

BYLAWS OF  
ALL SOULS CHURCH, UNITARIAN

(as revised and adopted by the Congregation on December 7, 2008)

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## **ARTICLE I - Name of the Church**

The First Unitarian Church of Washington, D.C., shall be known as "All Souls Church, Washington, D.C.," referred to herein as "the Church". For denominational identification, it may be called "All Souls Church, Unitarian."

## **ARTICLE II - Purpose**

**Section 1.** The purpose of this Church is captured by the mission statement adopted by the congregation in 2002: "to create a diverse, spirit-growing, justice-seeking community that transforms ourselves and our world into one great family of all souls." This statement shall be complemented by specific goals adopted periodically by the congregation, on recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 2.** The Church subscribes to the stated purposes and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association, specifically to further recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of all people, individual freedom of belief, discipleship to advancing truth, the democratic process in human relations, respect for the interdependent web of all existence, and allegiance to the cause of a world community undivided by nation, race, economic class, creed, gender, affectional or sexual orientation.

**Section 3.** The Church recognizes that its organization is congregational in tradition and polity. As the elected representatives of the congregation, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for proposing goals, establishing policies, and monitoring their implementation. The Senior Minister, called by the congregation, shall be responsible for coordinating the implementation of those goals and policies in a spirit of shared ministry and shall also supervise the staff.

**Section 4.** The Church explicitly commits to eliminating racism and promoting genuine multicultural integration/collaboration in its membership, its organization, and its activities.

## **ARTICLE III - Denominational Affiliation**

The Church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the appropriate local and regional affiliates and shall recognize its responsibilities of fellowship in these entities.

## **ARTICLE IV - Church Membership**

**Section 1.** All persons who are members of the Church on the adoption of these Bylaws, or who thereafter sign its Membership Roll and maintain a continuing interest in its worship and work, shall constitute its membership. No doctrinal test shall be required. Membership shall be open to anyone who:

-is at least sixteen years of age or has completed UU Rites of Passage;

-has participated in some form of new member orientation, including discussion of All Souls' Mission and Ends statements, and

-is prepared to make a financial contribution to the Church and participate, as able, in its ministry.

**Section 2.** The Membership Secretary, subject to the exception in Section 3, shall inquire of members not known to have been active in the Church or to have contributed to its support for a period of two years as to their desire to continue as members. Members who cannot be reached or who do not respond to written or oral communication after a sixty-day period shall be considered to have withdrawn from membership but shall be reinstated upon request.

**Section 3.** The Membership Secretary may continue the membership status of persons who have been members of the Church for an extended period of time and who, due to advanced age or disability, are no longer able to participate actively in the affairs and services of the Church. The Membership Secretary shall report to the Board of Trustees the names of those to whom this privilege is extended.

## **ARTICLE V - Qualification of Voters**

**Section 1.** At meetings of the Church the right to vote may be exercised by each member present who has been a member for at least thirty days and has made a financial contribution of record to the Church in the previous fifteen months.

**Section 2.** A list of members entitled to vote shall be prepared by the Membership Secretary as of the start of each fiscal year and shall be available for inspection in the Church at all times. A list of members entitled to vote at any Church meeting shall be prepared as of the date of mailing of any notice of meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI - Church Meetings**

**Section 1.** There shall be an annual meeting of the Church no more than 45 days and no less than 21 days before the start of the Church's fiscal year. At the Annual Meeting:

- (a) Trustees, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Assistant Secretary, an Assistant Treasurer, a Moderator, a Membership Secretary, and members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected from the membership;
- (b) the annual budget for the following fiscal year shall be approved; and
- (c) any other business may be transacted.

Notice of the Annual Meeting and its agenda shall be sent to all members of the Church, by First-Class mail, not later than two weeks before the meeting. The Nominating Committee shall

serve as the ultimate authority for all matters related to elections of church officers and trustees up to and through the respective congregational meeting.

**Section 2.** Special meetings may be called at any time by the Board of Trustees or may be called at the written request of at least one-tenth of the members, provided that written notice stating the business to be transacted shall be sent by First-Class mail to each member at least two weeks in advance. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting other than that for which it is called.

**Section 3.** At any meeting of the Church, one-tenth of the members entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. No proxies shall be recognized.

## **ARTICLE VII - Board of Trustees**

**Section 1.** Supervision and direction of the affairs of the Church shall be vested in a board of nine directors, herein referred to as Trustees, with a particular focus on policy development and oversight. At each annual meeting of the Church, three members shall be elected to serve as Trustees for terms of three years each, and no Trustee shall be eligible for re-election for a period of one year after the expiration of his or her term of office; provided, however, that a Trustee elected or appointed for a term of one year or less shall be eligible, upon the expiration of that term, for election or re-election to a term not exceeding three years. The Board shall elect its own President and Vice President from its own membership, and make such other rules for its own government, as it may deem advisable. Such rules shall be available for inspection by the congregation.

**Section 2.** If any Trustee is absent from three consecutive regularly scheduled monthly meetings in the course of a year for reasons that a majority of the Board considers not justifiable or ceases to be a member of the Church, the office of that Trustee shall be treated as vacant and shall be filled by another person in accordance with this Article.

**Section 3.** The Board of Trustees shall fill any vacancy that may occur in its membership or in the office of the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Moderator, or Membership Secretary between annual meetings, and any person so appointed shall hold office until the next annual meeting. At the annual meeting, any vacancy on the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the remaining year(s) of that term.

**Section 4.** The Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Moderator, and Membership Secretary shall have the right to participate in meetings of the Board of Trustees, but without the right to vote.

**Section 5.** The Board of Trustees may appoint such consultants to it and to the Church as may be required.

## **ARTICLE VIII - Officers of the Church**

**Section 1.** The officers of the Church shall be:

President of the Board of Trustees  
Vice President of the Board of Trustees  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Assistant Secretary  
Assistant Treasurer  
Moderator  
Membership Secretary

Elected by the congregation, the officers shall serve one-year terms in the same officer position, renewable only twice unless the Nominating Committee determines that extenuating circumstances warrant further renewal of one year.

**Section 2.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, shall represent the Church on all appropriate occasions, and shall be an ex officio member, without vote, of all Board-appointed committees of the Church.

**Section 3.** The Vice President shall act in the place of the President during the latter's absence and perform such other duties as the President delegates.

**Section 4.** The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of the Board of Trustees and preserving an account of whatever may be of interest in the history of the Church, recording and ensuring the accessibility of all Church policies, convening the first meeting of the newly elected Board of Trustees and presiding over the election of President and Vice President, convening the first meeting of the Nominating Committee, and receiving and posting the report of the Nominating Committee and the report of the Church Council on nominations to the Nominating Committee.

**Section 5.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for monitoring the funds of the Church, assuring the safekeeping of the books and records of all financial transactions, and performing the other duties customary to the office. The Treasurer shall be expected to attend Board meetings.

**Section 6.** The Assistant Secretary shall act in place of the Secretary during the latter's absence and shall otherwise assist the Secretary in performing the duties of the office. He/she shall assist in assuring that the Church's official and historical records are preserved and readily accessible and shall take minutes and maintain the membership roster of all meetings of the Church Council.

**Section 7.** The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in the performance of the duties of the office.

**Section 8.** The Moderator shall preside at annual and special meetings of the Church and , representing the interests of the congregation, be the ultimate coordinator and authority for the preparation and conduct of such meetings, except for matters relating to the determination of the ballot process for elections which shall be the Nominating Committee's responsibility. In the event that the Moderator is unable to do so at a particular meeting, a presiding officer shall be

elected from the members present at the meeting. The Moderator shall also chair the Church Council.

**Section 9.** The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for the official roll of the membership of the Church; determine Church membership status as directed in Article IV, above; and maintain an official list of members entitled to vote as directed in Article V, Section 2, above.

**Section 10.** The Board of Trustees shall have the responsibility for ascertaining that all officers are performing their duties as prescribed by these bylaws or by other church governing documents.

## **ARTICLE IX - The Senior Minister and Church Staff**

**Section 1.** The Senior Minister and any other called minister shall be chosen by ballot by the members of the Church present in a special meeting called for that purpose. A majority of the votes cast shall constitute a choice. The Senior Minister's salary and conditions of employment shall be determined by the Board of Trustees. The connection between the Senior Minister and the Church may be dissolved by the giving of three months' notice by either party.

**Section 2.** The staff of the Church shall be composed of the Senior Minister and such other employees authorized in the budget as may be necessary to manage the Church. Subject to Board-approved policies, the Senior Minister shall be responsible for the retention and supervision of all staff.

**Section 3.** The Senior Minister shall chair an Executive Team composed of the Senior Minister and other senior staff and/or lay leaders designated by the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister. Operating under policies established by the Board and available for inspection by the congregation, the Executive Team shall oversee all staff and, in a spirit of shared ministry, shall coordinate the implementation of the Church's policies as delegated by the Board of Trustees.

## **ARTICLE X – Committees**

**Section 1.** To aid the Church in the conduct of its business and other activities, standing committees shall be constituted for continuing fields of Church interest and concern; ad hoc committees may be constituted for more limited purposes.

**Section 2.** There shall be two categories of committees: Board committees, which advise and assist the Board, and implementing committees, which work collaboratively with the Executive Team to propose operating policies and manage the programs that advance the Church's goals.

**Section 3.** Members of Board committees shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees after consulting with continuing members of the committee in question. The members of implementing committees shall be appointed by the Executive Team in collaboration with the relevant committees and other lay leaders who can help recruit suitable candidates. Both the

Board and Executive Team should strive to reflect the Church's diversity in their committee appointments.

**Section 4.** Committee members shall be expected to serve for a term of three years.

**Section 5.** Standing committees' size and mission shall be outlined in writing by the Board (for Board committees) or by the Executive Team (for implementing committees), working in collaboration with the respective committees.

**Section 6.** Ad hoc committees shall be dissolved when their purposes are fulfilled, in the judgment of the Board (for Board committees) or the Executive Team (for implementing committees).

**Section 7.** Each committee shall elect its presiding officer annually from among its members and constitute and elect such other officers as may be required. Committee chairs must be members of the Church. In constituting an ad hoc Board committee, the Board of Trustees shall designate a convener. In constituting an ad hoc implementing committee, the Executive Team shall designate a convener.

**Section 8.** The Church Council shall be composed of the chairs of all standing committees and ad hoc committees, leaders of Church organizations and activities, and the officers of the Church. Its role shall be to share information, coordinate programs, broaden lay leadership, and advise the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees. It shall act as the committee to nominate the Nominating Committee. The Moderator shall be its chair.

## **ARTICLE XI - Church Organizations and Activities**

**Section 1.** Members and friends of the Church are encouraged to participate in Church organizations and activities to advance the Mission and Ends of the Church and for their mutual interest and fellowship. Church members may form organizations for social, educational, spiritual, or advocacy purposes.

**Section 2.** Church organizations may constitute and elect their own officers, a majority of whom shall be members of the Church, and may determine their own programs without restriction when such programs are not inconsistent with the policies of the Church and further its Mission and Ends.

**Section 3.** Innovation and creativity shall be encouraged, but Church organizations and activities, unless separately incorporated, shall operate as units of All Souls Church, Unitarian, and shall be subject to the policies and controls of the church, including, but not limited to, budgeting, record-keeping, contracts, membership recruitment, and fund-raising. In the case of separately-incorporated organizations, the Executive Team shall determine what information, if any, must be reported to the Church for legal, financial, or other purposes.

## **ARTICLE XII - Nominations and Elections**

**Section 1.** There shall be a Nominating Committee composed of fifteen persons. Twelve shall be elected for one-year terms at each annual meeting of the Church, and the previous Nominating Committee shall select three of its members to serve for a second year. Except for these three, no member of the Nominating Committee shall serve for two consecutive years, and no member shall serve for more than two consecutive years. There shall be no ex officio members. The Committee shall fill by appointment any vacancy in its membership occurring between annual meetings of the Church. The Secretary shall promptly convene the first meeting of the Nominating Committee, at which time the Committee shall organize itself in order to fulfill its responsibilities in a timely fashion. The Nominating Committee is accountable only to the congregation, although it is encouraged to confer with the Board of Trustees and the Executive Team.

**Section 2.** At least twelve nominations for election to the Nominating Committee shall be made and reported to the Secretary each year by the Church Council not later than six weeks before the annual meeting of the Church.

**Section 3.** It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to submit a report to the Secretary, not later than six weeks before the annual meeting of the Church, nominating one or more members of the Church for election to each vacancy on the Board of Trustees and to the offices of Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Moderator, and Membership Secretary, and stating the names of the three members of the committee selected to hold over for a second year pursuant to Section 1 above. The decision about the number of candidates to nominate for each position, one or more, shall be the Nominating Committee's to make. The Nominating Committee shall strive to present a slate of candidates that reflects the diversity and pluralism to which the Church aspires.

**Section 4.** Additional nominations for all offices and for the Nominating Committee may be made from the floor at the annual meeting by a member. Such nominations shall require a second by three other members. Additional nominations may also be made by petition signed by at least twenty members and filed with the Secretary at or before the annual meeting.

**Section 5.** Promptly upon the receipt thereof, the Secretary shall cause to be posted conspicuously in the Church the reports of the Nominating Committee and of the Church Council and all nominations made by petition, to remain posted until the annual meeting; and shall also cause such reports to be published in a Church publication or other mailing sent to all members of the Church not later than twenty days prior to the annual meeting.

**Section 6.** Election to the Board of Trustees, to the offices of the Church, and to the Nominating Committee shall be by ballot. However, if there is but one nominee for an office, voting for that office may be by voice.

**Section 7.** The newly elected Trustees, Officers, and members of the Nominating Committee shall take office immediately following the annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIII - Fiscal Provisions**

**Section 1.** The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 through December 31.

**Section 2.** The Board of Trustees, in advance of the annual meeting of the Church, shall cause to be prepared a budget for the ensuing year, based on anticipated availability of funds and relative priority and importance of Church programs and financial needs. Before the last regular Board meeting prior to a congregational meeting at which a proposed budget will be voted, the Board shall hold one or more congregational budget hearings.

**Section 3.** There shall be an annual canvass for pledges, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees.

**Section 4.** After the adoption of the budget, the Board of Trustees in office during the fiscal year covered by the budget shall have the responsibility of adjusting the budget to conform as nearly as possible to the funds actually received.

**Section 5.** Any expenditure of endowment funds shall require a recorded vote of the Board of Trustees. This authority may not be delegated.

**Section 6.** Annual fiscal reports shall be prepared and made available to the congregation not later than ninety days after the close of the fiscal year.

## **ARTICLE XIV - Sponsorship and Ordination**

**Section 1.** Sponsorship of a person to become a Minister within the Unitarian Universalist Association shall be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

**Section 2.** A person may be ordained by the Church at a specially announced service after approval by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees and of a meeting of the congregation. Notification of a vote on ordination must be provided to members, in writing, at least two weeks in advance by newsletter, mailing, or electronic communication.

## **ARTICLE XV - Dissolution**

In case of dissolution of the Church, 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 Board of Trustees of the Church shall perform all actions necessary to effectuate such conveyance.

## **ARTICLE XVI - Parliamentary Authority**

**Section 1.** The rules contained in ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER, REVISED, shall govern the Church in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or special rules of order of the Church.-

**Section 2.** The Moderator of any annual or special meeting of the Church may appoint a parliamentarian.

## **ARTICLE XVII – Indemnification**

The Church shall indemnify its Trustees, Officers, and Executive Team to the fullest extent permitted by the laws of the District of Columbia and shall purchase and maintain insurance on their behalf.

## **ARTICLE XVIII - Amendments to the Bylaws**

These Bylaws may be amended at any annual or special meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote, provided that any amendment proposed has been either approved by the Board of Trustees or sponsored by at least twenty members and that a copy thereof has been sent by First-Class mail to each member at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.