



Unitarian Universalist
Church
of the
Lehigh Valley

Guidelines For UUCLV Committees

Smile. The work you do is for our “beloved community.”

Our community is what we make it. And most of what we do is done by members and friends working together in committees and groups. Some are authorized in our By-laws, while others are formed on an ad hoc basis to accomplish specific goals. However they are formed, committees can be more effective in achieving their aims if members have a common understanding of expectations and practices. These guidelines, while not exhaustive, are intended to help make our committees more effective and enjoyable for all.

- Committees normally should meet or hold an activity every month.
- Committees should view themselves as a small “community” with a common purpose.
- To foster community, time should be taken each meeting for open discussion of some aspect of church interest or life aside from the committee’s principle interest. (Example, the upcoming monthly focus topics.) This is in addition to an opening “check in” involving personal sharing.
- Committees can serve the church community best if they are inclusive, represent a cross-section of our congregation, and benefit from several perspectives. For most committees, a minimum number of three (3) members will help achieve this. Committees are asked to strive to maintain at least three active members.
- The Congregational Covenant (attached) reflects the promises that we have all made to each other about how we will act in community. This covenant applies when we gather in committee to carry out our work.
- Committees should be encouraged to discuss your goals and the work methods to be used for achieving them. In this regard, some committee may find it useful to agree on a covenant that helps define how the members will work together.
- It is important for each committee to be familiar with the applicable sections of the bylaws, “User’s Guide”, and other sources that describe the committee’s charter and/or responsibilities.
- The chair should facilitate meetings, provide an agenda in advance, ensure adherence to it, and seek to involve everyone in discussion and decision-making.
- Decisions should be made by consensus if possible and otherwise by majority vote.
- Open and close the meeting in a way that strongly signals that “we are beginning” and “we are closing” the meeting. A simple inspirational reading or a chalice lighting can signal that the committee’s time and work are important for the greater good of our church community.
- Select meeting times and places that suit the schedules and needs of the members of your committee. It is not necessary to meet at the church.
- Search for new members to share the work of your committee, throughout the year. Seek assistance, if needed, to obtain names of potential members from Nominating or from our Member/Volunteer Coordinator.
- Ensure the committee’s representation at Program Council, and keep Program Council advised of committee membership.
- Enjoy what you do.

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CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT

In holding our relationships sacred, we the people of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley make promises about how we treat each other as we pursue our religious journey together. In this spirit, we affirm and covenant that –

We welcome and accept all who enter.

- ❖ Greet all warmly
- ❖ Treat our differences as opportunities for greater understanding

We communicate with kindness and respect.

- ❖ Assume all have good intentions
- ❖ Listen with an open mind
- ❖ Honor boundaries
- ❖ Disagree without criticism or judgment

We participate in our church community with generosity and good humor.

- ❖ Freely share our time, talent, treasure and energy
- ❖ Welcome others to join in our activities while honoring their right to decline
- ❖ Honor all levels of service to the church

We work together to resolve conflicts.

- ❖ Give people the benefit of the doubt
- ❖ Stay engaged even in the midst of difficult issues
- ❖ Assume responsibility for our own feelings and actions
- ❖ Be slow to anger and quick to forgive
- ❖ Gently call each other to account for hurtful behavior

We support each other in times of happiness and sorrow.

- ❖ Recognize talents and nurture spiritual and personal growth
- ❖ Be open to accept help and give help when needed
- ❖ Practice gratitude and appreciation
- ❖ Celebrate the joy of being together

Acknowledging that this covenant represents lofty goals toward which we strive, we empower one another to remind us when our actions fall short of our ideals.

Approved June 9, 2013