

CONSTITUTION

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING

Adopted - April 4, 1964; Amended - May 9, 1969, December 6, 1970, March 5, 1972, March 2, 1973, April 20, 1975, February 15, 1976, September 16, 1979, December 4, 1983, December 15, 1985, December 12, 1993, May 22, 1994, December 11, 1994, November 3, 1996, December 8, 1996, December 9, 2001.

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, do pledge ourselves to the endless search for truth; to the right of each to believe as mind, heart, and conscience dictate; to accept, along with this principle of individual freedom of belief, the responsibilities that this freedom commands; and to implement our belief in the essential worth and dignity of every human being.

This congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of all persons in all our activities and endeavors, including membership, programming and staffing practices, with regard to both ministers and lay employees, without regard to race, sex, national origin, class political affiliation, marital status, physical and mental abilities, or affectional or sexual orientation, thereby celebrating our diversity.

ARTICLE I - NAME

Sec. 1: The name of this church is the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring. It is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association and regards itself as pledged to foster and extend the interests of the denomination, especially by paying its fair share of financial support.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 1: Any person aged 18 years or older who seeks the fellowship of this Church and intends to give services and financial support to the best of his/her ability shall be an Adult member of the Congregation upon signing the rolls. Any person under the age of 18 years may sign the membership book as a Youth Member. Any member of the Church who expresses a wish to remain on the rolls, but can no longer actively participate in the activities of the Congregation, may be designated a Standing Member by vote of the Board of Trustees. A Youth Member and a Standing Member are not assessed for the purpose of this Church's payment to the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Joseph Priestley District, or the Greater Washington Area Association of Unitarian Universalist Churches. All persons who sign the membership book as Youth Members will, upon reaching the age of 18 years, be invited to become Adult Members. No tests of creed, color, character, rite or ceremony shall be

imposed as conditions of admission to the membership of this Church.

- Sec. 2: An Adult Member of the Congregation is eligible to vote on all Church business, except as restricted by Section 3 below. A list of Adult members shall be maintained by the Administrative Assistant and certified by the Board of Trustees (hereinafter called the "Board") prior to congregational meetings. Both Adult Membership and Youth Membership shall be terminated by notification to the Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant may be instructed by the Board to ascertain the intent of any individual to remain a member. Failure to respond to such an inquiry within a reasonable time shall be considered a resignation.
- Sec. 3: No member of the Congregation less than eighteen (18) years of age shall vote on the Board of Trustees or vote on the following matters: dissolution of the corporation, calling of a minister, dismissal of a minister, determination of the ministerial remuneration, or amendment of the Constitution. No member shall vote on the calling or dismissal of a minister, dissolution of the corporation, or amending the Constitution without having been a member for at least six (6) months immediately preceding the vote. There shall be no vote by proxy, but absentee votes shall be accepted as determined by the Board and shall be counted as present and voting.
- Sec. 4: Any member of the Congregation, with the exception of a minister, shall be eligible for any elective or appointive office, unless disqualified by this Constitution.

ARTICLE III - MEETINGS

- Sec. 1: The Congregation shall exercise its will at duly called meetings where a quorum is present. A quorum shall be one-fifth or 50, whichever is less, of the voting members, and voting shall be by simple majority of those members present and voting, except as otherwise required by this Constitution.
- Sec. 2: This Congregation shall hold one or more general meetings a year, of which one, called the Annual Meeting, must come in the 60 days prior to the beginning of the Church year, which shall begin on January 1st. The agenda of the Annual Meeting shall include, but not be limited to: adoption of the budget and election of officers, trustees, and a Nominating Committee. The Board of Trustees shall determine additional items to be included on the agenda. Motions from the floor not germane to items on the agenda may be considered if two-thirds of the eligible members present and voting consent. A motion to consider a non-germane motion shall not be debatable. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Board or on the application to the Secretary of not less than 15 members, provided the purpose is stated in the notice. Notice and agenda of all congregational

meetings shall be in writing to each member at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting.

- Sec. 3: Meetings of the Congregation shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order except that: debate may not be closed until each member has had an opportunity to participate; and it shall be assumed that a quorum is present and business transacted until such time as a member raises the point of order.

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Sec. 1: The responsibility for the functioning of this Church shall be delegated to the Board elected as prescribed herein at the Annual meeting. The Board shall be responsible for long-range planning, facilities and administration, financial planning, and resource development.
- Sec 2: The Board shall consist of the President, who is President of the corporation, the Secretary, who is Secretary of the corporation, a First Vice President (Corporate), who is Vice President of the corporation, a Second Vice President (Programs), a Third Vice President (Finances) and four (4) Trustees elected at-large. A Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board. The Director/Minister of Religious Education shall be a non-voting, ex officio member of the Board.
- Sec. 3: The members of the Board shall be elected for two-year terms, with no fewer than four (4) elected in any one year. All persons elected shall take office at the beginning of the Church year, or immediately in the case of special elections to fill vacancies, and shall serve until their successors are duly qualified. No person shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office nor more than six (6) consecutive years on the Board. Eligibility shall be regained after one calendar year.
- Sec. 4: Vacancies on the Board or Nominating Committee shall be filled by appointment by the President and confirmed by the Board, except in the case of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President(Corporate) shall assume office. All appointees to the Board or Nominating Committee shall serve until the next duly called congregational meeting, when the office shall be filled for the balance of the term by election.
- Sec. 5: The Board shall meet at least monthly. A majority of those Board members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- Sec. 6: The Congregation shall establish and the Board shall maintain a Program Council to carry out the program and operational functions of the church. Membership of the Program Council shall be chairs of those committees designated by the Board as Council Committees. The Second Vice President (Programs) shall chair the Program Council. In addition, the Congregation at its Annual Meeting shall

elect the Program Council Vice Chair and Secretary from a slate provided by the Nominating Committee. Terms of Program Council officers shall be for two years.

- Sec 7: The Board may charter subordinate program councils and committees and may organize itself into departments and committees to best meet the needs of the church; irrespective, the Board and only the Board may appropriate church funds, authorize fund raising, and create Church policy. The Board President shall appoint Board members to Board departments and committees.
- Sec. 8: Employees, except a minister, shall be appointed by the Board from applicants recommended by the departments and standing and special committees. The Board shall fix salaries and conditions of employment.
- Sec. 9: The Board is charged with the financial affairs of the Church, including investment and reinvestment of funds for the benefit of the Church, subject to such powers and restrictions as appear in the Articles of Incorporation. Expenditures from the endowment fund shall be no more than fifteen (15) percent per year, or \$20,000, whichever is greater, without approval of the congregation. The Board shall appoint an adult member of the Congregation, who is a legal resident of the State of Maryland, who shall deposit all money and other valuable papers in the name and to the credit of the Church in such places as are designated by the Board.
- Sec 10: Membership in the Church shall be required for election, appointment or service as a board member. In addition, at least four (4) Board members must be eligible under the laws of the State of Maryland to serve as trustees of a religious corporation.
- Sec. 11: The Board shall appoint a Personnel Committee to advise and assist the church in carrying out its responsibilities as an employer.

ARTICLE V - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- Sec. 1: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation and of the Board and shall be, ex-officio, a member of all committees except the Nominating Committee. The President shall have the power to appoint committees.
- Sec. 2: The Secretary shall keep church records, reports, and correspondence and be the official Recorder of the Church, issuing such notices as directed.
- Sec. 3: The Treasurer shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Church. The Treasurer shall make such reports as required by the Board. An Associate Treasurer shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Board. The

Treasurer shall be, ex-officio, a member of the Finance Department.

Sec.4: The Church officers and committee chairs shall submit full reports of their activities in writing at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VI - ELECTIONS

Sec. 1: The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) members.

Sec. 2: At least three (3) months before the Annual Meeting the Board shall advise the Nominating Committee of position/task descriptions required to carry out the work of the Congregation in the forthcoming church year. The Nominating Committee shall then seek candidates for the Board willing to assume the designated responsibilities.

Sec. 3: At least two (2) months before the Annual Meeting the Nominating Committee shall solicit from the Congregation suggestions for nominees.

Sec. 4: At least one (1) month before the Annual Meeting the Nominating Committee shall present to the Board and then publicize to the Congregation a slate of one or more candidates for each office to be filled, including the succeeding Nominating Committee.

Sec. 5: Additional nominations may be made prior to the Annual Meeting by petition of ten (10) members. Names of petition candidates will also be publicized to the Congregation. Nominations may also be made at the time of election with the consent of the candidate. Candidates defeated for an office may be nominated for an office not yet voted on.

Sec. 6: The Board shall determine the order of election. Election of officers and At-Large Trustees will be carried out serially, with a plurality of votes needed to elect.

Sec. 7: Election of the Nominating Committee and At-Large Trustees shall be determined by a ranking by number of votes. The Nominating Committee will elect its own chair.

ARTICLE VII - MINISTER

Sec. 1: No person shall be called to or continued as minister of this Church who is not a Unitarian Universalist.

Sec. 2: A committee of seven members shall be nominated by the Board of Trustees and elected by the Congregation to search for any settled minister. The minister shall be chosen and her/his salary determined by the Congregation. The approval of three-quarters of the members of six (6) months standing present and voting shall be necessary to call a person to the ministry of this Church. Dismissal of a minister from this Church requires approval of at least a simple majority of the members of six (6) months standing and shall be

within the terms of his/her contract. The Congregation must approve the search for an interim minister and approve a salary for an interim minister by majority vote. After that affirmative vote, the Board may hire the minister for a period not to exceed two years. The calling or dismissal of a minister shall be included in the written agenda submitted to the Congregation ten (10) days in advance in order for such a matter to be discussed in a meeting of the Congregation.

Sec. 3: The minister of the Church shall be charged with the functions usually associated with the office and with denominational cooperation in the larger work of the Church, and may engage in such interdenominational and civic causes as she/he chooses.

Sec. 4: The minister shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board and all departments, councils and committees except the Personnel Committee, the Nominating Committee, any Ministerial Search Committees, and the Director of Religious Education Relations Committee. The minister may assist officers and committees as mutually agreed in promoting the efficient and harmonious function of the total Church organization and program.

ARTICLE VIII - DISSOLUTION

Sec. 1: In the event of the dissolution of the Church, all its property, both real and personal, after paying all claims on it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the Unitarian Universalist Association or its successors.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENT

Sec. 1: This Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the Congregation by a vote of two-thirds of the members of six (6) months standing present and voting, provided that a written copy of the proposed amendment(s) has been sent to each member by the Secretary at least ten (10) days in advance of such a meeting.

Sec. 2: Amendments to this Constitution shall take effect immediately after adjournment of the meeting at which they were adopted, except as delay may be necessary to permit previously elected Board members to complete the terms to which they were elected.