

# BYLAWS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SACRAMENTO (UUSS)

(See last page for amendment history)

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento (UUSS) bylaws exist to support and enhance the functioning of our congregation and provide clear processes to follow. UUSS bylaws are distinct from the UUSS constitution which defines our congregational meetings, elections, budget adoption, and governance. Our constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members at a congregational meeting, while the bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees (Board). Both documents are found on the UUSS website under Governance Documents.

## 1. MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION

### 1.1 MEMBERS

#### General

Making a commitment to be an official member of UUSS involves completing a Member Information Form for the UUSS database, signing the Membership Register, completing a financial pledge form, and making a new pledge every fiscal year. Usually, joining UUSS as a member is done at a meeting with a Minister; but if one is not available this may be done in the presence of a UUSS Officer.

To retain continued membership, a person or family needs to have a contribution of record within the 18-month period preceding the date of the Congregational Meeting.

#### 1.1.1 Active Members:

- (a) An active member is a person aged 18 or older who has met the financial responsibility requirements of Article 1.2.
- (b) Active members are entitled to receive the newsletter, all notices of meetings and other UUSS activities, to speak at congregational meetings, to chair committees, and to be elected to offices of the congregation. Active members who have satisfied the requirements of Article V, Section 6 of the UUSS Constitution are entitled to vote at membership meetings.
- (c) To determine the number of delegates for Unitarian Universalist Association

(UUA) General Assembly, and to contribute to denomination-wide statistics, a count of active members shall be reported annually to the UUA and the Pacific Western Region.

#### 1.1.2 Youth Members:

- (a) A Youth Member is a person aged 17 or younger who has met the financial responsibility requirements of Article 1.2.1(c).
- (b) Youth Members have the same rights as Active Members.

#### 1.1.3 Honorary Life Members:

- (a) Honorary Life Members are valued and formerly active UUSS members who are no longer able to manage their own financial affairs or to actively participate in the congregation. The Minister(s) shall recommend this status, to be affirmed by the Board of Trustees (Board). Honorary Life Members shall receive the UUSS newsletter and notices and free use of UUSS facilities for Memorial services.

#### 1.1.4 Friends:

- (a) A Friend is an individual who makes financial pledges but chooses not to become a member of the congregation.
- (b) A friend has no rights of membership in the congregation but receives the UUSS newsletter and notices.

## 1.2 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Those members who meet the financial responsibility requirements of the congregation shall be entitled to be Active Members. The financial responsibility requirements may be met by making a contribution of record or by being granted a waiver for financial hardship (see Article 1.3).

The Board President shall certify a list of voting members each January and before each congregational meeting. The January list shall be the basis for submission of a certified number of members to the UUA. Voting members must meet one of the following requirements:

1.2.1: A member meets the financial responsibility requirements if any of the following criteria are satisfied:

- (a) The member has made a contribution of record.
- (b) The member has been granted a waiver by the Board.
- (c) A Youth Member shall make an annual contribution of record to the congregation. The Board may allow a youth to substitute service-in-kind for the financial contribution.

## 1.3 FINANCIAL WAIVER

1.3.1 If a member experiences a situation that makes payment of the minimum contribution for their class of membership a financial hardship, the member may seek a waiver of contribution. Financial Hardship waivers may be granted only by the Board. The Board may suggest a contribution of service when a waiver is granted.

1.3.2 The waiver will expire no later than the end of the fiscal year.

1.3.3 A member who is granted a financial hardship waiver is entitled to all the rights and privileges associated with their category of membership.

## **2. STANDING COMMITTEES AND LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS**

### 2.1 STANDING COMMITTEES

In addition to the standing committees established in the Constitution, from time to time the Board or the Program Council may, consistent with the best interests of UUSS, establish additional committees to serve the needs of the congregation. Standing committees are not elected by the congregation, except for the Nominating Committee. A complete listing of these committees shall be maintained by the UUSS office and is available on the website.

### 2.2 LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

The Board may assign Board members as liaisons to appropriate committees and groups.

### 2.3 COMMITTEE CHARTERS

Charters of standing committees shall set forth the committee authority and responsibilities, method of appointing members, and term lengths and limitations on reappointment, if any.

## **3. PROGRAM COUNCIL**

### 3.1 ESTABLISHMENT / MEMBERSHIP

There shall be a Program Council consisting of six members, elected at large from the congregation. Each year Program Council will select one or two of its members to serve as chair or co-chairs. Program Council members serve two year staggered terms. The Board shall appoint one or two liaisons to the Program Council selected from Board members.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Program Council is to care for congregational life and to support program groups and committees.

## **4. LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

### **4.1 FUNDRAISING STRATEGY COMMITTEE (FRST)**

FRST is appointed to oversee and promote coordination of fundraising activities and programs that support and sustain the UUSS mission. It schedules/calendars fundraising activities and recruits leadership for fundraising activities. It develops and makes recommendations to the Board.

### **4.2 COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

(a) Purpose: This Committee serves as a support group or confidential sounding board for the minister(s), and ensures clear communications between the congregation and minister(s). The committee is authorized to review and consider the various ministry areas of the congregation and make recommendations to ensure healthy, respectful congregational relationships in the spirit of UUA values. The committee's work could include facilitating development of a formal covenant or facilitating conversations in times of transition or challenge. It could also include involvement in or leadership of an evaluation of the minister(s). The committee has a working relationship with the Board but does not report to the Board.

(b) The committee consists of three to five (3 to 5)-members of the congregation, who shall not be a Board member. Members may serve from two to ten (2 to 10) years, depending on personal ministerial needs and those of the committee. The committee membership is established by consultation among the minister(s) and current committee members.

(c) Departure of minister: The committee will disband with the departure of both current minister(s) or a solo ministry, at which time a Search Committee and Interim Minister Committee will be formed, until replaced by a new Committee on Ministry to serve the new minister. In the case of co-ministry, if one minister leaves, it will be up to the new minister and the remaining minister to decide if a new committee is needed.

(d) Forming new committee: In the case of a newly called minister, the-committee

shall be formed, consisting of three to five (3 to 5) members of the Search Committee and may include one or two (1 or 2) members nominated by the new minister (not to exceed five total members). Committee membership is established by consultation among the minister(s), current committee members, and the Board.

(e) In the case of an interim minister, the committee shall consist of three to five (3 to 5) members of the interim minister committee or other congregational members appointed by the Board in consultation with the interim minister. Interim ministers may typically rely on this committee for support and leadership on several designated developmental tasks for congregations in this interim period.

### **4.3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

(a) The Executive Committee is composed of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board.

(b) The Executive Committee shall:

- (1) Act on behalf of the Board in any emergency when time and other circumstances make it impossible to either convene a formal Board meeting or obtain a decision by electronic means.
- (2) Meet in advance of the Board meetings to prepare the agenda.

### **4.4 ENDOWMENT TRUST**

Endowment Trust is a separate entity independent from UUSS that receives financial gifts from UUSS members and friends, invests such gifts in a prudent and diversified manner, and annually uses a percentage of the trust's value for special and non-recurring needs of UUSS. Endowment Trust membership consists of three (3) trustees elected by the congregation, a minister, and one member of the Board. Trustees have the responsibility and authority to prudently hold, invest, reinvest, and disburse endowment funds.

## **5. AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT UUSS**

At meetings, conventions, or venues of whatever nature, no member may speak or

act as a representative of UUSS unless authorized to do so by the Board; except that in the case of UUA or Pacific Western Region – UUA meetings, the Board may assign responsibility for selecting delegates to the President, Executive Committee, or a standing committee.

## **6. SUSPENDING OR TERMINATING A MEMBERSHIP FOR CAUSE**

### **6.1 GOOD CAUSE**

Definition: Good cause to justify the suspension or termination of a membership shall be shown by the intentional misconduct of a member directed against another member or against UUSS, which is contrary to the purposes and principles of UUSS.

### **6.2 USE OF INTERMEDIARY CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES**

(a) Except under extraordinary circumstances where immediate action may be necessary to avoid an imminent threat to the health, safety, security, or property of the Board, UUSS, a member, or a member of the public, prior to initiating any action to suspend or terminate a membership under sections 6.3 and 6.4, the Board shall in good faith avail itself of a conflict resolution process.

(b) In any case when a conflict resolution process has been initiated, the Board shall defer the proposed action for a reasonable time. The Board shall appoint one or more of its members to represent it in efforts to resolve the conflict. Any suggested resolution reached through these negotiations shall be presented to the Board for consideration. The Board may accept, reject, or modify the resolution. If the Board elects to modify the suggested resolution, the modifications shall be returned to the member for further consideration or acceptance. If a resolution acceptable to both the Board and the member cannot be reached, the Board may resume the procedures set out in sections 6.3 and 6.4 below.

### **6.3 NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO SUSPEND OR TERMINATE A MEMBERSHIP**

(a) Whenever the Board finds there is good cause to suspend or terminate a membership, it shall provide written notice to the member of its proposed action.

(b) The notice shall inform the member of the reasons for the Board's proposed action. The notice shall specify a date not less than 20 days from the date of mailing together with the time and place of the meeting of the Board at which the proposed action will be considered.

(c) Notice shall be mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the member's address in the records of UUSS. In addition to mailing, the Board may also deliver notice to the member in any other appropriate manner.

(d) Generally, the Board's notice shall not be published to the members of UUSS. However, if appropriate, the Board will use its discretion regarding any communication on the matter.

### **6.4 BOARD MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED ACTION**

(a) At the meeting of the Board, the member may appear and present reasons why the membership should not be suspended or terminated. The Board shall request the attendance of members or others who either support the proposed action or possess information relevant to the action. The member may also request the attendance of members or others who possess information relevant to the action. The meeting shall be closed to the general membership, unless the member requests that it be open to the general membership.

(b) No Board member may vote on the proposed action unless the Board member was present at the meeting.

(c) If the Board votes to suspend a membership, the Board shall specify the length of the suspension together with any terms or conditions upon that suspension the Board may deem appropriate.

(d) If the Board votes to terminate a membership, the decision is effective immediately and the member shall be informed of the decision in writing.

#### 6.5 SUMMARY SUSPENSION.

Whenever the Board reasonably believes that the conduct of a member is of such egregious nature that the health, safety, security, or property of another member or UUSS is threatened by their continued membership, the Board may immediately suspend the membership, pending notice and action as set forth above.

### **7. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

#### 7.1 PROPOSAL

Amendments to the Bylaws may be proposed by any Board member or member of UUSS.

#### 7.2 ADOPTION

Amendments to the Bylaws may be adopted by:

- (a) a two-thirds vote of the whole Board
- or
- (b) a majority vote of the members present at a membership meeting.

#### 7.3 REVIEW

Unless required earlier, the Bylaws shall be reviewed by the Board every five years to make any necessary changes or adjustments.

#### 7.4 EFFECTIVE DATE

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be effective immediately upon adoption unless specified otherwise.

This document contains the amendments adopted on:

8/28/97, 11/18/99, 1/27/00, 2/22/01, 5/16/02, 10/17/04, 8/27/09, 1/22/15, 9/27/18, 12/28/2023, and 6/27/2024.