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19 **By-Laws**
20 **of the Unitarian Universalist Church**
21 **of Muncie, Indiana**

22
23 **ARTICLE I**
24 **Purpose and Objectives**

25 SECTION 1.

26 The Universalist Church of Muncie was founded in 1859, incorporated in
27 1956 and, following the national merger, became a Unitarian Universalist Church in
28 1962.

29
30 SECTION 2.

31 The purpose of this church is to provide an environment in which we, the
32 members, unite to secure for ourselves, our posterity, and our fellow human beings a
33 communion and faith, a tradition and heritage of ever greater freedom, justice, love,
34 and mercy, and do voluntarily bind ourselves together to support and maintain one
35 organization and government of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie,

36 Indiana. Therefore, this church shall devote its resources to religious, educational and
37 charitable purposes.

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39

40 SECTION 3.

41 Our church is autonomous and concerned with humankind's conception of the
42 ultimate, or universe, and with human relationships. With mutual good faith and good
43 will we seek:

- 44 -to strengthen one another in the search for truth;
- 45 -to cherish and spread the values of our heritage as discovered by the prophets
46 and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition;
- 47 -to affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every person, the dignity
48 of humanity, and the use of the democratic process in human relationships;
- 49 -to implement our ideals of beloved community, justice and peace by
50 encouraging appropriate action through which each member, in accordance
51 with personal convictions, may serve fellow humans and cooperate with
52 persons of good will in every land;
- 53 -to help other Unitarian Universalist churches and fellowships; and
- 54 -to extend our own church in order to make membership available to all who
55 would find the way of liberal religion an enrichment of life.

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57

SECTION 4.

58 Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers
59 for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We
60 pledge to do all we can to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of
61 solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be a congregation that truly welcomes all
62 persons, and commit to structuring congregational life in ways that empower and
63 enhance everyone's participation.

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SECTION 5.

66 No Statement in these by-laws is to be used as a creed or doctrinal test. No
67 committee, group or individual may speak for the congregation without its
68 authorization.

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ARTICLE II
Allegiance

72 SECTION 1.

73 This church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA),
74 acknowledging the organization and purposes of that Association; however, this
75 church remains fully autonomous and independent. Congregational polity cannot be
76 infringed upon by the UUA or any other organization to which this church may be
77 joined; and further, this church regards itself as pledged to its own conference and
78 district organization and shall cooperate with each in extending the interests of this
79 church.

80

81 SECTION 2.

82 This church shall contribute each year, according to its ability, to the funds of
83 the Unitarian Universalist Association, its own district and such other conferences
84 and/or organizations as are deemed appropriate by the congregation.

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ARTICLE III

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Membership

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91 SECTION 1. **Admittance to Membership**

92 Any person sixteen (16) years of age or older who expresses sympathy with the
93 Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association and is willing to
94 support and advance the purpose of our church as stated in our by-laws, may become
95 a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie. Membership is effected
96 by: following our membership procedure (as outlined in the Policy and Procedure
97 Manual) to learn about Unitarian Universalism and the responsibilities of
98 membership; and signing the membership book witnessed either by the minister or by
99 a member of the Board of Trustees (here and after defined as Board.)

100

101 Section 2. **Definition of Membership**

102 A. Persons who have been admitted to membership for at least thirty (30)
103 days, who make a financial pledge to the church and make a good-faith effort to pay
104 it, who donate their time and services, and who attend church services and activities
105 are deemed to be voting members with all rights and privileges. Members who by
106 reason of health have not been able to participate in church affairs and members who

107 by reason of financial hardship have not been able to make a monetary contribution,
108 are nonetheless viewed by the church as being members.

109

110 B. UUA--With regard to assessing the church's financial obligations to the
111 Unitarian Universalist Association, membership will be deemed to be equal to the
112 number of members in the year previous to the current assessment.

113

114 C. A membership list will be updated annually by a group comprising church
115 staff, members of the Board of Trustees, and members of one or more appropriate
116 committee(s). A member's name shall be removed from the membership list in case
117 of: (1) the member's death, (2) written request by the member to the Board Secretary,
118 (3) non-fulfillment of the membership obligations as defined above (section 2A), (4)
119 removal by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Board for actions that threaten the well-being
120 of the Congregation.

121

122 Section 3. **Rights and Privileges**

123 A. All members shall have the right to vote in all matters concerning the life
124 of the church where voting is required by the by-Laws. Only members of this church
125 may be officers or trustees. All members of this church may attend any meeting of the
126 church standing committees and the Board and any member may make proposals,
127 suggestions and criticisms and present them to the Board, the minister or the
128 appropriate committee at any time.

129

130 B. All members of the church will receive preferential consideration regarding
131 facility uses and services associated with church property and staff in accordance with
132 the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie policy.

133

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136

ARTICLE IV

137

Auxiliary Organizations

138 The church through its Board may provide for or recognize any auxiliary
139 organizations that may be deemed appropriate for the purpose of worship, instruction,
140 service, recreation or the general development of the church. All such organizations
141 shall be regarded as integral parts of the church and shall designate a liaison
142 responsible for communication with the Board and shall prepare a report for the May

143 semi-annual meeting. The Board may withdraw recognition of organizations it deems
144 inappropriate.

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ARTICLE V

147

Dissolution

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In any case of the dissolution of this Church, all of its property, whether real,
personal, or mixed, subject to all just and legal claims upon it, shall be vested in the
appropriate regional and/or district organization of the Unitarian Universalist
Association to be held in trust for the benefit of a future Unitarian Universalist
Church in the vicinity of Muncie, Indiana.

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ARTICLE VI

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Amendments

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The By-Laws may be altered or amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the
members present at any business or special meeting. Proposed changes and notice of
the meeting shall be published and mailed 30 days prior to a business or special
congregational meeting.

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ARTICLE VII

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Annulment

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By-Laws in force previous to the adoption of these By-Laws are hereby
annulled.

166

ARTICLE VIII

167

Congregational Meetings

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SECTION 1. Business Meeting

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The congregation shall meet in May and October of each year at the times and
dates set by the Board. The purpose of the May meeting is to elect all officers and
personnel whose election is called for by these By-Laws, to receive presentation of all
annual reports, to approve the budget of the church and to transact other business as
necessary. The purpose of the October meeting is to receive the final financial report
of the previous fiscal year, to make budgetary adjustments, if needed, and to transact
other business as necessary.

177

SECTION 2. Special meetings

178 Special meetings shall be called by the President, by a majority of the Board
179 or by a petition duly presented to the President or a Board member by fifteen (15) or
180 more members of the congregation.

181

182 **SECTION 3. Notice of Meetings**

183 Notice of all meetings of the congregation shall be announced from the pulpit
184 the two Sundays preceding the meeting and shall be published and mailed to each
185 member of the church at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date, except as
186 stated in ARTICLE VI. The agenda shall be prepared by those calling the meeting and
187 shall be included in the notice. The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for
188 the time requirement of such notice.

189

190 **SECTION 4. Quorum**

191 At all business and special meetings of the congregation, twenty (20) percent
192 of the members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is required for the transaction of
193 any business of the congregation.

194

195 **SECTION 5. Rules of the Meetings**

196 Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all business and special meetings of the
197 congregation when not in conflict with these By-Laws. The Board President shall
198 preside over all official meetings and shall appoint a parliamentarian. In the absence
199 of the President, the President-Elect shall preside. In the event of the President-
200 Elect's absence, the Vice-President shall preside.

201

202 **SECTION 6. Voting at Congregational Meetings**

203 Decisions shall be made according to Robert's Rules of Order, unless
204 otherwise specified in the By-Laws. An absentee ballot, deposited with the Board
205 Secretary a minimum of two (2) days prior to the meeting, shall be permitted on all
206 agenda proposals.

207

208 **ARTICLE IX**
209 **Church Officers**

210 **SECTION 1. Number and Election**

211 The officers of the congregation shall be six: President, President-Elect, Vice-
212 President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past-President. The officers shall be elected at
213 the May semi-annual meeting and shall hold office beginning July 1. The President

214 and President-Elect shall be elected every year for a one (1) year term. The Secretary
215 shall be elected in even numbered years for a two (2) year term.; the Vice-President
216 and Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years for a two (2) year term. With
217 the exception of the Treasurer, an officer may not hold the same office for more than
218 two (2) consecutive terms. If an officer cannot complete a term, the Board, upon the
219 recommendation of the Nominating Committee, shall appoint a replacement to
220 complete the expired term. A Vice-President or Secretary appointed to fill a vacancy,
221 who serves half of a term or more, shall have that term counted as a full term and will
222 be eligible for one (1) additional term, after which there must be an elapsed period of
223 one (1) year before being eligible for another term. A Vice-President, or Secretary
224 appointed to fill a vacancy and who serves less than half a term will be eligible for the
225 election to two successive terms.

226

227 SECTION 2. **Duties of the Officers**

228 A. President

229 The President shall:

- 230 1. preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Board;
- 231 2. supervise activities of the Board to ensure thorough and effective operation;
- 232 3. facilitate the work of and be an ex-officio member of the Program Council
233 and all committees;
- 234 4. ask the Nominating Committee to recommend nominees for Board and
235 committee vacancies, including ad hoc committees;
- 236 5. be empowered to countersign all checks;
- 237 6. be responsible for the preparation of the annual report; and
- 238 7. perform such other duties as the congregation, Board, or Program Council
239 may require.

240

241 B. President-Elect

242 The President-Elect shall:

- 243 1. in the absence of the President, preside over congregational and Board
244 meetings;
- 245 2. in cooperation with the President, facilitate the work of the Program
246 Council and church committees;
- 247 3. be empowered to countersign all checks;
- 248 4. in cooperation with the President, help prepare the annual report;

249 5. perform such other duties as the congregation, the President, Board, or
250 Program Council may require.

251

252

253

254 C. Vice-President

255 The Vice-President shall:

256 1. Serve as Chair of the Program Council

257 2. in the absence of the President and President-Elect, preside over
258 congregational and Board meetings;

259 3. in cooperation with committee chairs and the church staff, prepare the
260 annual church calendar;

261 4. coordinate the development and maintenance of a procedural manual which
262 will outline the duties of each committee, the Board, and the Program
263 Council, and reflect the procedural operations of the church;

264 5. ensure biennial review of the By-Laws;

265 6. be empowered to countersign all checks; and

266 7. perform such other duties as the congregation, Board, or Council may
267 require.

268

269 D. Secretary

270 The Secretary shall:

271 1. give notice of all meetings of the congregation and of the Board and keep
272 the minutes of the meetings of the Board (See Article VIII Section 3);

273 2. together with the minister, assure the congregation that the administrative
274 assistant maintains accurate records of child dedications, marriages and
275 funerals performed in the church or conducted by the minister;

276 3. receive notices of membership resignations and forward such notices to the
277 committee which deals with membership of the congregation;

278 4. perform such other duties as the congregation or Board may require.

279

280 E. Treasurer

281 The Treasurer shall be bonded and shall:

282 1. have custody of all funds of the church except those that have been placed
283 in the custody of the Board;

- 284 2. keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements; pay all bills duly
285 incurred for the general expense of the church and such other bills as may be
286 approved by the Board;
- 287 3. be empowered to countersign all checks;
- 288 4. submit a Treasurer's report at each Board meeting and, together with the
289 committees which deal with the financial affairs of the church, submit a
290 financial report at each semi-annual congregational meeting (See Article
291 VIII, Section 1 of these By-Laws);
- 292 5. deposit monies in the name of the church as directed by the Board;
- 293 6. have custody of all insurance policies and all evidence of property
294 belonging to the church which shall be kept in a safe deposit box provided for
295 that purpose;
- 296 7. open financial books and records to audit and examination as directed by
297 the Board. The books and records shall be audited annually by the Internal
298 Finance Review Committee, a special committee of the church (Article XII,
299 Section 3.);
- 300 8. may request that the Board appoint an assistant to share the responsibilities
301 of the office. The assistant shall be bonded if the duties include receiving and/
302 or disbursing monies; and
- 303 9. perform other duties as the congregation or Board may require.

304

305 F. Past-President

306 The Past-President shall:

- 307 1. chair the nominating committee;
- 308 2. serve as member of the Board;
- 309 3. serve on the Personnel Policies Committee.

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ARTICLE X

312

Board of Trustees

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SECTION 1. Members

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The Board shall include the six (6) officers of the congregation. An additional Board member representing the youth of the church may serve on the Board, to be elected at the May congregational meeting for a one-year term. The Youth Representative must be between the ages of 13 and 19. The president of the congregation shall be chairperson of the Board. All members of the Board must be members of the church and shall have voting power. In the event the youth

320 representative on the Board is not a member of the church due to the age requirement,
321 that member shall serve in an *ex officio* capacity without voting power until such time
322 as the youth becomes a member of the church and assumes voting power.

323

324 **SECTION 2. Meetings**

325 A schedule for monthly meetings shall be set by the Board at the beginning of
326 each fiscal year. Additional meetings may be called by the President or upon petition
327 of one (1) or more Board members. A majority of voting Board members shall
328 constitute a quorum. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect shall
329 preside. In the absence of the President and President-Elect, the Vice-President shall
330 preside. Except for Executive Sessions called to consider personnel and litigation
331 matters, meetings are open to all members of the congregation.

332

333 **Section 3. Responsibilities of the Board**

- 334 1. promote the welfare of the church and its constituency;
- 335 2. oversee the total life of the church, guiding and evaluating its functions;
- 336 3. be responsible for the functioning of the Program Council and committees
337 of the church and the establishment of standing committees;
- 338 4. recommend the terms and conditions of employment for the minister
339 according to article XIII, Section 2 of these by-laws; evaluate the performance
340 of the minister in service to the purpose of the Church and approve
341 employment of other Church staff as recommended by the minister.
- 342 5. appoint personnel to fill committee vacancies and other personnel as shall
343 be desired and not otherwise provided for by these By-Laws;
- 344 6. act for and on behalf of the congregation in the discharge of business
345 affairs; receive and administer monies, bequests and gifts; borrow money;
346 buy, sell and mortgage church property; and execute for and on behalf of the
347 congregation, all notes, mortgages, deeds and other documents, provided
348 however, that the Board shall not buy or sell real estate for the congregation or
349 enter into contract or execute any note, mortgage or other commitment
350 involving an expenditure or obligation in an amount in excess of five percent
351 (5%) of the operating budget, except for emergency maintenance repairs,
352 without first obtaining the approval of the congregation at a duly called
353 meeting at which a quorum is present. The Board may designate by resolution
354 the person or persons who shall execute all contracts, deeds, notes, mortgages

355 and other documents, and the signatures of such designated person or persons
356 shall be binding upon the congregation;
357 7. initiate long-range planning studies of congregational needs for maintaining
358 the physical plant, for developing the church grounds and for expanding or
359 reviewing congregational programs;
360 8. secure adequate casualty, liability and other necessary insurance; and
361 9. approve and enforce policies and procedures.

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ARTICLE XI The Program Council

SECTION 1. **Composition**

369 The Program Council shall be the chairs of standing committees as
370 determined by the Board and the Vice-President.

371

Section 2. **Organization**

373 The Program Council members shall be given responsibility for stewardship
374 and programmatic activities of the congregation.

375

Section 3. **Terms of Program Council Membership**

377 The committee chairs who comprise the Program Council serve a two (2) year
378 term and shall assume office July 1 of that year. A committee chair shall be ineligible
379 for appointment to the same capacity on the Council after having served two terms,
380 but is eligible for appointment to the same position after at least one year has elapsed.
381 If the chair cannot complete a two (2) year term or a new standing committee is
382 established, the Board, upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, shall
383 appoint a replacement to complete the un-expired term. A chair appointed to fill a
384 committee vacancy and who serves a year or more will be eligible for one (1)
385 additional term of two (2) years. A chair appointed to fill a Council vacancy and who
386 serves for less than one year will be eligible to serve two successive terms. The
387 maximum number of consecutive terms an individual may serve as chair of a
388 standing committee, is two (2).

389

Section 4. **Meetings**

391 A schedule for meetings shall be set by the Program Council at the beginning
392 of each fiscal year. Fifty-one per cent of Council members shall constitute a quorum.
393 Additional meetings may be called by the Council chair or upon petition of two (2) or
394 more Council members. In the absence of the Chair, a designated member of the
395 Council shall preside. Program Council meetings are open to all members of the
396 congregation.

397

398 **Section 5. Duties**

- 399 1. promote the welfare of the church and its constituency;
400 2. lead the congregation in its effort to carry out all established programs;
401 3. regularly evaluate and enhance the church program;
402 4. share with the Board responsibility for the functioning of all church
403 committees.

404

405 **ARTICLE XII**
406 **Committees**

407 **Section 1. Committees**

408 The programs and work of the church will be carried out, under the guidance
409 of the Board and congregation, by standing committees and special committees. All
410 committee chairs shall be members of the church. All committees are accountable to
411 the Board and congregation.

412

413 **Section 2. Standing Committees**

414 Standing committees are those created by the Board to serve purposes that
415 endure over many years and become established in the ongoing life of the
416 congregation. The names and purposes of the standing committees will be designated
417 by the Board and can be changed, established, combined, or dissolved by the Board
418 as needed.

419 The chair and/or co-chairs of a standing committee shall be appointed as
420 designated in the Policy and Procedure Manual. The chair(s) of each committee, or
421 someone appointed by the chair(s), will serve on the Program Council. Committees
422 shall meet regularly. All meetings are open to the congregation. A majority shall
423 constitute the quorum of each committee.

424

425

426 **Section 3. Special Committees**

427
428 A Special Committee can be created to serve a specific purpose for the congregation
429 and reports to the body which established it as specified in the Policy and Procedure
430 Manual. The special committee chairs do not serve on the Program Council.

431
432 The two types of special committees are:

433
434 1. Long-Term Special Committees
435 Long-Term Special Committees are those created by the Board with no designated
436 end date.

437
438 2. Short-Term Special Committees
439 Short-Term Special Committees are those created by the Board, the Program Council,
440 Standing Committees, or Long-Term Special Committees to serve temporary
441 purposes.

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ARTICLE XIII

446 The Minister

447 SECTION 1. **Vacancy**

448 In case of vacancy a Ministerial Search Committee of seven (7) members shall
449 be established: four (4) appointed by the Board and three (3) elected by the
450 congregation. This committee shall secure recommendations from and work with the
451 Department of the Ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Association and, if
452 indicated, other appropriate groups. The committee shall be responsible for screening
453 applicants and making a recommendation to the Board.

454

455 SECTION 2. **Call and Employment**

456 The minister shall be called and employed upon recommendation of the Board
457 and an eighty (80) percent majority vote of the voting members of the congregation
458 present at a special meeting held for that purpose. Quorum for such a meeting is to be
459 constituted by forty (40) percent of the voting members of the church as defined in
460 Article III Membership, Section 2 Categories of Membership. The terms, conditions
461 and remuneration package shall be agreed upon by the Board and the minister and
462 ratified by the voting members of the congregation at the special meeting. Each year
463 thereafter, the terms and conditions shall be agreed upon by the Board and the

464 minister and the remuneration package will be presented as part of the budget to be
465 ratified at the congregational business meeting.

466

467 **SECTION 3. Removal**

468 The minister may be removed by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members
469 present at a special meeting called for that purpose in accordance with Article VIII
470 Section 2. The president shall inform the minister of the intent of the meeting. The
471 minister shall be given three (3) month's salary if removal is approved and may be
472 subject to immediate removal.

473

474 **SECTION 4. Resignation**

475 In the event the minister resigns, the ministerial relationship shall continue for
476 at least three (3) months, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the Board and
477 minister.

478

479 **Section 5. Qualifications**

480 Any candidate for the position of Settled Minister shall be in fellowship with
481 the Unitarian Universalist Association.

482

483 **Section 5. Responsibilities**

484 The responsibilities of the Minister and obligations of the church to the
485 minister shall be described in a letter of terms and conditions made between the
486 Minister and the Board and ratified by the congregation per Article XIII, Section 2.
487 In general the Minister shall provide overall religious leadership and guidance in
488 accordance with the established purposes of the church and shall be guaranteed
489 freedom of the pulpit. The Minister shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the
490 Board and of all committees except for Nominating and Search Committees.

491

492 **SECTION 6. Powers and Limitations**

493

494 1. The church is considered the pulpit of the called minister, who has the
495 prerogative to determine whether or not non-members may be married in the
496 church. The minister will officiate at all weddings that she/he may approve
497 for the church unless she/he expressly approves the officiation by another
498 individual.

- 499 2. The Minister shall have no power or authority to make any contracts binding
500 upon the church, or to employ or dismiss employees. The Minister is
501 authorized to make purchases and to undertake repairs of the church within
502 the framework of the budget.
- 503 3. The Minister shall be charged with recommending to the Board measures,
504 programs and policies that will enhance the life of the congregation.
- 505 4. The Minister is head of staff of the church. As such, the minister—acting
506 within the framework of the budget and the Personnel Policy manual, and
507 with the advice and consent of the Board—manages the administrative affairs
508 of the church. The minister manages the training and evaluation of staff;
509 recommends the hiring of, termination of, and salary actions for staff;
510 recommends changes in job descriptions and personnel policy to the Board.