

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal

Constitution of the Church

Originally adopted 1903
Revised 1946, 1955, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2010, 2016, 2018
Latest revision effective 08 September 2019

1613 East Emerson Street
Bloomington, IL 61701-2008

Telephone: 309-828-0235
E-mail: office@uubn.com
Website: <http://www.uubn.org/>

Article I: Name

The name of this religious organization is the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.

Article II: Affiliations

The Church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and the MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

Article III: Purpose

The purpose of this Church is to foster liberal religious living through worship, study, service and fellowship. Seeking truth in freedom, we strive to apply it in love for the enrichment of our lives, the furtherance of a helpful fellowship in worship and work, and the establishment of a just social order.

Article IV: Bond of Union

We join together that we may help one another, may multiply the power of each through mutual fellowship, and thereby promote most effectively the cause of truth, justice, and compassion.

This congregation welcomes and encourages the full participation of persons without regard to age, race, occupation, political beliefs, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, economic level, or differences in abilities.

Article V: Membership

Any person who has accepted the Purpose of the Church and the Bond of Union (see Articles III and IV), has completed requirements as adopted by the Congregation, and has signed the Church membership book shall be a member of this Church.

However, the right to vote at business meetings of the Church shall be exercised only by those members who (1) are at least 14 years of age and (2) have made a financial contribution to the general operating budget of the Church during the year ending thirty (30) days prior to the date of such meeting. In accordance with Illinois law, only members at least 18 years of age may vote on financial and contract matters. Contributions must be identified in order to qualify under this provision. A contribution by either spouse or partner shall be deemed a contribution by each. (Revised 10-28-2018)

No one may vote by proxy; however, the Board of Directors shall have the flexibility to allow absentee voting as it deems necessary. The Board of Directors shall have the sole right to judge eligibility for voting. (Revised 09-08-2019)

Article VI: Meetings

There shall be at least two annual congregational meetings of the Church. These meetings shall be in December and February, unless otherwise specified by the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee shall present its slate at the December meeting. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted with the consent of the nominee. Elections shall follow. The budget for the following year shall be presented at the December meeting for discussion, changed as necessary, and adopted by the Congregation.

A quorum for all congregational meetings shall be twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of members eligible to vote.

All meetings shall be called by the Secretary or by such members of the Church as the Board of Directors may name. The call shall state the purpose of the meeting and shall be made at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting through proper notice from the Church pulpit and in the Church calendar and by U.S. mail or electronic notification to voting members.

Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Board of Directors and shall be called upon the written request of ten (10) voting members of the Church.

Article VII: Officers

The officers of this Church shall consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer elected at the congregational meeting in December. They shall hold their respective offices for one year (January 1 – December 31) or until their successors take office.

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Board of Directors. The President shall preside at congregational meetings and at all duly called meetings.

The Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President and shall assist the President in executing Church policy and implementing Church programs, especially regarding committees.

The Secretary shall act as both recording secretary and corresponding secretary.

The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the Church.

Article VIII: Board of Directors (revised 10/28/2018)

The Board of Directors shall consist of (4) four elected officers and (5) five directors all of whom shall be voting members of the Church. Each elected director shall fill a three-year term. The Minister(s) shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Directors.

A quorum for Board of Directors meetings shall be two thirds of the Board voting membership or five (5) members, whichever is smaller.

The Board of Directors shall have the general direction of the overall program and policy of the Church, shall have charge of its property, shall conduct its business affairs, and control its administration, including establishment of such committees as may be deemed necessary.

Members of the Board of Directors may resign by giving notice in writing to all Members of the Board and may be removed, with or without cause, by action of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board voting membership or by a majority of the voting members present at an annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The Board of Directors may fill vacancies in its membership and persons so chosen shall serve until the next Board of Directors' election. If three (3) or more vacancies exist at any one time, a congregational meeting for the purpose of filling these vacancies shall be held within thirty (30) days.

Article IX: Committees

To expedite the work of the Church, the Board of Directors shall create and designate the functions of standing and special committees. At the first Board of Directors meeting after taking office and at such other times as necessary, the President of the Board shall appoint the chairs and the members of such committees, subject to the approval of the other members of the Board.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) voting members of the congregation who shall be elected at the December congregational meeting. The Board of Directors may fill vacancies in the Nominating Committee membership and persons so chosen shall serve until the next Nominating Committee election.

When there is a vacancy in the Called Ministry, a search committee shall be elected by the membership at a duly called congregational meeting. The Board of Directors shall determine the nomination process, and oversee the election procedures.

Article X: Minister

The Ministers are the religious and spiritual leaders of the Church. They shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express their opinions outside the pulpit.

A Called Minister shall hold ministerial fellowship in the Unitarian Universalist Association. A Called Minister shall be chosen and her/his initial compensation approved by at least eighty-five percent (85%) of those members voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.

A Called Minister's term of service shall be unlimited, except that such service may be terminated either by the Minister's resignation or by a vote of the Church. Except by mutual agreement between a Called Minister and the Board of Directors, notice of one hundred twenty (120) days shall be given before the termination of her/his service. A resignation shall be presented first to the Board of Directors and then to the Church at a duly called meeting.

Dismissal of a Called Minister shall be determined by a majority of those members voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.

A Minister shall perform the usual duties pertaining to this office. A Minister shall be an ex officio, non-voting Member of the Board of Directors. A Minister shall bring to the attention of the Board of Directors any matters pertinent to the general welfare of the Church, together with such recommendations as seem proper. A Minister shall make a report at the February congregational meeting.

Article XI: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Article XII: Protection of Non-Profit Status

Neither the Church, the Board, the Minister(s), nor any officer or employee of the Church shall take any action or allow any activity or use of Church property that shall endanger the non-profit, tax-exempt status of the Church or its property. Nothing in this constitution shall be construed to allow a violation of this article.

Article XIII: Non-Budgeted Fiscal Authority

Without a congregational vote the Board may neither expend nor borrow funds from any revenue source (with the exception of the Special Projects funds annually distributed by the Trust) to cover non-budgeted expenses that total (in the budget year) in excess of 5% of the annual budget. For such a vote to be taken at a congregational meeting, the action must be included in the call of the meeting. The vote must be approved by at least 85% of those members voting. In the event of an emergency situation that threatens the destruction of the church property or the safety of persons on it and that would require action before a congregational meeting is possible; the Board retains full discretionary fiscal authority to act as necessary.

Article XIV: Additional Activities Requiring Congregational Approval

Certain activities not otherwise referenced in the constitution require a congregational vote with an 85% majority, regardless of the cost or value of the activity. These include:

- Purchase, sale or commitment to purchase or sell land, deeded property and/or buildings.
- Lease of land, deeded property and/or buildings for more than one year duration.
- Projects that significantly alter the function and/or appearance of the church's land, buildings, or infrastructure. These would not include ordinary maintenance of existing land, buildings, or infrastructure.

Article XV: Dissolution Clause

Should this Church cease to function and the membership vote to disband, any accrued assets of the Church remaining after payment of debts shall be assigned to the Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

Article XVI: Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern this Church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the Church may adopt.

Article XVII: Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the eligible voting members present and voting at any duly called meeting of the Church, provided that a statement of such proposed amendment or amendments has been included in the call of the meeting.