

Bylaws of The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley as approved Oct. 11, 2009

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this religious society shall be **The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley**, hereinafter referred to as **UUCLV**.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the UUCLV shall be to:

- A. Form a community of mutual concerns serving the needs of its members;
- B. Provide opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment;
- C. Affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality;
- D. Contribute to the vision of a world community founded on values of tolerance, justice and peace;
- E. Celebrate life by worshiping together as a religious community;
- F. Promote and provide religious instruction for all in our community, children and adults alike.

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Any person fourteen (14) years of age or older may become a member by signing in the presence of the Minister, a member of the Board of Trustees, or other member designated by the Board, the following declaration in the membership book:

"We the undersigned, being in sympathy with the spirit and the goals of the UUCLV, as expressed in Article 2, and with the Mission Statement and Covenant of the UUCLV and the UUA's Principles, hereby subscribe our names as members."

An applicant should attend New UU classes or consult with the Minister about the heritage of Unitarian Universalism, its principles, and the responsibilities of commitment to the Church as a prerequisite for signing the book.

3.2 There shall be two categories of members:

3.2.1 Members are those who have signed the membership book. Members shall indicate their continued interest by attendance, participation in Church activities, financial support, or other responsible contributions. The Board of Trustees may designate a member as a **Member Emeritus** in accordance with Section 3.6 of this article.

3.2.2 Associate Members are those who have signed the membership book and wish to continue a nominal affiliation with the Church, but are not actively participating in church activities.

3.2.3 For the purpose of reporting membership rolls to the **Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations**, hereinafter referred to as the **UUA**, only members, including members emeriti, shall be counted.

3.3 Only members shall have voting privileges.

3.4 The Membership Committee shall inform members who have not met the criteria of membership listed in Section 3.2.1 above for two consecutive years that they will be recommended for associate membership unless they indicate that they wish to remain members or be dropped from the membership roll. The Committee may then recommend removal from membership or associate membership of those who left the area or who have made known that they are no longer interested in membership in the Church. Upon approval of change by the Board, the Membership Committee shall make a reasonable effort to notify each person involved of change in membership status.

3.5 Members of the Church may voluntarily withdraw by indicating to the Membership Committee, the Minister, or the Board of Trustees, verbally or in writing, intent to withdraw from the Congregation.

3.6 The Board of Trustees, upon its own initiative or a recommendation from any member, may designate a member as a member emeritus, in recognition of the designee's exceptionally distinguished service to the Church. Members emeriti shall have the same status and privileges as other members, including the right to vote, except that members emeriti shall not be required to indicate their continued interest by attendance, participation in Church activities, financial support or other responsible contributions.

ARTICLE 4. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

The UUCLV recognizes and affirms the statement of Principles and Purposes prepared by the UUA and shall comply with such requirements as may be necessary to retain full membership and participation in the UUA.

ARTICLE 5. MEETINGS

5.1 Annual Meeting. A Congregational meeting of the Church shall be held near the end of each fiscal year to elect trustees and other church leaders, to discuss and adopt the budget, to receive reports of all committees and activities of the Church, and to consider other business that may legally come before it. The Board of Trustees shall present to the membership at the Annual Meeting a full report of its activities and proceedings during the previous fiscal year.

5.2 Special Meeting. A Special Meeting of the Church shall be held on the call of the President or two or more members of the Board of Trustees, or upon written petition of ten members of the Church to the Clerk or the President. The Clerk or President shall notify the Board of Trustees immediately of any Special Meetings. Business at a Special Meeting shall be limited to the matter or matters for which the meeting was called.

5.3 Meeting Notice. The Clerk shall notify the membership of the meeting and the business to be transacted in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to said meeting. Publication in the Church newsletter may be considered notification. When possible, meetings shall be announced from the pulpit on the two Sundays preceding the date which has been set.

5.4 Quorum and Voting.

5.4.1 Fifteen (15) percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum to conduct business at the Annual Meeting or at any Special Meeting other than one to call a Minister, amend the Bylaws, or acquire/dispose of/finance the purchase of property, except that members under the age of eighteen (18) shall not be included in a quorum.

5.4.2 Consideration of the acquisition/disposition/financing of Church property may occur at the annual meeting or at any special meeting provided there is a quorum of forty (40) percent of the membership of age eighteen (18) or older. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting is required to approve the acquisition/disposition/financing of Church property. Amending the bylaws at an annual or special meeting requires a quorum of twenty-five (25) percent of the members regardless of age.

5.4.3 A majority vote of the members present and voting shall be required to approve resolutions at the Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting other than those specified elsewhere in these Bylaws. Meetings attended by a lesser number than specified in the bylaws shall be adjourned to another time and date. Only members present at a meeting may vote.

5.5 The most recent edition of "Robert's Rules of Order" is hereby adopted as the parliamentary authority of the Church, except as otherwise provided by these bylaws.

5.6 Church facilities may be used for worship, for activities of organizations of the Church, and for the conduct of weddings, services of union, services of infant dedication, and funerals and memorial services in the charge of the Minister. All other meetings in the public rooms of the Church building must be approved by the Board of Trustees, which may delegate its supervisory authority to the Minister or another individual.

ARTICLE 6. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from July 1 to June 30.

ARTICLE 7. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

7.1 Duties and Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees shall constitute the governing body of the Church. The Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Congregation, shall have general charge of the property of the Church, the conduct of its business affairs and the control of the administration of the Church, consistent with these bylaws.

The Board shall establish such policies and appoint such persons and committees as necessary to implement the decisions and policies of the membership. The Board shall have responsibility for the Personnel Committee, which oversees employee policies and relations for the employed staff other than the Minister. Members of the Board shall be a liaison to one or more of the Church committees and shall report to the Board on the activity of those committees.

7.2 Board Membership. The Board of Trustees shall be members of the Church who are at least eighteen years of age and shall consist of (a) the Officers of the Church except that, with the approval of the Nominating Committee, the Treasurer may serve as a non-Board member with no right to vote. In such event, the Nominating Committee shall select an additional At-Large Board member to fill the Board position; (b) five members At-Large representing the Congregation. The Minister and the Director of Religious Education are non-voting members of the Board.

7.3 Term of Office. The members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the members of the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for a term of two years, and shall assume their duties immediately after the Annual Meeting, except that the treasurer shall take office at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Officers and Board members may not serve more than two consecutive full terms in the same office, or for more than four consecutive full terms on the Board. The President, Vice-President and three At-Large Trustees shall be elected in odd-numbered years; the Clerk, Treasurer, and the additional At-Large Trustees shall be elected in even-numbered years.

7.4 Meetings. The Board of Trustees shall meet monthly or on call of the President or two or more members of the Board. A simple majority of voting Trustees shall constitute a quorum. Board meetings are open to all members of the Church except for closed sessions to discuss personnel or contract matters.

7.5 Vacancies. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by the vote of the Board for the remainder of the term. Any member of the Board may resign from the Board upon written notice to the Clerk. The Board of Trustees may remove one of its members for cause by two-thirds vote of the Board.

7.6 Liabilities. A member of the Board of Trustees shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action if he/she acts or performs his/her duties in good faith under the standard of care and justifiable reliance as set forth in the appropriate Pennsylvania laws pertaining to liability of Officers, Directors or Trustees of non-profit organizations.

ARTICLE 8. OFFICERS

8.1 President. The President of the Church shall be the Chair of the Board of Trustees and shall preside at all meetings of the Board and of the Congregation. He/she shall be a member of all committees except the Nominating Committee and the Committee on Ministry, but without voting rights.

8.2 Vice-President. The Vice-President shall act in the place of the President whenever the President is absent. The Vice-President shall Chair the Program Council and shall report to the Board on its activities. He/she may be asked by the President of the Church to perform other duties in keeping with the office of the Vice-President of the Church.

8.3 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive and safely keep all monies and other assets of the Church entrusted to his/her care and shall disburse the same under the direction and to the satisfaction of the Board. The Treasurer shall keep a complete accounting of all finances, the record of which is the property of the Church and which shall be open for inspection at any time by the Board and for at least annual independent financial review. Church funds shall be deposited only in banks or financial institutions selected and approved for the purpose by the Board.

The treasurer shall present a current statement at each regular meeting of the Board and of the Congregation and shall issue annually to the Congregation a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year. The Treasurer shall be a voting member of the Finance Committee and shall report to the Board on the activities of the Finance Committee. With the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer may appoint an Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded.

8.4 Clerk. The Clerk of the Church shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and transactions of the Board and of the Congregation. The Clerk shall notify members of all Congregational meetings and shall perform such other secretarial duties as may be requested by the President of the Church. All records kept by the Clerk shall remain the property of the Church.

ARTICLE 9. COMMITTEES

9.1 Definitions.

9.1.1 Standing Committees, hereinafter referred to as **Committees**, are established to help further and enhance the programs and activities of the Church. The committees shall be fully empowered to carry out their designated activities. The committees are permanently established bodies which have broad areas of responsibility and perform basic functions important in the life of the Church. The committees are defined in later sections of this Article.

9.1.2 Subcommittees are ongoing bodies which perform specific tasks in designated areas of responsibility of their parent committee. Committees may create, dissolve, or merge their subcommittees as they see fit, including those defined in later sections of this Article, with the exception of the Endowment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee.

9.1.3 Task Groups, sometimes known as ad hoc committees, may be formed as needed by the committees within the responsibilities of the committee. The Board of Trustees may appoint task groups for activities not covered by the charters of the committees. Task groups shall expire not later than one year after their creation unless specifically renewed by the authorizing group.

9.2 Committee Chairs. The Chairs of each committee defined in these articles, except for the Nominating and the Personnel Committees and the Committee on Ministry, shall be elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting from a slate prepared by the Nominating Committee; the term of office shall be one year, beginning immediately after the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee may nominate a pair of people to be Co-Chairs of a committee, jointly sharing the responsibilities of Chairperson.

Committee Chairpersons may, if invited by the Nominating Committee, succeed themselves in the position. Each committee, unless it has a Co-Chair, shall select a Vice-Chair to act in the absence of the Chair.

9.3 Program Council. The Program Council shall be a body whose charter is to promote program coordination, cooperation and communication between the committees and the Congregation. Members of the Council shall consist of (a) the Vice-President of the Church as Chair; (b) the Chairs (or their delegates) of each committee as defined in these articles, or any as may be organized in the future; and (c) Church professional staff who shall be non-voting members. All members of the Congregation are invited to participate in Program Council activities. The council shall meet at least three times a year or upon the call of the Chair or any three Program Council members.

9.4 The Church Planning Committee shall be responsible for the assessment of goals of the Church and for proposing programs to achieve these goals. The Committee shall present its findings and recommendations to the Board as required and to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

9.5 The Committee on Ministry shall be responsible for establishing and strengthening the quality of ministry within the Congregation. The committee shall function as a vision and oversight group with focus on all aspects of the congregation's ministry, including, but not limited to, professional leadership, religious education, worship, social justice, pastoral care, and church family. This committee shall be comprised of six members of the Church appointed to three-year staggered terms by the Board from a list formulated jointly by the Board and the Minister.

9.6 The Finance Committee, with the assistance of the Treasurer, shall keep informed about, and shall advise the Board and Congregation on all financial matters of the Church. It shall prepare the annual budget and coordinate the raising of funds other than stewardship activities. It shall be responsible for arranging the independent financial reviews of the books of the Church, one of which is to be completed within ninety (90) days of the close of the fiscal year.

9.6.1 The Building Use Committee shall be a subcommittee of the Finance Committee. It shall advise the Finance Committee on rental rates, requirements that renters must meet, and propose standard rental agreement forms.

9.6.2 The Heritage Society Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Finance Committee. It shall administer and manage the Endowment Fund in accordance with the Policies and Guidelines of the Finance Committee.

9.7 The Stewardship Committee shall conduct the annual campaign for financial, time, and talent resources and report such results to the Board and the Congregation. It shall conduct ongoing stewardship throughout the year.

9.8 The Membership Committee shall be responsible for the integration of members into our church community. It shall arrange to welcome visitors, inform new members about the activities of the Church, and prepare, distribute and maintain an up-to-date directory of members. It shall keep the Minister, appropriate committees and the Board informed of any individuals seeking to become a more active part of the Church. The Membership Committee shall review and update annually the membership record and submit a report of changes to the Clerk of the Church at least two weeks prior to any congregational meeting. This report should also indicate which of those members are less than eighteen years of age. The activities overseen by this committee include, but are not limited to, hospitality and social activities.

9.9 The Communications Committee shall promote the activities and programs of the church by internal and external communication, including the church web site. It shall be responsible for publications. External communications activities include, but are not limited to, advertising and publicity.

9.10 The Youth Religious Education Committee shall plan, staff and conduct the educational activities for children and adults and shall initiate such programs as will further the educational aims that the Church promotes.

9.10.1 The Adult Education Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Youth Religious Education Committee and shall develop and conduct religious education programming for the adult members of the Congregation.

9.11 The Property Committee shall keep the Board and the Congregation apprised of any property needs and concerns, including the care and maintenance of the buildings, furnishings, equipment and grounds of the Church. It shall, along with the church staff, determine which projects can be done by church volunteers, staff, or outside services. It shall organize property related volunteer activities.

9.12 The Worship Committee shall assist the Minister in planning and supervising our worship experience and shall provide for programs in the absence of the Minister.

9.13 The Music Committee shall be responsible for the music which complements and enhances Sunday worship services and other Church occasions/events by hiring, coordinating and/or enlisting instrumental or vocal musicians as needed.

9.14 The Social Action Committee shall have as its goal to put all seven Unitarian Universalist principles into action in the Congregation, the community and the world. In this pursuit it will be open to meet new needs as they arise and to encourage new talents and enthusiasms whenever they manifest. At the same time, it will maintain continuity and dependability with ongoing service projects. Through close communication, it will offer to all members of the Congregation opportunities to live their principles together.

9.15 The Nominating Committee shall prepare and present to the membership, at the Annual Meeting, a slate of candidates for the expiring positions on the Board of Trustees, the Chairs of various committees and the Nominating Committee. This committee shall actively seek individuals for inclusion on the slate of candidates from those members who have demonstrated interest and participated in the life of the Church. The Nominating Committee shall also actively seek, on an on-going basis, individuals for the membership of various Church committees.

This committee shall consist of five members of the church serving staggered three-year terms. A vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled until the next Annual Meeting by vote of the remaining members of the committee.

9.16 The Church Family Committee shall be responsible for assisting in the caring, pastoral ministry of the Church.

9.17 The Denominational Affairs Committee shall have the responsibility to: (a) inform the members and friends of the UUCLV mission and structure of the denomination; and (b) provide the members and friends of the UUCLV the opportunity to participate in the programs and events of the UUA and its affiliated organizations.

9.18 The Personnel Committee shall provide equitable policy recommendations to the Board in matters of employee relations and to act as liaison between the Congregation, the Board and employed staff, except that it shall have no responsibility with respect to the Minister. It shall consist of five Church members appointed by the Board for staggered terms of three years, plus, as non-voting members, one trustee appointed for a one year term and the minister. It shall choose its own Chair.

9.19 The Social Activities Committee shall be responsible for developing and initiating social activities to further the sense of fellowship within the Church.

ARTICLE 10. THE MINISTER

10.1 The Search Process. A Ministerial Search Committee shall be elected by the Congregation from a slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee. This Committee shall function in accordance with the procedures suggested by the Department of Ministry of the UUA. Any person recommended to the Congregation to be Minister shall be a member in the Fellowship of said UUA.

10.2 Calling or Dismissing a Minister. The Minister shall be called upon the recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a Special Meeting called for that purpose. The quorum for such Special Meeting to call or dismiss a Minister shall be forty percent (40) of the membership.

10.3 Tenure. The Minister shall be tenured upon his or her acceptance of the terms as voted by the membership. In the event of resignation or dismissal, the Minister shall continue his/her duties for ninety (90) days after written notice is received by the President or after a membership decision for dismissal, unless mutually agreed otherwise.

10.4 Duties of the Minister. The Minister shall have the primary responsibility for overseeing the conduct of worship within the Church and the Church's spiritual interests and affairs. He/she shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express his or her opinion outside the pulpit. The Minister shall be a non-voting member of such committees as the Board may designate and shall, as principal administrative officer, carry out the policies established by the Board and the Congregation.

ARTICLE 11. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

If the Church should, at any time, cease to be a member of the UUA, all of the property of the Church, whether real or personal, shall be transferred to the UUA on the understanding that the said property shall be used by the UUA for its general purposes. This bylaw shall apply to all property donated to the Church whether by will or by some other manner, unless the donor expressly provides otherwise.

ARTICLE 12. AMENDMENTS

Amendments may be proposed by the Board of Trustees or by petition of ten members of the Church. These bylaws may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

ARTICLE 13. ENDOWMENT FUND

Annual income from the Endowment Fund may be used for church needs. Membership approval shall be required to access the principal (or corpus) of the Fund. Membership approval shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

As amended at a special congregational meeting, Oct 11, 2009. Previously amended: Nov 2, 2008, June 26, 2005 and June 2003