

Unitarian Universalist of the Chester River

Bylaws

May 6, 2007

**Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalists of the Chester  
River**

***Table of Contents***

Preamble..... 3  
..... 3  
..... I. Article I.

Name..... 3  
..... 3  
..... II. Article II. Associational

Affiliation..... 3  
..... 3  
..... III. Article III.

Mission..... 3  
..... 3  
..... IV. Article IV. Non-

Discrimination..... 3  
..... 3  
..... V. Article V.

Membership..... 3  
..... 3  
..... A.

Members..... 3  
..... 3  
..... B. Termination of

Membership..... 3  
..... 3  
..... VI. Article VI. Congregational

Meetings..... 3  
..... 3  
..... A. Annual

Meeting..... 3  
..... 3  
..... B. Special

Meetings..... 3  
..... 3  
..... C.

Requirements..... 4  
..... 4

	D.	
Voting.....		.....
.....		.....
	.....4	
	VII. Article VII. Officers and Trustees-at-	
Large.....		.....
		.....4
	A.	
Responsibilities.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	B.	
Composition.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	C. Youth	
Representative.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	D. Terms of	
Office.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	E. Removal from	
Office.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	F.	
Vacancies.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	G.	
Duties.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....4
	H.	
Operations.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....5
	VIII. Article VIII. The	
Minister(s).....		.....
.....		.....
		.....5
	A. Responsibilities of the	
Minister(s).....		.....
.....		.....
		.....5
	B. Ministerial Search	
Committee.....		.....
.....		.....
		.....5
	C. Calling the	
Minister(s).....		.....
.....		.....
		.....5

	D. Dismissal of the	
Minister(s).....		5
	IX. Article IX. Committees and Affiliated	
Groups.....		5
	A.	
Committees.....		5
	B. Nominating	
Committee.....		5
	C. Affiliated	
Groups.....		6
	X. Article X. Fiscal	
Operations.....		6
	A. Fiscal	
Year.....		6
	B.	
Budget.....		6
	C. Audit Committee and	
Process.....		6
	D.	
Staffing.....		6
	XI. Article XI.	
Amendments.....		6
	XII. Article XII.	
Dissolution.....		6

Preamble: These Bylaws are adopted pursuant to Section 5-301, et seq., of the Corporations and Associations Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland regarding religious corporations. These Bylaws shall govern the affairs of the Unitarian Universalists of the Chester River, subject to the public general laws of the State of Maryland.

Article I. Name

The name of this religious Congregation shall be Unitarian Universalists of the Chester River.

Article II. Associational Affiliation

This Congregation shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Joseph Priestley District or their successors. It is the intent of this Congregation to make an annual financial contribution equal to its full fair share as determined by the Association and the District

Article III. Mission

The Mission of this Congregation is to foster liberal religious ideals through public worship, study, service and fellowship; to provide a public forum to address religious, ethical and moral issues; to support individual freedom of belief and caring human relationships; to become an intentionally diverse community; and to engage in promoting a just and humane social order.

Article IV. Non-Discrimination

It is specifically understood that the Unitarian Universalists of the Chester River affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in all its activities and endeavors including membership, programming, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals, without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affect ional or sexual orientation, age or national origin.

Article V. Membership

A. Members: Any person who is in agreement with the Mission and programs of this Congregation may become a Member by attending an orientation session, signing his or her name in the Membership Book, and making an annual financial contribution of record to this Congregation. Membership entitles all the rights and privileges of the Congregation. Membership is open to all persons age sixteen (16) and above, in accordance with and as limited by the laws of the State of Maryland. Members must sign the Membership Book at least ninety (90) days before voting privileges are granted.

B. Termination of Membership: Persons wishing to discontinue their Membership in the Congregation may do so by stating their desire to the President of the Board. In case of death, relocation, or non-attendance and/or failure to make a contribution of record of two (2) years duration, termination may be enacted by the Membership and Outreach Committee and reported to the Board of Trustees at least annually. Persons whose Membership has been terminated have the right to renew their Membership by following the Membership procedures under Article V A.

Article VI. Congregational Meetings

A. Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held each year in the month of May at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to elect new officers and trustees, adopt an annual budget, receive reports from officers and committee chairs and conduct other business as may be required.

B. Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the President of the Board of Trustees. Special meetings may be requested in writing to the Board of Trustees by ten percent (10%) of voting Members and are to be held within 30 days of such request, as scheduled and presided over by the President of the Board.

C. Requirements: Notice of the Annual Meeting shall be sent to all Members by mail at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Notice of Special Meetings shall be sent to all Members by mail at least

fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Notice of the business to be transacted at any meeting shall be sent to all Members by mail at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.

D. Voting: Twenty percent (20%) of the Members of the Congregation shall constitute a quorum. The vote of a simple majority of the Members present shall prevail at all meetings, except where otherwise stipulated in these Bylaws. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot is not permitted.

#### Article VII. Officers and Trustees-at-Large

A. Responsibilities: The Board of Trustees shall have responsibility for the overall operation of the Congregation in accordance with its Mission and Bylaws. The Board of Trustees shall meet no less than eight (8) times per year.

B. Composition: The Board of Trustees shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition there shall be three (3) Trustees-at-Large. Elected Officers and Trustees shall be Members as defined in Article V.A.

C. Youth Representative: An optional Youth Representative may be nominated annually by the Youth Religious Education Committee and approved by the Board to serve as a non-voting representative to the Board of Trustees. The minimum age for the Youth Representative shall be thirteen (13) years.

D. Terms of Office: The term of office for all Board of Trustee members shall be two (2) years. The terms of the officers shall be staggered with the President, Secretary and one (1) Trustee being elected in one year and the Vice President, Treasurer and two (2) Trustees being elected in the next year. In the first election held under these Bylaws, the Vice President, Treasurer and two (2) Trustees shall be elected to a one year term and the President, Secretary and one (1) Trustee shall be elected to a two (2) year term. No member shall serve on the Board for more than five (5) consecutive years.

E. Removal from Office: A member of the Board of Trustee may be removed from office at a congregational meeting called for that purpose in accordance with Article VI. D.

F. Vacancies: In the event of a vacancy in any elected position, the Board shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next annual election, at which time the Nominating Committee shall present a candidate to fill the position.

#### G. Responsibilities of Officers:

The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Trustees and provide general guidance for the operation of the Board.

The Vice-President shall assist the President and shall preside over meetings when the President is absent.

The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Congregation and Board of Trustees and handle correspondence relating to the Board

The Treasurer shall oversee the financial operation of the church, depositing and recording donations and paying the bills of the church. The Treasurer may not serve as chair of the Finance Committee.

The Trustees shall provide a liaison between the various committees and the Board.

#### H. Operations:

A quorum for a Board meeting shall be a majority of the Board members. The vote of a simple majority shall prevail.

Article VIII. The Ministers (S)

A. Responsibilities of the Minister(s): The Minister(s) shall be responsible for the conduct of worship services and provide spiritual leadership to the Congregation. The Minister(s) shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express his or her opinion outside the pulpit. The Minister(s) shall be an ex-officio and non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and of all committees except the Nominating and Ministerial Search Committees.

B. Ministerial Search Committee: The Nominating Committee shall select a Ministerial Search Committee to be presented for election at any properly called congregational meeting. Members of the Ministerial Search Committee shall be Members of this Congregation. The Nominating Committee will present the proposed Ministerial Search Committee to the Congregation at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.

C. Call of the Minister(s): The Minister(s) shall be called upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee and by a four-fifths (4/5) majority of the Members of the Congregation present at any meeting legally called for the purpose. The quorum for such a meeting shall be forty percent (40%) of the voting Members rather than twenty percent (20%) of the voting Members as called for in Article VI. D.

D. Dismissal of the Minister(s):

The Minister(s) may be dismissed by a simple majority vote of the Members of the Congregation present at any meeting legally called for that purpose. The quorum for such a meeting shall be forty percent (40%) of the voting Members rather than twenty percent (20%) of the voting Members as called for in Article VI. D.

Article IX. Committees and Affiliated Groups

A. Committees:

1. Committees essential to the support and functioning of the Congregation in the areas of worship, membership, finance, religious education, and building and grounds, and such others as are necessary, shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees.
2. All committees shall report to the Board at the time and in the manner determined by the Board of Trustees.
3. The Board shall appoint committee chairs annually. All committee chairpersons shall be Members as defined in Article V. A. Committee responsibilities are described in the UUCR Manual of Operations.
4. Committee membership is open to Members and non-Members of the Congregation.

B. Nominating Committee:

1. A Nominating Committee of three (3) Members of the Congregation shall be elected by the Congregation at the annual meeting. The term of office shall be two years, beginning at the first election held under these Bylaws. No officer of the Congregations shall serve on the Nominating Committee.
2. The Nominating Committee shall propose candidates, to be voted on at the succeeding annual meeting, for:
  - (a). officers and members of the Board of Trustees to replace those whose terms are expiring;
  - (b). members of the Audit and Nominating Committees when their terms expire.
3. The slate of candidates is mailed to the membership at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

C. Affiliated Groups: The Board of Trustees may appoint a representative to any affiliated group or organization that is consistent with our Mission.

Article X. Fiscal Operations:

A. Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

#### B. Budget:

1. The Board of Trustees shall submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year to the Congregation for vote as defined in Article VI. D.
2. The Board shall maintain a Capital Reserve Fund. The budget shall contain a separate line item for said Capital Reserve Fund in an amount to be recommended by the Finance Committee. Funds will be deposited in a separate account on a monthly or quarterly basis. This fund shall be used for major improvements and/or major maintenance to the physical building and contiguous property. Disbursement of funds for major improvements (Examples: building addition(s), restructuring of the interior) shall not take place without approval of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose. The disbursement of the funds for major maintenance will be determined solely by the Board on an as needed basis (Examples: replacement of the roof, updating or replacement of the heating/cooling system, painting of the exterior/interior of the building.) (This amendment to the By Laws ratified January 13, 2008.)
3. Total expenditures for a fiscal year shall not exceed the approved budget without a congregational vote to revise the budget.
4. The Board may reallocate up to fifteen percent (15%) of funds from approved budget items. Reallocations beyond fifteen percent (15%) require a congregational vote of approval at a meeting called for that purpose. If an approved obligation or budgeted item ceases to exist during the fiscal year, the Board may reallocate those funds without further congregational approval.
5. The Board may not borrow money without the approval of the Congregation.
6. Committee chairs are responsible for their budgets.
7. The Board is ultimately responsible for all fiscal expenditures.

#### C. Audit Committee:

1. An Audit Committee comprised of two individuals shall be elected. The term of office shall be two (2) years. Audit Committee members shall be elected in alternate years, to allow for continuity. In the first election held under these new Bylaws, one individual shall be elected to a two (2) year term and one individual to a (1) one year term, in order to initiate the staggered terms.
2. The Audit Committee shall conduct an annual audit of the books of account and shall report thereon to the Board and to the Congregation.

D. Staffing: New employee positions and their associated budgets must be approved by the Congregation. The Board shall determine all terms of employment.

#### Article XI. Amendments:

These Bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those Members present and voting. Twenty percent (20%) of the Membership shall constitute a quorum. Notice of any proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.

#### Article XII. Dissolution

Any action to dissolve this Congregation must be approved by a four-fifths (4/5) majority of the Members present at a meeting called to specifically consider such action, in accordance with these bylaws. The quorum for such a meeting shall be forty percent (40%) of the Membership. At dissolution, any assets of the Congregation will be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its general purposes, this transfer to be made in full compliance with whatever laws are applicable.

These By Laws ratified May 6, 2007

Revised: January 13, 2008UUCR Bylaws Ratified.doc