams who carry out the administration and actions of the congregation's ministry as determined by the Governance Council. These teams will be responsible for the duties and tasks in the following areas: membership development, faith development, worship, pastoral care, fellowship, communications, and social justice. Team leadership and organization are determined by the Minister and may consist of both volunteers and paid staff.

C. Task Forces.

The Committee of the Whole, the Governance Council, or the Ministry Council may establish working groups to accomplish specific, time-limited goals. Each task force will report their results

directly to the body that has established the task force. The body establishing the task force will specify (1) how the membership of the committee will be determined, (2) how long the task force will function, and (3) the duties and responsibilities of the task force.

D. Affiliated Interest Groups (AIGs).

Voluntary organizations whose membership includes a significant number of members and friends of the Congregation and whose purposes are consistent with the purpose of the Congregation may be recognized by the Governance Council as AIGs. Affiliated groups may use the facilities of the Congregation and may receive financial support from the Congregation. The Congregation may not, however, assume any legal liability or financial responsibility for an affiliated group without the approval of the Committee of the Whole and may not interfere with the internal functioning or programs of affiliated groups.

E. Community Partnerships (CPs)

Our community partnerships increase the visibility of UUCH as we align our resources with organizations that promote our Unitarian Universalist Principles and our Congregation's mission. Non-partisan groups or events which organize for social change and/or expand services that address significant human needs in our community may be recognized by the Governance Council. CPs may use the facilities of the Congregation and may receive financial support from the Congregation. The Congregation may not, however, assume any legal liability or financial responsibility for a CP without the approval of the Committee of the Whole and may not interfere with the internal functioning or programs of CPs.

XI. THE MINISTER

- A. The Committee of the Whole may call an ordained minister to serve the Congregation as its Minister upon the recommendation of a Search Committee consisting of at least five members appointed by the Committee of the Whole.
- B. The Minister has the right and duty to freely express and act upon their personal, political, and religious beliefs, convictions, and opinions, both in the pulpit, within the Congregation, within the denomination, and in the community. It is understood that the Minister's views may not reflect the views of the Congregation as a whole or the views of any member of the Congregation and that the Committee of the Whole, the Governance Council, other Congregational committees, and members of the Congregation are free to agree or disagree with the views expressed by the Minister.
- C. The duties and responsibilities of the Minister will be specified in the contract or agreement entered into between the Minister and the Congregation and approved by the Committee of the Whole.
- D. The Governance Council shall establish procedures for the evaluation of the work of the Minister and review of the terms of the agreement or contract between the Minister and the Congregation on a tri-annual basis.

XII. CHURCH AND FISCAL YEARS

- A. The Congregation's Church and Fiscal Year shall be from July 1 through June 30.

XIII. DISSOLUTION

- A. In the event that the Congregation is dissolved or ceases to exist, all property of the Congregation, after the payment of just debts owed by the Congregation, shall vest in and become the property of the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) (to be used for the extension of liberal religion within the Region) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, in equal shares.

XIV. ADOPTION

- A. These Articles of Association shall become effective upon approval of the Committee of the Whole.