

Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Blacksburg, VA

# **Policy and Procedures Manual**

**Updated March 2024**

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The Unitarian Universalist Congregation (UUC) is committed to the highest ethical standards as set forth by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). These policies are to be interpreted in that vein.

## **Section I. Organizational Structure**

Administration of the Congregation is carried out by an elected Executive Board (the Board), an elected Board of Trustees (the Trustees), and various committees. Committees are organized into an integrated structure consisting of Committees of the Board, Standing Committees, and Activity Areas, each of which has its own committees and/or task groups.

### **A. Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees composition and responsibilities are detailed in the Bylaws (Article VI-D). The Trustees will submit an end of year report to the Board that will be appended to the Board minutes.

### **B. Executive Board**

Membership and general responsibilities of the Board are given in the Bylaws (Article VI-E). The Board meets monthly to discuss and make decisions regarding matters of Congregation management, operations and policy.

#### **1. Duties and Responsibilities of All Board Members**

1. Attend monthly meetings of the Board. Attendance in person is desired but under extenuating circumstances, the President may approve virtual attendance through available technology. If a Board member misses three regularly scheduled meetings of the Board, the Board, by vote of a majority of the Board members, may ask the individual to resign.
2. Review the previous month's meeting minutes, the current month's financial statements, reports from the Minister, DLFD and Administrator, and meeting agenda prior to the meeting and come prepared to discuss items.
3. Vote on matters presented at Board meetings and vote by email or telephone on specific issues that arise between Board meetings which must be resolved before the following Board meeting.
4. Attend Board member orientation training, the annual Board retreat and workshops relevant to Board responsibilities.
5. Annually review the information in this manual and Bylaws.
6. Facilitate communication between the congregation, committees, and the Board.

7. Provide ongoing support and supervision of Committees of the Board.
8. Help identify and develop the next generation of leadership in conjunction with the Leadership Development Committee.
9. Implement and facilitate strategic planning through existing and ad hoc committees.
10. Approve a proposed annual budget which is sent to the Congregation for final approval and approve the slate of candidates for congregational offices.
11. On occasion, handle specific assignments such as: review and edit Board documents, chair or be a member of ad hoc committees, attend region functions, solicit congregation volunteers for specific tasks, write articles for the newsletter, present findings or give status reports to the Board, etc.
12. Attend a high percentage of congregational events.

## **2. President**

While the position of president is a one-year term elected by the Congregation, it is in fact, a two-year commitment as the individual first serves as President-Elect and then as President. Terms of office are defined in the Bylaws. Duties and responsibilities include:

1. Provide and sustain ongoing leadership and vision for the Board and the Congregation as a whole in coordination with the President-Elect.
2. Chair congregational meetings in accordance with the Bylaws as well as other meetings intended for the entire Congregation.
3. Act as the chief lay spokesperson in dealing with the general public and media.
4. Chair monthly Board meetings.
5. Chair the monthly agenda-setting Executive Committee meeting.
6. See that Board tasks are completed.
7. Respond to expressed concerns of the congregants as they relate to congregation governance.
8. Write or delegate writing of a monthly Board message article for the UUC newsletter.

## **3. President-Elect**

Serves a year as President-Elect, followed by a year as President. Responsibilities include serving as a member of the Board, The Executive Committee, attending monthly agenda-setting Executive Committee meetings, learning and utilizing *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures*, and carrying out special tasks assigned by the President. The President-Elect is a member of the Leadership Development Committee.



#### **4. Treasurer**

The Treasurer is an elected member of the Board serving a two-year term. In addition to being a Board member, the Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the Congregation. As such, this individual is a member of the Finance Committee and the liaison with the bookkeeper. The Treasurer's primary responsibility is, working with the bookkeeper and Finance Committee, to maintain oversight of and ensure control over the Congregation's financial affairs. Specific duties of the Treasurer include:

1. Carefully review accounting files from the bookkeeper every two weeks and adjust in concert with both the bookkeeper and Administrator as necessary.
2. Produce monthly reports on the financial condition of the Congregation, analyze them and report to the Finance Committee and the Board.
3. Annually prepare a draft fiscal year budget in conjunction with the Finance Committee for submission to the Board.
4. Submit to the bookkeeper the approved new budget before the new budget year begins.
5. Sign checks as necessary.
6. Coordinate stock transactions with the broker, bookkeeper and Finance Committee.
7. Review monthly bank and broker statements before sending to the bookkeeper.
8. Submit monthly financial reports to the webmaster.
9. Submit budget reports to committee chairs who request them.
10. Submit the retirement contribution file electronically monthly for employees who are enrolled in the UUA retirement program.
11. Review UUC credit card(s) usage along with the Administrator.

An Assistant Treasurer, whose duties are assigned by the Treasurer, may be appointed by the Treasurer subject to confirmation by the Board.

#### **5. Secretary**

The Board Secretary is an elected member of the Board serving a two-year term. The Secretary records minutes of meetings, is in charge of updating the Policies and Procedures Manual, and attends the agenda-setting Executive Committee meeting monthly.

#### **6. At-Large Board Members**

There are three at-large Board members, elected on a staggered basis for two-year terms. Their duties and responsibilities are those of all Board members as described [above](#).

## **7. Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Secretary and the Minister. The President chairs the Executive Committee.

## **C. Committees of the Board**

Committees of the Board report directly to the Board. Members are approved by the Board. Committees elect their own chairs whose appointment is approved by the Board. All committees are to:

1. Prepare and submit to the Finance Committee an annual budget proposal and then administer the approved budget.
2. Prepare an annual written report to the Board prior to the end of the fiscal year.
3. Provide relevant information for the newsletter.

The Committees of the Board are the following:

### **1. Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall consist of a Chair, the Treasurer, and three to five additional members of the Congregation. The Finance Committee is to:

1. Annually prepare a tentative budget for the next fiscal year for approval by the Board and Congregation.
2. Regularly review reports of financial activities and budget and make recommendations to the Board for changes and exceptions as needed.
3. Perform an annual informal audit of the Congregation's financial records and provide a written report to both the Trustees and the Board.
4. Review and recommend to the Board as needed, issues that involve the financial situation of the Congregation.
5. Develop for Board approval and maintain records of procedures for all financial matters of the Congregation.

### **2. Committee on Ministries**

The Committee on Ministries (COM) collaborates with and supports the various ministries of the Congregation, with the intention of strengthening the overall health and wellbeing of the Congregation.

The COM is charged with considering how the Congregation is living into its vision and mission in the world and creating opportunities for strengthening communication among the different facets of the Congregation.

The COM is composed of six members, each serving three-year terms. Rotation shall be one or two members per year. In case of vacancies the Minister and President shall bring names to the Board equal to or exceeding the number of vacancies for Board approval.

The COM will serve the following functions:

1. Aid the Minister by being available for counsel and offering candid observations and feedback about conditions within the Congregation.
2. Interpret to the Congregation the nature and scope of the work of the Minister, including clarification of role expectations and realistic priorities.
3. Submit an annual compensation recommendation of the Minister to the Finance Committee and Board.
4. Support the Minister's planning for continuing education, other professional development, and self-care.
5. Attain feedback from congregants to proactively reflect upon and support the shared ministries of the Congregation (including Lifespan Faith Development, Social Justice, Connections, Small Group Ministries, etc.). This feedback will be reported to the board at least annually.

### **3. Leadership Development**

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) has the responsibility of seeking and developing leadership in the Congregation. The President-Elect serves as a member of the committee.

The LDC, in consultation with the Board, shall prepare a list of at least one nominee per office for the elective offices of the Congregation to be filled.

The LDC will also recruit persons to serve as leaders and coordinators as requested by the Board and Minister and may choose to undertake other activities that support lay leadership in the Congregation.

### **4. Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee consists of the Minister and at least three members, one of whom is also a member of the Board. The committee develops, reviews, and recommends personnel policies to the Board. It also makes recommendations to the Board on various personnel matters pertaining to hired staff. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Review personnel policies annually and, when needed, make recommendations to the Board for changes.
2. Work with supervisors in creating position descriptions and developing and hiring all staff positions, with the exception of the minister.

3. Sit with supervisors for annual review of employees, if or when requested.
4. Receive and review annual employee evaluations.
5. Conduct exit interviews when considered appropriate.
6. Prior to final budget development, meet with staff that receive both salary and benefit compensation, and advise Board of recommended agreements.
7. Write committee report prior to annual meeting.

### **5. Auction Committee**

The Auction Committee is responsible for planning and coordination of all functions for an annual goods and services auction for the benefit of the congregation. Within one month after the conclusion of the auction, the committee shall provide a report to the Board and Finance Committee.

### **6. Ad Hoc Committees and Task Leaders**

From time to time the Board may appoint *ad hoc* committees and task leaders to research, perform or oversee special projects. These groups will be established, directed and dissolved by the Board. Ideally committees are comprised of two or more people who meet on a regular basis to plan activities that address areas of Congregational need. Task groups focus on addressing a finite task, recruit people to carry out that task and meet occasionally or never. Tasks may be carried out by one person or a group.

## **D. Standing Committees**

Standing committees carry on the work of the Congregation. They may be year-long appointments or exist for a time limited task. The function of the committee may be carried out by a group that composes the committee or by a single individual or two. The committee chair or task leader is responsible for getting the job done and reporting to the convener (e.g., Minister, Board).

### **1. Lifespan Faith Development**

#### **a. Lifespan Faith Development Committee**

The Lifespan Faith Development Committee (LFDC) oversees all LFD programs and policy creation. Membership consists of the DLFD and of 4-6 individuals chosen by the DLFD to encompass experience with all age ranges in the LFD program, including: Children's RE; Adult RE; middle school and high school youth programs; and the Our Whole Lives program.

LFDC members have voting rights, at one vote per member. The Minister is an ex officio member of LFDC and does not have voting rights.

LFDC serves mainly to oversee all LFD policies, and to provide oversight for the overall LFD program. The LFDC is responsible for reviewing and amending the [LFD Program Covenant](#) annually.

#### b. Youth Adult Committee

The Youth Adult Committee (YAC) is an intergenerational committee within the UUC, responsible for LFD programming for youth in grades 9-12. Membership is comprised of 6-10 members, and the DLFDC. YAC will strive to always have a youth majority membership. Youth are encouraged to serve a term of 1-2 years. Adults are encouraged to serve a term of 3 years. One adult and one or two youth serve as co-chairs of YAC. Each of these members shall have equal voting power. The Minister shall be a non-voting member. YAC will meet monthly during the programming year, with meeting times and locations posted on the church calendar. YAC supports Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), our high school youth group, which meets weekly, with exceptions approved by YAC.

#### c. Library

The library person/committee is responsible for maintaining the library according to the [Library Materials Selection and Collection Development Policy](#) below. Activities include:

1. Submit a proposed annual budget for library acquisitions.
2. Solicit suggestion from various committees, activity/task leaders and individuals for purchases.
3. Purchase materials selected for inclusion.
4. Process materials into the library system.
5. Establish policies for lending materials.

## **2. Worship**

#### a. Worship Services & Associates Committee

Works closely with the Minister to reflect upon and develop the year's worship calendar around broad monthly theological themes. Members should have willingness to collaborate, create and engage in theological reflection.

The Worship Services & Associates Committee (WSA) duties include:

1. Participating in brainstorm session and WSA Retreat with Minister to develop the overall worship calendar.
2. Meeting regularly for Worship Reflection with the Minister.

3. In conjunction with the Minister, coordinating Worship Associates for services when the Minister is not leading on a Sunday

b. Worship Associates & Worship Associates Program

Worship Associates play a visible, active role in Worship on Sunday mornings with the Minister.

Worship Associates (WAs) duties include:

1. Meeting with the Minister in advance of the service for which they are the WA in order to discuss the theme of the particular service and develop role for the WA in the service.
2. Providing feedback to the Minister and WSA on highlights and challenges of being a WA on Sunday mornings.
3. May lead a service when the Minister is not present
4. May support a guest minister or speaker when the Minister is not present.
5. Attending 1-2 Worship Associates Retreats or Trainings with the Minister each year to maintain a continuous quality of worship and to build skills including liturgical creativity and Sunday morning WA presence.

c. Audio Visual System

The Audio Visual (A/V) System Leader is responsible for all technical systems used during a Sunday service and scheduled meetings of the Congregation. This individual will:

1. Recruit and train people to run the A/V system
2. Arrange for purchase of necessary equipment.
3. Ensure the equipment is in good working order.
4. Prepare and upload podcasts of sermons.

d. Flowers

The Flower team is responsible for flowers being present for each Sunday service and special occasion services.

### **3. Stewardship Campaign Committee**

The Stewardship Campaign Committee is a standing committee responsible for planning and implementing the annual stewardship campaign.

The committee will:

1. Determine the design and strategies of the stewardship campaign.
2. Coordinate with the Board to determine campaign goals and timeline.
3. Execute the campaign.

4. Keep the Board and congregants informed of the campaign's progress.
5. Maintain the Stewardship webpage.
6. Provide a written annual report to the Board containing an analysis of results of the campaign and suggestions for further plans.

#### **4. Member services**

##### **a. Connections Committee**

The Connections Committee's mission is to reach out, embrace, and support those who are seeking a liberal religious community. The Connections Committee sets the tone in welcoming visitors, members, and friends and encouraging engagement in congregational activities. Committee responsibilities include:

1. Membership - support the Minister in growing and maintaining the congregation's members and friends; in this capacity, the committee will:
  - a. Welcome and provide information on Unitarian Universalism and the congregation to new members and friends.
  - b. Assist in maintaining communication and community with existing members and friends.
2. Greeting – provide a warm welcome to all, helping everyone feel welcomed and integrated into the Congregation. The committee will recruit and provide for services both in-person and online greeters
3. Hospitality – support food and fellowship opportunities after Sunday services (e.g., potlucks, coffee hour) and other times, as needed.
4. Sponsor Activities & Groups - provide fun activities throughout the year for all ages, both at UUC and in the community such as hikes, picnics, chili cook-offs, movie nights, sing-alongs, dessert parties, etc.
  - a. Groups (Life stage, Interest, etc.)
  - b. Ongoing Activities (Food and Fellowship - Circle Suppers, Sundaes, etc.)
  - c. Occasional Activities (e.g., Fun and Frolic)

##### **b. Lay Pastoral Care Ministry (LPCM)**

The purpose of the LPCM is to assist our minister in providing support to members and friends of the congregation during times of distress, both crisis and long-term. It is composed of the minister, facilitator(s), and LPCM associates, who must apply to be on the team.

Members of the LPCM will

1. Meet monthly for training and mutual support.

2. Report to the minister and facilitator monthly.
3. Provide a ministry of presence and listening.
4. Maintain confidentiality

c. Caring Network

The Caring Network provides support and services to comfort members and friends in need.

The Coordinator(s)'s responsibilities include:

1. Maintaining a list of congregants willing to provide meals, transportation, emergency assistance or other support congregants might need and contact them when requests are made.
2. Receive requests from congregants and determine what help they might need, being respectful of congregants' wishes.

d. Memorial Committee

The purpose of the Memorial Committee is three-fold:

1. To maintain and enhance a memorial garden space for the UUC;
2. To establish a permanent record of gifts to the Congregation;
3. To provide opportunities to honor and memorialize those dear to members and friends of the Congregation.

The Committee shall:

1. Maintain appropriate records of the subscribers, niches, pavers, and persons whose ashes are interred on the grounds;
2. Assist persons recording biographical data in the Memorial Book;
3. Approve eligibility and appropriateness of memorial garden items;
4. Oversee garden maintenance;
5. Include a summary of financial inflow and outflow in its Annual Report to the Board.

e. Communications Committee

A Communications Committee will be appointed that will serve to oversee all communications both internal and external to UUC including the website, email, newsletter and all other communications to members, friends and the general public. Many specific responsibilities of the Communications Committee are included in the [Communications Policy](#).

The Administrator and Webmaster (if appointed) shall serve as members of this committee. Other committee members may be appointed, as appropriate.



#### f. Right Relations Team

The Right Relations Team (RRT) is responsible for providing educational support for faithful communication. The RRT also provides confidential conflict engagement support when conflicts arise.

The RRT is composed of 5-6 congregants, each serving three-year terms. Congregants apply to the current RRT and minister to serve.

The term "right relations" has been adopted widely within UU circles. In this context, we use the word "right" in the spirit of "righting the ship", not as the opposite of wrong, nor as an indication that there is only one way to be in a relationship.

The roles of the RRT include:

1. Providing education on the practice of faithful communication to create compassionate community
2. Promoting knowledge and understanding of conflict transformation
3. Serving as mediators/coaches/facilitators as appropriate

### **5. Community Outreach**

#### a. Community Service Team

The Community Service Team involves service outside the Congregation. It functions as the coordinator of task forces of the Congregation that are designed to address specific issues and needs resulting from social injustices, deprivation or catastrophes.

Matters of social concern may be addressed through the formation of a group of like-minded people who take on a project of their own choice. Examples of projects undertaken by the Community Service Team include but are not limited to: Interfaith Food Pantry, Blacksburg Refugee Project, To Our House, Habitat for Humanity, and Literacy Volunteers.

#### b. Social Justice Team

The social justice team facilitates coordination of the various social justice groups/activities within our congregation and with other social justice groups/activities in the wider community, state and/or national level. The team also serves as a spark for the formation of new social justice groups within our congregation based on interests expressed by congregants.

Community Outreach teams are flexible to change with community needs and interests. They are initiated by congregants with the support of the Minister, and report to the Minister.

## **6. Buildings & Grounds**

### **a. Building Maintenance**

The Building Maintenance Coordinator, in conjunction with the [Facilities Manager](#), is responsible for the maintenance of the UUC building. The Building Maintenance Coordinator reports to the Board. The individual may recruit assistants to help:

1. Maintain and repair the existing UUC building and its fixtures including plumbing, heating, electrical, lighting, and structural systems.
2. Maintain and repair and/or replace appliances and furniture owned by the UUC; e.g., kitchen equipment, tables, chairs, etc.
3. Clean and paint the interior of the UUC building as necessary.
4. Provide appropriate information to the Trustees concerning major revision and for protecting the capital investment of the building.
5. Provide the Board with information concerning energy consumption and sound utilization of all utilities.

### **b. Grounds Maintenance Committee**

The Grounds Maintenance Committee is responsible for the exterior grounds around the UUC building. As such the Committee:

1. Organizes and supervises work parties to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, and flowers on the grounds.
2. Arranges for lawn mowing on an as needed basis.
3. Recruits people to work to maintain the grounds.
4. Purchases or solicits donations for trees, shrubs, and flowers.
5. Solicits the opinions and desires of UUC neighbors regarding landscape choices as appropriate.
6. Participates in long-range planning for landscaping the grounds.

## **7. Committee on the Visual Arts (COVA)**

The Committee on the Visual Arts (COVA) schedules and selects methods and materials for art exhibits and installations in the UUC building.

The purpose of the COVA is to promote the mission and vision of the UUC through the selection and display of artwork that enhances the spiritual and intellectual experience of members and guests. The committee is charged with selecting, installing, overseeing, and maintaining art objects in designated areas of the building. More specifically, the Committee is to select and install semi-permanent art for the main entrance and main meeting hall that will reflect the life, spirit, and purpose of the UUC. In other areas of the building, the committee will arrange for time-limited exhibits that are changed from time to time during the church year.

These “rotating” exhibits will beautify the UUC space, enhance the experience of members and guests, and facilitate outreach to the local community.

In fulfilling its purpose and meeting its charge, the COVA will:

1. Recommend to the Board improvements that will enhance the aesthetics and purpose of the building.
2. Bring policy recommendations to the Board with regard to the selection and placement of art both semi-permanently and for limited time in agreed-upon areas of the building.
3. Arrange for loans and purchases of artwork and manage donations of artwork according to existing policies and procedures.
4. Make a good faith effort to involve members of the congregation and various committees and interest groups within the UUC in the selection and placement of art objects.
5. In soliciting and selecting art, include artists and perspectives from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds which may be outside the experience of many members of the congregation.

## **E. Groups**

### **1. Sponsored Groups**

A Sponsored Group (SG) is a group sponsored by the Congregation as it furthers the goals of the Congregation and provides a service to the Congregation and the New River Valley community and has successfully completed the process to become a SG. The representative for a SG must be a Congregation member. If group membership is limited, Congregation members will have first priority to participate in a SG.

SGs are covered by the liability insurance of the Congregation. SGs enjoy preferential [building use privileges](#) and may have a link to their web materials placed on the UUC website.

To become a SG, a presentation outlining the services provided by the group and the time and space needs of the group must be made at a Board meeting. The Board shall vote on whether to sponsor the group at a subsequent meeting in order to allow time for input of members of the Congregation. The Board shall vote on whether to renew sponsorship of previously sponsored groups at the August Board meeting.

### **2. Congregational Groups (CG)**

A Congregational group (CG) is a group made up of Congregation members whose purpose(s) further the goals of the Congregation.

CGs are covered by the liability insurance of the Congregation. CGs enjoy preferential [building use privileges](#).

CGs may be formed for a number of purposes including spiritual practice groups, study groups, support groups, service groups or advocacy groups. CGs may be of short-term duration or on-going.

Any member may form a new CG as long as (1) the group's general purpose is in alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the congregation, and (2) there are at least three UUC members who are interested in actively organizing and participating in the group. To form a new group, a member should begin by discussing the possibility with the minister or DFLD. If encouraged to do so, the member should fill out the [Group Application Form](#) and submit it to the minister or DFLD for approval. Before approving a new group, the minister or DFLD should consult with any appropriate ministry team. New groups will be assigned to an existing committee or ministry team as appropriate.

### **3. Member Groups (MG)**

A Member Group is a group not affiliated with the Congregation, but organized by a member of the Congregation for personal reasons. If this group is organized for profit, then the conditions of the Non-Member Group apply. The representative for an MG must be a Congregation member.

MGs must either provide their own insurance or inform members that they are uninsured.

### **4. Non-member groups (NMG)**

A Non-member Group (NMG) is an independent group that has no connection to the Congregation.

NMGs must either provide their own insurance or inform members that they are uninsured.

### **5. Non-Profit Groups (NPG)**

A Non-profit group is an independent group that has no connection to the Congregation and is a legal non-profit organization.

NPGs must either provide their own insurance or inform members that they are uninsured.

## **Section II. Staff and Contract Employees**

Unless otherwise noted, all employed staff contracts or negotiated agreements that include a job description begin and end so as to coincide with the Congregation's fiscal year. Holiday and sick-leave agreements shall be part of all contracts. All employee contracts will be automatically renewed unless the employee resigns or the supervisor or Board acts to do

otherwise. Non-renewal decisions are to be coordinated with the [Personnel Committee](#). All staff are responsible to the Board.

## **A. Minister**

The Congregation shall employ a full-time, settled minister.

As part of the annual budget process, the Board will establish, in consultation with the [Committee on Ministries](#), the Minister's compensation package which will include the following categories; salary, housing allowance, a contribution to the UUA retirement fund in accordance with the UUA retirement plan agreement, health insurance, disability insurance, life insurance and professional expense reimbursement. The Minister shall be entitled to periodic sabbatical leave as negotiated in the Minister's employment package.

## **B. Director of Lifespan Faith Development**

The Board shall employ a Director of Lifespan Faith Development (DLFD) to oversee faith development programs for all ages. The DLFD is supervised by the Minister. The DLFD collaborates with all LFD committees, sub-committees, and task forces to create LFD policy and to carry out LFD program operation and development.

The details of employment and job description are negotiated with the Board at the start of employment. The DLFD's employment package is to include salary, health insurance, a contribution to the UUA retirement fund in accordance with the UUA retirement plan agreement and professional expense reimbursement. The DLFD shall be entitled to periodic sabbatical leave as negotiated in the DLFD's employment package.

The responsibilities of the DLFD include;

1. Develop a learning environment, which fosters the religious and spiritual growth of children, youth and adults within a UU context.
2. Review and oversee UUC policies that relate to LFD. Ensure that policies are followed by all groups at UUC working with minors.
3. Oversee the Sunday morning RE program to ensure that the RE mission is being met within a welcoming and safe environment.
4. Assist all groups in the recruitment of volunteer teachers, youth group advisors, and substitutes. Maintain the list of individuals with background checks. Oversee the training and support of volunteer teachers and youth group advisors.
5. Hire and supervise childcare providers for Sunday services and other RE events in accordance with the policy in [Section IV.D.1](#).
6. Work with the LFD task forces to plan and carry out special events, social action projects, and extra-curricular programs.

7. Maintain communication with parents, the Board, and the congregation about the goals, needs, and activities of the LFD program. Conduct congregational surveys to obtain input and feedback.
8. Conduct year-round registration of children and maintain records of basic information for each child. Maintain records of attendance at all classes and meetings.
9. Work with the Finance Committee to develop a budget to support the LFD program. Keep financial records of LFD expenditures.
10. Maintain records of curricula and other teaching materials, oversee the purchase of supplies, furnishings, or other needed materials.
11. In consultation with the minister, select curricula for all age groups.
12. Plan developmentally appropriate class groupings, while also maintaining balanced class sizes.
13. Represent the Congregation at district and area RE and LFD conferences and workshops.

### **C. Administrator**

The Board shall employ an Administrator to assist in carrying out the administrative tasks involved in the day-to-day operation of the Congregation. The Administrator is supervised by the Minister.

The details of employment and job description are negotiated with the Board at the start of employment. The Administrator's employment package is to include salary, health insurance, a contribution to the UUA retirement fund in accordance with the UUA retirement plan agreement and professional expense reimbursement.

The responsibilities of the Administrator include;

1. Operation of the administrative office.
2. Congregational communications including the newsletter and emails.
3. Day-to-day financial operations.
4. Track pledge fulfilment and other contributions.
5. Prepare and mail or email quarterly pledge reports.
6. Prepare and mail or email year-end reports of contributions itemized by type.
7. Day-to-day building management decisions including hiring a sexton.
8. Hire and supervise childcare providers for non-RE events in accordance with the policy in [Section IV.D.1](#).
9. Maintain a list of eligible childcare providers.

### **D. LFD Assistant**

The DLFD, upon authorization by the Board, may hire an assistant to provide both administrative and program assistance to the DLFD. The LFD Assistant is supervised by the DLFD. The LFD Assistant's schedule will

vary week to week depending on program needs. The responsibilities of the LFD Assistant will be assigned by the DLFD.

## **E. Pianist**

The Board may employ a pianist. The pianist is supervised by the Minister. Details of the employment agreement shall be negotiated by the Board or its designated representative. Duties shall include providing music as needed during services, accompanying the choir and other musicians, and playing for both choir rehearsals and rehearsals for special musical programs. The pianist is not expected to play for weddings or memorial services, but may contract to do so with the individuals involved.

## **F. Choir Director**

The Board may employ a Choir Director. The Choir Director is supervised by the Minister. Details of the employment agreement shall be negotiated by the Board or its designated representative.

Duties shall include conducting weekly choir rehearsals, directing the choir at bimonthly Sunday services, selection of music in coordination with the Minister, preparation of the choir for special events (at the discretion of the Choir Director), and submission of a yearly choir budget.

## **G. Sexton**

The Administrator may hire a Sexton to support the work of the congregation and determine their job responsibilities.

## **H. Facilities Manager**

The Board may employ a Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager is supervised by the Administrator and works in coordination with the Building Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance Chairs.

The Facilities Manager duties include:

10. A monthly walk through of the facilities using a checklist provided by the Building Maintenance Coordinator and Grounds Maintenance Committee and producing a written report to the Administrator.
11. Replacing any light bulbs, backup batteries or filters needed.
12. Performing small electrical, mechanical and painting repairs.
13. Scheduling, meeting, admitting and assisting service technicians for the fire alarm system (annually), sprinkler system (twice annually) backflow preventers (annually), HVAC system including filters (four-times annually), and fire extinguishers (annually).

14. Scheduling, admitting and assisting repair technician visits on an as needed basis including carpet cleaners, plumbers, electricians and window cleaners.
15. Meeting with outside contractors such as the cleaning service, lawn service (in season) and snow removal service (in season) on a regular scheduled basis.
16. Close coordination with the Sexton to assure smooth operation and safety of the facilities. Responsible for realigning chairs in the main room weekly as needed.

## **I. Contract Employees**

As needed, the Minister, Administrator, or Building Maintenance Coordinator may hire contract employees for specific purposes. Examples of contract employees include lawn mowing, snow removal, piano tuner, and building cleaners. A contract agreement is created and signed by the Administrator.

## **Section III. General Policies**

### **A. Communications Policy**

This policy provides guidelines for ensuring appropriate, accurate, timely, and thorough communication within the UUC community, as well as to the outside world. All sectors of the congregation must communicate quickly and fully with the congregation about events, activities, and issues within the UUC community. Where issues of ministerial confidentiality are involved, only that information which may identify or affect the privilege of a congregant may be withheld.

#### **1. External Communication**

In situations where UUC must make an official statement to the press, the public, or to authorities, the Minister and/or Board President are empowered to speak for UUC. If contacted by any outside entity regarding a statement, others should refer them to the Minister or Board President. If these persons are not available, no comment should be made; it should be stated that the Minister or Board President will make contact as soon as possible.

#### **2. Website Policy**

This policy exists to manage the use of UUC's website to communicate and promote the church and its philosophy to prospective and current members, news media, other religious organizations, and friends. The



UUC website [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org) is owned by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, located in Blacksburg, Virginia.

The Communications Committee has responsibility for establishing procedures and priorities for [uucnr.org](http://uucnr.org), as well as the content and design of the website. Communication Policies and procedures will be reviewed by the committee at least once a year and changes will be approved by the Board.

The Communications Committee will review the website for accuracy, currency, continuity, and compliance with these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis.

These policies and procedures apply to all pages of [uucnr.org](http://uucnr.org), including any special sites that have been approved to operate using the UUC name or hosted within the [uucnr.org](http://uucnr.org) domain.

No UUC website shall be permitted to exist outside of [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org). A sub-domain of [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org), such as an auction website, is permissible as long as it is (a) approved by the Board or Communications Committee; (b) consistent with the values of UUC; (c) does not provide a conflicting identity for UUC; and (d) is editable, at all times, by a member of UUC staff.

All volunteers who provide content, or make changes to, [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org) give UUC express permission to use their work and waive all rights to copyright.

#### a. General Overview of Responsibilities

As elected representatives of the congregation, the Board serves as de facto owner of [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org).

The Minister has primary responsibility for Ministerial pages; the Director of Lifespan Faith Development has primary responsibility for the Lifespan Faith Development portion of the website; and the Administrator has primary responsibility for the remainder of the website. Each staff member may handle the maintenance of their website pages themselves, or oversee a volunteer in page maintenance, at their discretion.

#### b. Advertising

The website does not accept paid advertising, and does not participate in commercial affiliations such as search links, link exchanges, or preferred placement of links. The UUC may choose to use the website as a vehicle for advertising its building as rental space.

#### c. Contact Information

The website will include the email address, telephone number, and physical address for the UUC building. Contact information for staff members

will be limited to email aliases using the uucnrv.org domain, and the church address. Individual full names connected to email addresses and phone numbers are considered private and are, therefore, not publicly available on the website.

#### d. Design

The website will be designed with users of all ages and abilities in mind. Since users may use one of several browsers, consideration must be given to compatibility, ease of use, navigability, and consistency in style and format. The layout must be easy to use and maintain, while serving a diverse audience. Navigation links will be consistent across all pages. Accessibility for the visually impaired will be provided, whenever possible.

Potential new members are the primary target market for the website. A secondary target market exists for current members and friends. The content on the public portion of the website will consist of information that is of interest to potential UUC visitors.

Information pertinent only to current members and friends will be kept on the Members area of the website and password protected.

A separate section of the website will be available to provide members with more personal and detailed information regarding the UUC and its activities. This section will be accessed by permission only, and will include more liberal privacy considerations than those used in the public section.

#### e. Links

The website does not offer reciprocal linking, but will consider any external websites suggested as possible external links. While we cannot restrict other organizations from including a link to our website, a reciprocal link may not be automatically granted.

To be included on uucnrv.org, a link must:

1. relate to the mission of UUC
2. complement and enhance the Unitarian Universalist content of the website
3. provide credible, accurate, and current information;
4. be subject to adequate procedures for the review and updating of material
5. make reasonable accommodations for users with disabilities, such as the visually impaired
6. adhere to adequate policies regarding external links and privacy of user data.

Links will not qualify for inclusion if they: advertise or endorse other organizations or political parties; contain obscene or objectionable images

or text; contain individual or personal home pages; endorse candidates for local, state, or federal offices; advocate political or social positions on a local, state, or federal level; or promote commercial or other for-profit organizations.

It is permissible to include links to those organizations supported by half-plate collections or other social action projects.

Links used for fundraising opportunities through online marketplaces (e.g., Kroger) who do not otherwise present advertising are permitted.

#### f. Maintenance

Every effort shall be made to ensure that the information on the website is up to date and accurate. However, this information is issued in good faith as a general guide, and not as a contract.

The Administrator shall oversee the maintenance of the website. The Administrator may appoint a Webmaster and determine the scope of this position's responsibilities. To ensure a unified image and high-quality content, all website information will be directed through the Administrator and Webmaster (if appointed).

The Administrator and the Webmaster (if appointed) have the right to refuse, or to remove materials, without notice.

Only individuals authorized to implement website content changes may update and maintain the UUC website. These individuals must be approved by the Communications Committee, and agree to follow established website policies and procedures.

#### g. Privacy

The UUC website will not post personally identifiable information such as home addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses on the public site. Full names will not be used in most circumstances unless a full name is necessary to convey information properly (such as a sermon presenter, Board member, or committee chair).

The UUC Website may link to other organizations to provide services to members; however, external pages are governed by the owner's privacy policies. UUC will not be held accountable for the policies or practices of these third parties. UUC recommends that visitors to any website examine the privacy policy posted on that site for their own protection.

Any information submitted through the website will be treated in confidence and, unless explicitly agreed upon, will not be passed to a third party.

#### h. Terms of Use

Information on uucnr.org is subject to national copyright laws and therefore may not be used for financial gain without the prior written permission of UUC. Unless otherwise stated, all items on uucnr.org are copyright © Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg, VA., YYYY (current year). There shall be no use of the UUC logo, designs, or mission statements without specific, written permission from UUC.

Other websites may link to uucnr.org as long as the UUC website page and their content clearly appear as UUC property. UUC does not permit its website content to be presented in such a way as to make it appear to have been produced by another organization, or to be altered in any way. This may include, but is not limited to, framing the site's content within another website's pages.

The user assumes the entire risk related to use of uucnr.org. In no event is UUC liable to the user or to any third party for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, special, or exemplary damages or lost profit resulting from any use or misuse of this information.

#### i. Website Statistics

The UUC website uses a statistics-tracking service that reports the number of visits the site receives in a given period. No identities or individually identifiable information is gathered by this process. Our servers automatically log standard information, including IP address, browser types, and access times. This information is used for internal research or analysis purposes only and is not stored for long term uses.

### **3. Podcasting Policy**

A podcast is a digital audio or video file or recording that can be downloaded from a website to a media player or computer. Podcasting can support the greater UUC goal of nurturing a lifelong spiritual journey by making our religious message available to a larger community of people.

Only the sermon or other non-copyrighted portions of the service will be podcasted. Any music, individual reading, or other performance of copyrighted material will not be podcasted, even if it is part of the sermon, unless proper permission from the copyright holders is obtained. Properly attributed quotations that are used during a sermon will be included in a podcast. The author or publisher of the original work, the performer(s), and the recording entity must all be considered in making sure that proper permissions have been obtained.

All sermons presented by a minister, lay speaker, or guest speaker in the UUC setting will be recorded, and unless a specific request to withhold is

made to the Communications Committee, they will be made into podcasts. The Communications Committee, in consultation with the minister, may determine that a particular service does not have sufficient content to warrant a podcast.

#### **4. Photography Policy**

Photographs of group activities that take place during an event hosted by UUC may be posted to the website without the express permission of those adults who appear in the photograph, as long as individuals are not identified by name. Recognizable images of children or youth under the age of 18 may not be posted to the website without the permission of the parent or guardian of the child or youth.

Photographs of children may be used in the newsletter; however, neither first nor last names of children will appear under photographs of minors. First names of children may appear in printed articles but should not reference particular photographs.

If a photograph is of an event such as the presentation of an award or other honor, a performance by an individual or small group, or other similar activity, and including the names of at least some of the people depicted is desired, consent must be obtained of everyone in the photo who is named.

No photos of adults may be posted on the UUC Facebook page, or other social media sites, without the permission of the individual(s).

Permission must be given via email or in writing to the individual serving as social media administrator (defined in the [Social Media Policy](#)). No photos of children in which the children are recognizable will be posted on the UUC Facebook page, or on other social media sites.

Any adult who does not want their image to be posted on the website and/or social media sites should notify the Communications Committee who will maintain a list of such individuals.

All reasonable efforts will be made to comply with the wishes of those who have indicated that their images should not be posted.

#### **5. Newsletter Policy**

The responsibility for the editorial policies and practices of the UUC newsletter rests with the Board. The Administrator will serve as the Newsletter Editor, or will appoint and supervise a volunteer in that role.

The Newsletter Editor is responsible for the production of the newsletter. The primary function of the newsletter is to inform the congregation of church programs and activities

Any questions or problems concerning the newsletter should be addressed to the Administrator.

## **6. Email Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to support the needs of the UUC community in communicating on a timely basis about issues of importance.

Email can be used for general announcements, urgent announcements, and as a tool by committees for communicating with each other and reviewing documents and other material.

### **a. Aliases**

The Administrator will determine eligibility for an alias, and will maintain a listing of email aliases that use the uucnr.v.org domain name. These aliases will be used to provide privacy and a forwarding mechanism for emails sent to staff, committee chairs, and others in the congregation.

Whenever possible, the alias address will be used in published materials, regardless of vehicle.

### **b. Listservs**

The primary UUC email list is a moderated listserv with the purpose of communicating UUC-relevant information to members and friends of the Congregation who choose to be subscribers.

This listserv will be maintained by the Administrator. Messages sent on this listserv require the approval of the Administrator, and may only be sent by the Administrator, Minister, Board President or other authorized persons.

UUC members or friends may make a request to the Administrator to have an email message sent via the main UUC listserv; approval of such messages is at the Administrator's discretion. To be sent via the main listserv, messages must be reasonably considered of interest to the whole congregation and not a special interest group.

Other email lists may be set up for committees or groups upon request. All listservs or groups must be set up through the Administrator, and a staff member must have access, at all times. The Administrator will assign a group member primary responsibility for the group email list. The Administrator will oversee this responsible member, or assign another staff member to act as supervisor. A staff member, or the Webmaster, may delete objectionable content from group email lists without notice. Views expressed on group email lists are those of the posters as individuals and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the UUC.

No group may set up their own email list if UUC is identified in any way with this group.

### c. Individual Use of Email Addresses

Use of email addresses of UUC members and friends should be used responsibly by all email authors. Personal information (address, phone number) should not be emailed without permission.

Email addresses may not be used to: send spam; send virus warnings; send advertisements; insult or criticize; forward chain letters; or use offensive language.

## **7. Social Media Policy**

Please note: the term "Administrator" refers to the paid staff position of Administrator. The term "social media administrator" refers to a volunteer assigned responsibility for a social media site.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the content on all UUC social media sites. UUC owns all social media sites affiliated with Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Blacksburg, VA. No individual may begin, or maintain, a social media site using the UUC name without approval of the Board. A staff member must have edit access to all social media sites, at all times.

The majority of UUC social media content will promote activities occurring at UUC, activities in which members of UUC are participating, and events in the Blacksburg/Roanoke area that are sponsored by Unitarian Universalist churches or UUA affiliated organizations. Other types of content may include personal comments, photos, etc. from those having permission to post to the site. Customarily, this will be related to UUC, Unitarian Universalism, members of our congregation, etc.

The UUC logo, colors and typefaces should be consistent with UUC graphic guidelines and resemble our other media "branding" styles. The name of the Minister should be easily accessible; however, it should be clear that site administrator posts are not from the Minister. Contact information for UUC should be prominently displayed, and links to [uucnr.org](http://uucnr.org), and any other UUC social media sites should also be easily accessible.

Posted photos should be of a presentable quality, but this is not as critical as the requirements for photos on the website. All photos must conform to the Photography Policy above.

The Communications Committee, with approval of the minister, will designate all social media administrators. A social media administrator should monitor each UUC social media site and remove any content that does not comply with the guidelines contained herein. Habitual offenders may be banned from further contributions to the page. Postings should be regularly checked for inappropriate content. New content should be added by the social media administrator at least once per week.

The social media administrator will have responsibility for monitoring content, and will have full authority to create, delete and maintain the content, provided that the content:

1. is maintained within the bounds of these policies
2. is consistent with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism
3. avoids slander, libel, violations of copyright, profanity, off-color humor, and advocacy of political candidates
4. does not reveal private personal information
5. does not advertise commercial businesses
6. presents information that is accurate and relevant.

Content must be written in clear and grammatically correct prose.

### **8. Blog Policy**

UUC owns all blogs affiliated with Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Blacksburg, VA. No individual may begin, or maintain, a blog using the UUC name without approval of the Board. A staff member must have edit access to all blogs, at all times.

All blogs affiliated with UUC must be set up through the Administrator. Blogs will follow the same policies as set forth for email and social media.

### **9. Video-Sharing Site Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for any content placed on, or embedded from, a video-sharing website or video-conferencing platform. UUC owns all posted and streaming videos affiliated with Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Blacksburg, VA. No individual may begin or maintain a video-sharing site account using the UUC name without approval of the Board. A staff member must have edit access to all video-sharing accounts, at all times.

No videos of UUC sanctioned activities may be posted on video-sharing sites without written permission from the Administrator. Any video posted by the UUC must have obtained proper permission for any copyrighted music (including background music) or performance contained within it. Posted videos must follow the Photography Policy.

YouTube videos used on the uucnr.org website, or in any other UUC vehicle, will be embedded using the YouTube code. No user will modify the functionality of the YouTube code, or modify the video itself.

### **10. Publicity Policy**

No non-congregational group is allowed to promote its activities in the newsletter, emails, or anywhere in the building without approval of the Board.



No group is allowed to suggest any connection between it and the UUC either in its name or its publicity without prior approval of the Board.

UUC does not accept any liability for publicity for events sponsored by renters of the UUC facilities.

The following applies to UUC sponsored events.

a. Internal Publicity

Internal Publicity targets only the members and attendees of UUC. If a wider audience is desired, internal publicity methods can be used in conjunction with external publicity methods. The following methods may be used for internal publicity, each subject to the approval of the Administrator except as noted:

1. Newsletter articles
2. Order of Service announcements
3. UUC email lists (listservs)
4. UUC bulletin boards: subject to approval of the owner of the bulletin board
5. Information Tables
6. UUC Website: subject to approval of the Administrator and/or Webmaster

b. External Publicity

The Communications Committee oversees the publicizing of UUC events or information to the greater community. Members should coordinate external publicity activities with the Communications Committee for requirements and guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, use of the following:

1. Media advertising and public service announcements
2. Handouts and flyers
3. UUC booths, floats, and sponsorships.

## **B. Disruptive Behavior**

The UUC strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. We expect all to conduct themselves according to our [Guidelines for Right Relations](#). 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.

While openness 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 their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat is best addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons.

In congregations, disruptive behavior of an individual in the church building or on the church grounds has led congregants to voice 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. Diminishing appeal of the congregation to its potential and existing membership

The following shall be the policy of UUC to address disruptive behavior:

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister(s), 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 time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister(s), the Minister(s) will be notified.
2. Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board. The committee members will use their collective judgment to implement the following:
  - a. The Committee will respond to problems as they arise. There is no expectation that "acceptable" behavior will have been specifically defined in advance.
  - b. The committee will respond to persons who have exhibited disruptive behavior as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.
  - c. The committee will collect all necessary information.
  - d. To aid in evaluating the problem, these points will be considered:
    - i. DANGEROUSNESS - is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
    - ii. DISRUPTIVENESS - How much interference with church functions is going on?
    - iii. OFFENSIVENESS - How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
  - e. To determine the necessary response, these points will be considered:
    - i. 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?
    - ii. HISTORY - What is the extent, if any, of disruption cause in the past?

- iii. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE- Has the individual acknowledged personal responsibility or apologized for the disruption? Has the disruption occurred before? How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
- f. The committee will decide on the necessary response on a case-by-case basis. However, three levels of action/response are recommended:
  - i. LEVEL ONE - The committee shall inform the Minister(s) of the problem and either the Minister(s) or a member of the committee shall meet with the offending person or persons to communicate the concern.
  - ii. LEVEL TWO - The offending individual(s) is excluded from specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and conditions of return written and made clear (with a copy going to the offender and one going into congregational files)
  - iii. LEVEL ONE or LEVEL TWO action taken may be appealed to the Executive Committee, and/or the Minister(s).
  - iv. LEVEL THREE - The Board, after consultation with the committee and Minister(s), may determine that the offending individual may be removed from membership and excluded from church premises and all church activities. If it is agreed that the expulsion take place, a letter will be written and sent by the Minister to the individual outlining the nature of the expulsion.
  - v. If an individual has been subject to LEVEL THREE action, a request for reinstatement may be made to the Board in writing. The request must contain: (1) a statement of understanding of the behavior that led to removal from membership; and (2) an explanation in detail how circumstances and conditions have changed to justify a reinstatement. The Board will review the request and respond within sixty days regarding reinstatement. The decision of the Board is final and not subject to further appeal. Reinstatement requests may be made no sooner than one year following the removal, or subsequent denials of reinstatement.

## **C. Congregational Public Witness**

### **1. Purpose**

The UUC is a spiritual community for which social action is a fundamental expression of our core values and principles. The health and vitality of our congregation depends on creating opportunities for our members to engage in strong and effective social action. One of the most effective ways is for the UUC to take a public stand on important social issues.

Recognizing that not all members will agree on all issues, the purpose of this policy is to identify different ways by which we, as members of a congregation, may respond to these issues.

Given our principles of honoring independent thought and diverse beliefs, we anticipate that not all congregants will necessarily agree with a statement of public witness. It is also understood that no congregant will be bound to agree with or act on a public statement by the UUC.

## **2. Policy**

There are different ways in which we as UUs and a UU congregation can make public witness, either as individuals or as groups. This policy is intended to apply only to public action or speech which is intended to speak, or is portrayed as speaking, for the UUC as a whole.

## **3. Procedure**

### **a. The Request**

Any UUC member or group may prepare a written request to the Board for approval to take a public position on behalf of the UUC on a social justice issue. The request shall include the following:

1. A description of the position and specific action the UUC is to consider taking on the social justice issue;
2. How this request is consistent:
  - a. with the Principles and Purposes of our UU faith,
  - b. with the Mission and Vision of the UUC, and
  - c. with the regulations governing 501(c)(3) organizations;
3. A list of any Statements of Conscience, Resolutions or Actions of Immediate Witness passed by the UUA that support this request (see the Resources section [below](#)); and
4. The name of the individual or group submitting the request along with the names of at least twenty additional members supporting the request.

### **b. Assessing the Support of the Congregation**

The Board will consult with the Minister for discussion and theological reflection on the topic and consider how to assess support within the congregation for the request. Options for this assessment may include, but are not limited to:

1. Conducting a forum where friends and members of the UUC discuss and debate the request. At the end of the forum a straw vote may be taken with the results communicated to the congregation.
2. Distributing copies of the request to all members and friends of UUC, inviting comments to the Board within a specified period of time.

The Board may designate its assessment function to a Social Justice Committee or the equivalent, if such exists, which will subsequently report its findings to the Board.

#### c. Consideration by the Board

If, in the opinion of the Board and Minister, the request aligns with the mission and vision of the UUC, the Board shall take up the request at their next scheduled Board meeting. If the Board approves the request, then it shall become an official position of the UUC on the social justice issue.

Approval of the public witness statement shall be announced in the next monthly newsletter and for two weeks via the weekly announcements to the congregation.

#### d. Action of Immediate Witness

If time is of the essence, the requestors can ask the Board to handle the request as an Action of Immediate Witness and waive the congregational assessment. If the Board and the Minister concur that broad congregational support exists, the Board has the authority to waive the process and consider the request for approval on an expedited basis.

If the Board approves the request, then it shall become an official position of the UUC on the social justice issue. Approval of the Action of Immediate Witness shall then be announced in the next monthly newsletter and for two weeks via the weekly announcements to the congregation.

### **4. Modify Existing Statement**

The same procedures will be used to modify or redact an existing statement of public witness.

### **5. Resources**

As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, the UUC is part of a national movement of UU congregations seeking justice in the world through the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). At our national meeting known as General Assembly, representatives from our congregations develop, debate and pass Statements of Conscience and Resolutions that inform and support our work for justice globally. Because these go through a rigorous democratic process over a number of years, they represent official positions we have taken as a faith on important social justice issues.

On pressing social justice issues that demand our immediate attention, Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW) are developed and passed at a single

General Assembly and represent the sentiments of the congregational representatives present that year.

UUC members and friends who seek to have UUC take a public position on a social justice issue are encouraged to review UUA statements, resolutions and Actions of Immediate Witness and use them in support of their request. These can be found on the UUA website <http://www.uua.org/action/statements/search>.

## **D. Denominational Policy Endorsement**

If the UUA endorses a denominational policy, the Minister and/or Committee relevant to the policy have the freedom to endorse that policy also without going before the Board or President for approval to act. However, the Minister and President should consult with one another, and the Board should be consulted if time permits.

## **E. Participants for National and Regional UU Meetings**

### **1. Selection Process**

An announcement shall be put in the newsletter and UUC emails inviting interested members to contact the Board President. The President shall recommend candidates to the Board. When there are more interested individuals than allotted delegate positions, selection shall be based on the following priorities:

1. Persons in leadership positions
2. Future leaders
3. Members who have not served as a delegate the previous two consecutive years

### **2. Delegate Responsibilities**

Delegates shall provide a written report to the Board, a summary article for the following month's newsletter, and share materials gathered at GA as appropriate.

### **3. Registration**

Depending on availability of funds, a portion of registration fees may be paid for delegates. If delegates waive their financial registration support, such designated monies may be used by other attendees.

## **F. Policy on Setting UUC Board Meeting Agenda**

### **1. Objective:**

The objective is to obtain balance between allowing access to the Board by individuals or groups needing attention or action at Board meetings,

and the need to have meetings organized and structured for the expedient transaction of business and efficient use of time by the volunteer Board members and staff. There is also a need to provide the UUC membership, in advance of Board meetings, with reliable information as to business to be conducted at each meeting.

## **2. Policy:**

The agenda shall be planned by the [Executive Committee](#). The President is authorized, in consultation with said planning committee, to adjust and finalize the agenda up to the date of posting. The agenda shall be posted on the UUC website at least 7 days before each meeting. Once the agenda is posted it shall not be changed or amended prior to the call to order of the Board meeting.

The first order of business of each Board meeting shall be to review the agenda and consider the need for any changes or amendments. No changes or amendments shall be allowed without a majority vote of the members present.

Anyone requesting an audience with the Board may request items be placed on the agenda by communicating with any Board member or the Minister prior to the agenda planning meeting. After the agenda planning meeting, but before the date of posting of the agenda, requests to have items placed on the agenda should be made directly to the President. After the agenda is posted, urgent requests for additions to the agenda may be made by contacting any Board member or the Minister. The Board member or Minister may then offer the new item as an addition to the agenda during the review of the agenda at the beginning of the Board meeting.

## **G. Membership in VICPP**

The UUC shall be a member of the VICPP (Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy) and be listed as a member church in the VICPP brochures and website.

## **H. Isabel Berney Award for Exceptional Service**

The Isabel Berney Award recognizes a member or friend of the Congregation for extraordinary service and work in one or more areas of the life of the Congregation over a period of several years, as embodied by Isabel Berney.

### **1. Criteria for award**

1. Nominees will have made extraordinary contributions in selfless service to one or more areas of church life. More than one individual

can be nominated to jointly receive the award (usually, but not necessarily, as a couple).

2. Nominees will have been a church member or friend for a minimum of seven (7) years.

## **2. Selection Procedure**

1. A committee of the Board will solicit nominations for the award from the congregation.
2. Each nomination should include a letter describing the specific contributions and areas of service of the nominee and the names of at least two other individuals willing to provide additional information in support of the nominee, if requested by the sub-committee (examples include individuals with whom the nominee has worked or church leaders familiar with the nominee over a period of years).
3. The committee will review the nominations and recommend to the Board their choice for the recipient of the award at the March meeting of the Board.
4. The Board will vote on the recommendation.
5. The award will be bestowed at the annual meeting.
6. Nominations will be solicited annually. However, a recipient need not be selected every year.

## **Section IV. Lifespan Faith Development**

### **A. Governing Principles**

The Lifespan Faith Development (LFD) program of the UUC is committed to creating an environment for volunteers, students, and their families that reflects our [mission](#), [Covenant for Right Relations](#), our [UU principles](#), and the [UUC covenants](#).

Ours is an inclusive program: We celebrate and respect similarities and differences among individuals and families.

LFD programs do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, physical disability, age, national origin, religion, physical appearance, or political affiliation.

Everyone is responsible for honoring, to the best of their abilities, our shared UUC covenants, the UU principles, and LFD-program-specific agreements.

Our goal is to support the development of each student to their fullest potential.



## **1. Special Needs**

LFD welcomes children, youth and adults with special needs, but recognizes that our program may have limits to the level of assistance that we are able to provide. While UUC provides a nurturing learning environment, it is also a very small organization in terms of staffing and depends on extensive volunteer involvement to accomplish its goals.

The LFD program is limited in capacity to address special needs, and can only address a narrow range of learning and behavioral challenges. The LFD program collaborates with families to find mutually-agreeable strategies, if possible, for special-needs students.

If a child has a unique medical condition that may require intervention on a timely basis, the UUC strongly encourages parents/guardians to inform the DLFD and teachers/advisors and provide any needed training.

## **B. Lifespan Faith Development Structure**

LFD programs are administered by the Director of Lifespan Faith Development (DLFD), who reports to the Minister and the Board, and is overseen by the Lifespan Faith Development Committee (LFDC). Further staff support may be provided by an LFD Assistant, who reports to the DLFD.

The DLFD is empowered to interpret policy and to develop appropriate processes to enact policies. The DLFD is also free to form short-term Task Teams to accomplish the goals of the LFD program, with the composition of Task Teams determinant on the program needs and available resources. The DLFD may make decisions regarding volunteers and other matters without consulting the LFDC.

Although decisions reside with the DLFD, the LFDC has oversight and may, with a majority vote, override any decision made by the DLFD. Disputes are referred to the Minister, with further oversight provided by the Board.

Curriculum for classes is chosen in accord with the themes designated by the DLFD and LFDC. The DLFD, in consultation with LFDC, chooses all curricula.

In addition to the standard components of the LFD program, the LFDC assumes content responsibility for the physical surroundings of the downstairs RE space, the Nursery, and any other space within the church that has been assigned for RE classroom use. The committee must ensure that all physical components are acceptable, safe, and age-appropriate for the children occupying these spaces.

## **C. UUC Child Abuse Prevention Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy has been written with the following objectives:

1. To provide guidelines and procedures that will promote a safe and caring environment for children and youth who participate in programs offered by the UUC.
2. To provide guidelines to decrease the risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse while an infant, child or youth is in the care of a UUC staff person or volunteer. (See below for definition of these forms of abuse.)
3. To provide guidelines and procedures regarding the selection, training, and supervision of adult staff and volunteers.
4. To provide a caring and appropriate response to victims of abuse.
5. To provide guidelines for dealing with a report of abuse and for communicating with authorities and with the press in such an event.
6. To help reduce the UUC's exposure to risk and liability in our programs for children and youth.

### **2. Definition of Child Abuse**

The Commonwealth of Virginia defines child abuse in these terms:

Under section 63.1-248.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, an abused child is defined as one who is less than eighteen years of age, whose parents or other persons responsible for their care create or inflict, or threaten to create or inflict, or allow to be created or inflicted upon such a child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or create a substantial risk of death or disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions. This includes the following: failure to provide care necessary for health; abandonment; committing or allowing sexual exploitation; endangerment or neglect. Child abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or mental, and may be the result of action or the failure to act (e.g., lack of care for a child).

#### **a. Physical Abuse**

A physical injury, threat of injury, or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non-accidental means. Example: asphyxiation; bone fracture; brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma; burns, scalding; cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions; internal injuries, poisoning; sprains, dislocations; gunshot, stabbing wounds.

## b. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes any act defined in the Code of Virginia that is committed, or allowed to be committed, upon a child by their parent or other person responsible for the child's care. Examples of such abuse are: sexual exploitation, sexual molestation, intercourse, oral or anal penetration, exposing a child to sexual activity or pornography, verbal comments of a sexual nature, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism.

## c. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes actions or verbal statements that are intended to intimidate, shame, harass, or diminish a person's sense of self-worth. Examples are name-calling, teasing that creates fear or emotional distress, threats of physical or other punishments that are outside of the accepted discipline procedure outlined below.

### **3. Selection and Screening of Volunteers**

It is the policy of the UUC that no one who has been convicted of any crime involving an infant, child or youth, or who has had such a conviction expunged, will be permitted to work with children and youth. This would include crimes such as contributing to the delinquency of a minor, or other non-sexual crimes.

In order to meet the variety of needs and positions required to provide education and supervision for infants, children and youth while they are in the care of the UUC, two different levels of volunteers will be selected and screened. These levels are described below.

1. **Primary Volunteer:** A primary volunteer is an adult who is at least 18 years of age and works with infants, children, or youth on a regular basis within UUC's approved and on-going programs. Specific programs may set a higher age limit as meets the needs of the children and youth who participate. Examples of primary volunteers would be RE teachers who are assigned to a class or YRUU advisors.
2. **On-Call Volunteers:** An on-call volunteer is an adult who is at least 18 years old and works with infants, children, or youth on an occasional basis within UUC's approved and on-going programs. Examples would be sitters for UUC events, chaperones for lock-ins, one day summer RE teachers, or substitute teachers.

All primary volunteers must be active participants in the life of the Congregation for at least six months before being considered for any positions involving children or youth. This requirement may be waived if a potential volunteer has been active in another congregation and is given a favorable reference by the minister and/or religious education director of that congregation.

With the exception of parents assisting in their child's program as required or as requested, all staff and all volunteers assigned to work with infants, children and youth on an on-going basis must agree to a criminal background check by an agency approved by the Board. The purpose of this check is to ascertain if a potential volunteer has ever been convicted of a crime with a child. These checks will be repeated every fourth year of a volunteer's service. The UUC will bear the cost of this check.

Background checks will not be required for one-time volunteers, as long as a background-checked person will also be in attendance when contact with a child or children occurs.

Background checks will be performed by an entity approved by our insurance carrier. Volunteers may also submit a letter from a current employer verifying successful completion of a background check within the past four years in lieu of the UUC initiating the background check.

The background check reports will go directly to the Minister and/or DLFD and the individual being checked. The specific information from the report will not be shared with any other volunteers. The Minister has the authority to veto a volunteer on the basis of the information received from the background check or other confidential information regarding the volunteer. Volunteers have the right to discuss a veto with the Minister and to take action on their own behalf, which may include an appeal to the Board.

The Administrator has authority to conduct and review background checks in addition to the Minister and DLFD.

All volunteers in the LFD program that work with minors will submit a formal application including two references and will have an interview with the DLFD. The DLFD or LFD Assistant may conduct reference checks and keep a written record of references.

#### **4. Training and Supervision of Volunteers**

All primary volunteers will be required to complete online policy training prior to volunteering with minors. Volunteers who have completed training within the last four years will not be required to complete training for subsequent volunteer years unless there has been a relevant change in the legal statutes regarding child abuse.

This online training will cover the congregation's policies regarding relationships between adult volunteers and children or youth, information on child abuse and how to recognize child abuse, and how to handle an incidence of child abuse or the report of child abuse.

All primary and on-call volunteers will receive a copy of the UUC policy on child abuse prevention.

## **5. The Two-Adult Standard**

It is the policy of UUC that on-going activities and classes for infants, children and youth shall be supervised by two screened and approved volunteers.

In the event that an adult volunteer becomes incapacitated and unable to carry out assigned responsibilities, the DLFD or the person in charge of the program or activity shall be notified and appropriate arrangements shall be made for the care of the children or youth in attendance.

Screened on-call volunteers will be utilized whenever possible to fill unexpected, one-time needs in our programs for children and youth. In the event that a screened on-call adult volunteer is not available to fill an unexpected, one-time need, a parent may be utilized to fill the vacancy, as long as the second adult present is a screened volunteer, and the DLFD or another screened staff member or adult is in the vicinity. The DLFD also has the discretion of using a screened assistant who is at least 16 years old as the second volunteer. If a second volunteer is not available, the children or youth will be returned to their parents or guardians or placed in another classroom.

Additionally, in keeping with UUA best practices, LFD teachers and advisors who are married or involved in a romantic partnership may not serve as the sole two adult primary volunteers in a classroom or other program. Although they may both volunteer for the same activity, attendance at the activity must be on different dates, or in the presence of a third adult volunteer, approved by the DLFD. Married/romantically involved adults may volunteer together in on-call volunteer positions.

If a staff person or primary volunteer wishes to meet with a child or youth one-on-one outside of normal classroom or program activities, the parent or guardian of that child or youth must give explicit permission for the meeting to occur. If the child or youth does not want the parent to be notified of the meeting, then a second staff person must be present for the meeting. In the case of high school youth, a second young person of the youth's choosing may also sit in.

## **6. Open Classrooms**

1. Classrooms will be arranged so that windows are not totally obstructed, and dividers or curtains are partially open.
2. The DLFD or someone appointed by the DLFD to act in their place will observe classrooms without prior notification to the teachers each Sunday.
3. Parents and guardians are welcome to observe RE classrooms at any time. However, whenever possible, we strongly encourage parents

to inform the teacher and/or DLFD in advance, as unannounced visits can be disruptive.

## **7. Parents and Guardians**

Parents and guardians have an important role to play in the prevention of sexual and physical abuse. To support parents and guardians as they educate and instruct their children about this issue, the UUC will offer a workshop on the topic of sexual and physical abuse of children, upon demand.

## **8. Parental Involvement in the Classroom**

While parents are welcome to visit a classroom without notice, a parent's ongoing presence in the classroom is still subject to the Child Abuse Prevention Policy. The policy states that all adults involved in ongoing contact with minors in classrooms are required to have background and reference checks.

There is an expectation that a child will be able to be separate from their parents for a one-hour class, in order for a child to be enrolled. However, LFD recognizes that children may experience separation anxiety in new classrooms, particularly in settings with younger children, and is committed to helping children and parents through this transition, within the boundaries of the Child Abuse Prevention Policy.

Parents may attend a class, or a portion of a class, for three visits, to help the child transition. If further parental involvement is still required after three visits, the parent will meet with the DLFD to jointly develop a transitional plan. In this plan, the parent will leave the classroom for longer periods each week until the child is fully independent.

Should a child require parental involvement to ease separation anxiety at some future date after the initial transition has occurred, a new period of transition will begin, with the parent again able to attend classes for three visits, before a transition plan must be developed.

Parents of children with special needs may be requested or required to attend classes with their child(ren) by a teacher or the DLFD. This attendance is allowed within the confines of the Child Abuse Prevention Policy, without the requirement of a background and reference check, and with no expectation of separation, or transition plan, required.

## **9. Reporting Suspected Abuse**

Both the Minister and DLFD are regarded as mandated reporters if they suspect that abuse or neglect of a child has occurred. As advocates for the welfare of all children, the UUC strongly encourages all adults who

suspect the abuse or neglect of a child make a report to either the Department of Social Services or the local police.

We recognize that the issue of potential abuse must be handled with the appropriate respect and privacy for the individuals/families involved. The alleged victim, their family members, and the person accused of the abuse shall be treated with respect and dignity.

1. In order to facilitate the appropriate management of a report of suspected child abuse, the Board, in consultation with the Minister, will appoint a Task Force. The members of this Task Force should have some professional knowledge about the topic of child abuse and family issues.
2. The purpose of the Task Force is to be available to give counsel to the Minister, DLFD and President, to meet with the alleged victim and their family and also with the person accused of the abuse. The work of this Task Force is to be held in strict confidence. The names of the members of the Task Force will be posted online.
3. All volunteers and the non-mandated staff of the UUC are strongly encouraged to report suspected child abuse, endangerment, or neglect to the appropriate authorities within 72 hours of determining that abuse or neglect may have occurred. Anyone making a report of child abuse as per above should also report their suspicions to the Minister, the DLFD or the President. The person who receives the report will then notify the other staff person(s) and/or the President.
4. If the person who first suspects the abuse declines to make the report, the Minister or DLFD will make a report to the appropriate agency. If the Minister or DLFD are unavailable, the President or a member of the Task Force will contact the appropriate agency.
5. When a report of suspected child abuse is made, the President will notify the agent representing the congregation's insurance company within 24 hours of the initial report. If the President is not available, the President-Elect or a member of the Task Force should make these reports.
6. All reports of suspected child abuse will be documented at the time that the report is made. The person writing the report will sign it and the staff person who first received the report of the incident shall keep a copy.
7. Anyone suspected of child abuse will not be permitted to have contact with children or youth of this congregation while on UUC property pending resolution of the allegation. Staff accused of abuse shall be immediately relieved of any responsibilities involving children or youth and are forbidden to have any contact with UUC children or youth on or off UUC property with the exception of their own family members, pending resolution of the allegation.

8. In the event that an accusation of abuse is made against the Minister, the President will notify the Task Force, and the UUA Department of Ministry. If the President is not available, the President-Elect will make the contacts. The President or President-Elect will convene an emergency meeting of the Board to inform the Board of the allegations.
9. The President, in consultation with the Board, the Minister, the DLFD, and the Task Force will determine how information about the allegation of child abuse will be communicated to the congregation. If the allegation is against the Minister, DLFD, Board member or Task Force, the Board will consult with the alleged party regarding timeline and the communication plan. The Board may also meet in session closed to the alleged party. The Board will make final determination regarding the course of communication.

### **10. Managing Convicted Sex Offenders**

Adults, youth and children who are known to have a criminal charge pending or have pled guilty to or have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse, or as a sex offender, will not be allowed to work with children or youth.

If it becomes known that a convicted sex offender is attending the church or any church activities, the following steps shall be taken.

1. The Minister will check the local sex offender registry and meet with the individual to discuss any concerns that have been raised.
2. The person will then be asked to meet with the Task Force.
3. The individual will be asked to sign a release form so that the Minister can contact their sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist, as well as the person's parole officer. The therapist and the parole officer will be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the sex offender will re-offend and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Limited Access Agreement ought to be placed on the person's participation. The individual may also be asked to go for a professional assessment with a therapist who specializes in working with sex offenders. If the offender refuses permission to contact the therapist or refuses to go for an assessment, the congregation may refuse participation in any congregation activity.
4. If the assessment indicates that the person has completed or is participating successfully in treatment and is not at high risk for recidivism, the Task Force will develop a Limited Access Agreement. If the professional assessment indicates that the person is at high risk for re-offending, the person will be denied involvement in the faith community until treatment is successful at reducing the risk.



5. All persons with past histories of sexual offenses will be asked to sign a Limited Access Agreement. Upon entry into the congregation and depending on the circumstances, the person may be asked to sign one annually. If the offender refuses to do so, they may then be denied access to congregation functions and church property.
6. The Task Force will meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom it has a Limited Access Agreement to review the arrangement and address any concerns.
7. The President, in consultation with the Board, the Minister, the DLFD and the Task Force will determine how information about the presence of a convicted sex offender will be communicated to the congregation.

### **11. Managing the Media**

In the event that a report of suspected child abuse becomes public, the Minister and the President of the Congregation will be the contacts for the media. The Minister and the President should be in frequent contact with each other to maintain consistency in the information that is released to the media.

In the event that either the Minister or the President is accused of child abuse, the President-Elect shall be the second contact person for the press and the congregation.

The advice of the UUA and an attorney should be sought before a public statement is released. Statements should be factual and should avoid blaming or speculation of the outcome of any investigation or prosecution.

### **12. Policy Review**

The Child Abuse Prevention Policy of the UUC shall be reviewed annually by the Lifespan Faith Development Committee which may make suggestions for changes to the Board.

## **D. Multi-Age Childcare Policies for Events at UUC**

This section pertains to all UUC events that require childcare.

### **1. Childcare Providers**

- a. A childcare provider shall be hired for congregational events, other than Sunday services, that are open to the general membership.

Those requiring childcare shall sign up one week prior to the event to ensure the proper number of childcare providers.

- b. At least two childcare providers shall be provided for all services.
- c. The UUC may choose to provide childcare for other events that are a part of congregational activities, at the discretion of the Administrator. If childcare is not arranged by the UUC, parents or guardians may arrange with the Administrator to use the facilities of UUC for childcare. The parents or guardians of these children are responsible for hiring and supervising the childcare provider(s) for their children. The Administrator will provide a list of screened childcare providers as a courtesy, but UUC accepts no responsibility for those hired by the parents or guardians.
- d. In accordance with the State of Virginia's guidelines for provider to child ratios for center-based care, childcare providers will be assigned using these guidelines:
  - Infants (1:4)
  - Young toddlers (1:5)
  - 2 and 3 years (1:10)
  - 4 years (1:12)
  - School age (1:20)Multi-age groups should use an appropriate ratio based on the age of the children attending, or, if unknown, default to the ratio for the lowest age child expected to attend.
- e. One adult provider, 18 years or older, is to always be present. Additional paid providers must be at least 16 years old. Younger youth may volunteer to help in the nursery, but will not count towards provider-child ratios.
- f. In the event that a scheduled childcare provider must cancel, they shall contact the DLFD if the event is RE related or the Administrator if the DLFD is unavailable. For non-RE events, they should contact the Administrator or the event coordinator if the Administrator is unavailable. If the Administrator or event coordinator are both unavailable, the childcare provider shall contact the Minister.

## **2. Sign In**

Parents will sign-in on a list requesting parent's names and children's names and ages in case staff needs to locate them during the event.

### **3. Outdoor Playground**

An adult must be present on the playground at all times when children are playing there. Adults must read and enforce playground rules. See [Use of RE Facilities, Playground Use](#) below.

### **4. Nursery**

Multi-Age childcare events follow standard practices for Nursery use at UUC. See [Use of RE Facilities, Nursery Use](#) below.

### **5. Pick up**

At the end of the event, children will not be released from the childcare area until they are picked up by the parents.

### **6. Alcohol Policy**

Alcohol may not be consumed by caregivers in areas where UUC is providing childcare.

## **E. Safety Rules for Parents**

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children before and after RE classes, inside and outside the UUC building, or anywhere on our grounds.

Parents are asked to greet their children as soon as RE classes end each Sunday, in accordance with the [release policy](#).

Outside boundaries that are acceptable play areas for children include any of the grassy areas. The wooded areas on the UUC property are off-limits to children, as they are out of sight of the UUC building and lawn, and are often littered with potentially dangerous materials. The drainage ditch adjacent to the playground may be approached by children only under adult supervision.

Children are asked to follow the same behavioral expectations at church as they do at their school or educational gathering. For the safety of our very young and very old attendees, no running is allowed indoors.

Parents are asked to discuss the expectations and rules for safety with their children.

## **F. Behavioral Policies**

In all policies, the goal of the UUC is to affirm our UU principles. Because children, youth and adults are at different stages of development, we recognize that reasonable expectations of their accountability and responsibility are also different. The LFD program expects all participants, at all ages and stages, and in all roles, to covenant with each other and to

model our UU principles, consistent with their developmental stage. Adults in all roles; parents, teachers and students, will abide by the [Covenant for Right Relations](#) and all other UUC behavioral covenants for adults.

The following are prohibited during all UUC-sanctioned LFD activities:

1. No exclusive relationships or activities including sexual or non-sexual behavior
2. Possession and/or use of drugs and alcohol.
3. All forms of violence (physical, verbal, sexual, and otherwise).
4. Weapons.

Additional behavioral guidelines specific to LFD roles are below.

### **1. Guidelines for Children and Youth**

Our goal is to aid in the development of each student to the student's fullest potential. The following policies are specific to LFD children and youth:

1. Children and youth must ask, and be granted permission by an adult LFD volunteer or the DLFD, before leaving the classroom or meeting space during LFD program time.
2. Supplies and property must be respected and not wasted or destroyed.
3. Everyone waits their turn to speak.
4. Everyone cleans up their own messes.
5. Disparaging comments and put-downs will not be tolerated.
6. Students are encouraged to recognize and resist stereotypes and biases and to challenge prejudice.

### **2. Guidelines for Adult LFD Students**

In addition to the LFD policies noted above, classroom teachers and attendees may also form classroom covenants as a guideline for behavior.

### **3. Guidelines for Teachers, Advisors, and Other LFD Volunteers**

UUC aspires to support its teachers, advisors and volunteers in creating and sustaining safe, inclusive classroom and group experiences. We view the LFD program as a partnership with parents. Consistent communication between volunteers and parents is essential.

In classroom situations, teachers will guide students to create age-appropriate rules and consequences. With older children, a covenanting process may be used. Covenants or rules that are created for classrooms will be posted in class and reviewed periodically.

In addition to the overall behavioral guidelines noted above, teachers, advisors and other LFD volunteers are expected to follow the policies below:

1. No corporal punishment or verbal abuse (ridicule) will be used.
2. Teachers, Advisors and other LFD volunteers will develop and enforce classroom/group covenants and rules with their students.
3. Repeated, or serious, violation of classroom/group covenants or rules will be brought to parent/guardians' attention through written and/or verbal communication, at the teacher or DLFD's discretion.
4. If significant, intentional damage to property or physical injury occurs, there will be an Accident/Incident report written and given to the parent, and a copy held in a confidential file in the DLFD's office.
5. Because a single child will not be permitted to compromise the experience for the entire class, it may be necessary in some cases for the child to be placed under the supervision of the parent or guardian during RE class time.

Teachers, advisors and other volunteers will consult the DLFD about specific or ongoing behavior problems.

#### **4. Guidelines for Parents**

When at UUC, parents/guardians are responsible for their children's behavior and well-being at all times other than classes or official youth group meetings.

Acceptance and adherence to the [LFD Program Covenant](#) is required for registration of children into the LFD program. Violation of UUC/LFD rules and/or policies may result in removal from, or denial of registration for, LFD programming.

#### **5. Emergency Suspension**

Any child, youth or adult, whose presence poses an immediate danger to persons and/or property, and/or an ongoing threat of disruption, may be removed from the UUC property immediately. Processes regarding suspension will occur as soon as practicable thereafter.

#### **6. Consequences**

The DLFD, in consultation with the Minister, will determine the appropriate consequences for policy violations and/or a substantive breaking of covenant. The DLFD and Minister may consult with any LFD volunteer deemed necessary for best discernment.

Should the DLFD's child be involved in such an incident, the Minister will assume the role normally held by the DLFD to determine consequences. Should the Minister's child be involved in an incident, the Board Liaison for LFD will assume the Minister's role of consultant to the DLFD. In both cases, the DLFD or Minister is free to participate in the role of parent.

The DLFD and Minister may choose to inform any and all volunteers engaged in supervisory roles in LFD programs, if their leadership in programs will be best supported by knowledge of policy violations, broken covenants, and/or subsequent consequences.

The DLFD will maintain a record of such incidents in a confidential file, located in the DLFD's office.

## **G. Classroom / Youth Group Policies**

The following policies apply to all UUC classes and youth group meetings that are attended by minors, including minors in the Nursery. All activities and meetings will be held in accordance with the requirements of the [Child Abuse Protection Policy](#). All volunteers will be supervised in their role with the youth. The DLFD or Minister may attend or be present at all classes and meetings.

### **1. Registration**

Children and youth should be registered annually each fall in the appropriate programs. Registration information will be sent to returning families in late summer for fall registration. New families may register at any time during the year. Special programs, such as OWL and Coming for Age, may hold separate registration drives at a time appropriate for the program.

Registration per group:

1. Nursery: open to children age 0-3 years old
2. RE classes: open to children age 3 through 8th grade
3. MSYG: open to youth in grades 6-8
4. YRUU: open to youth in grades 9-12
5. OWL: open to children and youth in appropriate age designation for class (grades K-1; 4-6; 8-9)
6. Coming of Age: open to youth in grade 8, or as determined by the DLFD

### **2. Curriculum**

Curriculum for all classes is chosen by the DLFD, in consultation with the LFDC. Classes or events chosen for inclusion on the LFD calendar will be promoted in UUC advertising venues. Choice of venue and timing is at the discretion of the DLFD, in consultation with the Administrator.

Individuals or groups who would like LFD to sponsor a class or event should submit a prospectus to the DLFD and the appropriate committee, which will review class suggestions at their meetings. LFD retains the right to choose the timing and teachers/facilitators for all offerings. (See [Process for Becoming a LFD Sponsored Class or Activity](#).)

LFD sponsored activities are bound by the [Communications Policy](#), and are to be advertised as UUC events. All advertising must be approved by the DLFD and/or Communications Committee.

Individuals who book space independently to hold a class or discussion group for adults are not considered as part of the LFD program. These classes are not advertised at UUC. Rental space is booked through the Administrator.

LFD retains the right to change its class or event offerings at any time with no notice.

### **3. Confidential Information**

Teachers and advisors may come in contact with information of a confidential nature during check-ins or classes/meetings. A child/youth's confidentiality should be respected, except under the following circumstances:

1. If a child is doing harm to themselves.
2. If a child is doing harm to another.
3. If someone else is doing harm to a child.

Under these circumstances, the parent/guardian of the child/youth, or the DLFD or Minister, should be informed. The safety of the child/youth must be the primary driver.

If a volunteer is uncertain as to whether or not information should be shared, they can speak to the DLFD or Minister, who will maintain confidentiality if it is determined that confidentiality should not be breached. When in doubt, the Minister will make the final decision on whether or not information should remain confidential.

### **4. Recruitment**

With the exception of the circumstances outlined in section 3. *Confidential Information*, LFDC believes that it is important to respect the privacy of youth at older ages.

To that end, parents/guardians of children registered in YRUU will not be recruited or approved as YRUU advisors.

We will also not recruit or approve parents/guardians as OWL teachers at grades 8-9 or above for classes in which the parent's child is registered.

Except for these circumstances, parents are free to volunteer in other activities in which their own child(ren) are registered.

### **5. Youth Group Advisor Guidelines**

Youth groups should strive to have gender diversity on an advisor team. 4-6 advisors will be recruited annually for each youth group.

Two adult advisors are required to be present with youth at all times. If needed, permissible additional adult advisors may be other team members, committee liaisons, and/or parents approved by advisors and/or DLFD. The adult-to-youth ratio will be no less than 1:7.

Any offsite meetings must be approved in advance by the DLFD and/or the governing committee.

At the end of all meetings, advisors will ensure that all youth are picked up by parents, or have a designated ride, before leaving UUC or the offsite meeting location.

## **6. Substitute Teachers**

If a substitute is required for a class or meeting, teachers and advisors should attempt to arrange for a substitute in this order:

1. Other team members
2. Substitute from approved list (DLFD will provide a substitute list)
3. Parents of child in the classroom or group
4. A background checked Teen Assistant may be used as an assisting teacher.

## **7. Medical Policies**

### **a. Food Allergies**

1. Parents are encouraged to inform the DLFD of food or other allergies that a child may be in contact with during their time at UUC. The DLFD will notify teachers accordingly.
2. No outside food may be brought into classrooms or the Nursery. If needed, snacks will be provided by the DLFD or teachers.
3. If a teacher is providing a snack, the teacher will ensure that no ingredient listed on a child's registration as an allergen is used.
4. If outside volunteers are asked to provide food for a children's party, volunteers may be asked to provide an ingredient list for prepared food.
5. If there are a high incidence of children registered who are allergic to nuts, the DLFD may declare the entire downstairs to be a "nut free" zone. In that event, teachers will ensure that no snacks provided contain nuts or have ingredients processed in a facility that also processes nuts, and volunteers will be asked to provide food that is nut-free.

### **b. Confidentiality**

All information concerning a child, including, but not limited to, medical conditions, learning or developmental disabilities, or discipline issues is



considered confidential and will not be shared beyond the DLFD, teaching team and/or governing committee.

### **8. Flame Policies**

No open flames are allowed in any classroom of children in grade 5 or below. Please use a LED candle or chalice alternative. Use of flame for classes/activities of those older than grade 5 is at the discretion of the activity leader or DLFD. No smoking is allowed of any kind on either floor, including sage and other incense.

### **9. Release Policy**

Children registered in RE in preschool through Grade 3 may not leave the RE classrooms until picked up by their parents or a designated guardian after the service. Children grade 4 and up may wait for their parents in the RE lobby if their classroom is downstairs, or in Elarth Hall if their classroom is upstairs. No child may exit the building without permission of a parent or guardian.

Class time ends at approximately 11:15. If the service ends before 11:15, parents may wait in the RE lobby and hallways until class is over, or may be invited into the classroom at the discretion of the teacher. When the service runs past 11:15, children must remain in their classrooms.

### **10. Classroom Supplies**

Each classroom will have its own RE supply cabinet to store curriculum materials and supplies that are used regularly. There is also a main supply closet downstairs for all teachers to use, that will contain classroom materials used less frequently. All cabinets in all classrooms will be organized in the same way for consistency. Teachers should assist by putting supplies back in the proper place. Teachers should check with the DLFD before purchasing any additional items.

### **11. Door and Key Policy**

For the safety of our students, the downstairs outside doors will remain locked during classroom time, or during planned activities in which a large group of children are present downstairs. Outside of classroom time, the outside doors may be unlocked at the discretion of the DLFD. Locking the doors will occur without notice to parents and children.

Teachers and Assistants wishing to use the outdoors for classes may sign out a key in the RE Office. Keys must be returned to the RE Office immediately following the class or activity and may not be loaned to others.

## **12. Movie, Electronic Media, & Games Policy**

When using movies, electronic media, and games for classrooms and youth groups, the selection of an appropriate medium should be made that is mindful of the age and experience diversity within the classroom/group, and is respectful and inclusive to all.

Movies, media, and games are chosen by the group viewing the medium:

1. YRUU members chose items for YRUU, with approval by YAC.
2. MSYG advisors chose items for MSYG, with approval by the DLFD.
3. OWL teachers chose items for OWL, with approval by the DLFD.

The DLFD and parents will be informed of any movies that will be shown in advance of the showing and provided a link for a movie review from the Parents Guide at [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com).

No R-rated movies will be shown to MSYG. MSYG advisors should choose a movie with unrestricted access, such as G, PG, and PG-13. For all groups, efforts should be taken to choose movies that do not promote or glamorize disrespectful relationships or behavior; unsafe sex, or casual sex without commitment; senseless, disturbing and/or glamorized violence; or the use of illegal substances or unhealthy lifestyles.

YRUU and OWL will be required to seek permission from their overseeing committee and the DLFD before showing an R-rated movie, or using any media or game intended for an audience over the age of 14. Efforts should first be made to acquire a suitable medium with a lower rating to ensure inclusion of all youth. Before approving an R-rated movie, committee members and the DLFD will view the movie to determine appropriateness of youth viewing. Before approving a game or electronic media intended for an older audience, committee members and the DLFD will view the item to determine appropriateness of youth use.

No youth will be required to view a chosen film or media, or to play a game. Parents will be required to sign a permission form for R-rated movies.

## **13. Approved Driver Policy**

A minimum of two LFD approved adult volunteers (age 21 or older) must chaperone all offsite officially scheduled events. At least one volunteer must be a primary volunteer with the group traveling offsite (i.e., YRUU advisor for YRUU events; MSYG advisor for MSYG events; RE Teacher for RE events).

Any person planning to drive youth to an offsite event must be an Approved Driver. Approved Drivers are required to:

1. Complete a Volunteer Application.
2. Submit to a background check.

3. Submit to a reference check.
4. Complete a Driver Information form.
5. Show proof of a valid driver's license, and proof of current insurance covering injury and loss of life in their vehicle and other involved vehicles should there be an accident.
6. Have a good driving record.

The minimum adult-to-youth ratio will be no less than 1:7.

Before embarking on any trip outside the New River Valley, the LFD group will develop a travel plan that will include route, waypoints, and a plan for staying in touch.

If the group size requires only one vehicle, two approved adults must travel in that vehicle. If the trip requires two or more vehicles, only one Approved Driver (serving as the driver) is required in the vehicle, up to a maximum of 7 youth per one adult driver, as long as vehicles have come to agreement about how to stay in touch. If two or more vehicles are not traveling together in communication, but are instead traveling essentially on their own, two approved adults must travel in each vehicle.

Ten or fifteen passenger vehicles require two approved adults to travel in the vehicle, one of which must be an Approved Driver (serving as the driver). For trips longer than 5 hours or 350 miles away, both adults must be Approved Drivers, so that no single driver will have to drive for too many hours before getting a break.

When two drivers are required per car and an approved adult volunteer who is not an Approved Driver is used as the second adult, the second adult in a car may be the parent of another child in the car, but may not be the other parent of the driver's child. The second adult may also be an LFD volunteer who has a current background check on file.

When youth are carpooling to the event location, transportation will be a personal decision between parents and not subject to LFD Policies.

#### **14. Lock-ins and Cons Policy**

When scheduled, lock-ins will be considered a part of the program and will be planned to promote the mission of the LFD group. The primary goal of conducting the lock-in must be the emotional safety and well-being of our youth. During a lock-in, all LFD policies remain in effect.

Lock-ins may only be held on the premises of the UUC and will be held no more than twice per year. Each participant will need a signed permission form from his/her parent/guardian.

Lock-ins will occur on evenings that provide sufficient time the next morning for clean-up and wrap-up of activities. Despite the high-energy

potential of lock-ins, it is recommended that lock-ins have lights-out by midnight, to ensure adequate sleep.

The following rules are publicized and followed:

1. Exclusive or sexualized behavior of any kind is not permitted at a UUC sanctioned event.
2. Possession or Use of Drugs and Alcohol are prohibited.
3. All forms of violence, physical, verbal, sexual, or otherwise will not be tolerated during any UUC sanctioned event. Weapons are not permitted.
4. Separate gendered arrangements shall be provided upon request, at all UUC sponsored or financed youth events. Adequate adult supervision shall be provided at all events.

Under no circumstances should a planned lock-in be announced on the UUC website or advertised to the general public.

### **15. Attendance by Minors at Adult RE Classes**

Adult RE classes, events and activities are intended for those ages 18 and older. Youth participants require advance permission from the teacher/facilitator or the DLFD, and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Youth participants are expected to participate fully in the class or activity as adults.

A permission form signed by a parent/guardian will be required for any minor attending the viewing of an R-rated movie at UUC.

### **16. Parent Communication for Youth Groups**

Parents will be invited to a kickoff at the beginning of the year, hosted by the advisors, with the assistance and support of the governing committee, in which plans for the year will be presented and questions and/or issues may be addressed.

Parents will receive contact information regarding advisors, parents, and participating youth.

Advisors will provide parents with information about upcoming activity plans during the year on a regular basis either through mail, email, or the UUC newsletter. Parent feedback will be invited and shared among the advisors, committee, and DLFD.

## **H. LFD Visitor Guidelines to Committee Meetings**

The LFD program welcomes open communication between the LFDC and our congregants. If a congregant has feedback or issues that they would like to discuss, we recommend that the first avenue of communication be with the DLFD, the LFDC chair, and/or the Minister. An initial conversation

can help determine the best course of action for official communications that need to move forward to the committee level. Congregants wishing to address the LFDC as a whole may request time on a meeting agenda or avail themselves of the brief time allowed at the beginning of all LFD meetings for congregant input.

Because the LFDC undertakes a large workload, productive meetings are essential. To ensure that the committee has enough time during the planned meeting to accomplish the needed work while also ensuring that the committee is accessible to UUC congregants, LFD has created these guidelines.

### **1. Meeting Observation:**

Any member/friend of the congregation may observe any LFD meeting, with the exception of conversations about minors, families and volunteers that are considered confidential or private, pursuant to UUC policy and legal requirements (See Executive Session).

LFDC requests that those desiring to observe an LFDC meeting make their intentions known in advance of the meeting date so that the agenda can be arranged, as much as possible, to accommodate their presence. Meeting dates may be found online at [www.uucnr.org](http://www.uucnr.org) in the Calendar. Participation of those observing in the meeting itself is limited to the constraints placed by the committee.

### **2. Addressing the Committee:**

Any congregant may request to be added to any LFDC meeting agenda. LFD asks for requests to be made one week or more in advance of the posted meeting date (see [Calendar at the UUC website](#)).

Requests made with less than one-week notice will be added to the agenda only if the agenda is light enough to allow the item's inclusion. If declined, the item will be added to the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

LFD reserves the right to limit the time allowed for congregants to address the committee. Items will be added to the agenda on a "first come, first served" basis, with consideration for urgency.

If a congregant attends a meeting and requests to address the committee with no prior notice, each congregant will have three minutes to identify their issue.

LFD reserves the right to limit the number of congregants addressing a committee at any one meeting to three. A special meeting may be called at the discretion of the committee.

Should a congregant have an issue which they feel cannot wait until the next planned meeting, the congregant may contact the DLFD, the LFDC Chair, and/or the Minister.

### **3. Executive Session:**

Confidential or private information will be discussed only in Executive Session, open only to committee members, the Minister, and the Board President. During Executive Session discussions that involve a minor, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child may also attend and participate.

By process, a committee will announce their intention to move into Executive Session citing the need for confidentiality. No names or other details will be given. Decisions made in Executive Session will be reflected in the minutes only if they do not violate confidentiality.

### **4. Committee Response:**

For all issues brought to the committee by congregants, the committee will decide if the issue will be addressed at that meeting or if a later response is appropriate. For issues that are not addressed at that meeting, the congregant will receive a written response within three days. Responses may include:

1. A request that the congregant attend another meeting for more in-depth discussion, and placement of the item on the agenda for the following month.
2. Designation of a committee member to speak with the congregant within one week.
3. A determination that the issue is not appropriate for the LFD committee, with a suggestion of the appropriate committee for bringing forth the issue.
4. An approximate timeline for review, if the Committee's "response" will take more than 72 hours.

### **5. Recourse:**

Disputes with the decisions of the LFDC may be taken to the Minister, and subsequently to the Board, as needed. The decisions of the Board are considered final.

Once a Board decision is rendered the issue is considered closed by the committee and the committee will no longer accept discussion of this issue during meeting time.

## **I. LFD Visitor Guidelines for Meetings and Classes of Minors**

The following guidelines apply to RE classes, OWL classes, Middle School Youth Group meetings, YRUU meetings, Coming of Age meetings, and any other meeting that is predominately attended by minors.

In classroom and youth group settings, safety is the predominant concern of the LFD program. UUC and LFD use Safe Congregation recommendations in creating policy governing adult interactions with minors.

At the heart of all policy is the Child Abuse Prevention Policy, located earlier in this document. This policy mandates background and reference checks for adult volunteers in ongoing relationships with minors, as well as the presence of two adults in all classroom and youth group settings.

### **1. Adult attendance in rooms with minors:**

With the exception of a parent with a child in the class/meeting, no adult may attend a RE or OWL class or youth group meeting, or other meeting predominantly attended by minors, without prior approval of the DLFD, Minister, or lead teacher/advisor.

Other than the DLFD, the Minister, or youth group advisors, adult attendance at YRUU meetings and OWL meetings of grade 4 and above may also be subject to approval by the youth in YRUU/OWL. Parents who wish to attend a YRUU meeting or OWL class may be requested to wait to join the meeting/class until after check-in is complete and are requested to contact an advisor or teacher prior to attending.

### **2. YRUU Visitation**

Former members of YRUU may return to visit YRUU meetings once bridged, but may not regularly attend meetings.

Adults, youth, or friends of members can visit YRUU meetings with advance notice to the advisors; visiting adults are **not** encouraged to be present for YRUU check-in due to confidentiality. YRUU members may request that the visitor sit out of check-in.

## **J. Policies Regarding Use of RE Facilities**

### **1. Nursery Use**

1. All organic trash such as diapers, food waste, tissues, etc., shall be carried out to the outside trash cans when a group leaves the nursery.
2. The changing table shall be washed after each use.
3. The main room of the Nursery is intended for use by children age 3 and under. In order to provide a safe and enjoyable environment,

- toys for older children shall not be brought into the main nursery room. Nursery toys for children ages 0-3 shall remain in the nursery.
4. At no time are children of any age to be left unsupervised in the nursery.
  5. All toys shall be returned to their appropriate bins or shelves before leaving the nursery.
  6. Items for donation to the nursery shall be given to the Administrator or DLFD

## **2. Outdoor Playground Use**

An adult must be present on the playground at all times when children are playing there. Adults must read and enforce playground rules:

1. Two adults, or the parent or legal guardian of the playing child, must be present at all times when children are in the playground area.
2. Children should go down the slide one at a time and sit on their bottoms.
3. The sand should stay in the sand box, and mulch should stay in mulched areas.
4. Children are expected to respect the rights of each other, harm no one physically or verbally and follow instructions from supervising adults.
5. Children are expected to treat the playground equipment with respect.
6. Balls are to be thrown only in open spaces and not within the fenced area.

## **3. Downstairs Classroom Use**

Tables and chairs may be rearranged in classrooms as needed, but must be returned to their original setup, after use. Adult-sized chairs are stored downstairs and may be used without permission.

Supplies, including those located in classroom cabinets, the supply closet and work rooms, may not be used without prior staff permission.

All classroom property and supplies must be returned to their original location.

# **K. Library Materials Selection and Collection Development Policy**

## **1. Objectives**

The purpose of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation (UUC) Library is to provide all individuals in the congregation with carefully selected books



and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of faith development as a Unitarian Universalist. The library is considered part of the LFD program.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of space and budget, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet congregational interests and needs. This materials selection/collection development policy is used by staff in the selection of materials, and also serves to acquaint the congregation with the principles of selection.

The materials selection/collection development policy will be reviewed and/or revised annually, or as the need arises.

## **2. Responsibility for Selection**

The responsibility for selection of library materials rests with staff. This responsibility may be shared with congregational members; however, staff answers to the Board and the congregation for actual selections made. The Board has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of staff.

## **3. Criteria for Selection**

The categories of materials collected for the UUC Library are [published](http://www.uucnr.org/learn/library) at [www.uucnr.org/learn/library](http://www.uucnr.org/learn/library). This list of categories will be reviewed and/or revised annually, or as the need arises.

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

1. Individual merit of each item.
2. Popular appeal/demand.
3. Suitability of material for the congregation.
4. Existing library holdings and collection balance.
5. Budget/availability.

Reviews may be consulted when approving new items for inclusion in the library, including reviews from Booklist, School Library Media Journal, The New York Times Book Review and LibraryThing.

The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a portion taken out of context.

## **4. Gifts and Donations**

The UUC library accepts gifts and donations of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. Once accepted, if they are not needed because of duplication, condition, dated information, or subject matter, staff can dispose of them as they see fit. It is desirable for gifts of specific titles to be

offered after consultation with staff. Book selection will be made by staff if a monetary gift is offered and no specific book is requested.

It is not within the library's domain to assess the financial value of donated materials. However, a receipt with a list of gift materials will be given to the donor if it is requested before the materials have been processed.

## **5. Weeding**

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of staff. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

## **6. Potential Problems or Challenges**

The UUC Library and LFD staff recognize that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some congregants. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for children's readings rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials in the adult library will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

Material contained within the children's library may be sequestered at the discretion of the Director of Lifespan Faith Development.

## **7. Challenged Materials**

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Congregants requesting that material be withdrawn from, or restricted within, the collection may appeal to the DLFD or the Minister. Appeals of the decisions of the DLFD or Minister may be taken to the Lifespan Faith Development Committee. Appeals of the decisions of the Lifespan Faith Development Committee may be taken to the Board. Decisions made by the Board are final.

## **L. Evacuation Plan**

In the event that evacuation is necessary, parents should not attempt to go downstairs and retrieve their children. Parents should follow their own

evacuation plan while the RE staff and teachers will evacuate the children. We will ensure that reunion occurs once danger has passed. Below follows the evacuation plan for children.

### **1. Evacuation Areas**

The designated evacuation areas for UUC are the farthest points from the building in the meadow behind the church; an alternate evacuation point is the center parking area. If the DLFd determines that the designated evacuation areas do not provide adequate protection for the children, a previously determined alternate evacuation assembly area will be utilized.

1. Outdoor Assembly Point: Meadow, with access through hedge to street behind UUC
2. Site Evacuation Point: The Second Tier Parking Area
3. Off-Site Evacuation Point: The Blacksburg Community Center
4. Transportation arrangements: Blacksburg Transit

In the event of an evacuation the designated transportation (Blacksburg Transit) will be sent to the church for assisting in the transportation of the children.

The emergency response team will assist in the orderly evacuation of the children.

If an evacuation is ordered by the town emergency response organization, the Incident Commander for the Town will identify the route and location of the nearest evacuation shelter.

### **2. Portable Emergency Kit**

The Portable Emergency Kit shall be located in the DLFd's downstairs office. This kit shall contain: Essential documents (sign-in record and child emergency information), the first aid kit, and a battery-operated flashlight. The Portable Emergency Kit shall be carried by a caregiver at all times during any evacuation.

### **3. Sheltering/Sheltering-In-Place**

In the event of a natural emergency (e.g., tornado, severe storms, or hazardous airborne chemicals incident outside the church's facility) the children and other occupants of the building will shelter in place in the prearranged designated areas as necessary. Sheltering **in place** is defined as moving people into the building and isolating the building environment from the outside.

During a Shelter-in-Place evacuation:

1. Staff and students shall remain calm and assemble in either the hall bathrooms or in classroom 2.
2. Staff shall ensure all students are accounted for.

3. Any items that may fall on sheltered people will be removed to a safe place.
4. Windows and doors will remain closed and, in the event of a hazardous airborne materials emergency, all air intake vents will be covered to provide protection.
5. If necessary, emergency response personnel will shut off all HVAC systems to isolate the outside air from the building if the system has not already shut down.
6. Staff and students shall remain in the building until notified by the emergency response authorities that the situation has been resolved or that an evacuation has been ordered.

#### **4. Evacuation of Building**

The decision to evacuate the church building will be made by the DLFD. When the decision is made to evacuate the building, the DLFD will make the announcement in the most expeditious way possible that all persons are to evacuate to their assigned assembly area and await further instructions and/or activate the building fire alarm. The DLFD will notify appropriate personnel.

Teachers will evacuate their children as follows:

1. Collect clipboards with attendance sheets and Portable Emergency Kit.
2. Gather children in a group and supervise an orderly evacuation to the designated assembly area (Meadow).
3. Middle school class should evacuate through the Nursery and assist Nursery personnel with small children.
4. Account for all children, staff, and visitors during the evacuation process. Attach and display green sign to front of clipboard if all children are accounted for and no help is needed; attach and display red sign to front of clipboard if all children are not accounted for, or if immediate help is needed.
5. Remain in assembly area until the DLFD either:
  - a. determines the need for an alternative on-site evacuation point;
  - b. determines the need for an evacuation off church grounds; or
  - c. clears the return to the evacuated facility.

#### **5. Evacuation of UUC Grounds**

In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation away from UUC premises, UUC shall coordinate necessary provisions for Blacksburg Transit to transport the staff and children to The Blacksburg Community Center. Teachers shall remain with the students until all children are able to evacuate to their homes with a parent/guardian or emergency contact person.

#### a. Evacuation Procedures

The following measures should be taken during an evacuation of church grounds:

1. Collect the clipboard with Attendance Record to use during the evacuation and take it along during transport to the host facility.
2. Leave the building in a safe and orderly manner as quickly as possible.
3. Upon arrival at the Assembly Site, account for all children, staff, and visitors during the evacuation process. Hold up a green or red sign in accordance with the procedure above.
4. Transport all necessary supplies, records, emergency numbers, and cell phone in the Portable Emergency Kit.
5. Determine the host facility based on the situation. (Primary location: Blacksburg Community Center)
6. Confirm transportation and arrival time with Blacksburg Transit.
7. Contact host facility with estimated time for arrival of children and staff.
8. Notify families of evacuation and host facility information
9. Make arrangements for support of children at the host facility until reunited with families or returned to the evacuated facility.

#### b. Initiating an Evacuation from Church Grounds:

The DLF is responsible for notifying building occupants to initiate evacuation of the building, ensuring that the building has been safely evacuated, and for ensuring accountability for all occupants.

Evacuation duties:

1. Initiate evacuation procedure by either pulling the fire alarm box and/or verbally notifying building occupants.
2. Report to the designated assembly area.
3. Account for all students and staff.
4. Determine if the evacuation area provides adequate safety of children. Initiate further evacuation to another facility if necessary.
5. Coordinate with the town emergency response personnel as needed.
6. Notify UUC of evacuation initiation.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that all occupants in their assigned areas safely and properly evacuate to their designated assembly areas.

## **6. Contact Persons during an Emergency:**

- a. Liaison between church and emergency services: Chair of the Safety Committee.

This person will be responsible for greeting fire/rescue/police personnel, and for reporting all known details of the situation. In the absence of the Safety Committee Chair, another committee member will serve as alternate.

- b. Media contact: the Minister and the President of the Congregation.

The Minister and the President should be in frequent contact with each other to maintain consistency in the information that is released to the media. If neither is available, the media contact will be the President-Elect.

## **7. Reunion between Children and Parents/Guardians:**

Parents will follow their own evacuation plans and should not attempt a reunion with their child(ren) until it has been determined that all danger is past.

The DLFD and Safety Committee Chair will determine when reunion may occur and will make an announcement to parents.

Teachers will remain with children until all children have been reunited with parents.

# **Section V. Building and Grounds**

## **A. Maintenance**

Board approval shall be required only for maintenance and emergency expenditures in excess of \$750.

## **B. Use of Alcohol**

This policy applies to social events held on the premises of the UUC, whether sponsored by the Congregation or by another group. This policy does not apply to events held in members' homes or when small groups of members meet to socialize privately off of UUC property.

The UUC shall carry liability insurance that generally covers liability for alcohol use on the premises.

Alcohol use is also discussed in the Lifespan Faith Development section under [Multi-Age Childcare](#) and [Behavioral Policies](#).

This policy shall be posted on the premises where those attending social events will see it, and it shall be attached to agreements signed by groups renting our facilities.

Alcohol use on the premises is limited to beer and wine/champagne.

### **1. Liability and Safety**

1. Alcohol may not be sold at or for events on the UUC premises. In the event alcohol is donated for bidding at events like the annual auction, it shall be labeled "not for consumption on the premises."
2. The area in which alcohol is being served must be staffed by volunteers at all times. Only adults of legal drinking age who have expressed an understanding of the alcohol policy as well as willingness to ask for age verification and to refuse service to those who appear to be inebriated may serve alcohol.
3. Alcoholic beverages must be labeled as such. Similarly, food containing alcohol (especially non-volatilized alcohol) must be labeled as such.
4. No alcohol may be served to anyone less than the legal drinking age in Virginia.
5. All those attending social events on the UUC premises at which alcohol is served are responsible for monitoring their own and each other's alcohol consumption. At any such event, the organizers must advertise and provide for alternative transportation to deter driving by any person who appears to be inebriated.
6. Alcoholic beverages may not be left behind on the premises after social events.
7. Groups renting the premises for events at which alcohol may be served must sign on the rental policy to indicate that they have received and will abide by the UUC policy.

### **2. Accommodating non-drinkers and drinkers**

1. Non-alcoholic beverages must be served and prominently displayed at social events on the premises.
2. Food must be served at events where alcoholic beverages are served.
3. If alcoholic beverages are to be served at UUC-sponsored social events, that fact must be included in the publicity for the events. The group serving alcoholic beverages must specify the times of service. Similarly, alcohol-free events must be publicized as such.

## **C. Building Use**

As a matter of first priority our building resources are intended to provide space and shelter for the worship, educational, and program goals of the

congregation. Our congregation also wishes to have our building used as a center for community activities. We recognize a continuing conflict between a policy of easy and inexpensive availability in order to serve the community and the reality of maintenance costs. The following document serves to detail:

1. general building use guidelines that apply to all groups;
2. descriptions of various group designations including: sponsored, Congregation member, non-member and non-profit groups;
3. procedures for implementing the building use policies.

We realize that the application of these guidelines must be flexible to serve the changing goals and needs of the Congregation.

### **1. Guidelines**

These guidelines apply to all individuals and groups using the building without exception.

1. The Congregational building and grounds are a non-smoking facility.
2. The use of illegal drugs on the Congregation premises is prohibited.
3. Weapons and firearms are prohibited from Congregation property.
4. No group shall use the building without scheduling with the Administrator. All groups shall make every effort to cooperate with other groups using the building.
5. Each group is responsible for maintaining the building in good condition and will be held accountable for any damage to the building and its furnishings.
6. All expendable materials must be provided by the group. Groups must obtain permission from the Administrator in advance to use congregational equipment.
7. No permanent changes in the decoration of the building may be made without permission of the Board.
8. In order for a group to use the playground, permission must be obtained from the Administrator.
9. Any group using the building must have a representative. This person shall be contacted if any problems arise and shall be responsible for the group acting within the building use guidelines.
10. All non-congregation members using the building shall have a representative sign a waiver form releasing the congregation from any liability in the case of illness or injury.
11. Congregation members using the building shall sign a waiver form releasing the Congregation from any liability in the case of illness or injury for activities not covered by the building insurance policy or in any other case which the Board decides is necessary.



12. The Congregation reserves the right to have its official representative make a brief statement at a group or meeting regarding the Congregation's purposes and the current building use policy.
13. Building use is on a first-come, first-served basis for empty time slots. Building use reservations shall be renewed on a yearly basis. Reservations for regularly scheduled events can be made up to 4 months before the first date of meeting. Reservations for special events can be made up to 1 year in advance. Any conflicts shall be resolved by the Board.
14. The Congregation reserves the right to deny the use of our building and facilities to any group. Granting use of the building does not imply endorsement of any program or group, nor does denial imply disapproval.
15. Failure to pay rental fees or comply with building use guidelines may result in the termination of a building use agreement.

## **2. Guidelines by Type of Groups**

Group types are defined in the [Organizational Structure](#) section above.

### **a. Sponsored Groups (SG)**

SGs shall not be required to pay rental fees for the use of the building for a maximum of 10 hours per week. The Board reserves the right to set a different limit on the number of hours of free building use. SGs may use Congregational equipment, and may be granted permission to use kitchen facilities, as long as it does not conflict with usage by other groups. If such a conflict should arise, it will be resolved by the Administrator.

### **b. Congregational Groups (CG)**

CGs will not be required to pay rental fees for the use of the building for a maximum of 10 hours per week. The Board reserves the right to set a different limit on the number of hours of free building use. CGs may use Congregational equipment, and may be granted permission to use kitchen facilities, as long as it does not conflict with usage by other groups. If such a conflict should arise, it will be resolved by the Board.

### **c. Member Groups (MG)**

MGs will be charged a lower rental rate according to the Rate Schedule for Building Rental.

### **d. Non-member groups (NMG)**

NMGs will be charged the full rental rate according to the Rate Schedule for Building Rental.

e. Non-Profit Groups (NPG)

NPGs will be charged non-profit rental rates according to the Rate Schedule for Building Rental.

### **3. Rental Rates**

Building rental rates shall be based on an annually updated Rate Schedule for Building Rental. The Administrator has the right to negotiate the charged rate. The Administrator may consult with the Board on any decision. A group renting space has the right to appeal a decision by the Administrator to the Board.

### **4. Considerations for Implementing Above Policies**

The impact of the potential use of the Congregational building and grounds and the well-being of the congregation and neighborhood will be considered in a decision regarding use of the Congregational facilities. Among the factors to be considered are:

1. the capacity of the building and grounds
2. hours of intended use
3. disturbance of the neighborhood or other groups using the building
4. whether the intended use would comply with smoking, drug, and alcohol policies
5. any practices which we deem to be manipulative, deceptive, or a danger to the Congregation or community.

### **5. Scheduling of building use**

The Administrator will act on behalf of the Board for the purpose of scheduling building use. The decisions to approve or disapprove a request for the use of the building and whether the group has member or non-member status shall normally be made by the Administrator.

### **6. Kitchen Use**

1. The kitchen shall be used ONLY by groups which have received specific permission from the Administrator. Kitchen use is not granted as part of scheduling other rooms, and must be scheduled separately.
2. All organic garbage shall be removed to the outside trash cans after kitchen use. Recyclable materials shall be sorted and put in the bin provided for this purpose.
3. Dishwashers shall be used to wash dishes to ensure proper sanitation.
4. Full trash bags shall be carried to the outside cans. Replace with a new bag.

## **7. Nursery Use**

See Use of [RE Facilities, Nursery Use](#) above.

## **8. Outdoor Playground Use**

See Use of [RE Facilities, Outdoor Playground Use](#) above.

## **9. Downstairs Classroom Use**

See Use of [RE Facilities, Downstairs Classroom Use](#) above.

## **10. Signs and Notices in the Building**

Only literature, announcements, etc. pertaining to UUism, Sponsored Groups, or items consistent with our principles and approved by the Board shall be displayed in the foyer. Other materials shall be displayed on the bulletin board outside the restrooms and on the inside of the kitchen doors.

The kiosks in Elarth Hall are available for posters. Only posters announcing big UUC events (i.e., auction, concerts, stewardship, etc.) are to be placed on glass doors. All should check with the Administrator before placing a poster on a door.

Posters shall have the name of the person placing the poster in the lower left corner along with the date it was placed. After one month or after the event in question, it is the responsibility of the person that put up the poster to remove it. Posters should not be placed on painted surfaces.

The Administrator shall implement this policy and remove dated materials.

## **D. Animals in the Building**

Following Virginia Code § 51.5-40.1 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), UUC defines service animals as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The tasks performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. These definitions specifically exclude animals providing emotional support, therapy, comfort, companion or similar functions.

No animals other than fully trained service animals are allowed in the UUC building. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, UUC staff or leaders, again, following the rules of the ADA, may ask two questions of the handler: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

UUC expects service animals and their handlers to meet the following expectations:

1. Service animals are to remain with their handlers while on UUC property.
2. As some congregants may have health or emotional problems being around dogs, the person with a service dog may be asked to accommodate those people by keeping an appropriate distance or using a particular routing through the building.
3. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
4. Service animals shall not whine, bark, grumble, growl or make other noises unless that noise is an alert, such as to notify a handler who is experiencing a panic attack or a drop in blood sugar.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made in consultation with the minister to accommodate unique events and situations.

## **E. Memorial Garden**

The Memorial Garden is managed by the [Memorial Committee](#).

### **1. Purpose and Use of The Garden**

The Memorial Garden shall be maintained as a long-term repository for cremains in columbarium niches. In addition, there are places for memorial bricks (henceforth pavers), and for the scattering of cremains. The Memorial Garden is intended to be a peaceful area for meditation and remembrance, so therefore use of the Garden is limited to religious and approved social occasions. The use and care of the Memorial Garden and related files are subject to the control of the [Memorial Committee](#). Rules and regulations are established by the Memorial Committee, with Board approval.

### **2. Eligibility and Ownership**

The cremains of any past or present UUC member or friend, as defined by the bylaws of the UUC; the spouse or partner of a member or friend; parents or children and others who, in the opinion of the Memorial Committee, have a sufficient connection to the Congregation, are eligible for placement. Reservation of a niche or a paver and payment of the established fee entitles one person, the Subscriber, to the privilege of use but not the right of ownership. The Subscriber, the executor of the will, spouse or close family member may make the request to inter or scatter cremains. An interested member or friend may contact the Memorial Committee if they wish to request modified financial arrangements.

Niches must be assigned and pavers approved by the Memorial Committee, functioning under the authority of the Board. Engraved pavers will be placed in the area designated by the Memorial Committee. All Memorial Garden columbarium niches and memorial bricks remain the property of the UUC.

### **3. Subscriber Responsibilities**

The Subscriber's [Checklist for Cremains Interment or Scattering](#) delineates the steps to be taken by a Subscriber. Note that the following must be received before cremains may be placed in the Memorial Garden: a copy of the Death Certificate, which is presented to the Liaison Officer of the Memorial Committee (filed permanently in the Memorial Garden records) and a Memorial Garden [Right to Inter or Scatter Cremains Proof of Purchase](#). Subject to the rules and regulations existing at the time of any designation or change, the Subscriber shall retain the right and authority 1) to designate or change the designation of the eligible person or persons whose cremains shall be placed in the niche or ground space, subject to the consent of the UUC Memorial Committee, and 2) to designate or change the designation of the person who, upon the Subscriber's death or incapacity, shall have such right and authority. The designated replacement will henceforth be referred to as the Subscriber.

### **4. Reservation of Niches**

Niches for the interment of cremains of eligible persons may be reserved upon payment (donation) of the fee in effect at the time of reservation. In the event of a group reservation, individual contracts for each person's reservation are required. Upon the death of a person who is to be memorialized, rights under the contract become part of their estate.

A reservation may be canceled in writing, addressed to the Memorial Committee, in which event a refund of 1/2 of the amount paid will be made to the Subscriber or to their estate. Thereafter, the niche or space will be made available as unassigned space. The Subscriber must notify the Administrator of a current address. In the event that the UUC is unable to contact the Subscriber at the address given, by action of the Memorial Committee the reservation may be cancelled without refund.

At the option of the Subscriber, the niche reservation may be transferred to another vacant niche. The original *Proof of Purchase* will be exchanged for one with the new niche number.

### **5. Scattering**

If preferred, the cremains can be scattered at a location determined by the UUC Memorial Committee. A 4" by 8" paver is included in the cost of scattering cremains. An 8" by 8" paver is available at additional cost.

## **6. Certificate**

Each Subscriber shall receive a copy of a *Memorial Garden Certificate* at the time of interring or scattering cremains.

## **7. Inscriptions on Niche Nameplates and on Pavers**

Lettering on niche nameplates and pavers will be uniform in style, but may be reduced in point size for longer names. The [Niche/Paver Order Form](#) includes instructions about the number of lines and characters per line for each.

## **8. Memorial Registry**

A Subscriber is entitled to prepare a registry biographical page for the individual whose cremains are to be interred or scattered. This page will be included in the Memorial Registry. The Registry is kept in the Administrator's office and may be displayed for events or services at the discretion of the Memorial Committee. The Registry is available for Subscribers to view as an aid to preparing the biographical information.

Each memorial in the Registry allows up to two single-sided pages of written or printed material. Materials for inclusion in the Registry may not measure more than 8.5" by 11" and may consist of a biography, an obituary, poetry or other writings, and photograph(s). Entries will appear chronologically by date of interment or scattering.

## **9. Responsibilities and Disclaimer**

The UUC will endeavor to protect and conserve the cremains, their receptacles, and the pavers, both before and after they are placed in the Memorial Garden, but it shall have no responsibility for failure to do so. The Subscriber understands that the surrounding congregational grounds are used for many purposes.

Specifically, the UUC reserves the right to move all or part of the Memorial Garden to a different site, if necessary. The Subscriber agrees and understands that cremains, whether interred or scattered, are not recoverable.

## **10. Fees and Charges**

Fees may be modified at the discretion of the UUC Memorial Committee. See the [Memorial Garden Fees](#) page for the current fees.

## **11. Memorial Fund**

All funds received for reservation of niches, scattering rights, pavers and costs of establishment of the Memorial Garden or its maintenance shall be

deposited in the Memorial Garden Fund, which shall be administered by the UUC Treasurer subject to Board direction.

## **F. Snow Removal**

Out of concern for welfare of those using the meeting house, and as a condition of doing business, the UUC is responsible for arranging for snow removal and/or sanding and environmentally-friendly salting of drive-ways, parking lots, and walkways. Following are policies and procedures addressing how we carry out this responsibility for the different groups that use our facilities.

### **1. Sunday morning services during snow and/or icy conditions**

A representative of Buildings and Grounds Committee (BGC) will assess the safety of parking lots and/or sidewalks no later than 7:30 a.m. and contact the following (or alternates in the order listed) with a recommendation to either hold or cancel the Sunday service.

President  
President-Elect

If a decision is made for the service to be held, the BGC will:

1. Arrange to have the drive and parking lots plowed and salted or sanded before 8:15 am.
2. Arrange for volunteers from the congregation to shovel the walkways, steps, and other entrances to the building.

If a decision is made to cancel the service, the President (or alternate) will contact the following:

Congregation Administrator or alternate  
Website Administrator or alternate  
Minister (or Alternate Speaker)  
Director of Lifespan Faith Development

The Administrator (or alternate) will follow written procedures for installing an outgoing message on the church phone; notifying television station WSLs; and sending an email to the announcement list no later than 8:00 a.m.

The Website Administrator or designated alternate will place a notice of cancellation on the home page of the UUCNRV website no later than 8:00 a.m.

During winter months, the Administrator will publish a reminder in the monthly newsletter to call the church or access the UUC homepage in the event of inclement weather.

## **2. Groups in the building at times other than Sunday mornings**

The UUC will try to arrange for snow removal for meetings of these groups, but cannot guarantee that this service will be performed. This fact will be reflected in all communications with groups requesting to use the building.

The Building Maintenance Coordinator (BMC) will have access to the Administrator's version of the UUC Calendar for complete information about planned uses of the building.

When there is snow and ice and a group is scheduled to use the building, BMC will assess the safety of the drive, parking lots, and walkways and make a decision about their safety and the need for snow removal.

BMC will notify the Administrator about the decision.

The Administrator will contact the group scheduled to use the building and advise them of the decision about the safety of the drive, lots, and walkways, and if they have been deemed unsafe and plowing is not to happen, the Administrator will advise the group to cancel their event.

The UUC will make all reasonable efforts to have the drive and lots plowed/sanded and walks shoveled for events that involve more than 30 attendees or for events for which cancelling is not an option (e.g., weddings, memorial services).

## **Section VI. Fiscal Matters**

### **A. Pledges**

The Minister, Administrator, Treasurer, President, and Stewardship Campaign Committee Chair shall have access to the amounts pledged or paid by any contributor.

### **B. Fiscal Year**

The UUC fiscal year will run from 1 July to 30 June.

### **C. Gift (Donation) Acceptance Policy**

As a nonprofit, 501(c) 3 religious organization, this congregation encourages the acceptance of gifts to further and fulfill its mission.

#### **1. Purpose.**

This policy pertains to acceptance of charitable gifts and provides guidance to donors and their advisors when making gifts to the UUC. Gifts referred to in this policy do not include pledges made by members and friends of the UUC.



## **2. General Principles**

All references to tax law and regulations included in the document are provided solely for the UUC's convenience and should not be relied upon by donors. Such information is believed to be current at the time of the adoption of this policy, but the UUC accepts no responsibility for either its accuracy or for updating it as laws and regulations change.

1. All gifts given for a specified purpose shall be accepted or rejected by the Board.
2. The UUC reserves the right to refuse any gift that in any way detracts from its mission, purpose, character, integrity, freedom, or independence.
3. For gifts made by mail, the postmark date shall be the gift date.
4. The UUC requests a non-binding statement of intent to document a future commitment. The UUC has a form for such purpose and includes information about the donor, the donor's commitment and time frame for payments, and how the completed gift will be managed. The form may be requested from our administrator.
5. The UUC follows the letter and spirit of all laws and regulations affecting or relating to charitable giving and fund-raising activities.
6. The donor is responsible for assigning a value to tangible property for their income tax purposes.

## **3. Responsibility to donors.**

1. The UUC must use gifts for the particular purpose designated by the donor or as set forth in any solicitation materials.
2. The UUC, its staff and volunteer representatives shall endeavor to assist donors in accomplishing their philanthropic objectives in a donor-centered way.
3. All transactions between a donor and the UUC shall be held in confidence, and may be disclosed publicly only with the permission of the donor(s) or their designee.
4. Any donor(s) requesting anonymity shall be given such, and reasonable procedures to safeguard such shall be implemented.

## **4. Legal considerations**

1. Compliance: The UUC shall comply with all local, state and federal laws and regulations concerning all charitable gifts it encourages, solicits or accepts. All required disclosures, registrations and procedures shall be made and/or followed in a thorough and timely manner.
2. Endorsement of providers: The UUC shall not endorse legal, tax or financial advisors to prospective donors.

3. Finder's fees and commissions: The UUC shall not pay fees to any person as consideration for a directed gift by a donor to the UUC.
4. Legal, tax and financial advice: the UUC shall inform prospective donors that it does not provide legal, tax or financial advice, and shall encourage prospective donors to discuss all charitable gift planning decisions with their own advisors before entering into any commitments to gift to the UUC. This Policy is for information purposes only and is not intended as tax, legal, or estate planning advice.
5. Preparation of legal documents: The UUC shall not prepare legal documents for execution by donors, except forms to create charitable gift annuities. The UUC may provide model language, such as sample bequest language, gift agreements or charitable remainder trusts, but shall strongly encourage prospective donors to have this language reviewed by their own counsel.
6. Payment of fees: It will be the responsibility of the donor to secure an appraisal (where required) and to pay for the advice of independent legal, financial or other professional advisers as needed for all gifts made to the UUC.
7. Service as executor or living trust trustee: The UUC will not agree to serve as executor of a decedent's estate or as trustee of a living trust or other trust intended to serve as a person's primary estate planning document.
8. Trusteeship: Normally the UUC will not assume trusteeships. In cases where the donor and/or their advisor believes the UUC taking on a trusteeship is necessary, given the nature of a gift, the donor is asked to consult with the [Unitarian Universalist Association's Stewardship and Development](#) staff, who will then advise the UUC.
9. Use of counsel: The UUC shall seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to the acceptance of gifts when appropriate. Review by counsel is recommended for gifts involving: closely held stock transfers that are subject to restrictions; gifts involving contracts, such as bargain sales; reformation of charitable trusts; and transactions involving potential conflicts of interest.

## **5. Gifts to the Endowment Fund**

Gifts to the Endowment Fund may or may not carry restrictions as to their future use. The use of restricted funds is controlled by the UUC and the expenditure of the funds is at the UUC's discretion, as long as any specified restrictions are met. Because conditions change over time, it is preferable that any restricted gift instruments contain the following contingency clause, whenever possible:

*"If circumstances should arise in the future that make it illegal, impossible, or impracticable to use the gift for the purpose specified above, then the Finance Committee with*

*the concurrence of the Endowment Committee may submit a request for modification of this purpose to the Board. If, in the best judgement of the Board, such modification is deemed prudent, it may authorize a change in the purpose for the fulfillment of objectives as near as practical to the original purpose. In the event of such modification to a named endowment, the original name will continue to be associated with the fund. This provision cannot convert a permanently restricted gift into a temporarily restricted or unrestricted gift.”*

## **6. Gifts of Securities**

Gifts of shares of publicly traded securities, mutual funds, bonds and government issues are to be transferred to the UUC’s brokerage account. The amount of the gift will be the value of the security at the close of trading on the date of the gift or the next trading date if the date of the gift is a weekend or holiday.

Donors wishing to give shares of closely held securities which do not trade on a public exchange should arrange to first convert them to cash.

## **7. Real Estate**

UUC may accept gifts of real estate, including houses, condominiums, commercial properties, farmland, rental property, and undeveloped lands, after a thorough review of the following factors:

1. The usefulness of the property for UUC purposes.
2. The marketability of the property.
3. The existence of restrictions, reservations, easements, and/or other limitations.
4. The existence of encumbrances, such as mortgages and mechanics’ liens.
5. Carrying costs, such as property owner’s association dues, taxes, insurance, and other maintenance expenses.
6. Fair market value in relation to the costs and limits listed above as determined by a qualified appraisal conducted in accordance with IRS standards.

Prior to the acceptance of any parcel of real property, an assessment of the potential environmental risks will be conducted and paid for by the donor. An environmental audit conducted by a professional service may be required. The Board may alter or waive this requirement. This environmental assessment shall include the following:

1. An inquiry of the donor(s) regarding the donor’s knowledge of the history of the property.
2. A title search to determine whom the prior owners might have been.

3. A consultation with federal, state, and local environmental agencies to find out whether the property has any history of hazardous waste contamination.
4. A visual inspection of the property for any evidence of environmental hazards.

The UUC will consider donation of a home via a retained life estate agreement. This may be accomplished with the help of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## **8. Tangible Personal Property**

The UUC may accept gifts of tangible personal property, including works of art, jewelry, antiques, coin, stamps and other collections, automobiles, manuscripts, and books. Such gifts may be accepted only after a thorough review indicates the property is readily marketable or may be used by the UUC in a manner consistent with one of the purposes for which it was gifted. An essential issue for donors to consider before contributing a gift of tangible personal property is whether they would like the UUC to use or display the property. Prospective donors should be advised that the UUC reserves the right to sell or otherwise dispose of the personal property in question, if such action is financially advisable or necessary. Any gift of tangible personal property must be approved by the Board.

For goods-in-kind donations with a fair market value of less than \$5000, the UUC should be furnished with the following information:

1. Donor's name, address, and telephone number.
2. Contact person if donor is a corporation.
3. Donor's social security number or tax identification number.
4. Brief physical description of the donated asset, including an explanation of the method used to determine the fair market value.

For goods-in-kind donations with a fair market value of \$5000 or more, the UUC must be furnished with an independent evaluation from a qualified appraiser and evidence of having met the reporting requirements for [IRS Form 8283](#), *Non-Cash Charitable Contributions Appraisal Summary*, in addition to the information required for less than \$5000 goods-in-kind donations.

In order that the donor may make appropriate provisions on their tax return, the UUC should advise the donor of its intention to sell the property.

## **9. Non-Traditional Investments**

UUC may accept gifts of non-traditional investments after a thorough review of the following factors:

1. Marketability
2. Nature of any applicable restrictions

3. Legal and other liabilities associated with the asset
4. Carrying costs such as administrative and legal fees
5. Exposure to unrelated business income tax liability.

## **10. Appraisals**

All appraisals of real and personal property contributed to UUC shall be done in accordance with [IRS Publication 561](#). Expenses incurred obtaining an appraisal will be the responsibility of the donor unless special circumstances exist that makes it appropriate for the UUC to share the cost. Any appraisal cost borne by the UUC must be approved by the Board.

## **11. Planned Giving**

Planned gifts may be either deferred or outright. They involve the transfer of substantial assets which significantly impact the donors' estate and final plans. These gifts often do not immediately confer institutional ownership and generally are not taken out of current earnings. The acceptable methods of creating such gifts to the UUC are described below:

- a. Gift by will or revocable living trust.

Gifts made by will or revocable living trust are completed only at the death of the donor and/or surviving beneficiary. These gifts may provide for a specific dollar amount in cash, specific securities, and specific articles of tangible personal property or a percentage of the residue of the estate. Bequest may be given as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted gifts.

Donors are encouraged to recognize that over the many years following the establishment of a deferred gift, the needs, policies, and circumstances of the UUC can change in unforeseen ways. The Board must have the flexibility to make use of the funds in the best interest of the UUC and in accord with donor interest and specifications. Thus, donors are encouraged to avoid detailed limitations and restrictions for their gifts. Donors considering bequests for a specific purpose are encouraged to consult with the Treasurer regarding their wishes.

Because they are subject to change, gift commitments by will or revocable trust do not generate tax deductions for the donor nor are they counted as current gift revenue for the UUC. However, donors are encouraged to advise the UUC of these provisions to assist the UUC in its future planning. All such notifications are held in strictest confidence, unless the donor gives express permission for their plans to be made public. A form for such notification is available from the administrator and is non-binding. The UUC has gift language forms available for donors to use.

b. Life insurance beneficiary designations.

Donors may name the UUC as a beneficiary of their life insurance policies. Any benefit that the UUC receives from the donor's insurance will be excluded from the donor's taxable estate.

c. Life insurance policy gifting.

Donors may name the UUC as irrevocable beneficiary and owner of their life insurance policies. This results in an immediate income tax charitable deduction equivalent to the policy's cash surrender value or replacement value. If additional premium payments are due, those payments are deductible as charitable contributions.

d. Retirement plans.

These include traditional or rollover IRAs, 401(k), or Keogh plans. These assets have been growing tax-free for years. Once the owner begins to receive payments from the qualified plans, the distributions are taxed. If these plans are left to the UUC, the full amount will generally be received and used according to the donor's wishes. The full amount is still included in the donor's taxable estate but is fully deductible as a charitable gift.

e. Life estate plans.

Donors may contribute their personal residence but continue to live there for the rest of their (two individuals) lives. This type of gift of a future interest in your home lets donors continue to enjoy their home, without diminishing their standard of living, while obtaining a substantial income tax charitable deduction. These plans can be administered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and must be evaluated by UUA. Donors can divide the contribution between the UUC and the UUA as mutually agreed upon.

f. [Charitable gift annuity](#) (CGA)

A CGA is a contractual agreement between the UUA and one or two donors. A CGA will 1) pay a fixed dollar amount to one or two people for as long as they live or for a set number of years and 2) at the end of the contract, deliver what remains of the original gift to the UUC. The minimum gift is \$10,000. The CGA is administered by the UUA.

g. [UUA umbrella giving program](#)

Umbrella giving allows entities under the UU umbrella (such as UUC) to receive gifts through a single donation to the UUA. A donor can give planned gifts such as bequests, gift annuities and charitable trusts via umbrella giving.

h. [Charitable Remainder Trusts](#) (CRTs).

IRS-qualified CRTs are wonderful ways of giving and receiving at the same time. There are many types of CRTs available, the details of which can be found in the brochure. The CRT instruments are administered by the UUA. The UUC can be the sole or part beneficiary of the trust. The minimum trust amount is generally \$100,000.

i. [UUA Pooled Income Fund](#) (PIF)

The PIF is a fund administered by the UUA. All PIF contributions are commingled for investment purposes. The value of the gift made to UUC after the income recipients have died is often greater than the original contribution. The minimum gift amount is \$5000. Payments are made to the donor(s) on a quarterly basis.

j. [UU Common Endowment Fund](#) (UUCEF).

This is an endowment fund administered by the UUA for the UUC. Monies gifted to the UUC Endowment Fund are in turn sent to the UUCEF for investment. Investments are made in accordance with Unitarian Universalist principles.

## **D. Community Assistance Fund**

The minister shall have at their disposal a fund which is to be used solely to provide financial assistance to members of the congregation or people from the larger community in times of need.

Acceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the payment of utility bills, food assistance, medical care, or rent assistance. The names and reasons for the assistance will be kept confidential. In no case, may the minister use this fund for their own needs or the needs of a family member. This will be listed as a designated fund in our monthly treasurer's report. This fund shall be kept in a checking account, and the minister shall keep a record of all checks written to that account.

The account shall be audited by the treasurer at the discretion of the Board. The fund shall be collected in a special collection as determined by the Board or through special gifts to the fund.

## **E. Sunday Morning Solicitations**

Direct solicitations to the Congregation (other than the regular weekly collection) for donations or purchase of goods or services to benefit programs sponsored by community or other organizations or individuals may be made by program participants, members and their families and friends of the Congregation before, between, or after Sunday services, under the following conditions:

1. Performers and artists contributing to the Sunday service are authorized to offer their artistic products for sale following the service. (Examples: a musician may sell recordings after the service in which the musician has performed; an artist whose work decorates our premises may include a card listing the price.)
2. Any seller required by law to collect sales tax shall do so on sales occurring at the UUC.

Announcements for private profit not described above are discouraged during the Sunday services (e.g., no one should announce during a service, that they have products or services for sale).

Solicitations for Social Action Issues:

1. Requests for approval of solicitations involving social justice concerns shall be screened by the Social Action Committee (SAC), prior to referral to the Board, for conformity with the principles of the UUA, the current goals of the SAC, and the results of any survey of the Congregation's social justice concerns.
2. Any request declined by the SAC may be appealed to the Board.
3. Solicitations for health charities, such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, will not be considered by the SAC.

The weekly half-plate collections and solicitations for the Community Assistance Fund are exempted from the preceding requirements.

## **F. Special Solicitations**

Individuals or groups within the UUC shall first secure Board approval before making special solicitations of members for Congregational purposes. Should the Board approve a special solicitation for some purpose, any funds raised should not be in fulfillment of a pledge to the Congregational operating budget.

## **G. Fundraising Policy**

### **1. General**

Predictable expenses and financial needs of the UUC should be supported through the church budget and annual Stewardship Campaign. However, additional fund-raising events and campaigns expand the ability of our Congregation to support worthy projects. This policy governs fund raising activities by Members and Friends on and off congregation premises, as well as use of the UUC's mailing/telephone list.

All fundraising shall be consistent with the purposes and principles of Unitarian Universalism and the UUC.



Fundraising activities and projects must be approved by the Board. Prior to being submitted to the Board, all proposals should be reviewed and supported by a UUC committee.

The beneficiary of any fundraising activity shall be clearly and specifically identified when an appeal is made. All money raised for the benefit of a UUC project shall be deposited in the primary UUC bank account.

In all types of fundraising, priority shall be given to fundraising efforts which directly benefit the UUC. Second priority shall be given to fundraising efforts which benefit Unitarian Universalist organizations.

## **2. Fundraising Activities Not Requiring Board Approval**

### a. Fundraising by the UUC for the UUC

1. Stewardship Campaign
2. Annual Auction
3. Purchase of Hymnals
4. Life Span Faith Development
5. Memorial Garden
6. Playground
7. Support for General Assembly Attendance
8. YRUU Activities

### b. Fundraising by the UUC for others

1. Life Span Faith Development
2. Social Action/Community Service
3. Christmas Eve offering
4. Montgomery County Christmas Store
5. Interfaith Food Pantry
6. NAACP
7. To Our House
8. WVTF

## **3. Scheduling**

All fundraising events are to be scheduled through the administrative staff. The Board recognizes the need to limit the number of financial appeals and to spread them out over the year to avoid exhausting our members' good will. The staff shall schedule fund raising activities.

Notice of approved fundraisers listing purpose, schedule, and responsible party shall be filed with the administrative staff.

## **H. Stock/mutual fund/bond policy**

1. The Congregation shall maintain a brokerage account for investment of savings and to receive gifts of securities.

2. The treasurer shall sell all donated securities as soon as practical with the proceeds retained in a money market account until invested or withdrawn.
3. Pledges shall be made in dollar amounts and not numbers of shares.

## **I. Member Loans**

Interest on loans made to the UUC by members of the congregation will be determined by adding 1% to the highest current 5-year CD rate. A sample of local banks and/or credit unions will be taken to determine the largest current CD rate.

## **J. UUA Fair Share Payments**

The Congregation shall annually pay its full Fair Share to the UUA as defined by the UUA.

## **K. Second Signatory**

The treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks from the Congregational account. Designated individuals may sign checks in the event the treasurer is unavailable. This should not be a standard practice, but only a back-up in the treasurer's absence. Two signatures, the treasurer and other designated individual, shall be required for non-payroll checks greater than or equal to \$2,000.00.

## **L. Use of UUC Credit Cards**

This policy shall apply to any UUC credit card used by any authorized person. An authorized person (the cardholder) is any person whose use of a UUC credit card has been approved by the Board. The authorized person will be provided with the following at the time of issuance of the card and will be asked to sign a statement stating that they understand and agree to these stipulations. A copy of this signed statement will be retained in the UUC records.

1. A UUC credit card is to be used for congregation related purposes only. A card issued to a staff member may be used for professional expenses that are properly assignable as professional expenses as defined by U.S. tax law and all applicable regulations and other guidelines issued thereunder.
2. Cardholders must comply with all directions that are issued for usage of credit cards. Cardholders should familiarize themselves with the conditions of use imposed by the credit card provider and adhere to those conditions always.
3. Cash withdrawals are to be limited to exceptional circumstances where immediate cash requirements are necessary, e.g., where the card is not accepted. The total of such cash withdrawals must not

exceed the estimated cost of the approved expenditure. If a cash advance is obtained for other than business purposes, the cardholder will be responsible for any finance charges and fees.

4. In the event of unavoidable co-mingling of personal and professional usage, a personal check payable to UUC for the personal portion must accompany the business receipts.
5. The Treasurer will immediately report any excessive or inappropriate personal usage of the card to the Board. Such usage will result in the loss of the cardholder's credit card privileges.
6. The following reconciliation procedure is the cardholder's responsibility:
  - a. Credit card receipts must be maintained along with supporting documentation for each charge. A credit card slip is not acceptable unless it contains a detailed description of items purchased.
  - b. Within one week (7 days) of the purchase, the cardholder will send all signed receipts and supporting documentation, along with the applicable budget line item to which each applies, to the Administrator.
  - c. Should a receipt be misplaced, the cardholder will complete an expense voucher, obtain the Treasurer's approval, and substitute the form for the missing receipt. This must be accomplished within 7 days of item(s) purchased.
7. The loss or theft of the credit card must be reported immediately to the issuing bank and the treasurer. Failure to do so could result in the cardholder being held personally responsible for transactions charged against the card illegally.
8. The account is the cardholder's responsibility and should only be used by the cardholder. Please sign the reverse side of the card as soon as it is received.
9. Upon termination of employment with UUC or at the request of the Board, the card must be returned.

## **Appendix I. Covenant for Right Relations**

We the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. In recognition of this shared value, we covenant to work together to create an atmosphere of equality, trust and compassion within our congregation and the larger community. To this end, we commit ourselves to learn and practice the following attitudes and actions as we grow and develop our talents and skills within the context of this beloved community.

As members of a religious community that makes decisions through a democratic process, we understand that the health and well-being of our

congregation rests upon each individual's willingness to actively participate in this process and to respect the outcome of the collective wisdom.

As individuals, members and friends, we pledge to walk together in this covenant of right relations:

1. I believe that all are free to make choices regarding their personal journeys. I will respect these choices and support the spiritual growth of others, accepting and supporting them in their spiritual and personal quest.
2. I accept my responsibility to learn and practice the necessary skills to communicate with others in clear, honest and sensitive ways. I will strive to listen actively to others.
3. I will strive to make the kinds of choices that balance my various needs and desires with the needs and desires of others.
4. I will respect the confidentiality of the private disclosures made to me by others. Should I become concerned about the safety of the individual making disclosures or the safety of others as a result of a private disclosure, I will seek the support and guidance of our minister or another designated professional within our congregation. I will not engage in gossip about our staff or other people in the congregation. When making a request or suggestion based on my personal needs or wishes to either the staff or others in our congregation, I will respect their right to respond as they see fit, even when that response is not what I desire. I recognize that I too have the right to decline a request from a staff person or another member as long as my refusal does not endanger another person or violate the policies and covenants of the congregation.
5. I will respect the private and intimate relationships that exist between members of the congregation. I will recognize that each individual is responsible for their own words and actions and not assume that their partner agrees with them or is obligated to intervene on their behalf should a conflict arise.
6. I will respect the personal boundaries of other individuals in the congregation, as they are made known to me. I will not harass or exploit another person for my own gratification. (Harassment includes, but is not limited to personal comments or questions of a sexual nature or intimidating nature and unwanted touching of a sexual or intimidating nature. Harassment also includes remarks or actions that demean, humiliate, or belittle another person's gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background or religious beliefs.)
7. I will be especially mindful of the vulnerability of children and youth and strive to create healthy and safe relationships with young people of our congregation.

8. If I am concerned about an issue or conflict within our congregation, I will seek the facts from those who know them, avoiding speculation and conjecture.
9. I will strive to be aware of my emotions and to be sensitive to the emotions of others, recognizing that these emotions signal meaningful issues, which require an empathic and thoughtful response. In the case of strongly held differences of opinion or belief, I will express my own emotions, opinions, and beliefs in a respectful and constructive manner.
10. Should I be engaged in a conflict with another congregant or a staff member, I will act in good faith to come to an understanding even if we cannot agree on a resolution of the disagreement. If this is not possible and I feel the need for further action, I will take my concerns to a member of the Committee on Ministries or the Conflict Management Team. I will not use email for this communication. I will support this congregation with my time, talents, and financial resources to the best of my ability. I will support the staff and those members and friends who volunteer their time and talents to the programs and governance of the congregation. I will express my expectations, concerns, and appreciation in a responsible and constructive manner.