

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
OF HILLSBOROUGH
ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

As Approved by the Committee of the Whole August 4, 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

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.

Our Mission is why we exist and our Vision is how we actualize our Mission. Both are updated periodically and are written in the UUCH Governance Policy Book, which contains the policies, procedures, guidelines and operative details of the Congregation.

Covenants are agreements for how we treat each other and are outlined and defined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

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 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 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. Membership implies an active commitment to the mission and covenants of the Congregation. Members agree to actively and financially support the Congregation (within their means).

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** and the **Membership Policy**, available in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

IV. DECISION-MAKING

1. Process

A. All meetings will be conducted in a manner which (1) allows full, open, and free discussion of issues, (2) respects the rights of each member to free expression and freedom of conscience, (3) promotes the timely disposition of business and, (4) seeks consensus on all actions and decisions.

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, the Ministry Council and all Congregational Committees, Teams and Task Forces will be made by consensus, outlined in the **Consensus Policy**, available in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

2. Structure

Decisions of the Congregation are delegated to three main bodies:

1. The Committee of the Whole (COW)
2. The Governance Council (GovCo)
3. The Ministry Council (MinCo)

V. THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- A. The active Members of the Congregation comprise the Committee of the Whole (COW).
- B. Decisions and actions by the Committee of the Whole are binding on the Governance Council; the Ministry Council; the Minister; Congregational Committees, Teams, and Task Forces; Affiliated Interest Groups, Community Partners, and the Congregation, Members, staff and employees.
- C. The Committee of the Whole affirms the Mission and the Vision of the Congregation. The Strategic Plan is a subset of the Vision. The Committee of the Whole affirms the selection of the Governance Council members and entrusts them with the Governance of the Congregation. The Committee of the Whole affirms the call of the Minister and entrusts them with the Ministry of the Congregation.
- D. The spiritual responsibility of the Committee of the Whole may not be delegated to the Governance Council or to any Congregational Committee or Team. The spiritual responsibilities of the COW are to (1) ordain Ministers, (2) call a Minister to serve the Congregation, (3) dismiss a Minister.
- E. The financial responsibility of the Committee of the Whole may not be delegated to the Governance Council or to any Congregational Committee or Team. The financial responsibilities of the COW are (1) approve contracts and other matters related to the purchase, sale, or mortgage of real property, (2) approve contracts and agreements relating to the purchase or sale of property, equipment, or services in an amount in excess of \$10,000, (3) borrow money in any amount in excess of \$10,000 or for any period in excess of one year, (4) accept restricted donations or gifts of property in excess of \$10,000, (5) adopt the Congregation's operating budget.
- F. The governance responsibility of the Committee of the Whole may not be delegated to the Governance Council or to any Congregational Committee or Team. The governance responsibilities of the COW are (1) amend the Congregation's Articles of Association, (2) affirm the members of the GovCo, (3) affirm the Mission, Vision, and the Strategic Plan for the Congregation.
- G. The Committee of the Whole has the authority to hold its leaders accountable. The Committee of the Whole has the authority to call for a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole if 10 percent of the members in good standing request a meeting and present an agenda. Guidelines for notification must be followed. This includes calling for a special election of the Governance Council.
- H. The Committee of the Whole delegates to the Governance Council (1) the selection of delegates to the UUA General Assembly and to the annual meeting of the Southern Region of the UUA (or their

successors), (2) the determination of the Congregation's votes, for UUA and the Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) Officers or trustees, (3) the determination of how the Congregation's votes on resolutions before the General Assembly or Southern Region of the UUA (or their successors) annual meeting.

VI. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

A. There will be at least one annual meeting of the Committee of the Whole. The required 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 other members of the GovCo.

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 10 percent of the 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 to be made 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 percent of the active Members of the Congregation.

VII. THE GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

A. The Governance Council shall include at least seven members, including the three Officers (Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer) and the Minister (or a representative of the Ministry Council in the absence of a Minister). The remaining members may be chosen at-large or may represent the Ministry Council and/or the Committees. Officer terms will be for three years, and can be extended only once by the Committee of the Whole for another term of three years. Other members who have been nominated by Leadership Committee for a one year term and affirmed by the COW may serve for no more than five consecutive terms. All members of the Governance Council must be active Members of the Congregation. The responsibilities and Charter of the Governance Council are described in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

B. In the event of a perceived violation of the Covenant of the Right Relations resulting in a complaint against a GovCo member, their participation in GovCo matters will be suspended until an investigation is completed in accordance with the Guidelines Regarding Inappropriate Conduct. At that time, appropriate action (including possible removal) will be taken as outlined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book. In the event of the resignation, death, or removal of a member of the GovCo during the member's term, the Governance Council shall appoint a member of the Congregation to serve as an acting GovCo member until such time as the Committee of the Whole can act to fill the vacancy.

C. The Governance Council shall exercise the following duties and responsibilities: compile an annual report to the Committee of the Whole, prepare a Strategic Plan for approval by the Committee of the Whole, establish policies consistent with and in furtherance of the purposes of the Congregation and exercise additional powers and duties delegated to the Governance Council by the Committee of the Whole.

D. The Governance Council will maintain a working and current set of policies to govern the Congregation and support the foundational structure of the Articles of Association.

E. The policies are written and approved by the Governance Council and are binding for the Ministry Council, all Committees, Teams, Task Forces, the Minister, and staff.

F. The Committee of the Whole grants the Governance Council the power to affiliate the Congregation with Community Partners (CPs) and to set contribution levels with those organizations, commit the Congregation to positions on public needs or political questions, and provide oversight of the Congregation's resources through regular monitoring and evaluation as defined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

VIII. Officers

A. 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 for 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 can also serve as the representative of the Finance Committee to the Governance Council.

IX. THE MINISTRY COUNCIL

A. The Ministry Council will consist of the Minister and Team Leads of each Ministry Team. The responsibilities and Charter of the Ministry Council are described in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

B. The Governance Council delegates the management of the Congregational resources to fulfill the Mission and Vision as outlined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book to the Minister as head of staff and to the Ministry Teams. In the absence of the Minister, the Ministry Council is the responsible party as outlined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

C. The Ministry 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. Committees

1. The Congregation shall have at least three Committees: (1) Stewardship, (2) Finance, (3) Leadership. Additional Committees may be established by the Committee of the Whole or by the Governance Council by following the policies for establishing a Charter and choosing leadership.

2. Each Committee shall consist of at least three Members of the Congregation. Committee leadership, membership, and participation are outlined in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

B. Ministry Teams

The Ministry Council, led by the Minister (if one is called) will consist of Ministry Teams who carry out the management of the Congregation's Ministry as determined by the Congregation's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan. These Teams will be responsible for the duties and tasks that ensure the ethical foundation, the spiritual development, and the material well-being of the Congregation. The responsibilities and Charter of the Ministry Council are included in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

C. Task Forces

The Committee of the Whole, the Governance Council, or the Ministry Council may establish working groups called Task Forces to accomplish specific, time-limited goals. Each Task Force will report their results directly to the body that established the Task Force. Policies for creating and managing a Task Force are included in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

D. Affiliated Interest Groups

Voluntary organizations whose membership includes three or more members of the Congregation and whose purposes are consistent with the Mission of the Congregation may be recognized by the Governance Council as Affiliated Interest Groups. Terms of the Affiliated Interest Groups use of the building and association with the Congregation are included in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

E. Community Partners (CPs)

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 as Community Partners. Terms of the Community Partners use of the building and association with the Congregation are included in the UUCH Governance Policy Book.

XI. THE MINISTER

A. The Committee of the Whole may call an ordained Minister to serve the Congregation as its Minister. A Search Committee consisting of at least five Members will be formed by the Leadership Committee and affirmed by the Committee of the Whole.

B. Once called, in accordance with Unitarian Universalist values and beliefs, 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.

C. The duties and responsibilities of the Minister will be specified in the contract (also known as the Letter of Call) 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 the terms of the agreement or contract between the Minister and the Congregation at least every three years.

XII. CHURCH AND FISCAL YEARS

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

B. It is the intention of the Congregation to contribute every fiscal year to community action and social justice organizations, activities and events. This amount represents at least 5% of the current fiscal year's pledges.

XIII DISSOLUTION

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

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