

Bylaws of Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Lauderdale (UUCFL)

ARTICLE I - IDENTITY & MISSION

- A. Identity: We are known as the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Lauderdale and hereinafter known as UUCFL.
- B. Mission: We are here by choice to come together in a free, cooperative, and respectful search for our own religious truths and meanings; to live by and promote ethical standards and freedom of thought; and to connect to the earth, the universe, and each other with acceptance and an open heart and an open mind.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP - VOTING MEMBERS

- A. Voting Members are those who have qualified for Membership by signing the Membership Book as provided in the charter and who have made an identifiable financial contribution during the previous twelve (12) months and have submitted a financial pledge card for the current year at least 30 days prior to the applicable Congregational Meeting. In special circumstances, the Board of Trustees may waive this provision. It is also highly recommended that prospective Members attend the new membership orientation classes prior to signing the Membership Book. Members should seriously consider the commitment that they are making in terms of the volunteerism that is implied with being a Member.
- B. Members and former Members who wish to reinstate their voting eligibility will be subject to the above requirements.
- C. Members shall be eligible to vote after complying with Article II.A. and sixty (60) days after signing the Membership Book.
- D. If a person's voting eligibility is in question, the decision will rest with the members of the Board present (at least 3).
- E. There shall be absentee ballots for election and any resulting runoff election of Officers and Trustees only. Such ballots shall be issued by the Secretary to Voting Members who are unable to attend because of extenuating circumstances; and these ballots must be completed, signed, and in the hands of said Secretary prior to the Congregational Meeting.

ARTICLE III - DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

- A. This Congregation shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the Southern Region of the UUA, and the Southeast Cluster of the Florida District of the UUA, or their duly constituted legal successors.
- B. Congregation Representatives to Southeast Cluster of the Florida District of the UUA and UUA General Assembly and other delegates shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees at their discretion.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

- A. The Board of Trustees shall consist of seven (7) Members.
- B. The duties of the Officers shall be those commonly performed in the positions held.

- C. The Secretary shall be elected in odd numbered years to a two-year term. The Treasurer shall be elected on even-numbered years to a two-year term. The Vice President, President, and Past President will be elected for a one year term. Two additional At-Large Trustees shall be elected – one on even-numbered years to a two-year term and one on odd-numbered years to a two-year term.
- D. Each will serve as a voting member of the Board of Trustees.
- E. The President shall vote only in the event of a tie Board of Trustees vote.
- F. Trustees may succeed themselves in the same office once, for a total of no more than two terms. Each may then be elected to another office. These Trustees, if appointed to fill a vacancy, may thereafter be elected for two full terms.
- G. The President shall be a non-voting member of all Committees of the Congregation, except the Committee on Ministry, the Endowment Committee, and Nominating Committee.
- H. The Officers and the Trustees, all of whom shall be Voting Members of the Congregation, together may be, for convenience, referred to as "the Board;" and it is required that four (4) Members of the board be present to do business.
- I. The President shall, in consultation with the Minister, and subject to the approval of the Board, appoint the chairpersons of all Standing Committees except for Nominating and Endowment Committees.
- J. The Board shall meet at least once monthly as scheduled by a majority of the Board Members.
- K. Special Meetings of the Board may be called by the chair or any three (3) Members of the Board, after reasonable notice being given of no less than twenty-four (24) hours. The latter time restriction may be waived by no less than five (5) Board Members, all of whom are present at the Special Meeting when waived.
- L. Board meetings shall be open to the Membership, except such sensitive matters that would be appropriately handled in an executive session.
- M. Board votes may be conducted via email or telephone between meetings, and the results of these votes must be entered into minutes during the next meeting.
- N. The Board shall have the responsibility for hiring and firing of employees, except the Minister.
- O. Any unbudgeted expenditure over One Thousand Dollars must be approved by 2/3 vote of those Board Members present. Any unbudgeted capital expenditure over Five Thousand Dollars must be brought before the Congregation for a vote.
- P. All Board minutes shall be made available to the Voting Members and shall include the full text of any rules or guidelines that the Board passes.
- Q. Unexpired terms of Officers shall be filled as follows:
 - 1. President: by the Past President or Vice-President serving the remainder of the term until the next annual election, or by vote at a Special Meeting of the Congregation called by the Board for that purpose.
 - 2. Vice-President: by Board appointment, serving the remainder of the term upon majority vote of the Board until the next annual election.
 - 3. Past President: by a Board member serving the remainder of the term as Past President upon majority vote of the Board until the next annual election.
 - 4. Secretary: by Board appointment, serving the remainder of the term upon majority vote of the Board until the next annual election.

5. Treasurer: by Board appointment, serving the remainder of the term upon majority vote of the Board until the next annual election.
- R. A vacancy shall automatically open when a Board Member is absent from 2 consecutive or 3 total monthly meetings in between annual meetings. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed by the board.
- S. Nominees for unexpired Trustee terms shall be presented by the President to the Board for ratification by majority vote; said Trustees to serve the remainder of each term until the next annual election.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

- A. Standing Committees and Work Groups shall be formed to deal with the following areas: Building and Grounds, Friendship and Fellowship and Membership, Community Outreach, Lifespan Religious Education, Finance, Sunday Services, Social Justice, Endowment, Committee on Ministry, and Nominating.
- B. Only Voting Members of this Congregation shall chair a Committee. At least one member of the Board shall be a liaison to each Committee except Nominating, Endowment, and the Committee on Ministry. No member of the Board shall serve on the Nominating Committee, and there shall be no liaison from the Board.
- C. There will be a continuing Committee on Ministry consisting of three members serving staggered three year terms, with one member's term ending each year. When vacancies occur, the Minister shall submit twice as many names as vacancies to the Board, who shall select the new member(s) from this slate. No member of the Board may serve on the Committee on Ministry.
 1. Upon arrival of a newly called Minister, the Board shall include in the committee at least one member from the Search Committee that recommended the new Minister.
 2. The Committee on Ministry shall meet at least quarterly in a non-crisis, goal-oriented manner with an agenda to explore the various concerns and challenges of the Minister/Congregation relationship, the Congregation's own role and agreed-responsibility in shared ministry, and the health and vitality of the Congregation.
 3. The Committee on Ministry shall assist and support the Minister in their plans for professional development, sabbaticals, etc.
 4. The Committee shall alert the Board to any emerging concerns between the Minister and the Congregation.
- D. Other than the Ministerial Search Committee, Special Committees may be appointed, as required, by the President or the Board, and cease to exist on discharge of their duties.

ARTICLE VI - ANNUAL MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

- A. At its February meeting, the Board shall set a time and place for the Annual Meeting, to be held in the month of May, notice of such date to be given by mail to all Voting Members at least thirty (30) days prior to the designated date.
 1. No subjects may be voted on at the Annual Meeting unless written notice of the same is sent to all Voting Members fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.
 2. Any group of 10% of the Voting Members or more may submit, in writing, to the Board President, or Board Secretary, an item to add to the agenda; said item shall be accepted and included in the written notice mailed to the Membership.

- B. Nominating Committee: Such committee shall consist of three (3) Voting Members, selected as follows:
1. Three (3) by the Voting Members at the Annual Meeting.
 2. No member shall serve on the Nominating Committee for more than two years in succession. If the Voting Members fail to select, then the Board shall do so on their behalf. No member may be qualified for selection on such committee who benefits directly or through a relative as a result of the payment of salary or other continuous remuneration authorized or recommended by the board.
 3. The Nominating Committee Members shall select their own chairperson.
 4. This committee shall convene in January and shall name candidates for election to all vacancies and elective offices to be filled at the Annual Meeting and shall file its report, in writing, with the Board. Said report shall be delivered in time for inclusion in the mailing announcing the Annual Meeting and include a short biography of each candidate.
 5. The Nominating Committee should act in an advisory capacity to the Board by suggesting candidates to fill vacancies for unexpired terms on the Board, whenever such vacancies occur.
 6. If the committee is unable to nominate for any or all vacancies as designated by such report, the Board shall thereafter act as said committee.
- C. Other nominations may also be made for candidates for election under the following procedure:
1. By written petition signed by at least three (3) Voting Members delivered to an Officer or Board member at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting, after which the President shall give proper notice of such petition to the Voting Members as time allows.
 2. Voting Members may nominate themselves through this process.
- D. The terms of the Officers and Board Members elected at the Annual or Special Meeting shall commence immediately following that meeting.

ARTICLE VII - SPECIAL MEETING

Special Meetings of the Membership may be called by a majority of those serving on the Board, or by any twenty-five (25) Voting Members, by giving all Voting Members written notice by mail of not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the date such meeting is to be held, stating the purposes for which the Special Meeting is called. Only such stated purposes shall be voted upon, but any topic is open for discussion at the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - QUORUM AND REQUIRED VOTES

- A. At Special and Regularly-called Congregational meetings, thirty-five percent (35%) of the Voting Membership shall constitute a quorum.
- B. Except as otherwise specified in the charter or bylaws, a majority of those present at Membership meetings shall be sufficient to pass resolutions and otherwise transact business.
- C. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide for meetings. A Parliamentarian may be appointed by the President for all Congregational meetings.

ARTICLE IX - FISCAL YEAR AND BUDGET YEAR

The Fiscal Year and Budget Year of this Congregation shall be from January 1st through December 31st. The Program Year shall run between the Annual Meetings of the Congregation. Annual reports shall be made to the Membership, and the Treasurer shall make such reports to the Board as it may request.

ARTICLE X - FINANCIAL INDEBTEDNESS

A. The Congregation shall not become indebted in an amount greater than Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) unless said limit is increased by a 2/3 vote of the Voting Members present at a duly called Special Meeting.

ARTICLE XI - MINISTER

- A. The Voting Membership shall have complete freedom in its choice of a called Minister, and this Minister shall be in Fellowship with the UUA.
- B. When it becomes necessary, there shall be created a Ministerial Search Committee by the same procedure as the Nominating Committee, and such Ministerial Search Committee shall make recommendations to the Membership. It is recommended that the Ministerial Search Committee be guided by, but not limited to, the Ministerial Settlement Manual issued by the UUA.
- C. A Settled Minister is called to this Congregation on a continuing basis, subject to the right of the Minister to give the Membership sixty (60) days' notice of intent to resign, and the Membership's right to give the Minister sixty (60) days' notice of the termination of their services.
- D. The Minister shall be a non-voting member of all committees of the Congregation, except the Ministerial Search and Nominating Committee.
- E. The Minister, in spiritual matters and in sermon content, shall be governed only by dictates of their own free mind and conscience, after considering the interest of all the Membership and in the spirit of liberal religious thought.
- F. There shall be a Sabbatical program in accordance with the policy adopted by the Voting Members. The Board and Minister shall negotiate a contract which shall be subordinate to these bylaws.
- G. In the event that tensions arise between the Voting Membership and the Minister, the following procedure shall apply.
 - 1. Concerns by Members or the Minister shall be referred to the Committee on Ministry. If the Committee is unable to resolve the concern, they shall refer it to the Board.
 - 2. The Board shall decide whether or not to invite the appropriate representative of the UUA to visit and confer with the Minister, Board, and Voting Membership in an effort to reconcile any differences.
 - 3. In any event, a special Congregational meeting to modify or shorten the term of the Minister's services may be called in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws.

ARTICLE XII – SAFETY

In accordance with our respect for and interconnectedness with our world and the others with which we share it, we declare this Congregation and its holdings to be a hate-free and violence-free zone. The carrying of guns or other weapons is not allowed except as pre-approved by the Board of Trustees or their designees. A person in violation of this Article will be asked to leave the premises. In the event that this request is not honored, the Sherriff's Office will be called.

ARTICLE XIII – ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

- A. The Endowment Fund Committee's purpose is to manage and receive monies donated to UUCFL for the Endowment Fund.
- B. The Endowment Fund Committee will have three (3) committee Members that will be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting, if an opening becomes vacant. The Nominating Committee will submit at least one (1) name for every open vacancy at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Effective September 23, 2018, the current Board Members of the former entity named Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Lauderdale Endowment Fund, Inc. will serve as the Endowment Fund Committee until the 2019 Annual Meeting elections.
- C. The Endowment Fund Committee will follow all bylaws of UUCFL and use general consensus in their meetings. They may opt to use Robert's Rules of Order, if warranted.
- D. After election to the Endowment Fund Committee the committee members shall decide among themselves who will hold what position on the committee. The Endowment Fund Committee members will serve in the following structure and capacity:
 - 1. One (1) Committee Chairperson – This member will be responsible for organizing & leading bi-annual meetings with committee members. This member will provide a written and verbal report to the UUCFL Board of Trustees in the months of June and December and a written report to the UUCFL Members at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - 2. One (1) Committee Treasurer – This member will keep banking and donation records of monies received and track funds and earnings.
 - 3. One (1) Committee Secretary – This member will keep minutes of each meeting of the committee and submit a copy to the Endowment Fund Committee Chairperson to present to the UUCFL Board of Trustees in the months of June and December.
- E. All committee members will serve in this capacity for two (2) years. Members may be re-elected to the committee by congregational vote at the Annual Meeting. There are no term limits.
- F. If a member has missed more than two (2) meetings between Congregational Annual Meetings, they automatically forfeit their position on the committee. The remaining two members will carry on the committee business until a replacement is elected at the next Annual Meeting.
- G. The Endowment Funds are comprised of Memorial Guardian donations for the maintenance of memorial plaques, Social Justice donations to support worthy causes, and the General Fund to support UUCFL. Gains from the General Fund must be disbursed no later than December 31 of each calendar year. This disbursement shall not be used for general operating expenses.
- H. The Congregation can vote to borrow funds needed for other expenditures at a duly called Special Congregational Meeting for this purpose. This meeting may be called by a majority of those serving on the Board, or by any thirty-five (35) Voting Members, by giving all Voting Members written notice by mail of not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the date of such meeting, stating the purposes for which the Special Meeting is called. At this Special Congregational Meeting, fifty percent (50%) of the Voting Membership shall constitute a quorum. Funds from the Endowment Fund may be borrowed by a 2/3 vote of the Voting Members present at this duly called Special Meeting.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

All amendments, revisions, or waivers of the bylaws must receive a two-thirds vote of the Voting Members present at such meetings called for that purpose. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be sent with the notices of the meeting at which they are to be presented for action.

ARTICLE XV - WRITTEN NOTICES AND REPORTS

Written notices and reports which are required by these bylaws to go to the Membership must be prominently displayed beginning on the first page of any communication carrying such notice or report.

ARTICLE XVI - DISSOLUTION OF UUCFL

Any action to dissolve the Congregation must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible Voting Members of the Congregation present at a meeting called to specifically consider such action, for which meeting written notice has been issued to all Members eligible to vote in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. If the Congregation at its own option shall cease to exist, all property real or personal shall be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association or its successor.

These are the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Inc. as amended on May 3, 1992; May 16, 1993; May 1, 1994; May 4, 1997; January 10, 1999; May 7, 2000; May 5, 2002; January 5, 2003; May 18, 2003; May 16, 2004; May 15, 2005; May 20, 2007; May 16, 2010; January 31, 2016; and September 23, 2018.

ATTEST: _____ Secretary

_____ President