

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing  
UUCWC BYLAWS



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BYLAWS OF THE  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH AT WASHINGTON CROSSING

ARTICLE I  
NAME/AFFILIATION

The name of this religious organization shall be Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing,” hereafter referred to as “UUCWC” or “the Church. This Church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, hereafter referred to as UUA.

ARTICLE II  
PURPOSE

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.

ARTICLE III  
MEMBERSHIP & CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

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Section 1. Requirements for Membership

Any individual who is at least 18 years of age who:

- agrees with the mission of the Church
- agrees to act in accordance with the eight principles
- 
- agrees to abide by the Covenant of Right Relations
- completes the procedures for membership as established by the Minister
- signs the membership book
- makes a recorded financial pledge each year

Section 2. Youth Member

A person under 18 who has the approval of the Minister and has met all procedures established by the minister for membership may become a youth member. There is no financial expectation for youth members. Youth members may vote at Congregational Meetings as allowed by law.

Section 3: Benefits of Membership

The following benefits are available once the membership book is signed and as long as member requirements are sustained:

- voting rights at congregational meetings
- ability to hold leadership positions
- entitled to all the services of the minister and Church as well as those available through UUA

Section 4. Termination of Membership

A member's name shall be removed from the Membership Roll in case of: (1) the member's death; (2) written request by the member to the Church office; (3) a period of inactivity over one year, pending review by the Membership Committee; or (4) the Board of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as "the Board") may expel from membership any member whose acts are inimical to the interests of the Church. *See Policy on Disruptive Behavior and Covenant of Right Relations for specific procedures for termination and appeal process.*

Section 5. Congregational Meetings

A. The Board shall convene a congregational meeting annually ("Annual Membership Meeting"). This meeting would occur in the quarter prior to the end of the fiscal year.

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The purpose of the Annual Congregational Meeting is for the Board to report to the congregation on its activities during the year, for the members to adopt a budget for the following budget year, to elect officers, trustees, and to address other matters as determined by the Board.

- B. Special congregational meetings. Special meetings may be called to vote 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 Board, or when requested by written petition stating the purpose of the meeting and signed by at least 10% of 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. All Members shall be given written notice 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 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 Congregational meeting or for calling or discharging a minister. At all other congregational meetings, 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 attending shall determine all questions unless a greater percentage is specifically required under these bylaws for the determination of a particular matter (i.e.: bylaws revisions). 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. Otherwise, voting may be by show of hands. The Board has the right to authorize virtual attendance and voting. In addition, the Board may authorize members who cannot attend the annual meeting the ability to vote on the slate of officers, trustees, and any other congregationally elected positions once the slate has been released prior to the meeting.
- F. Congregational meeting minutes will be published for membership comment and then approved by the Board. All minutes shall be treated as corporate records.
- G. Meeting Procedures - Except where otherwise provided by the bylaws, all legal

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meetings of the Congregation and Board shall be conducted in accordance with The Summary Version of Robert's Rules of Order <https://robertsrules.org/>

ARTICLE IV  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. Composition

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 trustees must have been 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. The Board may consider any other matters that are in the interest of the Church. The Board prioritizes its role in:

- Setting and monitoring Church policy in accordance with applicable laws, the eight principles and UUA best practices
- Setting and monitoring strategic direction and progress on goals
- Setting and monitoring financial sustainability
- Contract approval and evaluation of Minister

Section 3. Policies and Procedures

The Board reviews and approves all policies of the Church and will delegate development of operating procedures as appropriate. 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 4. Emergencies Requiring Immediate Action

In the event of an emergency, the Board may make a decision on a matter ordinarily requiring a membership vote. In such case, seven (7) votes would be required. The

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Congregation must be informed of that decision within 10 (ten) days.

Section 5. 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 membership. Absent membership 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 and without membership approval as long as the overall increase or decrease to the budget is less than 15% of the member approved budget. Overall increases or decreases above 15% require membership approval. :

C. The Board reallocates funds to accommodate unanticipated expenses and under expenditures - Any committee/ministry or function whose budget would be reduced through reallocation or overall budget reduction shall first be consulted.

Section 6. Election of Trustees & Officers

A. Terms - Trustees and officers shall be elected for staggered terms to the Board by majority vote at the Annual Meeting:

*Alternative 1:*

- Officers – President and Treasurer are elected for 2 years terms
  - Vice President and Secretary positions are filled by the board from the elected Trustees for 1-year renewable terms

*Alternative 2:*

- Officers – President, Vice President and Treasurer are elected for 2 years terms
  - The Secretary position is filled by the board from the elected Trustees for a 1-year renewable term
- Trustees – 7 positions elected for staggered 2-year terms
- All Officers and Trustees shall take office on the first day of the next Church year following the meeting at which elected. These persons shall serve for a period of two (2) consecutive years. They 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.

B. Presidential Vacancy. 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

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majority of the Board present.

- C. Other Interim Appointments. In the event an Officer or Trustee leaves a position on the Board for any reason, the Board shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of that Church year:
- from among the remaining members of the Board in the case of an officer
  - from among eligible Church members in the case of a Trustee,
  - At the next Annual Meeting, an election shall be held as in Section 4. above for the remainder of the unexpired term, if any, of the Treasurer or Trustees. The replacement may serve two consecutive terms in addition to the one fulfilled on an interim basis.

Section 7. Officer Duties

- A. President. The President shall preside at all board and congregational meetings of the congregation and shall serve as Chair of the Board. The President shall sign all contracts in the name of the Church and shall perform all other duties usually incident to the office.
- 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 the term, the Vice President shall assume the position of President until the next Annual Meeting. The Vice President will serve as 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. The Secretary 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. The Secretary will maintain the Policies and Procedures Manual.
- D. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have the custody of the moneys and securities of the Church, deposit all moneys and valuables in depositories approved by the Board, and shall disburse the funds of the Church as ordered by the Board. The Treasurer also shall keep detailed and regular accounts of the moneys and securities of the Church 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 8. Board Meetings and Quorum

The Board shall meet at least six (6) times a year. A quorum consists of no fewer than 6 (six) members attending,



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, provided a quorum is present.

Board meetings are open to any member of the Church except during specifically designated Executive Sessions called by the President to discuss confidential matters

### Section 9. Removal of a Board Member

Consideration of the removal of a Board member may be initiated by a petition signed by at least 10% of 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/MINISTRIES

### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of committees and ministries is to further the work of the Church in accordance with its mission, as stated in Article II of these bylaws. There shall be standing committees and other groups such as task forces, ad hoc committees, and ministries.

### Section 2. Standing Committees

A. A standing committee shall be defined as any committee designated by the bylaws which has ongoing oversight in areas of major organizational liability. Standing committees report to the Board through the committee chair or a board liaison to that committee. The Board can rename committees without requiring a by-law change if the group's function remains basically the same.

B. Selection of Chairs and Terms. Committee Chairs shall be members of the Church appointed by Board, based upon a recommendation from the Nomination Committee, who will serve for a two-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms. When a Chairperson is unable to complete the term of office or the Board determines that a Chairperson should be replaced, the Board shall appoint a replacement, based upon a recommendation from the Nominating Committee, who will serve until July 1 following the next Annual Meeting. A Chairperson shall take office on July 1 following the Annual Meeting.

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C. Standing Committee

- Nominating Committee.
  1. The primary function of the Nominating Committee, appointed by the Board is to formulate a slate of candidates for Board officers and Trustees to be elected at the Annual Meeting as well as any Chair positions as directed by the Board. The names of candidates who are elected by membership 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.
  
- Endowment Committee:
  1. The primary responsibility of the Endowment Committee is to see that donations are deposited into the endowment funds with the objective of growing the principal value. The Endowment Committee implements the process for using the endowment fund income for projects that benefit UUCWC in ways not covered by the operating and capital budgets.
  2. The Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members, all of whom shall be voting members of the Church.
  3. The Nominating Committee shall nominate members for the Endowment Committee in the same manner as for other officers and committee chairs. The Nominating Committee will also nominate a Chairperson annually.
  4. The Committee shall meet at least quarterly. Virtual meetings are possible. Precise records of all finances and decisions shall be kept. 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.
  
- Finance Committee
  1. The Finance Committee is responsible for all financial matters for UUCWC. Primarily, it creates the Annual Budget and presents it to the Board for approval. Regular monitoring of financial and budgetary activity is also the responsibility of the Finance Committee. In addition, the Finance Committee shall arrange for audits, conducted either internally or externally, no less than every 5 years.



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2. The Finance Committee is composed of representatives of Stewardship, Fundraising, and the Treasurer.
- Personnel Committee
    1. The Personnel Committee ensures that sufficient staff systems and processes exist to meet the Church's legal and ethical responsibility for the treatment of staff. It also develops and monitors the Personnel Manual to codify those legal and ethical responsibilities. Finally, it works with the Minister and Finance Committee to identify the optimal staffing arrangement within the available resources.

Section 3. Committee, Task Forces & Other Governance Structures

The Board can appoint other committees (non-Standing), task forces, or ad hoc groups to assist with the work of governance and these groups report to the Board. These groups will be tasked to accomplish a specific goal for a finite time or for which temporary responsibilities are anticipated. Chairs of these groups will be appointed by the Board.

Section 4. Ministries

Ministries are groups of volunteers from the congregation doing the work of the Church and they report to the minister such as Membership, and Worship Associates.

A.

ARTICLE VI  
CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Purpose and limitations

The Council shall assist in coordinating and implementing general programs of the Church. It shall have no decision-making authority but shall be advisory to the Board.

Section 2. Membership of Council

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

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Section 3. Meetings

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

ARTICLE VII  
THE MINISTRY

Section 1. Duties

The Minister, as well as any Associate Minister, or Minister of Lifespan Religious Education, shall be responsible for furthering the religious and spiritual life of the Church and Unitarian Universalist purposes and principles. They shall have freedom of expression and freedom of the pulpit. They shall be non-voting members 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 hiring and supervising Church staff consistent with the approved operating budget

Section 2. Employment

Ministers named above shall be elected by at least 90% of the members present at a Congregational meeting. The vote shall be by secret ballot. Ministers can be dismissed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members by secret ballot at a Congregational meeting called specifically for that purpose.

Prior to employment, and annually thereafter, 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, and other relevant components. The Personnel Committee will draft the employment contract between the Minister and the church, to be approved by the Board.

Section 3. Minister Vacancy

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 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.

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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.

ARTICLE IX  
PUBLIC EXPRESSION

In keeping with the mission of the church and the eight principles, UUCWC may express itself publicly. See policy and procedure handbook for details on any necessary approvals from CFA or the Board. The Congregation may wish to display on church property its views on current issues. Such expression, intended for public view, may include but not be limited to placing a sign or banner on the property. Such a display requires a majority vote during a congregational meeting.

ARTICLE X  
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 XI  
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.

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## BYLAWS REVISION HISTORY

First adopted in 1916.

Revised:

- 1964
- 1984
- 1991
- 1998
- May 23, 2010
- May 22, 2011
- February 26, 2012
- April 2, 2017
- June 3, 2018

Major Revisions Proposed: February 2019 – Under review