

Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church

BY-LAWS

Adopted October 14, 1980

REVISED

April 30, 1982
October 3, 1982
April 29, 1984
April 12, 1986
April 25, 1987
April 24, 1994
April 21, 1996
April 19, 1998

February 21, 1999
April 27, 2003
April 18, 2009
December 11, 2011
May 18, 2014
May 1, 2016
October 22, 2017
June 2, 2019
June 6, 2021

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this religious Congregation shall be the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

We, the members of the Congregation of the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, covenant to affirm and promote a community of people dedicated to seeking religious, social, and ethical values, following the guidelines established by the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Grateful for the religious pluralism which extends and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. In addition, we maintain a Congregational Covenant that describes how we aspire to relate to one another and our wider communities. This covenant is appended to these Bylaws. As free individuals, we enter into this covenant, promising one another our mutual support.

ARTICLE III – MISSION

The AUUC is an open and nurturing community of faith. We foster each individual's spiritual journey and we share common values while honoring a diversity of beliefs. Together we cherish our connection to nature and we act to transform our world into a more embracing and just community.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Members

AUUC strives to be a congregation that truly welcomes all persons and commits to structuring congregational life in ways that empower and enhance everyone's participation. Members of the Congregation are in a close and mutually supportive relationship and commit themselves to maintaining AUUC as a vital and effective institution. No doctrinal test shall be required for membership.

To become or remain a member, a person, at least fifteen years old, must:

1. Agree with and be willing to support the overall purposes and mission of the Congregation; and
2. Sign the membership book; and
3. Commit to contribute time, talent and funds – commensurate with the person's ability – toward achieving the programs and goals that the membership annually adopts in a democratic process.

Voting privileges for members shall begin 30 days after all conditions of membership are met.

AUUC may terminate a membership:

1. Upon a member's request; or

2. After 24 months of non-communication. Furthermore:
3. The Board may terminate membership after determining that a member's behavior is not compatible with membership. To do so, the Board will consult with the minister and consider relevant information.

Friends

A "friend" of AUUC is any individual who regularly participates in and/or contributes to the organization but chooses not to become a member.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

Congregational Business Meetings

An annual business meeting shall be held at a time and place designated by the Board of Directors.

Special business meetings shall be held at the written request of ten percent of the members or upon a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

The agenda to be considered at all business meetings shall be set forth in a notice of the meeting which shall be sent to all members by mail or email at least fifteen days prior to the meeting.

Twenty percent (20%) of the membership shall constitute a quorum, except that, if the agenda includes business under Article IX (Real Property) or Article X (Minister), a quorum of forty percent is required. At any business meeting, any member may hold the written proxy of one other member. Such proxies shall be recorded as members present in voting and determining the quorum.

At any business meeting where elections are held, nominations may be made from the floor, subject to the consent of the nominee.

Business meetings shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order.

Other Meetings

All meetings shall be open to all members of the Congregation except when, by majority vote, the Board of Directors or Human Relations Committee resolves itself into a "Committee of the Whole." Such committee may, at its discretion, limit the persons in attendance.

ARTICLE VI – GOVERNANCE

Recognizing the special character of religious organizations, the Congregation has chosen to organize itself with a governance philosophy consisting of three parts. Long-term policy is the task of the Board of Directors. Day-to-day business guidance is the primary task of the Executive Committee. Program execution is the task of the Program Council.

OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The Congregation shall elect the following officers:

- **President:** The President shall preside at meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Congregational meetings and may represent the Congregation to the public.
- **Vice President:** The Vice President shall act in the absence of the President.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary shall be responsible for the records of the Congregation.
- **Financial Advisor:** The Financial Advisor shall provide management and advice to the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and the Congregation relative to financial matters.
- **Program Council Chair:** The Program Council Chair shall carry out the Congregation's mission through its membership and programs.

The duties and responsibilities of officers are detailed in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND OTHER ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Any elected officer of the Congregation shall be recalled by a four-fifths majority vote of the members at a duly called business meeting where a quorum is present. The agenda for the meeting, mailed or emailed to the members in accordance with Article V, must contain notice of the motion to recall the officer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Responsibilities

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the church, including financial and program decision-making within the policy guidelines provided by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee makes its own rules for its procedures.

Membership

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Program Council Chair, the Financial Advisor and the senior Minister.

Terms of Office

Officers of the Executive Committee serve terms concurrently with their elected terms on the Board of Directors or Program Council Chair, as specified in the following sections.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors shall set policy, provide general supervision, and direct the affairs of the Congregation. The Board makes its own rules for its procedures.

Membership

The Board of Directors shall consist of not more than eight members, including the President, Vice President, Secretary, Financial Advisor, three Members-At-Large, and Youth Representative. In addition, the Minister shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board.

The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, task the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee to seek candidates of specific demographic characteristics (e.g. race, gender, youth, etc.) to serve as Members-At-Large to achieve equitable representation of constituencies of the Congregation.

All persons elected to the Board shall be members of the Congregation. The Youth Representative position may be filled by two individuals. The Youth Representative(s) exercises full voting privileges on the Board. However, if two Youth Representatives are involved in any votes by the Board, they will share one vote.

Terms of Office

Officers and At-Large members of the Board shall be elected to two-year terms by ballot by the voting members of the Congregation. The Youth Representative shall be elected to a one-year term. An officer or member of the Board shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms and may not stand for election for one year following the end of the second term. The terms of elected officers and board members shall begin on July 1 following the annual meeting.

The Board shall have the power to fill any vacancy in its membership by appointing a member of the Congregation until the next annual business meeting. Appointment by the Board or election to an unexpired term shall not disqualify that person for election to a full term immediately thereafter nor count as one of the two consecutive terms defined in this section.

PROGRAM COUNCIL

Responsibilities

The Program Council coordinates the activities of committees in executing the mission of the Congregation through its membership and programs. The elected Chair shall preside at meetings and represent the Council on the Executive Committee. The Council makes its own rules for its procedures.

Membership

The Program Council shall consist of the Program Council Chair and representatives from AUUC Committees.

Terms of Office

The Program Council Chair shall be elected to a two year term by ballot by the voting members of the Congregation. The Program Council Chair shall not be elected for more than three consecutive terms and may not stand for election for one year following the end of the third term. The term of the Program Council Chair shall begin on July 1 following the annual meeting.

Committee Chairs or other representatives from programmatic areas defined under Program Council Membership in this section serve as defined in the applicable section of the Policies and Procedures Manual. The Board shall have the power to fill a vacancy in the Program Council Chair by appointing a member of the Congregation until the next annual business meeting. Appointment by the Board or election to an unexpired term shall not disqualify that person for election to a full term immediately thereafter nor count as one of the three consecutive terms defined in this section.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Responsibilities

The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee shall develop the future leadership of the Congregation and present a selection of candidates for all vacant elective positions annually. These include: President, Vice President, Secretary, Financial Advisor, Board Members-At-Large, Youth Representative(s), Program Council Chair, Leadership Development and Nominating Committee, and Endowment and Bequests Committee. The report of the Nominating Committee, including the slate of candidates for vacant elective positions, will be included in the notice of the annual meeting.

Membership

The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee shall consist of three members, two of whom are outgoing or former Program Council Chairs or outgoing or former members of the Board of Directors. All persons elected to the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee shall be members of the Congregation.

Terms of Office

Each member of the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee shall be elected by ballot by the voting members of the Congregation to a three year term. A member shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms and may not stand for election for one year following the end of the second term. The term of each member of the committee shall begin on July 1 following the annual meeting.

The Board shall have the power to fill a vacancy in the committee by appointing a member of the Congregation until the next annual business meeting. Appointment by the Board or election to an unexpired term shall not disqualify that person for election to a full term immediately thereafter nor count as one of the two consecutive terms defined in this section.

ENDOWMENT AND BEQUESTS COMMITTEE

Responsibilities

The Endowment and Bequests Committee shall administer the Endowment Fund as specified in Article VII of these By-Laws and the Policies and Procedures Manual.

The Endowment and Bequests Committee shall report to the Board on a semi-annual basis and to the Congregation at each annual meeting. At the annual meeting, their report shall render a full and complete account of the administration of the fund during the preceding year.

Membership

The Endowment and Bequests Committee shall consist of at least four and not more than six members. One member shall be an appointed representative from the Board of Directors. Members of the committee shall be members of the Congregation.

Terms of Office

Members of the Endowment and Bequests Committee, with the exception of the Board of Directors representative, shall be elected to three year terms by ballot by the voting members of the Congregation. The Board of Directors shall appoint one of its members as required to maintain one Board member on the committee at all times. The term of each member of the committee shall begin on July 1 following the annual meeting.

The Board shall have the power to fill a vacancy in the committee by appointing a member of the Congregation until the next annual business meeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Human Resources Committee (HR) reports to the Board of Directors regarding issues related to the staff of AUUC. The HR Committee shall be responsible for maintaining an updated Personnel Policy Manual in coordination with the Senior Minister. The HR Committee shall ensure that AUUC is in compliance with Commonwealth of Virginia employment laws, Federal employment laws (as apply), and Unitarian Universalist best employer practices. The HR Committee shall act as liaison between the staff of AUUC and the Board on all matters related to employment, including: hiring of staff, annual staff evaluations, recommendations for annual staff salary increases, staff grievances and others as stated in the Personnel Policy manual. The HR Committee shall review the Personnel Policy manual annually and propose changes to the Board as needed. The HR Committee will formally meet with each member of the staff at least once per year.

Membership

The HR Committee should be composed of three members of the Congregation. The Board appoints the three members and designates one of them to be the Chair of the committee.

Terms of Office

HR Committee members are appointed to 3 year terms and may be appointed to no more than two nonconsecutive terms.

ARTICLE VII – MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

The Board of Directors shall maintain a written financial management system. This system will include, but not be limited to, procedures for the collection and disbursement of funds, the development of the budget, the establishment of special funds, investments, acquisition and disposal of capital equipment and real property, and regular status reports to the Board and to the Congregation.

Budget estimates developed in accordance with the financial management system shall be presented to the Congregation prior to Board approval. The operating budget shall be approved by the Board of Directors.

An Endowment Fund shall be established. The Endowment and Bequests Committee shall not disburse more than five percent of the Endowment Fund in any one calendar year. A portion of the Endowment Fund greater than five percent can only be invaded by a four-fifths majority of the members of the congregation present at a duly called business meeting where a quorum is present. The agenda for the meeting must be mailed or emailed to all members and must contain notice of the motion to invade the Endowment Fund.

The fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30.

ARTICLE VIII – LEGAL STATUS

The Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church of Burke, Virginia shall be incorporated as a non-stock corporation with all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities set forth in the Virginia Non-Stock Corporation Act codified in the Code of Virginia (1950)."

ARTICLE IX – REAL PROPERTY

Acquisition or disposal of real property (land or building) must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called business meeting where a quorum is present.

ARTICLE X – MINISTER

A minister will be called by a four-fifths majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called business meeting where a quorum is present.

The minister shall be released by a four-fifths majority vote of the members at a duly called business meeting where a quorum is present. The agenda for the meeting, mailed or emailed to all members, must contain notice of the motion to release the minister.

The minister will be evaluated at least annually by the Board of Directors with inputs from other members of the Congregation, as specified in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

ARTICLE XI – AFFILIATED GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

New and existing groups and activities must notify the Board of Directors if they claim any affiliation with the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church. The Board will approve or disapprove such affiliation and shall not provide funding to any group or activity whose affiliation has not been declared and approved. The Board shall review the status of current groups and activities annually.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

These by-laws, insofar as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any business meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting. Notice of any proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII – DISSOLUTION

Should this Congregation cease to function and the membership vote to disband, any assets of the Congregation will be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association insofar as this transfer is in accordance with state and federal statutes.

APPENDIX

ACCOTINK UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT

Believing that living together in peace is a spiritual practice, we, the members of Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, enter into a covenant with one another to build a joyful community that sustains us in our search for truth and meaning. We aspire to live AUUC's purpose in the following ways:

- by accepting that individuals are unique with their own gifts, needs, growth, limits, and identities while lovingly holding each other accountable for actions in the spirit of this covenant;
- by respecting the rights and dignity of each individual, our community, and the world at large;
- by listening with open hearts and minds and expressing ourselves with integrity through peaceful communication;
- by supporting one another in good times and bad, and by coming together in our safe community for life-enriching connections and experiences;
- by being stewards of our community, acknowledging that church is an active pursuit enriched by many types of contributions; and
- by working together for justice and equity in our congregation, the surrounding community, and the wider world.

Though we know it is impossible to provide guidance for every human encounter, we hope all who come here will strive to conduct their relationships with the intention that this document sets forth. Recognizing that we are all human, we aspire to forgive ourselves and others when we err from the covenant, work together to make amends, learn from our mistakes, and recommit to this covenant. Finally, we acknowledge that this is a living document, meant to be improved according to church community needs.