



REVISION HISTORY

The Bylaws of the First Unitarian Church of Trenton were originally adopted in 1916. Revisions were made in 1964, 1984 (change in church name to Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing), 1991, and 1998, with minor revisions in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (see page 10). The most recent revision was adopted by the congregation in April 2017, with changes primarily to the purpose and timing of the Annual Meeting.

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**BYLAWS OF THE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH AT WASHINGTON CROSSING, N.J.**

**ARTICLE I
NAME/AFFILIATION**

The name of this religious Society shall be “Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing,” Titusville, New Jersey. This church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

**ARTICLE II
MISSION**

Inspired by our Principles and Purposes, members of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing unite to create a welcoming, caring religious community. Within this community, we encourage and affirm the individual's quest for authenticity, wisdom and spiritual deepening. We gather to celebrate the wonder of the cosmos and the mystery of life, its passages, its joys and sorrows. Compelled by justice, we give voice to societal concerns and reach out to touch the lives of others. To this end, we are dedicated to ending racism and oppression, committed to conserving this earth as a green sanctuary, pledged to remove all barriers for those who may be differently-abled, resolved to welcome and seek justice for all people equally and without regard to ethnicity or sexual orientation or the state of one's physical or mental health, and united



for peace and peacemaking everywhere. Aware of our profound potential to affect the individual and the global community, we commit our personal resources to each other and to our shared, sacred mission.

**ARTICLE III
CONGREGATION**

Section 1. Requirements for Membership. Membership in the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing is both a privilege and a responsibility. Members are expected to share their “time, talent and treasure” to the enhancement of the community. In exchange, members may vote on congregational issues and hold leadership positions. Members are entitled to all of the services of the minister and the church, as well as those available through the UUA. Finally, members receive *UU World*, a regular publication of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Any person who is at least 18 years of age who is in agreement with the mission of the Church and is willing to abide by its bylaws, attends and/or participates in church services and activities, and makes a recorded personal contribution each year may enroll as a member by signing the Membership Book.

A member’s minimum contribution shall be sufficient to pay the annual fair share, which is assessed per member by the UUA and the New York Metro District, plus an additional amount not to exceed one hundred percent of said fair share. In case of hardship, the Board of Trustees or the Minister may waive this financial requirement in part or completely; this waiver shall be reviewed annually. Except in hardship cases, a Member who does not make the minimum contribution will be transferred to status as a Friend.

Friend: Someone who is involved with the church in some capacity (i.e., attends services and/or social functions, supports the church financially), but does not wish to sign the Membership Book or does not meet the criteria for membership. Friends are canvassed for potential pledges; however, they may not vote or hold leadership positions, nor do they receive *UU World*.

Student/Youth Member: A young person who has completed the Coming of Age curriculum or has met with the Minister upon recommendation of the Religious Education Committee may become a Student/Youth Member. A Student/Youth Member may not serve in a leadership position, but may represent the youth on the Board of Trustees or on a committee. There is no financial expectation for these members. Student/Youth Members may vote at Congregational Meetings but do not receive *UU World*. A person may remain a Student/Youth member while in school or college, or until attaining age 18.

Section 2. Termination of Membership. The Board of Trustees may remove from the membership roll the name of any member whose acts are inimical to the interests of the Church community. If the member so removed wants to appeal the decision of the Board, s/he may request in writing a Congregational meeting, in which case the President must call the meeting within 30 days of receiving the request. A member may resign by letter to the Board of Trustees, or verbally to the Minister, who shall then notify the Board of Trustees.



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Section 3. Public Expression. The Congregation may express itself publicly on any issue of a moral nature, provided the position is approved by two thirds (2/3) of the members present at a Congregational meeting. The minority vote, if any, must be taken, recorded and included in any public announcement of this position.

Section 4. Meetings.

A. The Board of Trustees shall convene a business meeting annually (Annual Meeting). This meeting would occur in the quarter prior to the end of the fiscal year. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is for the Board to report to the congregation on its activities during the year, for the congregation to adopt a budget for the following budget year, and for the congregation to elect a board president, treasurer, trustees, and committee chairs.

B. Special meetings may be called to act upon a specific item of business. The only items that can be transacted at such a meeting are those announced in the published agenda for that meeting. A special meeting may be called by the Secretary at the direction of the Board of Trustees, or when requested by written petition stating the purpose of the meeting and signed by at least twenty-five (25) members.

C. Notice of Meetings. The business to be transacted or considered at any Congregational Meeting shall be described in the notice of the meeting. The Secretary of the Board shall coordinate the notification of all UUCWC Members. All Members of UUCWC shall be given written notice by electronic means at least ten (10) days in advance of such meeting or postal mail postmarked at least ten (10) days in advance of such meeting. All Members who have indicated a preference for receiving communications via postal mail shall be notified in this manner. All supporting documents shall be made available as soon as possible to each Member in printed and/or electronic form prior to the meeting. Every effort will be made to make the materials available at least forty eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. Only business on the agenda will be considered.

D. Quorum. A quorum for the transacting of business shall be 25% (twenty-five percent) of Members for the Annual Meeting or for calling or discharging a minister. At all other meetings, or for other business, the quorum shall be 15% (fifteen percent). If there is no quorum at a Congregational Meeting, any and all matters that were to be decided by a vote will either be deferred to a future Congregational Meeting or decided by the Board, at the Board's discretion.

E. Voting. A majority vote of those members constituting a quorum and voting shall determine all questions unless a greater percentage is specifically required under these bylaws for the determination of a particular matter. For elections, voting shall be by secret ballot if there are more nominees for a given position than there are positions, and the results shall be tallied in the presence of at least three (3) members of the Board of Trustees. Otherwise, voting may be by show of hands.

F. Annual congregational meeting minutes will be reviewed at the next Board meeting and a subsequent draft published accordingly for membership. The Congregation, at the next annual congregational meeting, shall approve annual congregational meeting



minutes from the previous year. All minutes shall be filed with other corporate records in the Administrative office.

**ARTICLE IV
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Section 1. Composition. The Board of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as "the Board") shall consist of nine (9) members: a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer (hereinafter referred to as "the Officers") and, five (5) other trustees. All members of the Board must be members of the Church for at least two years, when their term starts.

Section 2. Purposes and limitations. The Board shall have charge of all property owned by the church and shall have fiduciary responsibility for the church's funds. The Board shall have jurisdiction of the business affairs of the Church, and shall formulate and implement Church policy, subject to the limitations imposed by these bylaws and the directions of the Congregation, and shall consider any other relevant matters.

In the event of an emergency, the Board may make a decision on a matter ordinarily requiring a Congregational vote. In such case, seven (7) votes would be required. The Congregation must be informed of that decision within 10 (ten) days.

Section 3. Authority to Allocate Funds

A. The Board shall have the power to buy, sell, encumber, or transfer real property of the church with the approval of the Congregation. Absent Congregational approval, the Board shall so act only after requesting and/or receiving a recommendation from the Finance Committee, and only if the value of the real property is less than 5% of the operating budget.

B. The Board shall have the authority to revise the operating budget, after receiving a recommendation from the Finance Committee, in the following ways:

1) Funds may be reallocated to accommodate unanticipated expenses and under expenditures - Any committee whose budget would be reduced through reallocation or overall budget reduction shall first be consulted.

2) The overall level of expenditures may be reduced by reducing specific allocations to accommodate real or anticipated shortfall in revenue compared to expenses. The Board shall consult with the Congregation concerning a decrease of the overall level of expenditures of between 5% and 15%. The Board shall obtain Congregational approval for a decrease greater than 15%.

3) The overall level of expenditures may be increased by increasing specific allocations to accommodate real or anticipated excess in revenue compared to expenses. An increase of 5% of the total budget or more applied to a single line item shall require Congregational approval. An increase of 10% or more to the total budget shall require Congregational approval.



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Section 4. Election. Trustees and officers shall be elected to the Board by majority vote at the Annual Meeting. The President, Treasurer, and two trustees shall be elected in one year. The remaining trustees (five) shall be elected in the alternate year. At the first meeting of the Board with new members (the first day of the next church year), a Vice President and Secretary will be elected by the Board and will serve in such capacity for the length of their term (2 years). All Officers and Trustees shall take office on the first day of the next church year following the meeting at which s/he is elected. These persons shall serve for a period of two (2) consecutive years. S/He may be re-elected, but shall not serve more than two consecutive terms (total of 4 consecutive years). No nominations will be accepted from the floor.

A. Interim Appointments. In the event an Officer or Trustee leaves a position on the Board for any reason, the Board shall appoint a replacement from among the remaining members of the Board (in the case of an officer) or from among eligible church members (in the case of a Trustee), for the remainder of that church year. At the next Annual Meeting, an election shall be held as above for the remainder of the unexpired term, if any, of the Officer or Board member. The replacement may serve two terms in addition to the one s/he has fulfilled on an interim basis.

Section 5. Vacancies. In the event of death, resignation, or prolonged incapacitation of the President, the Vice President shall assume the duties of the President. When the Presidency is filled in this manner, the Board shall select a new Vice President by a majority of the Board present. Vacancies in any other Board positions except the President-elect shall be filled by appointment of the Board, based upon recommendations from the Nominating Committee, until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 6. Meetings and Quorum. The Board shall meet at least six (6) times a year either in person, virtually, or any combination thereof. Every effort shall be made to conduct Board meetings in person. No meeting of the Board shall be considered legal with fewer than 6 (six) members attending, which shall constitute a quorum.

Votes taken at all meetings will be recorded by the secretary. Any decision of the Board will be made by majority vote of the Board members attending, providing a quorum is present.

Board meetings are open to any member of the Church.

Section 7. Terms. Trustees shall take office at the first Board meeting after July 1 following the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. The President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five (5) of the trustees shall serve two-year terms. Trustees may serve more than one term.

Section 8. Duties.

A. President. The President shall preside at all business meetings of the congregation and shall serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees. S/he shall sign all contracts in the name of the Society and shall perform all other duties usually incident to the office.



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B. Vice President. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the Presidency in the President's absence. In the event the President is unable to serve out her/his term, the Vice President shall assume the position of President until the next Annual Meeting. S/he will serve as Co-chair of the Church Council.

C. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep and post an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Congregation and of the Board. S/he shall see that each member receives a written notice of all Congregational meetings at least ten (10) days before the meeting that clearly states the purpose of the meeting. S/he will maintain the Policies and Procedures Manual.

D. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the custody of the moneys and securities of the Society, deposit all moneys and valuables in depositories approved by the Board, and shall disburse the funds of the Society as ordered by the Board. S/he also shall keep detailed and regular accounts of the moneys and securities of the Society, and shall report on the same at each Board meeting, and to the Congregation at least once a year. The treasurer shall be bonded.

Section 9. Policies and Procedures Manual. The Policies and Procedures Manual shall describe the functions and responsibilities of the various committees and states the specifics as to how the Board and Committees will operate. The Board will make significant changes only after consultation with appropriate committees, the Council and/or the Congregation.

Section 10. Removal of a Board Member. Consideration of the removal of a Board member may be initiated by a petition signed by at least twenty-five (25) members of the Congregation. A Congregational meeting, at which a 25% (twenty-five percent) quorum is required, may remove the Board member by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.

**ARTICLE V
COMMITTEES**

Section 1. Purpose. The Purpose of Committees is to further the work of the Church in accordance with its mission, as stated in Article II of these bylaws. There shall be three types of Committees: standing, nominating, and ad hoc.

Section 2. Standing Committees. A committee shall be defined as any committee designated by the Board which has ongoing responsibilities.

B. Selection of Chairs and Terms. Committee Chairs shall be members of the Church elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor, with the prior consent of the nominee. When a Chairperson is unable to complete the term of office or the Board determines that a Chairperson should be replaced, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a replacement, based upon a recommendation from the Nominating Committee, who will serve until July 1 following the next Annual Meeting. Standing Committee Chairs shall serve for two years. A Chairperson shall take office on July 1 following the Annual Meeting. When the Board creates a Standing Committee



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during the year, it shall appoint a chair, based upon a recommendation from the Nominating Committee, to serve until July 1 following the next Annual Meeting at which time a chair elected by the Congregation will take office.

Section 3. Nominating Committee.

A. The Nominating Committee shall formulate a complete slate of candidates for Officer, Trustee, and Standing Committee Chair positions to be elected at the Annual Meeting. The names of candidates shall be sent to the Board who shall make this slate public at least ten (10) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Members of the Nominating Committee are themselves eligible to be nominated for office.

B. Selection and Terms. This committee shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. The Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members, each of whom will serve for two years. Terms will be staggered so that each year at least two members remain on the Committee. The slate of nominees for the committee shall be proposed by the Board. Nominations may also be made from the floor during the Congregational meeting.

Section 4. Endowment Committee:

A. The Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members, all of whom shall be voting members of the Church. Except for the period of inception or for midterm replacements, the term of each member will be three (3) years.

B. The Nominating Committee of the congregation shall nominate members for the Committee in the same manner as for other officers and committee chairs. The Nominating Committee will also nominate a Chairperson annually.

C. The Committee shall meet at least quarterly. A quorum shall consist of half of its members (rounded up if the committee has an odd number of members). The following is required to carry any motion: A quorum, affirmative votes from a majority of those present, and a minimum of three affirmative votes.

D. The Committee shall elect from its membership a financial secretary and recording secretary. The chairperson, or person appointed by the chairperson, shall preside at all Committee meetings.

E. The recording secretary shall maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings of the Committee and provide a copy thereof to each member of the Committee and to the Office Manager for filing in the central church office where it will be available to any member of the congregation.

F. The financial secretary shall assist the UUCWC treasurer in maintaining complete and accurate books of accounts for the Fund and will report to the Endowment Committee, the Board of Trustees, and to the Congregation. The UUCWC Treasurer will establish all accounts.



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G. A certified public accountant or other appropriate person who is not a member of the Committee shall audit the books annually. The Committee shall report at the Annual Congregational Meeting on the results of the audit, disbursements made in the past year and planned for the coming year, and the balances and changes since the last report for each investment position in the portfolio.

H. The Committee will be responsible for developing and implementing a disbursement plan, fund-raising plan, and an investment plan. All such plans are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.

1. In accordance with the Investment Plan approved by the Board of Trustees, decisions to buy, hold, sell, exchange, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Fund, including mutual funds stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities as in their judgment and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the Committee.

J. The Endowment will consist of, and this Committee will be responsible for administering, only unrestricted contributions. Restricted contributions will be managed by the UUCWC Treasurer according to the restrictions imposed by the donors.

Section 5. Ad hoc Committees.

A. An ad hoc committee shall be defined as any committee designated by the Board for which temporary responsibilities are anticipated.

B. Selection of Chairs. The Board shall appoint and replace ad hoc Committee Chairs, based upon recommendations from the Nominating Committee, as necessary.

**ARTICLE VI
CHURCH COUNCIL**

Section 1. Purpose and limitations. The Council shall plan and assist in the development of the general programs of the Church. It shall have no decision-making authority, but shall be advisory to the Board.

Section 2. Membership. The Council shall consist of the members of the Board, the Minister, chairpersons or representatives of standing and ad hoc committees, representatives of affiliated church organizations, and any others designated by the Board.

Section 3. Meetings. The Council shall meet at least twice a year. Meetings shall be convened by the Vice President and one committee chairperson. Meetings are open to all members of the Church.



**ARTICLE VII
THE MINISTRY**

Section 1. Duties. Minister and any Minister of Religious Education or Associate Minister, shall provide guidance in the religious and spiritual life of the Church, and is expected to concern him/herself with all aspects of its activities and the furtherance of its programs. S/he shall have freedom of utterance as an individual, but shall issue statements on behalf of the Church only upon approval of the Congregation. S/he shall be a non-voting member of the Board, and shall bring to the attention of the Board such matters as seem pertinent to the welfare of the Church.

The Minister shall be responsible for supervision of Church support staff as an agent of the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. Employment. Ministers shall be elected by at least two thirds (2/3) of the members present at a Congregational meeting who constitute a quorum. The vote shall be by secret ballot. Ministers can be dismissed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members constituting a quorum at a Congregational meeting called specifically for that purpose, by secret ballot.

Prior to employment, a mutually agreeable contract shall be drawn up between the Board and the new Minister. The contract shall state terms of employment, duties, salary, allowances, termination procedures, duration of contract, and other components deemed appropriate by either party.

Section 3. Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy in the position of minister, a Search Committee for a *settled* minister will be formed. The timing regarding its formation will be based on the current UUA Guidelines. The Search Committee will consist of seven (7) members. All applicants would appear on the slate presented for voting. The seven candidates receiving the most votes at a congregational meeting would fill the positions. The Nominating Committee will announce the process of accepting applications from any member of UUCWC. Additionally, the Nominating Committee will provide information to aspirants regarding the responsibilities of in being a Search Committee Member. Consequently, in applying to be a member of the Search Committee the individual agrees to accept the responsibilities of and fully participate in the Search Committee if elected. If a duly elected member of the committee can no longer serve, the Committee will continue without that person. An application will be accepted from any member of UUCWC in good membership standing, by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall submit the slate of proposed members to be voted upon at a Congregational meeting called for such purpose in accordance with these bylaws, Article III, Section 4. No nominations will be accepted from the floor.

**ARTICLE VIII
FISCAL YEAR**

The Church fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30. The Board shall cause an independent audit of the Treasurer's books to be made at least once every five years. The results of the audit shall be communicated to the Congregation.



**ARTICLE IX
DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH**

If at any time it may be deemed proper to dissolve the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing, and such action is voted by not less than two thirds (2/3) of the members, all moneys and property, except such funds as are otherwise dedicated, shall be placed in the possession of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

**ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS, REVISIONS, AND REPEAL OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws, so far as allowed by the laws of the State of New Jersey, may be amended, revised, or repealed at any duly called Congregational meeting by two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of members present. An exact copy of any proposed change shall be contained in the written notice of the meeting and sent by electronic means or by postal mail at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. All Members who have indicated a preference for receiving communications via postal mail shall be notified in this manner.

**ARTICLE XI
MEETING PROCEDURES**

Except where otherwise provided by the bylaws, all legal meetings of the Congregation, Board of Trustees, and Committees shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, as amended.

First adopted in 1916.

Revised in 1964, 1984, 1991, 1998.

Revised Article III, Section 1, May 23, 2010

Revised Article III, Section 4, part C, and Article X, May 22, 2011

Revised February 26, 2012:

- Article III, Section 4, Part C
- Article IV, Section 1
- Article IV, Section 4
- Article VII, Section 3

Revised Article III, Section 4, Part A, April 2, 2017