

**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OMAHA
BOARD POLICIES**

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DEFINITIONS

Annual Vision of Ministry: The Annual Vision of Ministry is the Board's short list of priorities to be accomplished in the forthcoming one to three years. It is the short-term product of the Board's strategic planning process. The Ministry Team then translates the Board's Annual Vision of Ministry into goals and objectives for the coming year.

Capital Trust: The Capital Trust, which is more fully described in the Church By-Laws, was established by the Congregation on May 29, 1981 and is governed according to the terms of its underlying trust agreement. The Capital Trust was established to hold and invest certain funds of the Church. Per the Capital Trust Agreement, certain amounts of the Capital Trust are annually to be paid to the Church and applied to its operating budget.

Church: First Unitarian Church of Omaha is a non-profit, church corporation founded in 1869. The Church is operated according to the terms of its Articles of Incorporation, its By-laws, and the laws of the State of Nebraska.

Congregation: The Congregation members, who collectively are the highest governing authority in the Church, are those members who are eligible to vote, as set forth in the Church's Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.

Core Values: Core Values are those values and behaviors that the Church intends to honor in all of its endeavors. The Unitarian Universalist Principles are Core Values of the Church. The question, "What principles do we intend to observe, no matter what?" helps lead to the discovery of Core Values.

Ends/Means Distinction: In this Policy Manual, an "ends/outcomes" policy statement sets forth the desired outcomes, the intended beneficiaries of the results, and the acceptable costs. Defining ends/outcomes is a function of Governance. "Means" are the methods that are employed to accomplish the desired ends/outcomes. Determining the appropriate means is a function of Ministry, except in any situation where the Congregation or the Board of Trustees has implemented policies that either limit or require certain means.

Governance: Governance is a collective, democratic process that produces lasting policies designed to direct many individual decisions. It is best accomplished through democratic or representative bodies, including Congregational meetings, the Board of Trustees, Board Committees, and Board working groups. The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of the President, is responsible for leading the governance of the Church.

Ministry: Ministry is the practical work of the Church, and consists of continually choosing means and methods, allocating resources, hiring staff, recruiting volunteers, and giving them leadership and support that will enable them to serve the mission of the Church effectively. Ministry is best accomplished through empowered ministry teams of people who share a sense of calling to particular forms of service. The Ministry Team Council, is responsible for directing the Church's ministry in accordance with Board policies.

Ministry Team: Ministry Team is the action arm of the Church. The Ministry Team encompasses all of the individuals who work together to provide all the benefits that the church offers to members and to the community. It includes all of the individual teams that operate the church (e.g. the Fellowship Team,

the Worship Team, the Office Team, etc.). It also includes all of the individual staff members (both volunteers and employees).

Ministry Team Council: The Ministry Team Council consists of the following four members: President-Elect, Minister of the Church, member elected by the Ministry Team and member elected by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Ministry Team Charter.

Ministry Team Council Charter: A Ministry Team Council Charter was adopted by the Board to create and further delineate the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry Team Council.

Mission: The Church's mission is the good that the Congregation means to do, whom it hopes to benefit, and how. It answers the question, "Whose lives do we intend to assist or change and in what way?"

Open Questions: Open questions are questions that are significant to the Church's strategic planning but do not, as yet, have answers. Open questions call for a wider, longer conversation than an annual goal-setting process can accommodate and invite congregational conversation before a decision is made.

Strategic Plan: The strategic plan contains the Church's longest-range plans. A strategic plan answers the question, "What major choices have we made about how we will fulfill our mission?"

Vision: A vision is a statement about what the Church wants to become. It is a star to guide by, an imagined future state of the Church as it becomes a better vehicle to serve our Mission. It answers the question, "What will our Church look like if we serve our Mission well?"

INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the Church is a shared responsibility of the Congregation, the Board of Trustees, the Ministry Team Council and the Ministry Team. Members of the Congregation share responsibility for discerning the Church's mission and organizing to fulfill it. Members do not "own" the Church for individual or collective benefit. Rather, members hold the Church in trust for those who benefit from its work now and in the future.

Although the Congregation reserves some duties for itself through the Articles of Incorporation or the By-Laws, the members delegate the majority of the leadership responsibility to the Board of Trustees and the Minister. This Policy Manual distinguishes two kinds of activity, Governance and Ministry, and it sets forth the Board's policies that have been created to help perform both in a spirit of partnership. These Board Policies are subordinate to and do not supersede the provisions of the Church's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. Those to whom these Board Policies delegate authority and accountability may establish their own administrative practices and procedures to regulate the delegated responsibilities, provided that they conform to these Board Policies as well as the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws.

These Board Policies replace all prior Board Policies and/or guidelines. Any Church member may suggest changes to these Board Policies or report any violation of these Board Policies to the President or any Board member.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

First Unitarian Church of Omaha exists to serve our Mission, our Congregation members, and the community at large.

Our Church was established more than a century ago (1869) and generations of Church members have held it in trust, nourished it, and passed it on to us. We owe future generations no less. To meet this sacred obligation, members must participate in our church community, volunteer their time and talents, and contribute financially according to their means.

The Board is responsible for establishing and publishing membership expectations and for maintaining the roll of active membership. In addition to any requirements specifically set forth in the Church Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, these expectations are:

1. Members who are able to do so are strongly encouraged to participate in and volunteer to help with Church services and activities to keep our community vital and vibrant.
2. Members are expected to support the Church financially. Members who are unable to do so may speak with the Minister about obtaining a waiver in order to vote at congregational meetings. The Board suggests referring to the UUA's Fair Share Contribution Guide for determining an appropriate contribution.

Members who are not actively engaged in meeting these minimal expectations may be regretfully dropped from active membership.

LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Partnership is the preferred style of leadership in this Church. All Church leaders are expected to practice cooperative decision-making, healthy conflict management, and mutual support in their respective roles. Clearly defined roles, authority, and accountability foster a harmonious, consultative, and collegial style and atmosphere. The Minister and President have a special responsibility to demonstrate and foster a spirit of partnership in their own working relationship.

BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY

The Board's focus shall be on the long-term mission and well-being of the Congregation, not on day-to-day administrative detail. It shall respect the distinction between Governance and Ministry, and shall avoid when possible making decisions that address only a single situation. The Board intends to govern primarily by:

1. Discerning and articulating the Congregation's Mission and Vision of Ministry,
2. Setting goals and making strategic choices,
3. Executing financial oversight to meet its fiduciary responsibility to the Congregation,
4. Creating written policies to guide the Congregation's Ministry, and
5. Monitoring and evaluating the Congregation's leadership, including itself.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The job of the Board is to represent and lead the Congregation in determining and monitoring appropriate organizational performance. In this spirit, the Board shall:

1. In conversation with the Congregation and the Ministry Team, discern and communicate the Mission and Vision of the Church.
2. Engage in continuous strategic planning practices to discern, develop, and communicate strategic direction and define initiatives to help the Congregation live its Mission and achieve its Vision.
3. Create and communicate the Church's Annual Vision of Ministry.
4. Develop continuous practices, as set forth more completely below under Board Monitoring, to monitor the Church's success in living its mission and achieving the goals established in the Annual Vision of Ministry.
5. Continuously monitor the Church's financial condition and intervene as necessary to assure that the Church is solvent and that its assets are protected.
6. Direct and inspire the organization through the careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting the Congregation's values, Mission, and Vision.
 - a. The Board's primary policy focus shall be on the long-term effects that the Church has on the lives of the Congregation, the community, and the wider world, rather than on the administrative means of attaining those effects.
 - b. To the extent possible, the Board's Policies shall be constructed to define the outcomes (ends) to be achieved and/or the limitations on the means or methods that may be employed. The Minister and the Ministry Team Council are empowered to use any reasonable interpretation of these Board Policies to develop the necessary means to achieve the stated outcomes.
 - c. The Board shall actively solicit Congregational input in developing or modifying policies.

The Board shall develop practices and procedures that specify how the Board conducts its own business. Accordingly, the Board and its individual Trustees commit themselves to:

1. Prudent, ethical, and lawful conduct that is consistent with the Church's Unitarian Universalist principles.
2. Enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence; regularly discuss its governance progress and performance to discover how it may improve; and create a Board communication process that keeps all Trustees informed and does not disadvantage any Trustee.
3. Create a Board Covenant, which shall form a part of these Board Policies. The Board shall review its covenant at least annually and update it as needed.
4. Respect the different roles of the Board and the Ministry Team. Trustees interacting with the Ministry Team must recognize the lack of authority vested in individual Trustees, except when specifically authorized by the Board.
5. Practice the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
6. Act only as a whole body. The Board shall discern and deliberate with many voices but shall govern with one voice. The Board shall support, regardless of their personal opinions or the vote that they cast on any matter, the legitimate decisions of the Board.

BOARD AND CORPORATE OFFICERS' ROLES

President: The job of the President is to assure the integrity of the Board's process. The President or his/her designated representative is the only person authorized to speak for the Board.

1. The job output of the President is that the Board behave consistently with the Church's governing documents, these Policies, and those requirements legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization.
2. The authority of the President consists of making any decision on behalf of the Board that falls within or is consistent with Board policies on governance process and the Board-Ministry Team Linkage.
 - a. The President or designated representative is empowered to chair Board meetings with all the commonly accepted powers of that position (e.g., preparing agendas, ruling on motions, recognizing speakers).
 - b. The Board retains sole authority to define ends/outcomes and leadership limitations. Therefore, the President's authority does not extend to making decisions concerning ends/outcomes or waiving leadership limitations.
 - c. The President's authority does not extend to supervising, interpreting Board policies, or otherwise directing the Ministry Team. However, nothing in this Policy is intended to interfere with mutual interaction about individual understandings of policies.

President-Elect: The job of the President-Elect is to serve on the Board of Trustees and the Ministry Team Council and prepare to serve as the President. In the absence of the President (whether temporary or permanent), the President Elect shall assume all of the duties of the President.

Secretary: The job of the Secretary is to assure the integrity of the Board's record. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring the:

1. Recording and distributing accurate minutes of Board and Congregational meetings.
2. Recording amendments to these Policies and providing them to the Congregation.
3. Timely public announcement of the annual meeting and other duties as assigned by the By-Laws.

Treasurer: Pursuant to the By-Laws, the Board shall annually appoint a member of the Congregation to serve as the Treasurer of the Church. The Treasurer shall be a corporate officer of the church, but not a member of the Board of Trustees. The job of the Treasurer is to fulfill the statutory and corporate requirements of the position and also to support the Board's responsibility for financial oversight. The Treasurer shall serve until resignation, replacement, or removal. The Treasurer shall also be an ex-officio member of the Board's Finance Committee.

The Treasurer is responsible to:

1. Keep the Board fully informed on a regular basis of the Church's ongoing financial status, and inform the Board in a timely manner of any projected material deviation from the current approved budget.
2. Work with the Finance Committee to identify available revenue sources to fund the annual operating budget.
3. Work with the Ministry Team Council and the Finance Committee to prepare an annual operating budget for Board and Congregational approval. See Annual Planning Cycle for details on preparing the annual operating budget.
4. Work with the Finance Committee to recommend to the Board for its annual approval an amount of Church funds to be maintained in a Building Maintenance Reserve Fund and an Operating Reserve Fund. The Building Maintenance Reserve Fund is available to supplement the maintenance line in the annual operating budget for longer range and unexpected expenses related to the maintenance of Church property. The Operating Reserve is intended as a "rainy day" fund the Board can turn to meet short-term revenue shortfalls or sustain operations in case of large unexpected operating expenses or declines in revenues.
5. Work with the Finance Committee to prepare for the Board's approval of an annual investment management plan. Capital preservation shall guide the investment of Church funds. The annual investment management plan will take into account the Board's AVoM and Strategic Plan, designate what portion of Church funds should be considered short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term. Short-term includes the operating fund and other funds expected to be used within a year. Intermediate-term funds are expected to be used within one to five years. Long-term funds are expected to remain invested for at least five years.
6. Coordinate with the Capital Trust Trustees to ensure Church funds are invested in accordance with the annual investment management plan.
7. Maintain church bank and credit card accounts and safe deposit box.
8. Manage Vanco ACH and credit card contributions.
9. Work with the Ministry Team Council to maintain church insurance policies maintain adequate insurance to protect against property losses at replacement value and liability for injuries to others, less reasonable deductible and/or coinsurance limits. Insurance coverage shall include both corporate liability and personal liability of Board members and staff, taking into account pertinent statutory provisions and exemptions applicable to Nebraska non-profit organizations.
10. Supervise part-time bookkeeper.
11. Prepare financial data for annual reports to the UUA.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Trustees shall carry out their duties with undivided loyalty to the Congregation and its mission. A conflict of interest exists whenever a Trustee or a close relative of a Trustee has interests or duties that interfere with the Trustee's duty of loyalty to the Church and its principles. The conflicting

interest may be financial, moral, political, theological, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest arise when a Trustee:

1. Stands to gain or lose because of a Board action.
2. Has a fiduciary duty or close personal or business relationship to any person or corporation that stands to gain or lose because of a Board action. A Trustee who is an employee of or has a close relationship to an employee of the Congregation always has a conflict of interest with respect to any action affecting such employment.
3. Holds a substantial property interest in a corporation or business, or serves as an officer or board member of another organization that stands to gain or lose because of a Board action.
4. Cannot set aside his or her personal preferences to vote on behalf of the best interests of the whole Congregation and its mission.
5. Faces any other situation that creates or appears to create divided or conflicting loyalties.

The Board shall annually require its Trustees to disclose in writing all existing or foreseeable conflicts of interest. Disclosure forms shall be kept by the Secretary and made available to any member of the Congregation who requests to see them. Trustees shall immediately notify the President of any existing or foreseeable conflicts of interest arising after the date of the annual disclosure form.

If an item of business arises in which any Trustee reports that a conflict of interest may exist, the affected Trustee may withdraw or ask the Board for guidance. In the latter case, the Board (minus any affected parties) shall determine how to handle the situation. Depending on the seriousness of the conflict, possible responses include:

1. Disclosure: A supplemental disclosure form shall be filed by the affected Trustee, who may then continue to participate and vote as usual.
2. Recusal: The Trustee shall disclose the conflict and withdraw from the meeting while the item is under discussion or voted on.
3. Resignation: The Trustee shall resign from the Board.

BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board may establish Committees to help carry out its responsibilities. At the Board's direction, Committees may operate as standing or time-limited bodies. Unless otherwise stated, a Committee will cease to exist as soon as its task is completed.

The Board, as a whole, will clearly direct Committees by outlining specific written objectives and restrictions and a time frame for completing their work. Initially, the Board shall establish the following Committees.

Governance Committee: A standing committee that is responsible for enabling the Board to become the best and most productive Board it can be. Its duties include maintaining accurate job descriptions for the Board, organizing the annual training session for new Trustees, to which all Trustees are invited, organizing the Board's annual evaluation of itself, and other appropriate process monitoring and improvement.

Finance Committee: A standing committee that maintains close contact with the Treasurer, Ministry Team Council and with the Trustees of the Capital Trust to assure that the Board performs its duty to provide financial oversight. Its duties include (i) assuring that Trustees are well informed of the Church's financial status and of the processes in place to protect the Church's property, (ii) working

with the Treasurer to annually recommend for the Board's approval reserve account balances and an investment management plan, and (iii) working with the Ministry Team Council and Treasurer to prepare the annual operating budget. See Annual Planning Cycle for details on preparing the annual operating budget.

Board Committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority by Board action for specific and time-limited purposes.

BOARD MONITORING

The staff, ministry teams, committees, and Board shall engage in a continual process of monitoring and evaluation. The purposes to be accomplished through monitoring and evaluation are to foster excellence in ministry work by encouraging open communication and regular feedback among all whose work contributes to achieving the Church's Mission, to help the Church to focus on its goals as adopted by the Board, and to ensure that all Church leaders adhere closely to Board policies.

The Ministry Team Council shall be responsible for regular written reports from the Ministry Team to the Board. Reports shall focus on progress on priorities, as set by the Board through the Annual Vision of Ministry, and on compliance with Board policy.

Financial reports shall show overall financial performance compared to budget and highlight significant financial or operational issues. Financial statements shall be filed and made available to any Congregation member who wishes to examine them.

The Board shall call upon the Ministry Team on a planned basis through the year to report more fully on the Church's work in a given area, and to contribute expertise, information, and leadership. The purpose of these reports is to support the Board's learning and reflection on major areas of the Church's mission, such as worship, religious education, social justice, membership development, and stewardship of Congregational property and wealth.

From time to time, the Board may inquire into specific questions of policy compliance, organizational concerns, or other serious issues by appointing a committee or outside consultant to assess some aspect of Church program or organizational functioning.

BOARD-MINISTRY TEAM LINKAGE

The relationship between the Board of Trustees, which defines ends and sets policy, and the Ministry Team, which determines means and manages Church operations, is defined here. The Board's official connection to the Ministry Team, its achievements, and conduct is through the Ministry Team Council.

1. Only decisions of the Board acting as a body are binding on the Ministry Team Council.
2. All Board authority delegated to the Ministry Team is delegated through the Ministry Team Council so that all of the authority and accountability of the Ministry Team is considered to be the authority and accountability of the Ministry Team Council.
3. The Board will instruct the Ministry Team Council through written policies that prescribe the ends to be achieved and that limit the means to be employed, allowing the Ministry Team Council to use any reasonable interpretation of these policies.
4. At least annually, the Board shall evaluate the Ministry Team Council's performance and the Ministry Team Council shall evaluate the Board's performance. In addition, the Board is responsible to "monitor and nurture the health of the ministries of the Congregation through

regular reviews and assessments. The methodology of such reviews will be collaboratively determined by the Board, or their designee, and the Minister and will reflect an understanding that program effectiveness hinges upon team effort. In determining the assessment methodology, the Board and Minister will also agree upon a process to periodically assess the work of the Minister” (UUA Ministerial Agreement, Section 1.2.6).

5. The Board is responsible for monitoring Ministry Team performance in a systematic and rigorous manner. Performance will be measured to determine the extent to which:
 - a. The Church’s desired ends are being accomplished, and
 - b. The Ministry Team operates within the boundaries set by established limitations.

GLOBAL DELEGATION TO MINISTRY TEAM COUNCIL

The Board shall specify those Ministry functions that it reserves for itself and those Ministry functions that it delegates to specific entities. All other Ministry functions shall be the responsibility of the Ministry Team.

The Ministry Team Council shall lead and direct the spiritual, programmatic, and administrative work of the Church, and is hereby delegated authority and responsibility to make all related operational decisions, adopt administrative policies, and allocate Congregational resources except as specifically limited by Board policies.

The Minister shall be responsible for maintaining a productive and effective staff team, for ensuring that its efforts are directed toward fulfilling the Congregation’s Mission and Vision of Ministry, and for staff compliance with all Board policies.

Decision-Making Authority: Any decision not addressed by a Board policy is hereby delegated to the Ministry Team Council (if in the area of Ministry) or to the President (if in the area of Governance). In the area of Ministry, the Minister and the Ministry Team Council are empowered to make decisions that are a reasonable interpretation of existing Policies. In the area of Governance, the President is empowered to make decisions that are a reasonable interpretation of Board Policies.

Care for People: The Ministry Team Council shall be responsible for preventing harm to the members and guests who take part in Church activities or use Church property, and shall have the power to take all necessary and appropriate steps to deal with situations where such persons are at risk.

1. **Health and safety.** The Ministry Team Council shall ensure that all facilities are maintained in a safe, sanitary, and secure condition, that required licenses and inspections are kept up to date, and that problems are corrected promptly.
2. **Emergency planning.** The Ministry Team Council shall maintain a written plan for responding to emergencies such as medical emergencies, fire, toxic conditions, weather problems, threatening communications, power outages, natural disasters, and other circumstances that create or threaten dangerous conditions.
3. **Harassment.** Harassment of any kind has no place in the Church. Any harassment regarding race, color, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national origin or ancestry, economic status, union membership, political affiliation, or any legally protected status will not be tolerated. See also the Personnel Policy and the Destructive Behavior Policy.
4. **Child protection.** Because of our special responsibility for children and youth in the Church’s care, the Ministry Team Council shall establish clear, written procedures for the selection,

training, and supervision of all Ministry Team members who work with persons age eighteen and younger.

5. **Nondiscrimination.** No one acting for the Church shall discriminate because of race, color, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national origin or ancestry, economic status, union membership, political affiliation, or any legally protected class. Religious opinion and affiliation shall be considered only to the extent that it may be (a) a bona fide occupational requirement or (b) prevent an individual from being fully supportive of the Church's Mission and Values. See also the Personnel Policy and the Destructive Behavior Policy.
6. **Universal access.** The Church intends to make its premises and activities reasonably accessible to persons with disabilities. To this end our goal is to meet or exceed all legal requirements, and to engage in continual examination of our properties, practices, and attitudes.
7. **Whistleblower policy.** Church policy prohibits adverse actions being taken against employees, volunteers, or any member in retaliation for any lawful disclosure of information relating to: (a) a violation of any law or local, state or federal rule or regulation, (b) mismanagement, (c) gross waste or misappropriation of Church funds or assets, (d) a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety, or (e) other alleged wrongful conduct. Any person found to have so violated this Policy shall be disciplined, up to and including termination from employment or expulsion from Church membership. Allegations of violations of this Policy shall be referred to the President, the Minister, or any member of the Board. See also the Personnel Policy with respect to employees.
8. **Right Relations.** The well-being, strength, and reputation of our Church depend on a sense of fellowship among the members, friends, and staff, which thrives in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and cooperation. To clarify our expectations and processes, the Board has adopted a Destructive Behavior Policy and chartered a Right Relations Committee to operate independently of the Board as a committee of the Congregation.

Care for Staff: The Minister shall be responsible for maintaining a productive and effective paid staff team, for ensuring that its efforts are directed toward fulfilling the Church's Mission and Annual Vision of Ministry, and for compliance by the staff with all Board policies. The Minister shall ensure that staff working conditions are not inhumane, unfair, hostile, or unprofessional.

1. **Personnel Manual.** The Minister shall be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date personnel manual covering matters not specifically addressed in these Board Policies, as required to ensure that the Church complies with legal requirements and denominational norms for employment practices.
2. **Hiring Approval.** The Minister is authorized to hire for any vacant paid staff position that has budget approval. New positions or positions that cannot be filled under the current budget require Board approval. Any contracts must be approved by the Board.
3. **Hiring Process.** The Minister shall create and publish practices for hiring that:
 - a. Establish a high degree of fairness in the hiring process.
 - b. Strive to develop a reasonable pool of candidates for each open staff position.
 - c. Inform and engage stakeholders who will interact with the position.
 - d. Evaluate candidates effectively and ensure appropriate background investigations and testing.
 - e. Notify the Board when a new employee is hired.
4. **Annual Performance Reviews.** The Minister shall ensure that a performance review of all employees is conducted annually.

5. **Termination.** Prior to discharging a paid staff member, the Minister shall consult as needed with the Ministry Team Council to ensure that the proposed decision complies with applicable laws and Board policies. The Minister shall also notify the Board when an employee is terminated.
6. **Grievances.** Employees are directed to follow the grievance procedure set forth in the Personnel Manual.

Care for Resources:

1. **Financial Management.** The Ministry Team Council, together with assigned staff members in their areas of responsibility, shall be responsible for making day-to-day fiscal decisions within the parameters of the annual Church budget. The Ministry Team Council:
 - a. Shall work with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee to prepare an annual operating budget for Board and Congregational approval. See Annual Planning Cycle for details on preparing the annual operating budget. See Annual Planning Cycle for details on preparing the annual operating budget.
 - b. May transfer budget amounts between budget categories provided that total expenditures will not exceed the total budget, other limitations have not been exceeded, and the transferred amount is clearly noted in the financial reports.
 - c. Shall not exceed the total budgeted spending for the year without obtaining Board approval.
 - d. Shall not cause or allow expenditures to deviate materially from Board priorities in ends / outcome policies and the Annual Vision of Ministry.
 - e. Shall not use donor-restricted funds in violation of donor restrictions or trust provisions.
 - f. Shall not jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status under local, state, or federal law.
 - g. May incur debt on behalf of the Church with prior Board approval, including credit cards, lines of credit, or other borrowings.
 - h. May apply for external grants, provided the grants are consistent with Church ends/ outcomes, and do not obligate the Church to expenditures that would jeopardize fiscal integrity. The Board shall be notified of grant activity and grants (if offered) must be formally accepted by the Board on behalf of the Church.
2. **Asset Protection.** The Ministry Team Council shall be responsible for preventing harm to the Church's reputation and assets and shall develop administrative practices, and procedures designed to prevent such harm, and report promptly to the Board on any significant shortcomings in their implementation.
 - a. *Financial controls.* Written procedures shall govern the handling of receipts, access to cash and bank balances, approval of expenditures, payment of invoices and other obligations, and management of invested funds.
 - i. To the degree that it is practicable, the functions of record keeping, bank reconciliation, and cash disbursements shall be under the control of unrelated persons.
 - ii. Unbonded personnel shall not be allowed access to material amounts of funds.
 - iii. The President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and Minister are authorized to approve cash disbursements.
 - iv. At least one authorized individual shall approve all cash disbursements. Two unrelated authorized individuals shall approve all disbursements of \$5,000.00 or more.
 - v. Church accounting records shall be reconciled with financial institution statements as often as those statements are issued and copies of such reconciliations shall be provided to the Treasurer.

- b. *Accounting.* The Church's financial records shall follow accounting practices that are reasonable and appropriate to congregations of comparable size. Particular care shall be taken to distinguish donor-restricted, temporarily restricted, voluntarily restricted, and unrestricted funds.
 - c. *Document retention.* Written procedures shall govern the retention and destruction of the Church's documents, giving definite retention periods for classes of financial, business, pastoral, personnel, and corporate records in both paper and electronic forms.
 - d. *Insurance.* The Ministry Team Council shall work with the Treasurer to maintain adequate insurance to protect against property losses at replacement value and liability for injuries to others, less reasonable deductible and/or coinsurance limits. Insurance coverage shall include both corporate liability and personal liability of Board members and staff, taking into account pertinent statutory provisions and exemptions applicable to Nebraska non-profit organizations. The Board shall annually review and approve the insurance coverage.
 - e. *Tangible Property.* The Ministry Team Council shall maintain the Church's property and equipment in good working order, subject to reasonable wear and tear.
 - f. *Intangible Property.* The Ministry Team Council shall protect its intellectual property, information, files, and other intangible property from significant damage or loss.
3. **Project Management-Contracts and Contractors.** All projects reasonably expected to exceed a cost of \$6,000.00 must conform to the requirements of the Board's Policy Concerning Contracts and Contractors, regardless of the entity (Board, Ministry Team, or other) initiating the project.

CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Discernment includes all that a Congregation does to discover and articulate its Mission.

Mission: The Board, Ministry Team, and Congregation shall, at least annually, consider the Mission of the Church. The Board shall determine the Mission and publish it to guide actions of all Church leadership.

Vision: The Board, Ministry Team, and Congregation shall, at least annually, consider the Vision of the Church. The Board shall determine the Vision and publish it to guide actions of all Church leadership.

Core Values: The Board, Ministry Team, and Congregation shall at least annually consider the Core Values of the Church. The Board shall determine the Core Values and publish them to guide actions of all Church leadership.

The Unitarian Universalist Principles shall be Core Values of this Church.

Strategic Plan: The Board, Ministry Team, and Congregation shall, at least annually, consider the strategic directions of the Church. The Board shall determine its Strategic Plan and publish it to guide actions of all Church leadership.

Annual Planning Cycle:

1. Annually, the Board, in consultation with the Minister shall establish its Annual Vision of Ministry (AVoM). The AVoM shall contain a description of the Church's priorities for the next Church year. It shall also contain such other information that the Board determines will be necessary to clearly communicate the current status of the Church and the desired ends/outcomes to the Congregation.
 - a. As a part of its annual planning process, the Board may develop a small number of Open Questions to be considered by the Congregation and the Board during the year.
2. The Ministry Team Council shall convert the Board's AVoM into action plans and develop, in coordination with the Finance Committee and the Treasurer, an annual operating budget for the Board's approval. The operating budget:
 - a. Shall contain sufficient detail to enable reasonably accurate projection of revenues and expenses, shall separate capital and operational projections, and shall disclose planning assumptions.
 - b. Shall not plan the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are projected to be available in that period from income, retained surplus, or other documented source.
 - c. Shall include capital expenditures, if any, as well as the means to pay for them unless such capital expenditures are separately documented in a capital budget.
 - d. Shall not deviate materially from Board-stated priorities and requirements (see ends/outcome policies) in its allocation among competing fiscal needs.
3. The Church's annual stewardship drive shall be based on the AVoM and this operating budget. Depending on the outcome of the annual stewardship drive, the Ministry Team Council, working with the Treasurer, shall revise the budget to reflect the financial resources available and return the revised budget to the Board for approval.
4. The Board shall present the budget for Congregational approval at the Church's annual meeting.
5. The current AVoM, the current annual operating budget, and any current capital budget form a part of these Board Policies. If circumstances require a change to either the current AVoM, the current annual operating budget, or any capital budget, the Board shall assure that the changes are appropriately approved and published.
6. The Board, in consultation with the Minister shall determine what information it needs to monitor the Church's progress toward achieving the desired ends/outcomes set forth in the AVoM as well as the information needed to exercise its duty of financial oversight.

Policy Concerning Contracts and Contractors

1. Bid Process

For all work reasonably expected to exceed \$6000 (Amended from \$3000 on August 10, 2005), a competitive bid process shall be initiated. The competitive bid process shall consist of the following elements:

1.1. Bid Custodian

The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Bid Custodian, who will have the following duties:

- Generate a written Statement of Work (SOW), detailing the work to be done, along with any special instructions as to techniques, materials, or processes to be used;
- Get Board approval for the SOW;
- Assemble a bid list of at least three competent contractors;
- Send Request for Quote (RFQ) to contractors on the bid list. The RFQ shall include at least:
 - The SOW
 - Proposed time frame for the work
 - A request for references
 - A request for bonding and insurance information
 - A request for the total cost of the job
 - A request for a time schedule for the work.
- Receive and review the bids, calling for clarification on individual bids, if necessary;
- Check references of bidders;
- Verify insurance and bonding of bidders;
- Perform other research as might be appropriate on bidders; and
- Recommend to the Board which bid, if any, should be accepted.

1.2. Bid Acceptance

The Board may authorize the Bid Custodian to award the contract to a specific bidder, or to no bidders. The Board may direct the Bid Custodian to solicit additional bids, in which case the process starts over.

2. Contracts and Contract Process

1.1. Contracts

All contracts shall be machine printed (not hand written). Minor changes may be handwritten, but shall be legible, and initialed by both parties. Any changes that affect the project cost shall be machine-printed addendums, approved and signed as outlined in Section 4.

1.2. Non-Fixed Price Contracts

“Time and Materials”, “Cost Plus” or similar contracts shall include a “not to exceed” clause.

2.3 The contract process shall follow these steps:

- The Board will appoint a person, possibly the Bid Custodian, to be the Contract Manager.
- The Contract Manager will negotiate the terms of the contract with the winning bidder.
- The Contract Manager will present the proposed contract, in written form, to the Board for review.
- The Board may approve the contract as proposed, or direct that certain changes be made. The Board may solicit outside legal or technical advice before making its decision.
- Upon Board approval, the contract will be signed by a person authorized under church By-Laws.

3. Project Management

Projects falling under this policy shall have a Project Manager appointed by the Board.

3.1 Qualifications

Qualifications to be considered by the Board for Project Manager shall include:

- General knowledge of the type of work to be performed, including materials, techniques, and practices.
- Ability to spend adequate time on the project site to judge the quality of work and to assess progress.
- Ability to quickly resolve differences while protecting the interests of the church.

2. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Project Manager shall include:

- General oversight of all phases of the project, including schedule, budget, material and equipment staging, and cleanup;
- Arranging access to work areas;
- Making decisions not covered explicitly in the contract or RFQ;
- Settling disputes;
- Determining compliance to contract and RFQ;
- Presenting project progress reports to the Board at least monthly;
- Recommending to the Board that it authorize progress payments;
- Final acceptance.

3.3 Compensation

The Board shall have the authority to compensate the Project Manager up to 5% of the total contract cost. This compensation shall become part of the total project cost.

3.4 Project Completion and Final Acceptance

The project shall be considered complete for the purpose of making final payment to the contractor when the work has received Final Acceptance from the Project Manager. The Project Manager shall grant Final Acceptance only after ensuring that all agreed upon work has been completed according to the contract and all approved modifications to the contract, all deficiencies have been corrected, and cleanup is complete.

The project shall be considered complete for the purpose of paying the Project Manager when all payments have been made to contractor, and any remaining disputes with the contractor, subcontractors, or suppliers have been resolved.

4. Cost Overruns

In the event that unforeseen circumstances arise that will materially affect the cost of the project, the Project Manager shall be authorized to approve cost overruns of up to 10% of the contract amount. This approval shall be recorded as a simple written addendum to the contract, signed by the Contractor and the Project Manager.

In situations where the cost overruns are likely to be more than 10 % or are unknown, the Project Manager shall immediately contact a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee shall be authorized to approve overruns of up to 25% of the original contract. This approval shall be recorded as a written addendum to the contract, signed by the Contractor and a member of the Executive Committee.

Potential overruns of greater than 25% must be approved by the Board of Trustees. In situations where the potential for cost overruns is known in advance, the Board may choose to delegate a certain specified level of overrun approval to the Project Manager.

Policy on Acceptance of Non-Pledge Gifts

These policies and procedures cover non-pledge gifts such as bequests, honoraria, memorials, and gifts in kind. Once a gift to the church is accepted, an acknowledgment thereof shall be delivered to the donor. If a restricted gift is accepted, the minister is responsible for the creation of an agreement reflecting the restriction. A copy of the donor agreement shall be provided to the donor and the signed original shall be retained by the church for at least 5 years after the final portion of said gift has been received. The minister is responsible for assuring that all tax laws applicable to the church are satisfied.

Cash Gifts

All cash gifts (or gifts convertible into cash) shall be treated as unrestricted gifts unless restricted pursuant to this policy. Unrestricted funds must be used in any legal and ethical manner to further the mission of the church. Cash or convertible instrument gifts under \$10,000.00 may be restricted for use for any of the following purposes at the option of the donor (or for any other purpose upon approval of the Board):

- 1. Social Action and Outreach:** For social justice and community outreach, consistent with the mission of the church and in accord with church policies.
- 2. Music:** For music in the church.
- 3. House and Grounds:** For church maintenance and property capital projects.
- 4. Religious Education:** Consistent with the mission of the church and in accord with church policies.
- 5. Ministry:** For use consistent with the vision and mission of the church ministry, consistent with church policies.
- 6. Capital trust:** For deposit in the Capital Trust and use consistent with the Capital Trust Agreement.

Cash or convertible instrument gifts over \$10,000.00 may be restricted for use for any of the aforementioned purposes or may be specifically designated as may be agreed to by the donor and the church Board of Trustees. All such gifts must be consistent with the mission and vision of the church and be in accord with the church policies. Convertible gifts must be cashed out as quickly as possible.

Gifts in kind or non-cash gifts:

A wish list of items specifically requested as gifts in kind will be maintained by the ministry team. Values of tangible gifts or services will be based on fair market value as determined by the donor. Tangible items or services that are not on the list and are of less than \$2,500.00 in value may be accepted at the discretion of the minister. Tangible gifts or services of over \$2,500.00 in value and not on the list must be approved by the Board of Trustees, and must be of direct and immediate use to the church or have immediate resale value and be liquidated as soon as reasonably possible.

Acceptance of all non-cash gifts of less than \$2,500 value and the administration thereof is at the discretion of the minister, who may request advice from board members, volunteers or staff.

Upon notification of the intent of any party to donate such a gift, the minister shall contact said party as soon as is practically possible and negotiate a donor agreement that is in accord with the above described policies. The same policy shall be followed for non-cash gifts of value exceeding \$2,500, except that the Board of Trustees must approve receipt of the gift. Gifts judged not to be of immediate use to the church or unlikely to have immediate resale value shall be declined.

Reporting:

The Ministry Team Council shall regularly report all gifts and donors to the Board. Donors may request anonymity, in which case the Minister and Board of Trustees shall treat the same as confidential. The amounts of gifts shall be reported annually to the congregation.

Accounting and Budgeting

The annual Church budget shall not project the receipt of any non-pledged gifts. Any gifts shall, upon receipt, be allocated to an appropriately specified non-budgeted account.

BOARD POLICY ON TAKING A PUBLIC STAND

Board's Interpretation of the Governing Bylaw

The Bylaws (Article II, Section I) provide that First Unitarian Church may not take a public stand on a matter of public interest without first taking a congregational vote. The Board of Trustees interprets this to mean that:

- Individual members of First Unitarian Church engaged in social action may identify themselves as a member of First Unitarian Church of Omaha but make no representation that they speak for the church.
- A congregational vote is necessary for public displays on church property, using the church banner in a parade or at a public demonstration, or any time the church, as an institution, wants to engage with the wider community on an issue of public interest.

Taking A Congregational Vote

The Bylaws give the Board of Trustees sole authority to call a special congregational meeting on whether the church should take a public stand. The Board of Trustees retains the authority on its own motion to call such a special congregational meeting and will otherwise follow these procedures when exercising that authority to call a special congregational meeting to take a public stand.

Procedures

1. At least one recognized church team or committee or member must sponsor a proposal to the Board of Trustees asking that the congregation take a public stand on an issue. The sponsors are encouraged to consult with the Minister and the Social Justice Chair early in the process of writing their proposal. The proposal must include:

- A written resolution that reflects the public stand to be voted on by the congregation. For examples of content and style, see www.uua.org/actions/;
- An explanation for how the proposal is consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles and will advance the mission of the church;
- An explanation for why engagement of individual members, teams or committees is an insufficient response to the issue and there is a compelling need for the congregation to take a public stand on the issue. For example, the proposal includes the use of the church banner or a public display on church property;
- A plan for educating the congregation about the issue or evidence that the congregation already has a long history of engagement with the issue that makes passage likely;
- A strategic plan for how the congregation's public stand will be acted upon to advance the goals embodied in the resolution; and

Approved by the Board on 8.9.2016

- A signature reflecting that the Social Justice Chair, if one has been designated, or the Ministry Team Council has reviewed the proposal and certifies that the proposal includes the above elements.

2. The President will verify and notify the proponents when the proposal is complete and place it on the agenda for timely consideration by the Board of Trustees. Once on the agenda, the Board of Trustees is not limited to taking a yes or no vote on the proposal and may, for example, decide to take no action or postpone action to allow more time for congregational engagement around the issue. The Board of Trustees will consider, along with the merits of the proposal, the following criteria when deciding how to act on the proposal: how central is the issue to the core values of the congregation, how polarizing is the issue and how much education is needed before the issue is ripe for consideration at a special congregational meeting.

3. If a special congregational meeting is called, copies of the proposal will be included in the meeting notice to all members. The purpose of the special congregational meeting is to allow all sides of the issue to be heard, concluding with a YES or NO vote by secret ballot on the proposition: "Should the congregation proceed to a vote by mail on taking the public stand set forth in the proposal". To move forward, a majority of eligible voting members at the meeting must vote yes.

4. Prior to the special congregational meeting, the Board Secretary will prepare a list of eligible voting members in the church. Anyone may attend a special congregational meeting but only eligible voting members may cast a vote. Eligible voting members are those who have been members for three months immediately preceding the special meeting and in whose name a contribution has been made during a period of a year closing thirty days prior to the meeting. (Revised Articles of Incorporation, III)

5. The list of eligible voters will be used at the special congregational meeting to distribute ballots and determine before any vote is taken whether a quorum of twenty percent of eligible voting members is present at the meeting.

6. Upon a majority vote of eligible members at the special congregational meeting the congregation will proceed to conduct a secret vote by mail on the proposition: "Should the congregation take a public stand on the resolution set forth in the proposal". Congregational approval requires at least two-thirds of the ballots returned by mail vote in favor of taking the public stand. (Bylaw, Article II, Section I)

7. To encourage the widest participation among eligible voters, instructions will include an email option identifying an address to which members willing to disclose their identity may send an email vote that clearly identifies a "yes" or "no" for the resolution and the name of the voting member.

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH PUBLIC STANDS

Approved by the Board on 8.9.2016

The church has taken a public stand on the following issues. Members and teams should first advise the Ministry Team Council before speaking or taking action in the name of the church on any of these issues.

1. First Unitarian Church, as a Welcoming Congregation, has taken a public stand in support of GLBT equality.
2. First Unitarian Church has taken a public stand in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement. (Congregational Resolution passed April, 2016.)

Recommendation By The Committee:

The Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees facilitate establishment of a Denominational Affairs Team (or a Board Committee) that would educate and engage the congregation on study/action issues being considered at General Assembly. More congregational engagement on those denominational issues could help spark a social justice response in the congregation and ripen into proposals for the First Unitarian Church to take a public stand.

Approved by the Board on 8.9.2016

Building Practices of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Updated June 2010

Overview

The primary purpose of the church building is for use by the congregation. Because of this, priority will be given to church activities, church team meetings, and church fundraising and fellowship events. Church groups and church events do not pay a rental fee.

Rental of the church is under the discretion of the senior staff. Any rental of the church will be considered in the context of how the event or use of the building furthers the mission of the church.

Outreach groups that are closely related to the church's mission will be given a reduced rate of \$50 for the common room or sanctuary use given that the event request is for less than 4 hours and not a for-profit event. A nonprofit will not be required to hire an event host if a church member will attend the meeting and ensure the event host responsibilities as described in the event host job description.

A nonprofit organization that hosts an event at the church may have its fee reduced or waived if there is no admission charged to attend and upon approval of the minister.

Any profit-making events will not receive a reduced rate or a fee waiver regardless of connection to church members or church staff.

Member Use

Active church members may use the church free of charge for weddings and memorial services.* This waiver applies only to the church member, his/her parents and his/her children or step-children. It does not extend to siblings, cousins, grandchildren or other relations.

Active church members will receive a 50% discount on using the church for other events (ie. a non-church group or club meeting, a birthday party, etc.)

A church member will only receive these discounts or waivers if he or she is considered active.

Active will be defined as having made a pledge during the church year the member is making the request, and the member has made a contribution towards a pledge in the last 12 months.

If the pledge amount is less than the rental fee, then the church member will be required to pay the difference. This may be waived by the minister in special circumstances.

Procedure

Anyone wishing to rent the church, whether member or nonmember, must fill out a request form. Forms are available in the office, online and by email. The request is not considered accepted and put onto the calendar until it is signed by the minister or the office administrator and half of the fee is paid to book the church.

The building shall be used for the purpose described on the application and not for any other purpose.

Fees – All fees are for four hours or less

For use of the church sanctuary: \$250

For use of the Common Room only: \$150

For use of the Common Room and the kitchen: \$200

For use of the Sanctuary and Common Room (including the kitchen): \$450

Classrooms (must be 15 people or less)

For use of the Merritt Lounge: \$50

For use of the any one classroom: \$50

* Wedding fees can be found in the wedding packet.

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

PURPOSE

To provide a clearly defined means of communicating information on the business and events of the church to its members while respecting member's privacy. All communications should reflect Unitarian Universalist values; provide information about First Unitarian Church of Omaha's ministry, business and activities; and/or encourage action in keeping with our covenant, vision of ministry, bylaws and UU principles.

SCOPE

The communications team and its practices navigate how to disseminate information within the established channels for internal and/or external publications. *Information that must be communicated which falls outside of these practices should be addressed to the ministry team leader and/or the right relations committee. This will be determined by the communications team.*

DEFINITIONS

Publications are defined as any means of conveying information among people and groups in the congregation or about the church to the larger community.

1. Internal communications have a primary audience of members, friends, visitors and potential members. They include: The Flame, First Unitarian Weekly News (enews), web site, email, bulletin boards, posters and other communications within the church. (i.e. order of service, pulpit announcements...)
2. External communications are targeted to the larger community and shall be defined as: news releases, interviews with news media on behalf of the church, advertising, written communication on First Unitarian Church of Omaha letterhead, banners, posters or displays using First Unitarian Church of Omaha's name, other communication publicly representing First Unitarian Church of Omaha.
3. Internal/external communications such as the First Unitarian Church of Omaha's: web site, social media, and some other communications may be defined as both internal and external.

Church communications and media may not be used for political endorsements of individual candidates. However, the church and its minister can advocate for public policy issues as long as it does not appear to endorse a certain candidate.

4. Spokespersons. Authorized spokespersons are the minister, the president of the Board of Trustees, and other persons designated by the Board of Trustees for a one-year period of time. Only authorized spokespersons are allowed to speak for the church as a whole. Please see bylaws for speaking on behalf of the church on social issues.

PROCEDURES

Policies for all publications are developed by the First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Communications Team, approved by the Ministry Team Leader and then posted on the church's website. The policies are available by request at the church office for those wishing to have a paper copy.

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

The Communications Team oversees the development and maintenance of systems to support effective Internal & External Public Communications. Specific responsibilities include:

- Recommend one or more volunteers to assist with editing, web administration, or upgrading current systems.
- Review current publications and research possible changes.
- Approve and create church wide communication methods.
- Recommend emerging technologies and upgrades.
- Help with public relation and marketing projects as needed.

PRACTICES

Order of Service Inserts

Inserts should arrive in the office, formatted and ready to copy no later than 9am on Thursday. For detailed instructions about formatting, contact the office. Inserts will only be used if they are for: church fundraising (ex. Heart & Hand Auction), team fundraiser (ex: Women's Alliance Bake Sale), sign-ups for a church related event (UU & You), nominating committee related (UU of the Year Award) and information from the board (annual meeting announcement). We encourage teams and others to please use the bulletin boards as opposed to inserts. We have found that inserts are not as effective as they once were.

Pulpit & Oral Announcements

These announcements must be coordinated with the worship leader on the Sunday of the announcement.

The Flame (the official newsletter of the church)

1. Deadline: Articles or other submissions must be received by the church office by the published deadline.
 2. Method: Articles should be sent by email to admin@firstuuomaha.org . Written articles may also be submitted to the church office or left in the Flame mailbox.
 3. Length: Maximum length for most articles is 200 words or 1200 characters. Longer articles may be cut by the editor.
 4. Submissions: The author's name must be included with all submissions. No anonymous submissions will be accepted. Articles submitted should follow these guidelines and be respectful of the author's ministry in the church.
 5. Changes: All articles are subject to editing for clarity, brevity or style by the editor. Questions regarding appropriateness or content should be resolved through consultation with the communications team, then the rights relations committee or ministry team leader.
 6. Priorities: The office administrator gives items priority in the following order:
 1. News of Sunday Services, Forums.
 2. News of other services.
 3. Column by the minister and/or Board president.
 4. Board meeting highlights, including a financial summary.
 5. Religious Education news.
 6. Social Justice news.
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First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

7. Church calendar.
8. Upcoming approved church events.
9. Church Board and team information.
10. Upcoming events of affiliated or relational groups.
11. Denominational and district information relevant to members and friends.
12. Current issues of concern to organizations of which First Unitarian Church of Omaha is a member.

eNews

The First Unitarian Church of Omaha's eNews is sent weekly as an email to all friends and members who have email addresses on file with the church. The content focuses on immediate events or concerns. Priorities are the same as for The Flame. People who specifically opt-in shall be included on this list, and every email will have an easy way for people to opt-out and will comply with the CAN SPAM act.

Special emails shall come only from the Minister, President of the Board of Trustees, or the Holland Lecture Series.

Website

First Unitarian Church of Omaha maintains a web site that is informative and useful to its members, friends, potential members and the public.

Information on the First Unitarian Church of Omaha's web site should be timely, accurate, useful and appropriate.

The webmaster and office administrator review all content. The office administrator is responsible for maintaining the website. The webmaster and other communications team volunteers assist with this maintenance. Ministry team leaders can also contribute to the website within these allowed policies and respective to the project or team they are working on.

Priorities for content include the following:

1. News of Sunday Services, Forums
2. News of other upcoming events and activities
3. Information about church programs, e.g., Religious Education programs and Music
4. Social Justice opportunities and activities
5. Church calendar
6. Information about the church and directions for finding it
7. Information about the board of trustees, church ministry and teams
8. Sermons
9. History and archival records
10. Contact information and links

Guidelines include:

- No names of minors should be published.

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

- No phone numbers, addresses or email addresses should be published without consent.
- Personal news of interest only to the congregation should not be placed on the web. Examples could include items such as "Caring Notes" and New Member profiles.
- The sermons will be posted to the site as soon as practical.
- A copy of the entire site is backed up weekly to the computer in the church office, and also copied dynamically to the uutester@gmail.com address.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards are the responsibility of the team whose information is displayed. These include: Archives, Social Justice, Religious Education, Membership, Board of Trustees, and Fundraising.

Social Networking and Online Media

Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter and other online media that use First Unitarian Church of Omaha's name must support the church and its mission. Use of any church created and maintained social networking sites should adhere to the following:

The office administrator or a designated member of the Communications Team are responsible for monitoring social/online media. Content, postings or other information on such sites not in keeping with the mission of the church, church bylaws or policies, the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism, or church policy will be edited or removed.

Content should generally be factual and remain supportive of church programs as well as of individual members.

The following guidelines are intended to protect the privacy of those served by the congregation:

- No photos of any minors should be used without approval by the parent or guardian.
- No names of minors should be published.
- No phone numbers, addresses or email addresses should be published without consent.
- Personal matters concerning individuals and families should only be entered by (or with the approval of) that individual.

Other

1. Using the name of the church in unofficial communications which imply official connection with the church is explicitly forbidden.
 2. Protection of the membership list and church directory:
 - The church directory is an official document of the church and contains the names and contact information of all members. Non-members are included at the discretion of the ministry team leader, membership, office and communications teams.
 - Only those persons listed in the directory will receive a copy of the directory.
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First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

- The information contained in the directory is for use by members and friends, and is not to be used for private gain or commercial purposes. A disclaimer to this effect shall appear on the directory.
Generally, the directory should not be used for private groups that are not part of the ministry of First Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Communications Privacy Practices for The First Unitarian Church of Omaha

These practices govern the use of personal information of members, friends and visitors by First Unitarian Church of Omaha in regular operations, on our website at <http://www.firstuuomaha.org> and for purposes of publicity both online and in print.

General

Use of Images

We believe that using images of church activities and events is valuable to create accurate, attractive and relevant on-line representation of the The First Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Photographs and videos of church activities may be posted on our website, used in social media, and printed in our newsletter or other promotional materials.

Adults not wishing to be photographed should notify The First Unitarian Church of Omaha's office administrator in writing.

Personal identification information such as names will not be associated with any photograph unless identification is warranted and permission of the individual of the person photographed has been obtained.

Email addresses are not to be posted without specific permission.

In the case of minors (children under 19 years) no photographs or videos will be posted or printed without the written permission of the parent(s), including both custodial parents in the event of a divorce or separation. Consent forms will be collected annually through the Religious Education program (See Image Release Consent Form); parent/guardian consent will be on file for all minors shown in pictures. No names or other identifying information will be posted in association with photos of minors.

However, the following information can be posted without prior written permission of the person depicted:

- Photographs and full names of staff members for biographies
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First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

- Photographs and full names of staff members leading or attending a First Unitarian Church of Omaha event; and
- Photographs and full names of Board of Trustees members of the church currently serving.

Website Practices

Contact Information:

Personal information about members of The First Unitarian Church of Omaha shall not be disclosed on public portions of this site except as determined necessary by the Board of Trustees or the staff of The First Unitarian Church of Omaha, and then only by permission. Specifically:

- No names are used, other than staff, without permission

The following information can be posted without prior written permission of the person depicted or described:

- Names, office phone numbers, and extensions of staff persons;
- Narrative descriptions of events which contain the names of staff person;
- Staff-provided biographical information for publicity purposes
- First and/or last names of adult members when those members are designated as a contact person for a The First Unitarian Church of Omaha event or activity
- Descriptive announcements of The First Unitarian Church of Omaha-sponsored events that contain the names of persons in a leadership role, for example, a visiting speaker, musician, author, or local dignitary.

Website Use by Children:

Children under age 13 should obtain their parents'/guardians' permission to access the The First Unitarian Church of Omaha website and to send any personal information (such as name, address, email address, etc.) via our website or anywhere else on the internet. The First Unitarian Church of Omaha encourages parents to get involved with their children's online usage and to be aware of the internet activities in which they are participating. See COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, <http://www.coppa.org/coppa.htm>).

Tracking Website Use:

We use google analytics, which automatically gathers information from your browser and may set a cookie to determine trends. A full explanation of how google analytics uses cookies can be found here: <http://code.google.com/apis/analytics/docs/concepts/gaConceptsCookies.html>

It does not harvest email addresses or other personal information. This information is not shared with any other organizations. We do not employ spyware or adware of any kind.

Links to Third Party Sites

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Communications Practices

This website contains links to other websites that are not owned or controlled by The First Unitarian Church of Omaha. The First Unitarian Church of Omaha is not responsible for the privacy practices or content of other websites. The inclusion of hyperlinks to other websites does not imply an endorsement of the material on these websites or any association with their operators.

Information Accuracy

First Unitarian Church of Omaha will make every effort to ensure that the information presented on our website is accurate. If inaccuracies occur, we will correct them in a timely manner. To report any web site inaccuracies, contact the office administrator: admin@firstuomaha.org

Ownership

This Website is owned and operated by The First Unitarian Church of Omaha. This Privacy Policy is a living document and may be changed or updated from time to time. If we make material changes to these practices, we will notify you by email or by means of a notice on our home page. If you have questions about these privacy practices, you can contact us at:

First Unitarian Church of Omaha | 3114 Harney Street | Omaha NE 68131
Phone 402-345-3039 | Fax 402-346-2662 | admin@firstuomaha.org

*As suggested by the First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Communications Team:
Shawna Foster, Barb Herring & Diane Withem*

These practices suggestions come after researching the UUA website and finding example model policies from All Souls in Kansas City, First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, and The Unitarian Church in Summit. They were developed in the team and then received feedback from staff and lay leadership of the church. They are subject to change and the communication team welcomes feedback from members & visitors.

DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

Preamble:

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist.

We are committed to providing a community allowing for, and fostering, safe and respectful communication that works to dismantle any culture that diminishes marginalized people or groups.

We understand that boundaries of "appropriate" behaviors vary depending on culture and that we may not always be in agreement on what defines "appropriate."

To address these concerns and provide a positive and safe atmosphere for communication and discussion, our congregation adopted the following Covenant of Right Relations in May 2019 (to be reaffirmed annually).

Covenant of Right Relations:

We, the congregation of First Unitarian Church of Omaha, covenant together:

To create a religious community where we can freely explore our values and foster diversity as a source of communal strength.

To build healthy relationships, seeking to understand each other and respect our differences.

To listen deeply and endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict.

To do our best to make amends when we have hurt each other, even unintentionally, to learn from our mistakes, to forgive, and to reconnect in a spirit of understanding and commitment.

Policy Statement:

When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the sources of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person(s).

There have been times when the destructive behavior of an individual within the church building has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child,
- The destruction of church activities, and/or
- Diminishment of the appeal of the church to its potential and existing membership.

It is imperative that the wellbeing of the community as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of an individual whose behavior is dangerous or destructive. Therefore, the First Unitarian Church of Omaha shall follow the Framework of Considerations and keep in mind our Mission, Vision, and Covenant when addressing a destructive behavior. In addition, this policy document will be reviewed and adopted annually by the Board in conjunction with the annual adoption of Covenant of Right Relations by the congregation.

Adopted: 4/22/2020

Framework of Considerations:

1. Evaluate the Situation

- **Dangerousness:** Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
- **Destructiveness:** To what extent does the behavior in question interfere with church functions?
- **Offensiveness:** How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

2. Determine the necessary Response

- **Causes:** Why is the destructive behavior occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
- **History:** What is the frequency and degree of destruction caused in the past?
- **Probability of Change:** How likely is it that the destructive behavior will lessen or be resolved in the future?

FUU Mission:

Fostering the Whole Person, Compassion, and Justice.

FUU Vision:

An inclusive Community that Listens, Engages, Inspires, and Acts.

FUU Covenant:

We covenant to:

- Listen to understand and grow
- Seek and value all voices
- Model respect and kindness
- Assume good intentions
- Resolve conflicts directly and compassionately
- Contribute time, talent, treasure
- Respect people's time
- Celebrate, support, appreciate

PROCEDURE

STEPS

1. Upon identification of potential issue, the congregation will **first attempt to respond directly** with compassion and concern.
2. If a direct response is not sufficient, **report the destructive behavior**.
 - a. Any person who believes that they have witnessed or experienced destructive behavior or who has had a destructive behavior incident reported to them should report it to any of the following:
 - i. The Minister(s)
 - ii. Any member of the Board
 - iii. Any paid member of the church staff
 - b. However, any person can share the case with the Minister(s) or other trusted leader or staff member at any time.
3. At all times during Steps 1 & 2, all parties involved will make an effort to understand power imbalances and cultural differences that might be at play in the situation.

Adopted: 4/22/2020

4. **If an immediate response is required**, the response should be carried out by the Minister(s), if present, or the leader of the group (e.g., a Board member, Staff member, Team leader, or meeting convener).
 - a. Responses may include being asked to leave or
 - b. Calling the police if further assistance is required.
 - i. When is police involvement necessary? If there is a/an:
 1. immediate threat to self or others
 2. weapon
 3. statements of desperation to the point of suicide
 4. injury
 - ii. Alternatives to calling the police:
 1. Reframing your thoughts
 2. Addressing directly
 3. See the UUA handbook for further information:
 - a. www.uua.org/safe/handbook/alternatives-calling-police
 - c. Anytime an immediate response occurs, no matter the severity of the response, the person carrying out the response, other than the Minister(s), must call the Minister(s) and the Minister(s) will send a letter to all parties involved.
5. **More deliberate responses** will be referred to an ad hoc committee selected by the board.
 - a. The board will determine the membership of the ad hoc committee.
 - i. Consideration will be made to name designated respondents to discern what action is needed to address specific situations.
 - ii. Ad hoc committee will seek to maintain confidentiality, as appropriate.
 - b. The committee will collect all necessary information regarding the case, including past destructive behavior cases.
 - c. The committee will follow the Framework of Considerations (see above in the Policy section) when considering cases.
 - d. The committee will decide on the necessary response following three levels:
 - i. Level 1
The committee shall inform the Minister(s) of the problem and either the Minister(s) or a member of the committee shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern.
 - ii. Level 2
The offending individual is excluded from the church and/or specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear.
 - iii. Level 3
The offending individual is permanently excluded from the church premises and all church activities. Before this is carried out, the committee will consult with the Board of Trustees and the Minister(s). If it is decided that expulsion will take place, a letter will be sent by the Minister(s) explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse. After any possible recourse and expulsion is final, it shall be announced to the congregation.
 - e. Any action taken under Level 1 or Level 2 (above) may be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and/or the Minister(s).
6. If an official Response is warranted (Steps 4 and 5), a **Destructive Behavior Form** (Appendix A) must be completed.

Adopted: 4/22/2020

Appendix A. Destructive Behavior Form

Members of the Ad hoc Committee or Leader carrying out an Immediate Response:

1. State the Issue:

a. Are precedent cases relevant to this particular issue?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how does it apply?

b. Who are the stakeholders and what are their moral claims as well as their risks and harms of concern? Stakeholders may include but are not limited to the individual, groups, the congregation. When not applicable, enter N/A.

Stakeholders	Moral Claims	Risks & Harms of Concern
Individual		
Group		
Congregation		

2. What is the selected Action?

☐ Level 1

☐ Level 2

☐ Level 3

3. Summarize and justify the selected Action:

A hard copy of this Form shall be retained for at least 7 years in a locked cabinet in the Minister's office.

Adopted: 4/22/2020

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Right Relations Committee

Mission, Description, and Purposes

MISSION

The Mission of the Right Relations Committee (RRC) is to:

Support the congregation in upholding its Covenant; facilitate effective communication within the congregation; encourage safe, respectful, and healthy dialogue and collaboration; and provide periodic training in communication, conflict resolution, and building healthy communities.

The RRC is available to all associated with the congregation to offer guidance on communication and process. When necessary, it may assist in the resolution of disputes by helping parties understand one another and the congregational covenant and processes with which we work together.

In case of serious allegations of misconduct by staff, members, or those associated with the congregation, the RRC will work to assure the safety of victims or potential victims of misconduct as well as the reputation of those who have been accused but not yet been shown to be guilty of misconduct.

A need to consult the RRC may arise when an individual has been unable to resolve a matter regarding an interpersonal dispute or a violation of Board or Church policy by dealing with the matter directly. The RRC will try to respond in a way that balances fairness and healthy transparency with the privacy and safety of those involved.

Note: Individuals may also approach the minister about interpersonal or staff concerns and the Board about policy concerns.

DESCRIPTION

The First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Right Relations Committee (RRC) is chartered by the Board of Trustees to function independently of the Board, operating instead as a *Committee of the Congregation*.

- The membership of the RRC will be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting.
- The RRC can only be dissolved by congregational vote at an official meeting, although activities of the RRC may be suspended, if so directed, by an action of the Board of Trustees pending the next called official meeting of the congregation.
- The RRC will consist of four voting members of the congregation selected because of their wisdom, experience, or skill in conflict resolution.
- Members of the RRC are elected to staggered two-year terms, with two members elected by the congregation each year at the congregational annual meeting. The term of office shall begin on the first day of the first church year (May 1st).
- In the event of a vacancy on the RRC for any reason, the Board may appoint a voting member to serve until the next annual meeting, at which time the congregation shall elect a voting member to serve the unexpired term.

- The RRC is *not* the ad hoc committee of the Board as described in the Disruptive Behavior Policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

- First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Right Relations Committee (RRC) will be an Interim Board-Mandated Committee for the remainder of the 2018-2019 current Board year.
- Starting in 2019, to begin the cycle of terms of office, two members will serve 1 year and two members will serve 2 years on the RRC.
- For the 2019 Annual Meeting only, and for the purpose of continuity, the Nominating Committee shall include at least 2 members of the Interim RRC on their nominating slate.
- In subsequent years, the RRC will supply at least three recommendations to the Nominating Committee for consideration along with suggestions for criteria in evaluating potential candidates. The Nominating Committee will then select and offer at least two candidates of the Nominating Committee's choosing to the congregation for the annual election. Nominations from the floor will be entertained.
- The minister(s) will be welcome to attend routine RRC meetings regularly as non-voting member(s). **It is intended that the RRC and the minister(s) will usually be working in concert and collaboration to promote harmonious relations within the congregation.**

PURPOSES

In keeping with First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Covenants, Visions of Ministry, Bylaws, Church Policies and our Unitarian Universalist Principles, the Right Relations Committee (RRC) is charged by the congregation to:

- Facilitate direct and healthy communication within First Unitarian Church of Omaha.
- Facilitate a safe environment for congregants and staff against criminal or threatening behavior, harassment, and retaliation.
- Facilitate the well-being of First Unitarian as a whole, by fostering, mediating, and maintaining harmonious relations within the membership.
- Guard confidentiality of parties to its work and keep internal deliberations of the RRC private except in those situations when confidentiality cannot be offered or maintained or is inadvertently breached.
- Establish and nurture an atmosphere and a process of congregational responsibility for harmonious relations.
- Work with the congregation to develop a *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations*, to be presented to the congregation for ratification during the Annual Meeting of 2019; thereafter, review and renew the *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations* with the congregation at each Congregational Annual Meeting.
- Develop practices for assisting in the airing and resolution of conflict as appropriate and to design accessible procedures by which the congregation can readily turn to and use First Unitarian's *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations* and Policies.

- Facilitate resolution of conflicts brought to the RRC under the *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations* by members of the congregation.
- Support the Board and the Minister(s) by relieving them of the routine activities and energies normally devoted to conflict resolution.
- Broadly and regularly publicize and focus attention on First Unitarian Church of Omaha's *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations*, as a basis for relations within the congregation.

PROPOSED CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

We, the congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, covenant together:

To create a religious community where we can freely explore our values and honor our diversity as a source of communal strength

To build healthy relationships, seeking to understand each other and respect our differences

To listen appreciatively and endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict

To do our best to forgive when we hurt one another, to make amends, to learn from mistakes, and to reconnect in a spirit of gratitude and generosity

RIGHT RELATIONS COMMITTEE COVENANT (for and among committee members)

We covenant with one another:

To serve the mission of the team by being honest, direct, prepared, and respectful of each other's time.

To focus on the mission of the committee and the church, with particular emphasis on marginalized voices

To take advantage of training offered by the UUA, the Region, and within the Omaha community.