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

23
24
25 **ARTICLE I**
26 **Purpose and Objectives**
27

28 SECTION 1.

29 The Universalist Church of Muncie was founded in 1859, incorporated in 1956 and,
30 following the national merger, became a Unitarian Universalist Church in 1962.
31

32 SECTION 2.

33 The purpose of this church is to provide an environment in which we, the members,
34 unite to secure for ourselves, our posterity, and our fellow human beings a communion and
35 faith, a tradition and heritage of ever greater freedom, justice, love, and mercy, and do
36 voluntarily bind ourselves together to support and maintain one organization and government
37 of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie, Indiana. Therefore, this church shall devote
38 its resources to religious, educational and charitable purposes.
39

40 SECTION 3.

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

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

55

56 SECTION 4.

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

62

63 SECTION 5.

64 No Statement in these By-Laws is to be used as a creed or doctrinal test. No
65 committee, group or individual may speak for the congregation without its authorization.

66

67

68

ARTICLE II

69

Allegiance

70

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

77

78

79

ARTICLE III

80

Membership

81

82 **SECTION 1. Admittance to Membership**

83 Any person sixteen (16) years of age or older who supports and is willing to advance
84 the purpose of our church as stated in Article I Section 3 may become a member of the
85 Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie. Membership is effected by learning about
86 Unitarian Universalism and the responsibilities of membership and signing the membership
87 book witnessed either by the minister or by a member of the Board of Trustees (here and after
88 defined as Board.)

89
90 **SECTION 2. Definition of Membership**

91 A. Persons who have been admitted to membership for at least thirty (30) days, who make a
92 financial pledge to the church and make a good-faith effort to pay it, who donate their time
93 and services, and who attend church services and activities are deemed to be voting
94 members with all rights and privileges. Members who by reason of health have not
95 been able to participate in church affairs and members who by reason of financial
96 hardship have not been able to make a monetary contribution, are nonetheless viewed by
97 the church as being members.

98
99 B. A membership list will be updated annually by a group comprising church staff,
100 members of the Board of Trustees, and members of one or more appropriate
101 committee(s). A member’s name shall be removed from the membership list in case
102 of: (1) the member’s death, (2) written request by the member to the Secretary, (3)
103 non-fulfillment of the membership obligations as defined above (section 2A), (4)
104 removal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board for actions that threaten the well-being
105 of the Congregation.

106
107 **SECTION 3. Rights and Privileges**

108 A. All members shall have the right to vote in all matters concerning the life of the
109 church where voting is required by the By-Laws. Only members of this church may
110 be officers or trustees. All members of this church may attend any meeting of the
111 church standing committees and the Board and any member may make proposals,
112 suggestions and criticisms and present them to the Board, the minister or the
113 appropriate committee at any time.

114
115 B. All members of the church will receive preferential consideration regarding facility
116 uses and services associated with church property and staff.

117
118
119 **ARTICLE IV**
120 **Auxiliary Organizations**

121
122 The church through its Board may provide for or recognize any auxiliary
123 organizations that may be deemed appropriate for the purpose of worship, instruction, service,

124 recreation or the general development of the church. All such organizations shall be regarded
125 as integral parts of the church and shall designate a liaison responsible for communication
126 with the Board and shall prepare a report for the May semi-annual meeting. The Board may
127 withdraw recognition of organizations it deems inappropriate.

128
129

130 **ARTICLE V**
131 **Dissolution**

132

133 In any case of the dissolution of this Church, all of its property, whether real,
134 personal, or mixed, subject to all just and legal claims upon it, shall be disposed of in a
135 manner determined by the Board in consultation with the congregation.

136
137

138 **ARTICLE VI**
139 **Amendments**

140

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

145
146

147 **ARTICLE VII**
148 **Annulment**

149

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

151
152

153 **ARTICLE VIII**
154 **Congregational Meetings**

155

156 **SECTION 1. Business Meeting**

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

163

164 **SECTION 2. Special meetings**

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

168

169 **SECTION 3. Notice of Meetings**

170 Notice of all meetings of the congregation shall be announced from the pulpit the two
171 Sundays preceding the meeting and shall be published and communicated to each member of
172 the church at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date, except as stated in ARTICLE VI.
173 The agenda shall be prepared by those calling the meeting and shall be included in the notice.
174 The Secretary shall be responsible for the time requirement of such notice.

175

176 **SECTION 4. Quorum**

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

180

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

182 All business and special meetings of the congregation shall be guided by Robert's
183 Rules of Order when not in conflict with these By-Laws. The President shall preside over all
184 official meetings and shall appoint a parliamentarian. In the absence of the President, the
185 President-Elect shall preside. In the event of the President-Elect's absence, the Vice-President
186 shall preside.

187

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

189 Decisions shall be guided by Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise specified in
190 the By-Laws. An absentee ballot, deposited with the Secretary a minimum of two (2) days
191 prior to the meeting, shall be permitted on all agenda proposals.

192

193

194

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196

**ARTICLE IX
Church Officers**

197 **SECTION 1. Number and Election**

198 The officers of the congregation shall be six: President, President-Elect, Vice-
199 President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past-President. The officers shall be elected at the May
200 semi-annual meeting and shall hold office beginning July 1. The President and President-
201 Elect shall be elected every year for a one (1) year term. The Secretary shall be elected in
202 even numbered years for a two (2) year term.; the Vice-President and Treasurer shall be
203 elected in odd numbered years for a two (2) year term. With the exception of the Treasurer,
204 an officer may not hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms. If an officer
205 cannot complete a term, the Board, upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee,
206 shall appoint a replacement to complete the expired term. A Vice-President or Secretary

207 appointed to fill a vacancy, who serves half of a term or more, shall have that term counted as
208 a full term and will be eligible for one (1) additional term after which there must be an
209 elapsed period of one (1) year before being eligible for another term. A Vice-President, or
210 Secretary appointed to fill a vacancy and who serves less than half a term will be eligible for
211 the election to two successive terms.

212

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

214 A. President

215 The President shall:

- 216 1. preside at all meetings of the congregation and the Board;
- 217 2. supervise activities of the Board to ensure thorough and effective operation;
- 218 3. facilitate the work of and be an ex-officio member of all committees;
- 219 4. ask the Nominating Committee to recommend nominees for Board and committee
220 vacancies, including ad hoc committees;
- 221 5. be empowered to countersign all checks;
- 222 6. be responsible for the preparation of the annual report; and
- 223 7. perform such other duties as the congregation or Board may require.

224

225 B. President-Elect

226 The President-Elect shall:

- 227 1. in the absence of the President, preside over congregational and Board meetings;
- 228 2. in cooperation with the President, facilitate the work of church committees;
- 229 3. be empowered to countersign all checks;
- 230 4. in cooperation with the President, help prepare the annual report;
- 231 5. perform such other duties as the congregation, President, or Board may require.

232

233 C. Vice-President

234 The Vice-President shall:

- 235 1. in the absence of the President and President-Elect, preside over congregational
236 and Board meetings;
- 237 2. coordinate the development and maintenance of a procedural manual which will
238 outline the duties of each committee and the Board and reflect the procedural
239 operations of the church;
- 240 3. ensure biennial review of the By-Laws;
- 241 4. be empowered to countersign all checks; and
- 242 5. perform such other duties as the congregation, Board, or President may require.

243

244 D. Secretary

245 The Secretary shall:

- 246 1. give notice of all meetings of the congregation and of the Board and keep the
247 minutes of the meetings of the Board;

- 248 2. together with the minister, assure the congregation that the administrative assistant
249 maintains accurate records of child dedications, marriages and funerals performed
250 in the church or conducted by the minister;
251 3. receive notices of membership resignations and forward such notices to the Board
252 or its appointed designee prior to each congregational meeting;
253 4. perform such other duties as the congregation or Board or President may require.
254

255 E. Treasurer

256 The Treasurer shall be bonded and shall:

- 257 1. provide oversight for all funds of the church as a representative of the Board and
258 serve as a liaison between the Board and the Bookkeeper, Accountant, and Trust
259 Management Company;
260 2. coordinate with Bookkeeper to ensure that there is an accurate record kept of all
261 receipts and disbursements, that all bills duly incurred for the general expense of
262 the church are paid in a timely manner, that deposits are made regularly, and that
263 all insurance policies and church property records are kept in a secure location;
264 3. be empowered to countersign all checks;
265 4. submit a Treasurer's report at each Board meeting and, together with the
266 committees that deal with the financial affairs of the church, submit a financial
267 report at each semi-annual congregational meeting;
268 5. open financial books and records to audit and examination as directed by the
269 Board and to review quarterly reports as provided by outside Accountant;
270 6. may request at Treasurer's discretion that the Board appoint an assistant to share
271 the responsibilities of the office. The assistant shall be bonded if the duties include
272 receiving and/or disbursing monies; and
273 7. perform other duties as the congregation or Board or President may require.
274

275 F. Past-President

276 The Past-President shall:

- 277 1. chair the nominating committee;
278 2. serve as member of the Board;
279

280

281

ARTICLE X
Board of Trustees

283

284 SECTION 1. **Members**

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

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

293

294 **SECTION 2. Meetings**

295 A schedule for monthly meetings shall be set by the Board at the beginning of each
296 fiscal year. Additional meetings may be called by the President or upon petition of one (1) or
297 more Board members. A majority of voting Board members with voting power shall
298 constitute a quorum. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect shall preside. In the
299 absence of the President and President-Elect, the Vice-President shall preside. Except for
300 Executive Sessions called to consider personnel and litigation matters, meetings are open to
301 all members of the congregation.

302

303 **SECTION 3. Responsibilities of the Board**

- 304 1. promote the welfare of the church and its constituency;
- 305 2. oversee the total life of the church, guiding and evaluating its functions;
- 306 3. be responsible for the functioning of the committees of the church and the
307 establishment of standing committees;
- 308 4. recommend the terms and conditions of employment for the minister; evaluate the
309 performance of the minister in service to the purpose of the Church and approve
310 employment of other Church staff as recommended by the minister;
- 311 5. appoint personnel to fill committee vacancies and other personnel as shall be
312 desired and not otherwise provided for by these By-Laws;
- 313 6. act for and on behalf of the congregation in the discharge of business affairs;
314 receive and administer monies, bequests and gifts; borrow money; buy, sell and
315 mortgage church property; and execute for and on behalf of the congregation, all
316 notes, mortgages, deeds and other documents, provided however that the Board
317 shall not buy or sell real estate for the congregation or enter into contract or
318 execute any note, mortgage or other commitment involving an expenditure or
319 obligation in an amount in excess of five percent (5%) of the operating budget,
320 except for emergency maintenance repairs, without first obtaining the approval of
321 the congregation at a duly called meeting at which a quorum is present. The Board
322 may designate by resolution the person or persons who shall execute all contracts,
323 deeds, notes, mortgages and other documents, and the signatures of such
324 designated person or persons shall be binding upon the congregation;
- 325 7. initiate long-range planning studies of congregational needs for maintaining the
326 physical plant, for developing the church grounds and for expanding or reviewing
327 congregational programs;
- 328 8. secure adequate casualty, liability and other necessary insurance; and
- 329 9. approve and enforce policies and procedures.

330

331

332 **ARTICLE XI**
333 **Committees**

334
335 **SECTION 1. Committees**

336 The programs and work of the church will be carried out, under the guidance of the
337 Board and congregation, by standing committees and special committees. All committee
338 chairs shall be members of the church. All committees are accountable to the Board and
339 congregation.

340
341 **SECTION 2. Standing Committees**

342 Standing committees are those created by the Board to serve purposes that endure
343 over many years and become established in the ongoing life of the congregation. The names
344 and purposes of the standing committees will be designated by the Board and can be changed,
345 established, combined, or dissolved by the Board as needed. All meetings are open to the
346 congregation. A majority of each committee shall constitute its quorum.

347
348 **SECTION 3. Special Committees**

349 A Special Committee can be created to serve a specific purpose for the congregation
350 and reports to the body which established it.

351
352 The two types of special committees are:

353
354 **1. Long-Term Special Committees**

- 355 • Long-Term Special Committees are those created by the Board with no designated
356 end date.

357
358 **2. Short-Term Special Committees**

- 359 • Short-Term Special Committees are those created by the Board, Standing Committees,
360 or Long-Term Special Committees to serve temporary purposes.

361
362
363 **ARTICLE XII**
364 **The Minister**

365
366 **SECTION 1. Vacancy**

367 In case of vacancy a Ministerial Search Committee of seven (7) members shall be
368 established: four (4) appointed by the Board and three (3) elected by the congregation. This
369 committee shall secure recommendations from and work with the appropriate office of the
370 Unitarian Universalist Association and, if indicated, other appropriate groups. The committee
371 shall be responsible for screening applicants and making a recommendation to the Board.

372
373 **SECTION 2. Call and Employment**

374 The minister shall be called and employed upon recommendation of the Board and at
375 least an eighty (80) percent majority vote of the voting members of the congregation present
376 at a special meeting held for that purpose. Quorum for such a meeting is to be constituted by
377 forty (40) percent of the voting members of the church as defined in Article III Membership,
378 Section 2 Categories of Membership. The terms, conditions and remuneration package shall
379 be agreed upon by the Board and the minister and ratified by the voting members of the
380 congregation at the special meeting. Each year thereafter, the terms and conditions shall be
381 agreed upon by the Board and the minister and the remuneration package will be presented as
382 part of the budget to be ratified at the congregational business meeting.

383

384 SECTION 3. **Removal**

385 The minister may be removed by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at
386 a special meeting called for that purpose. The president shall inform the minister of the intent
387 of the meeting. The minister shall be given three (3) months' salary if removal is approved
388 and may be subject to immediate removal.

389

390 SECTION 4. **Resignation**

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

393

394 SECTION 5. **Qualifications**

395 Any candidate for the position of Settled Minister shall be a graduate of an accredited
396 theological school or seminary.

397

398 SECTION 5. **Responsibilities**

399 The responsibilities of the Minister and obligations of the church to the minister shall
400 be described in a letter of terms and conditions made between the Minister and the Board and
401 ratified by the congregation per Article XII, Section 2. In general the Minister shall provide
402 overall religious leadership and guidance in accordance with the established purposes of the
403 church and shall be guaranteed freedom of the pulpit. The Minister shall be an *ex officio* non-
404 voting member of the Board and of all committees except for Nominating and Search
405 Committees.

406

407 SECTION 6. **Powers and Limitations**

- 408 1. The church is considered the pulpit of the called minister, who has the prerogative
409 to determine whether or not non-members may be married in the church.
- 410 2. The Minister shall have no power or authority to make any contracts binding upon
411 the church, or to employ or dismiss employees. The Minister is authorized to
412 make purchases and to undertake repairs of the church within the framework of
413 the budget.
- 414 3. The Minister shall be charged with recommending to the Board measures,
415 programs and policies that will enhance the life of the congregation.

416 4. The Minister is head of staff of the church. As such, the Minister—acting within
417 the framework of the budget and the Personnel Policy manual, and with the advice
418 and consent of the Board—manages the administrative affairs of the church. The
419 Minister manages the training and evaluation of staff; recommends the hiring of,
420 termination of, and salary actions for staff; recommends changes in job
421 descriptions and personnel policy to the Board.

422