

**BYLAWS OF THE**  
**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD**

**Enacted May 31, 2014**  
**By a Vote of the Congregation**

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## **ARTICLE I NAME**

This religious community is known as the Unitarian Universalist Society of Greater Springfield. Its legal name is the Third Congregational Society in Springfield, a non-profit corporation located at 245 Porter Lake Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts.

This institution's name shall be a continuation of the Second Congregational Society in Springfield (1819), the Third Congregational Society in Springfield (1820), the First Independent Universalist Society of Springfield – St. Paul's (1827), the First Universalist Society of Chicopee (1841), the Church of the Unity (1867), the Second Universalist Society (1898), the Unitarian Universalist Church in Sixteen Acres (1954), and the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Springfield (1962), with all of which it is identical.

## **ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Society is to foster a liberal religious community through worship, study, service, and fellowship based upon the worth and dignity of all people. This Society endeavors to be a fellowship that gives hope to all who search for meaning and beauty in life.

## **ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP**

### ***Section 1. Membership***

Membership is open to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin. Membership does not require adherence to any particular religious belief or creed. Membership is open to any person who is eighteen (18) years of age or older who is in sympathy with the purpose and mission of this Society. The Board of Trustees may grant an exception to the age requirement. The Board of Trustees shall affirm new members. Members are eligible to vote at congregational meetings and hold office after they have been members for a period of eight (8) weeks. The Board of Trustees may decline a new membership within eight (8) weeks after the membership book is signed. Members may attend any meetings of the Board of Trustees, committees, task forces, or ministry teams, except when the Board of Trustees goes into executive session.

### ***Section 2. Requirements for Continued Membership***

Any member who is a part of congregational life activities and has made a financial contribution of record within the previous two (2) years shall remain a member of this Society. These requirements can be waived by the Minister with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 3. Resignation or Transfer***

Any member may withdraw or transfer his or her membership at any time by notifying the Minister or the Board of Trustees of the Society in writing.

### ***Section 4. Cessation of Membership***

Any member who has not made a financial contribution of record and has not been otherwise active in the life of the Society for the previous two (2) years may be removed from the membership rolls by the Board of Trustees. Members who cannot be located may also be removed. Reasonable efforts shall be made to contact members prior to removal.

## **ARTICLE IV DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

This Society shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

## **ARTICLE V FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year shall be July 1 - June 30.

## **ARTICLE VI CONGREGATIONAL AUTHORITY**

### ***Section 1. Authority***

The ultimate authority for the Society shall rest with the congregation, which shall consist of the members of the Society. The congregation shall function as a legally constituted body at all annual and special meetings. The congregation shall elect the Board of Trustees. The congregation shall call the Minister and any other called ministerial positions.

### ***Section 2. Annual Meeting***

The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held at a date, time and place determined by the Board of Trustees. The business of the Annual Meeting shall include election of officers and members-at-large of the Board of Trustees, approval of the budget for the next fiscal year, and any other business that may need to be conducted.

### ***Section 3. Special Business Meetings***

Special business meetings of the Society may be called by the Board of Trustees or upon written petition to the Board of Trustees by 20% of the Society's members. The purpose and proposed agenda must be stated in the petition. At special meetings, the business acted upon shall be restricted to items on the agenda.

### ***Section 4. Notice of Meetings***

Written notice and an agenda for all congregational meetings shall be posted at the meetinghouse and sent or otherwise provided to each member at least eight calendar (8) days before the meeting.

### ***Section 5. Quorums and Conduct of Meetings***

A quorum for conducting business shall be 10% of the membership, or at least 25 members, except in the case of calling or dismissing a minister, buying or selling property. In these four cases, a quorum shall consist of 50% of the members and decisions shall require 80% of the votes cast by written ballot. Non-members shall be welcome at all meetings and may be given the courtesy of the floor, but non-members may not vote or make motions.

Decisions in congregational meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

### ***Section 6. Voting***

- A. Elections shall be by secret ballot, unless the membership calls for a voice vote.
- B. If there is more than one (1) candidate nominated for a single position on the Board of Trustees, the candidate receiving the greater number of votes is elected.

### ***Section 7. Motion to Rescind***

Any action of the Board of Trustees may be overturned by a 2/3 vote on a motion to rescind at a duly called congregational meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII BOARD OF TRUSTEES: AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Section 1. Authority***

The Board of Trustees shall act on behalf of the membership as the overall governing body of the Society. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible solely to the membership of the Society and shall be subject to the orders of the membership.

### ***Section 2. Responsibilities***

- A. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the health of the entire Society. To this end, the Board of Trustees shall:
1. ensure that the Society has an up-to-date vision and mission;
  2. develop appropriate and necessary policies to guide the operations of the Society;
  3. provide a slate of officers for nomination at the Annual Meeting;
  4. develop appropriate policies and procedures to guide the operation of the Board of Trustees, including job descriptions for all board members;
  5. appoint any appropriate and necessary committees that shall report to the Board of Trustees;
  6. approve appropriate job descriptions for members of the Executive Team;
  7. monitor and assess the ministry, programs and administration of the Society;
  8. monitor and evaluate progress toward achieving the Society's plans and vision;
  9. be responsible for the management of all funds and property of the Society; however, members of the Board of Trustees shall not be liable for any losses which may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Society;
  10. approve all expenditures of unbudgeted funds in excess of \$1,000; and
  11. approve all contracts that require the expenditure of unbudgeted funds or that require the expenditure of funds in future fiscal years.
- B. The Board of Trustees shall designate an Executive Team to implement the plans, programs, and policies of the Society. The Executive Team shall report to the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 3. Meetings***

- A. The Board of Trustees shall hold regular meetings at least eight (8) times each year. All voting members are expected to attend at least 75% of scheduled meetings and should not miss more than two (2) consecutive meetings.
- B. A quorum for conducting the business of the Board of Trustees shall be four (4) voting members.
- C. All meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be open meetings, except when the Board votes to adjourn into executive session. No formal or final action may be taken by the Board of Trustees in executive session.

## **ARTICLE VIII        BOARD OF TRUSTEES: OFFICES AND TERMS**

### ***Section 1. Composition***

- A. The Board of Trustees of the Society shall consist of the President, Vice President, Clerk, and four members-at-large. The Minister is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and shall serve as staff representative to the Board of Trustees.
- B. All voting members of the Board of Trustees shall have been members of the Society for at least eight (8) weeks.

### ***Section 2. Terms of Office***

- A. All Board of Trustees members shall be elected for a 2-year term and may serve up to three consecutive terms of office.
- B. An officer may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms in any given position.
- C. Officers and Members-At-Large shall take office on the first day of the fiscal year following their election.

### ***Section 3. Length of Service***

No person shall serve more than six (6) consecutive years on the Board of Trustees. Any person leaving the Board of Trustees after four (4) or more consecutive years of service shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Trustees for at least two (2) years.

### ***Section 4. Vacancies***

- A. When a vacancy occurs the Board of Trustees shall appoint a candidate to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. An election will be held at the Annual Meeting to fill unexpired terms.
- B. Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice President shall become President, and complete the unexpired term of the President. The Board of Trustees shall appoint a candidate to fill the office of Vice President. Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting to fill both unexpired terms.
- C. Should the offices of President and Vice President both become vacant, the Clerk shall become acting President. A new President and Vice President shall be elected at a special meeting of the Society to be held within 30 days of the vacancies.

### ***Section 5. Removal***

An officer or Member-at-Large who does not comply with assigned responsibilities may be removed by a majority vote of the entire Board of Trustees, or by a majority vote of the membership at a duly called congregational meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX EXECUTIVE TEAM**

### ***Section 1. Composition***

- A. The Executive Team shall be comprised of the Minister and such other staff or lay leaders as designated by the Board.
- B. The Minister shall function as chair of the Executive Team.
- C. The Executive Team shall report to the Board of Trustees.
- D. The Executive Team shall work collaboratively to implement the plans, programs, and policies of the Society.
- E. The Executive Team shall monitor progress toward achieving the vision and plans of the Society and shall regularly report their findings to the Board of Trustees.
- F. The Executive Team shall be responsible for the supervision of all other staff.

## **ARTICLE X CALLED MINISTERS**

### ***Section 1. Called Ministers***

- A. The congregation shall call a Minister and may call such other subordinate ministerial positions as are approved by the Board of Trustees.
- B. Calling Ministers
  1. When a vacancy in the ministry occurs or is anticipated, the Board of Trustees shall consult the Unitarian Universalist Association for appropriate procedures and shall follow Unitarian Universalist Association guidelines in the calling process.
  2. A Ministerial Search Committee shall be formed by the Board of Trustees from among the voting members of the congregation.
  3. The Ministerial Search Committee shall recommend its candidate to the Board, and upon approval by the Board, to the members.
  4. Notice of a special meeting to call the Minister shall require thirty (30) days written notice to all members.
  5. The decision to call the Minister shall require 80% of the votes cast by written ballot at a special meeting of the congregation. The quorum for this meeting shall be 50% of the members. The agenda at this meeting shall be limited to the calling process. If the Society does not call the candidate, the process shall begin again with the formation of a new Ministerial Search Committee.

### ***Section 2. Duties and Expectations***

- A. Ministers shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express opinions outside the pulpit.
- B. Ministers shall be responsible for the conduct of the religious activities of the Society, ministering to the congregation, and other functions associated with Society programs in ways that implement the mission and vision established by the congregation and that are consistent with the policies of the Society as established by the Board of Trustees.

### ***Section 3. Dismissal***

The Board of Trustees shall call a special meeting of the Society to discuss and vote on the dismissal of a minister if and only if 20% of the Society's members sign and submit a petition requesting such a meeting. The Board of Trustees shall give at least 30 days notice of this meeting. The quorum for this meeting shall be 50% of the members. Seventy-five percent of the votes cast shall be required to dismiss the Minister. Upon vote of dismissal, the Minister shall have at least three (3) months of notice of termination. Salary and benefits shall continue during this time.

Should a Minister be charged with a crime, the Board of Trustees shall have the authority to suspend the Minister with pay for up to 90 days.

### **ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any business meeting of the Society by two-thirds vote of members present. Proposed changes to these Bylaws shall be given to the Board of Trustees at least six (6) weeks prior to the Society meeting. Notice to members of any proposed changes shall be enclosed with the meeting notice and agenda.

### **ARTICLE XII DISSOLUTION**

In the case of dissolution of the congregation, all of its property, real and personal, after paying all just claims upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the Unitarian Universalist Association or its legal successor, and the Unitarian Universalist Society of Greater Springfield's Board of Trustees shall perform all actions necessary to effectuate such conveyance.

### **ARTICLE XIII MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The Memorial Garden, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, is a designated portion of our property located at 245 Porter Lake Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts, consisting of approximately one acre of land that shall remain in perpetuity. This acre of land is located southeast of the existing parking lot. The Memorial Garden is maintained as a naturally wooded area of beauty and dignity for the caring disposition of the cremated remains of loved ones.

### **ARTICLE XIV EFFECTIVE DATE**

These Bylaws shall take effect upon their adoption, and shall supersede all other Bylaws of the Society at the time of their adoption.

**END OF BYLAWS**