

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS  
3000 W RICHWOODS BOULEVARD PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61604  
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

REVISED AND ADOPTED: April, 1981; April, 1987;  
February, 1988; October, 1992; May, 1993; February, 1996; May 2010,; September 2010;  
May 2012; September 2012; June 2013, June 2014, November 2014, June 2015,  
September 20, 2015

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## **ARTICLE I – ORGANIZATION**

The organization now known as the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria, Illinois was organized in 1843 and incorporated in 1912 under Section 164 of Chapter 32 of the *Illinois Revised Statutes*.

Whenever the word church is used in these bylaws, amendments, or procedures, it shall signify the legal organization of this church as herein established. The phrase *a vote of the church* or any similar phrase shall mean a vote of the members of the corporation of legal voting status comprising the church at any duly called meeting.

## **ARTICLE II - GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church is vested in its members. It accepts obligation of mutual counsel, comity and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and regards itself as pledged to cooperate with this and all regional bodies with which the church votes to cooperate in fostering and extending Unitarian Universalist interests.

## **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1.– Membership Criteria**

Any person fourteen (14) years of age or older who attends a church sanctioned and sponsored informational session, and who signs the membership book is acknowledged as a member of this church. The minister can waive the requirement of attendance at the informational session.

### **Section 2 - Voting Members**

- A. Members are eligible to vote who have been members of the church for twenty-eight (28) days or more, and who have made an identifiable financial contribution either as an individual or as a member of a family. This financial requirement may be waived by the minister in consultation with the President of the Board of Trustees in cases of financial hardship.
- B. The register of voting members will be maintained by the Credentials Committee composed of the Membership Coordinator, Minister, Board President (or a church member designated by the President to serve on behalf of the President), and the Chair of the Annual Campaign Committee. If any of these persons is not a church member, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a member of the church to replace the nonmember on the Credentials Committee. A quorum of three (3) shall be required for any meeting of the Credentials Committee.
- C. A proxy vote shall not be honored at any meeting of the Credentials Committee.

### Section 3 - Changes in Voting Privileges

- A. Any voting member who wishes to withdraw membership, transfer to another church, or relinquish voting privileges, may do so by written notice to the church office.
- B. In January of each year, any voting member who has not made an identifiable financial contribution in the previous calendar year shall be notified in writing by a member of the Credentials Committee and asked whether the member wishes to remain a voting member of the church. Voting membership may be affirmed by making an identifiable financial contribution to the church. If the member declines to contribute or if no response is received within twenty-one (21) days, the member's voting privileges shall be withdrawn. The member shall be informed of this policy in writing by a member of the Credentials Committee.
- C. If a member's voting privilege has been withdrawn for any reason, the member may renew voting privileges by making an identifiable financial contribution.

### Section 4 – Voting Member Privileges

- A. Only members with voting privileges are entitled to the following privileges:
  - 1) The right to vote at any congregational meeting.
  - 2) The right to be a candidate for any position on the Board of Trustees.
  - 3) The right to serve as a delegate to the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association or the Central Midwest District annual meeting.
  - 4) The right to be a candidate for election to a Search Committee.
  - 5) The right to be a candidate for election to the Nominating Committee.
  - 6) The right to be a candidate for election to the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria Trust.
  - 7) The right to present motions to the Board of Trustees according to the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- B. Members with voting privileges are entitled to pastoral counseling services, child dedications, weddings, funerals and memorial services without charge. Non-members who have pledged or have made an identifiable financial contribution and non-voting members may also be offered these services.

## **ARTICLE IV - TRANSITIONS IN MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP**

### Section 1 - Permanent Ministers

The process outlined in this section shall be followed in all cases of the call of any permanent minister or ministers, including Parish Minister, Assistant or Associate Parish Minister, Minister of Religious Education, or Co-Ministers. Co-Ministers will be considered as an indivisible team in all situations regarding call, resignation or dismissal.

- A. When an opening occurs for a permanent minister, a congregational meeting shall be held to elect seven (7) members to a Ministerial Search Committee to manage all aspects of ministerial recommendation to the congregation. The Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Secretary.

- B. After a minister has candidated, a special congregational meeting shall be called at which time an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the voting members present shall be required to elect the minister. One or more representatives of the majority opinion of the Ministerial Search Committee shall be present at the special meeting to answer questions raised by any member of the congregation.
- C. If there is less than a three-fourths affirmative vote to extend a call to the candidate, or if the candidate declines to accept the call, the course of action to be followed will be determined at a congregational meeting.
- D. No person shall be called or continue as a permanent minister of the church who does not have Fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist Association. A minister not in Fellowship may be called on a temporary basis but no contract shall be written for a term longer than twelve (12) months without a membership vote for continuance.
- E. The minister's term of service shall continue indefinitely. Unless the minister voluntarily retires or resigns, the minister shall not be relieved of duties except by a three-fourths vote of all voting members of the church who attend a special congregational meeting for the purpose of considering removal of the minister.
- F. At least three (3) months notice must be given by the minister or church to the other before severance of the relationship. In the event of dismissal of the minister, the congregation shall decide whether the minister is to perform his or her duties for the remaining three (3) months. A majority vote of voting members present who cast ballots at a duly called congregational meeting shall rule.

#### Section 2 - Interim Ministers

In the case of an Interim Minister, the Board shall have the authority either to act as a search committee itself, appoint a search committee, or ask the congregation to elect a search committee. Voting on call and dismissal shall take place as in the case of a permanent minister.

#### Section 3 - Student Intern Ministers

In the case of a Student Intern Minister, the Board shall have the authority to enter into an agreement with an intern on behalf of the church, subject to the agreement of one of the permanent ministers to act as the intern's supervisor. The Board shall also have the authority to terminate an internship when in its judgment there is a compelling reason to do so. Any termination of an intern must be carried out in consultation with the intern's supervising permanent minister.

#### Section 4 - Written Agreements

A written agreement covering all details of contractual services for any minister shall be prepared and kept with the permanent church records.

### **ARTICLE V - MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### Section 1 - Responsibilities of Ministers

- A. All ministers of the church shall strive to develop understanding and cooperation with the Unitarian Universalist Association and its affiliated organizations.
- B. Responsibilities of Parish Ministers, including Assistant, Associate, Interim, and Co-Ministers:
  - 1. Be responsible for conducting worship services.
  - 2. Serve as consultant and advisor to the editor of any church publications.
  - 3. Be responsible for visiting, counseling, and providing general pastoral care for s members and friends of the church.
  - 4. Be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee and the Ministerial Search Committee.
  - 5. Serve as the Head of Staff; in the event of multiple ministers, the Senior Minister shall serve as the Head of Staff.
  - 6. Attend all Board of Trustees and congregational meetings unless otherwise requested by the President of the Board.
- C. Should the congregation call a Minister of Religious Education (MRE), his or her areas of service shall be mutually agreed upon by the Board and the MRE, in consultation with the other minister(s) of the church, and shall be recorded in a signed contract at the time of the call.

#### Section 2 - Relationship to Community

Any minister of the church shall devote time to civic and interreligious activities as inclination and schedule permit, being careful to maintain the ideals of the church and not neglect immediate responsibilities to it.

#### Section 3 - Relationship to the Board of Trustees

- A. The minister(s) and the Board shall work cooperatively for the good of the church. The minister(s) are not voting members of the Board.
- B. If in the opinion of the Board any minister of the church is not performing his or her responsibilities satisfactorily the Board may recommend dismissal to the congregation.

#### Section 4 - Multiple Staff Ministries

- A. Each minister of the church shall be considered a fully empowered minister, enjoying the cooperation of his or her colleagues and full access to the Board and committees.
- B. Each minister of the church shall meet regularly with a Committee on Ministry, composed of members of the church selected jointly by the minister and the Board.
- C. In the case of an assistant minister, the Board may designate another minister of the church as supervisor of the assistant minister.

D. Division of duties within the church shall be agreed upon by consultation among the ministers of the church. The Board shall be informed as to the division of duties and shall have the right to request revision of the agreement if it deems necessary. The Board shall also have the right to request that the ministers obtain conflict resolution assistance if it deems necessary.

## **ARTICLE VI - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 - Regular Annual Meeting**

A meeting will be held each year on a date and at a time set by the Board of Trustees, but no later than June 30, at which time new members of the Board of Trustees will be elected, a vote will be taken on the budget, the nominating committee will be elected, and other items as scheduled by the Board of Trustees will be acted upon.

### **Section 2 - Special Meetings**

Special Meetings may be called at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees or on application by petition to the President or the Recording-Secretary of the Board of Trustees by no fewer than ten percent of voting members as reported in the most recent certification to the UUA.

### **Section 3 - Advance Notice of Meetings**

The date, time and agenda of all church meetings shall be announced during church on each of the two Sundays preceding the meeting and written notice must be mailed at least three weeks prior to the meeting.

### **Section 4 - Agenda**

The agenda for each congregational meeting, whether regular or special, shall be set by the Board of Trustees. By written petition by ten percent of voting members as reported in the most recent certification to the UUA may require the Board of Trustees to place an additional item on the agenda. The petition must be received by the President or the Recording Secretary of the Board of Trustees no later than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Any such additional items must be published in writing and announced in church prior to the meeting. Only business stated in the advance notice of the meeting or added by members' petition shall be transacted at the meeting.

### **Section 5 - Quorum**

- A. Twenty percent of voting members, as reported in the most recent certification to the UUA, shall constitute a quorum at all congregational meetings.
- B. The Board of Trustees shall set a new date for the congregational meeting if a quorum is not present.

### **Section 6 - Voting**

- A. To be passed, all motions must receive a majority vote of the voting members present who cast ballots, unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws or specifically altered for a particular motion by a majority vote at a congregational meeting.

- B. Any action to overrule the decisions of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria Trust requires a three-fourths vote of all voting members present who cast ballots.
- C. A proxy vote shall not be honored at any meeting.

#### Section 7 - Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be the parliamentary authority at all congregational meetings for any issues not covered in the Constitution and Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE VII - BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

#### Section 1 - Board of Trustees and Officers

- A. The government of this church is vested in an elected Board of Trustees of thirteen (13) members, four (4) of whom are officers.
- B. Terms of office for the trustees shall be two (2) years, unless filling a vacancy or unexpired term.
- C. Terms of office for officers shall be two (2) years, with the President and Vice-President being elected on even-numbered years and the Treasurer and Secretary elected on odd-numbered years.
- D. The Board shall meet monthly at a time agreed upon by a majority of the Board.
- E. Any Board member missing three regularly scheduled meetings during a six month period shall be considered to have resigned.
- F. Vacancies on the Board shall be temporarily filled until the next congregational meeting by a nomination from the Board President or the Nominating Committee with the confirmation by a vote of the Board.
- G. Members of the Board of Trustees must be voting members of the church.

#### Section 2 - Quorum and Voting

Seven (7) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board, and a majority vote of Board members, present and voting, shall determine each question. However, a majority of the Board members, present and voting, may alter the level of majority required to pass a particular motion.

#### Section 3 - Powers and Duties of the Board

- A. The authority to transfer, purchase, make agreements or loans is vested in the President of the Board subject to granting of such authority by the Board and/or the membership.
- B. The Board shall determine the dates for the regular services constituting the church year.
- C. The Board has the authority to fill the pulpit temporarily should a vacancy occur.



- D. The Board shall approve a budget for the church and shall authorize the purchase of such supplies as needed for the operation of the church and its committees as approved in the budget. The Board may re-allocate between budgeted expense line items, as may be needed for the sound operation of the church. The President or Vice-President of the Board may authorize the expenditure of not more than \$200 outside the budget. Otherwise, Board action is required for expenditures not previously approved in the budget.
- E. Financial commitments over \$5,000 require congregational approval unless previously included in the church's yearly budget or in a fund established for a special purpose.
- F. Only the Board has the authority to use budgeted funds to support UU-related organizations. Any other use of church funds to support any organization other than the church must be approved by congregational vote.
- G. The administration of the church between Congregational Meetings of the membership shall be vested in the Board. The Board may create policies that govern the operation of the church. It may also delegate operational authority to a Minister as Head of Staff, the Administrative Team or other committees.
- H. The Board has the power to audit the books and records of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria Trust.

#### Section 4 - Eligibility for Re-election

A member may serve as an officer for no longer than four (4) consecutive years in the same position. No member can serve longer than six (6) consecutive years on the Board. After leaving the Board a member is eligible for re-election to any Board position after an interval of one (1) full year.

### **ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS**

#### Section 1 - Definition

- A. Officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. As needed the Board may appoint members of the church as assistants to the officers.
- B. All officers of the church must be voting members of the church and must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

#### Section 2 - President

- A. The President shall preside at all congregational meetings and at all meetings of the Board.
- B. The President shall make such appointments as stated in these bylaws with the approval of the Board.

#### Section 3 - Vice-President

The Vice-President shall act in the absence of the President and shall assume such other duties as the President or as the Board may direct.

#### Section 4 – Secretary

The Secretary shall keep official minutes of the Board and congregational meetings and shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Board minutes and related documents, which shall be stored in a secure place in the church office.

#### Section 5 - Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the supervision and/or maintenance of all church monies, financial books and records and papers, and all other financial information pertaining to the operations of the church. The Treasurer may use the assistance of the Finance/Personnel committee and/or paid staff in the performance of these responsibilities.
- B. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Finance/Personnel committee. The Treasurer and the Finance/Personnel chair are equal participants in making financial decisions of the church and shall work cooperatively under the direction of the Board of Trustees.
- C. The Treasurer reports the financial status of the church at each regular monthly board meeting.

### **ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES**

Section 1 - The Board of Trustees will authorize such committees, either standing or temporary, as it deems necessary and useful and shall be responsible for presenting a charge to each committee. Changes in committee charges must be approved by the Board. The Board of Trustees will publish a list of committees, committee chairs, and Board of Trustees liaisons each September.

Section 2 - Committee chairs are appointed by the Board of Trustees for a period of one church year, July 1 through June 30.

Section 3 - Any member or friend of the church may join a committee.

Section 4 - The chair of each committee, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, shall report to the Board of Trustees in such manner as the Board may request and shall send a representative to any special church-wide leadership meetings that the Board of Trustees may schedule.

#### Section 5 - Nominating Committee

- A. Selection: At the regular annual congregational meeting each year a Nominating Committee of five voting members shall be elected by the membership. That committee shall elect one of their members as chair. If a member of the Nominating committee is unable to serve after being elected, the President of the Board of Trustees shall appoint a member of the church to fill the vacancy. If more than one vacancy exists, the Board of Trustees shall fill the vacancies.
- B. Responsibilities: At the regular annual congregational meeting the Nominating Committee shall present at least one consenting candidate for each specified vacancy on the Board of Trustees to the membership for election. Additional nominations may be received from the floor with the nominee's permission. Written ballots shall be required for any contested election. Names of all candidates for an office shall be listed in church publications at least

two weeks before the congregational meeting. Candidates shall be announced and introduced, if present, at the Sunday services preceding the meeting.

## **ARTICLE X – CHURCH RESOURCES**

Section 1 - The care and maintenance of church property and the employment of a custodian shall be the charge of the Property committee.

Section 2 - Building and equipment use policies shall be established by the Board.

Section 3 - The church reserves the right to authorize or deny use of church resources based on a majority vote by the officers or of a quorum of the Board.

Section 4 - The Board has the authority and responsibility to ensure all Church Resources are used in accordance with proper business and legal standards, to fulfill the Church's Mission and Vision, and to work toward achieving the established Goals of the congregation. Church Resources include but are not limited to: buildings; grounds; cash; staff time; volunteer time; and the Church's name for display, publicity, and/or endorsement.

## **ARTICLE XI - FINANCE**

Section 1 - The fiscal year shall be from July 1 to June 30.

Section 2 - The Finance/Personnel Committee is composed of the Treasurer and at least four other persons. The Treasurer and the Finance/Personnel chair shall work cooperatively under the direction of the Board of Trustees as equal participants in making financial decisions of the church as authorized in the bylaws and committee charges.

### Section 3 - Responsibilities of the Finance/Personnel Committee

- A. Budget - Coordinates the preparation of the annual preliminary budget for presentation to the Board prior to the annual canvass campaign; prepares and presents an annual final budget to the congregation for its approval or revision after the annual canvass campaign.
- B. Contracts - Ensures that all church employees have a written understanding of the terms of their employment.
- C. Insurance - Obtains insurance for all property and any personnel as determined necessary by the Board. Reviews property values and reports them to the Board every fourth and ninth year of each decade to determine that insurance coverage is adequate.
- D. Property - Prepares and reports to the Board in even-numbered years the inventory of church personal property.
- E. Special Funds - Considers and recommends to the Board methods of raising special funds and assists in special fund raising activities.

- F. Audit - Forms a subcommittee (appointed by the Board of Trustees) after the end of each fiscal year consisting of the finance chair and at least two non-finance committee members to examine the church's books to record and report the findings at a congregational meeting.
- G. Records - Prepares details of procedures for handling monies, approving and paying bills, maintaining investments and any other necessary financial matters, for approval by the Board.
- H. Personnel - Coordinate with the Board, Head of Staff and/or the Administrative Team on issues concerning pay rates, work hours, evaluations, appeals, hiring and termination, and any other personnel practices affecting the paid and volunteer staffs.

## **ARTICLE XII - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Section 1 - The Religious Education Program of the church, for young people through high school age, shall be managed jointly by the Religious Education Committee and the Director of Religious Education. The Director of Religious Education shall manage the program while meeting regularly with the Religious Education Committee to receive and give assistance and direction.

Section 2 - The Director of Religious Education shall be selected by a Search Committee that includes the Head of Staff and other members selected by the Board. The Board will vote on the candidate recommended by the Search Committee. The Director of Religious Education will report directly to the Head of Staff while working cooperatively with the Religious Education Committee.

Section 3 - The Religious Education Committee will assist the Director of Religious Education by jointly setting long and short range goals for the Religious Education Program, jointly making curriculum decisions, and in general helping the Director of Religious Education to implement the Sunday School programs.

Section 4 - The Head of Staff will conduct an annual evaluation of the Director of Religious Education with input from the Religious Education Committee, the Board, and other members of the church that the Head of Staff may ask to participate.

Section 5 - Should the congregation call a Minister of Religious Education (MRE), his or her areas of service and relationship with the Religious Education Committee shall be mutually agreed upon by the Board and the MRE.

## **ARTICLE XIII - CHURCH ASSETS**

Section 1 - The title to all real and personal property and the obligation to pay any related debts shall rest with the congregation of the church.

Section 2 - The Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria Trust shall receive current and future assets for memorials, gifts or bequests which are not intended for operating or building funds, and shall maintain those assets subject to the bylaws of that trust.

## **ARTICLE XIV - DISSOLUTION**

In the case of dissolution of this church, all the property, both real and personal, after paying all just claims upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the Unitarian Universalist Association and held in trust for twenty-five (25) years for the reestablishment of a Unitarian Universalist Church in this area. If no church is established, all funds become the property of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

#### **ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS**

Section 1 - These bylaws may be amended at any congregational meeting of the corporation by a vote of three-fourths of the voting members present and voting, provided a notice of said proposed change and the time of the meeting is given from the pulpit for two consecutive Sundays at the regular services and by written notice mailed to all of the members of the corporation at least one week prior to the date of such meeting.

Section 2 - Changes to the proposed published amendment may be made at the meeting provided they are submitted in writing at the start of the meeting and are directly related to the issue under consideration.

#### **ARTICLE XVI - ANNULMENT**

All of the constitutions or bylaws in force previous to the latest bylaws revisions are hereby annulled with the exception of the bylaws of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria Trust. The constitution and bylaws shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Enabling Document and will be effective when approved by the voting members of the church.