

# **MEMBERSHIP POLICIES**

## **Membership/Joining**

Any person wishing to become a member of the UUCS is encouraged to attend a new member orientation class before signing the membership book. If the prospective member has had a prior UU membership elsewhere, he/she would also benefit from the class. In lieu of the class, a prospective member should meet with the minister or church president and membership chair to ensure his/her being made aware of the privileges and responsibilities of joining the UUCS, in accordance with Article II, Section 4 of the bylaws.

## **Membership Status**

The Church Administrator and Membership Chair(s) shall review membership records for accuracy at least annually. On November 1, the president shall request from the treasurer a list of members who have not made an identifiable financial contribution to the church in the current fiscal year. Members on this list must be contacted in the manner the president in consultation with the minister deems appropriate to establish the member's intent to continue membership in the church. If a member in question wishes to continue, an identifiable contribution needs to be made unless 1) it is waived by the minister in the case of hardship (this status should be reviewed annually) 2) it is paid by the minister from the Minister's Discretionary Fund, or 3) the member is given Emeritus status by the minister in consultation with the president. Otherwise, the member is removed from the church roll.

Members who have had their financial contribution waived by the minister may have the benefits of national UUA membership withheld at the discretion of the minister by removing their names from the list of members sent to the UUA. They will still be eligible to vote and receive other local benefits. A list of the remaining members will be provided to the UUA for purposes of denominational dues and *UU World* subscriptions. These persons will be eligible to vote and receive all benefits of membership unless and until a future membership review disqualifies them.

The president will also review member qualifications before major congregational votes such as: calling or removing the minister, major building projects, spending Endowment Fund principal, etc., or if voting status is challenged by a member.

Dual members (those whose primary UU affiliation is outside the District) are considered full members of this church and may vote on all congregational matters except those of UUA national issues.

## **Withdrawal of Membership**

A member who wishes to withdraw from membership should do so with a written notice. Such notice may be sent to the Church Administrator who will inform the Minister, President and Membership.

## **Friends of the Church**

Those who wish to affiliate with the Church, are in agreement with the purposes and objectives of the Church, and are willing to make an identifiable financial contribution, but do not choose to be Members, may be considered Friends of the Church. Friends are entitled to participate in committees and activities, but may not vote on congregational matters or serve as committee chairs. An interested person may contact the Minister or Membership Chair to be designated as a Friend.

Parents of children who participate in the Religious Education program who are not Members are encouraged to become Friends of the Church.

## **Civil Behavior**

### 1. Purpose

To provide a secure atmosphere where individual physical and emotional state, lifestyle, opinion, expression, behavior, etc. is accepted so long as one's behavior doesn't threaten, intimidate, or otherwise interfere with others' freedom of belief, expression, opinion, physical and/or emotional well-being. Concern for the well-being, openness, safety, and stability of the congregation as a whole shall be maintained and given priority over the actions of any particular disruptive individual or group. When concerns regarding disruptive behavior are expressed, the situation should be investigated tactfully and forthrightly, even if it means expulsion. Recognizing that the investigation will not always concur with expressed concerns, a failure to investigate and take appropriate action regarding such concerns would discount the expressed discomfort of members and staff and thereby aggravate the situation.

### 2. Criteria

The following are recommended as dimensions along which to evaluate problems:

- a. DANGEROUSNESS – Is the individual the source of threat to persons or property?
- b. DISRUPTIVENESS – How much interference with essential church functions is going on?

- c. IMAGE TARNISHING -- How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?
- d. CAUSES -- Why is this occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
- e. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
- f. HISTORY – What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

### 3. Immediate Action

If an activity is being disrupted, the leader of that activity will consult with the minister and/or members of the Executive Committee and/or other board members present to determine what if any immediate action is required. Immediate action may include:

- a. Asking the offending person to leave, or
- b. Suspending the meeting or activity until it can be safely and productively resumed, or
- c. Calling the police department for assistance.

FORCE WILL NOT BE USED TO EJECT THE OFFENDING PERSON UNLESS NECESSARY TO PROTECT AGAINST A THREAT OF PHYSICAL HARM.

### 4. Deferred Action

Situations involving disruptive behavior shall be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board of Trustees. This committee will have available to them the following guidelines. However, they will respond to the problems in terms of their own judgment.

- a. The committee will act by responding to the problems as they arise. They will not attempt to define 'acceptable' behavior in advance.
- b. Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.
- c. Information concerning the incident(s) that led to the complaint will be systematically collected from the complaining parties before any action is taken.
- d. An assessment of the problem behavior will be made, with personal communication emphasized. There are four levels of response recommended. The committee, however, will decide on an individual basis what is appropriate.

Level One. One of the committee makes personal contact with the person named as the source of the problem behavior, and takes notes of what is going on—from the points of view of the individual, and from his or her own point of view.

Level Two. The fact that a problem exists is clearly communicated to the offending individual, and an agreement for a clearly defined behavioral change is made.

Level Three, The offending individual is excluded from the church for a limited period of time, with the reasons made clear, as well as the conditions for return.

Level Four, He or she is permanently excluded from the church and church premises.

- e. If the committee decides that exclusion or expulsion from the church is appropriate, they will consult with the board before taking action.

#### 5. Training

Members who conduct open meetings or activities of the church must be familiar with this Disruptive Behavior Policy. A training session on church policy regarding civil behavior will be held at least annually for leaders and others who volunteer to assist in such situations.