

Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship

Volunteer Handbook

Online Edition



Revised and approved by the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship Board of Trustees

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Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship
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4. CURRENT CONTACTS

For privacy purposes, the lists of Board Members and Committee chairs are removed from the Volunteer Handbook's online version. To request a copy, please see the Office Administrator or email office@FairhopeUU.org .

1.1—PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide members, friends, officers, and leaders guidelines on how Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship (“FUF”) operates. Our Bylaws, vision, mission, and principles guide us in our actions within the Fellowship and with those around us.

On May 23, 2025, the Board approved that the workings of the Fellowship primarily fall under five functions: Governing, Building, Program, Member Support, and Community Connections. These functions work together to further the Fellowship’s vision, mission, and goals. Under each area, there may be a combination of committees, task forces, teams, or individuals that perform the responsibilities to meet the Fellowship’s vision and mission. The terms established to define the roles applicable to each functional area are described in the next section.

1.2—TERMINOLOGY

Functional area: Also known as “service functions” or “support functions.” A grouping of coordinated activities performed by one or more volunteers, teams, or designated committees over extended periods to carry forward the mission of the organization. On occasion, a special project may be designated to be carried out within a functional area that has a specific goal that can be achieved.

Liaison: Each mission area is assigned a Liaison—an Executive Board member who oversees that mission function, is familiar with the components within the function, attends appropriate meetings, acts as advisor to the chairs/leads, and reports the function’s activities to the Board.

Committee Chair/Lead: Volunteer Fellowship member, who coordinates and leads the meetings and designated actions of the committee, interest group, task force, or team.

Committees: Volunteer members working together on a long-standing area of responsibility within the functional area.

2.1—FUF STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

To explore new ideas,
To search for truth and knowledge,
To take care of the Earth,
To enjoy fellowship with open-minded thinkers,
To support and care for each other,
And to create an atmosphere of love and understanding
among our members and for those who come after us

(Adopted 2002/Affirmed 2025)

Vision Statement

Grounded in love,
Guided by reason,
Committed to spiritual growth and justice

(Adopted 2024)

Welcoming Statement

Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship welcomes and embraces people of any age, race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, language, or cultural background.

2.2—UUA PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

Seven Principles of UU

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- 1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2) Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- 3) Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4) A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- 5) The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- 6) The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

UU Shared Values

- **Interdependence:** We honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it.
- **Pluralism:** We are all sacred beings, diverse in cultural experience, and theology.
- **Justice:** We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all feel welcome and can thrive.
- **Transformation:** We adapt to the changing world.
- **Generosity:** We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.
- **Equity:** We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.



2.3—BYLAWS OF FAIRHOPE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

(Last updated December 8, 2019)

Article I - Name

The name of this religious society, incorporated as The Fairhope Unitarian Universalist Association, shall be the Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship (Federal Tax number is 63-0808147).

Article II - Purpose

This shall be a Fellowship of free minds, having for its object the study and practice of liberal religion, the development of the character, the enrichment of the spirit of its members, and the building of a better community and world through the promotion of universal brotherhood and service to humankind.

Article III - Membership

Section 1: Any person, regardless of race, color, gender, gender preference, age or national origin, who is in sympathy with its purposes and programs who signs the membership roll, may become a member of this Fellowship.

Section 2: All members who have attained the age of 16 shall have the right to vote at business meetings and to hold office in the Fellowship.

Section 3: Withdrawal from membership may be made by request of the member or through action of the Executive Board when the member has died, moved away, or cannot be located.

Section 4: Persons who do not participate in the Fellowship for over a year may be placed on the Associate List by the Executive Board and may not vote or hold office until their names again appear on the list of active members. Persons may be reinstated to the active list by following the procedures expected of new members.

Section 5: Persons who desire to participate in the activities of the Fellowship and receive the Newsletter may be included as Friends of the Fellowship, with all rights of participation excepting voting and holding office; however, they will not be included in any census of active members.

Article IV - Denominational Affiliation

The Fellowship shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in North America and of the Unitarian Universalist regional organization in which it is located. It is the intention of this Fellowship to make annual financial contributions to the National and the Regional District in an amount specified in the Annual Budget of the Fellowship, giving due consideration to the amounts requested or recommended by the Association and the Region, as well as the needs and capability of the Fellowship.

Article V - Meetings

Section 1: Sunday services shall be at 11 a.m., or as determined by the Fellowship or the Executive Board.

Section 2: The Annual Business Meeting of the Fellowship shall be held each year in the month of December. January 1 shall constitute the beginning of the fiscal year and the following December 31 as its end. The official year of the Fellowship and the terms of office of all officers shall begin on January 1 and end on the following December 31.

Section 3: Special business meetings of the Fellowship may be called by the President or upon written request of 20 percent of the voting members.

Section 4: Thirty percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum. Majority vote may decide any question unless these bylaws specify differently. Friends of the Fellowship will be welcome at all meetings and given the courtesy of the floor, but may not vote.

Section 5: Notice of time, place, and agenda shall be given to all members at least ten days prior to all annual and special business meetings by announcement in regular non-business meetings or by written or oral communication or by email.

Article VI - Officers

Section 1: The officers of the Fellowship shall be:

President	Chairman of the Board of Directors
First Vice-President	Second Vice-President / Program Chair
Recording Secretary	Corresponding Secretary
Treasurer	

Section 2: Officers shall be elected by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting for a term of one year. Their duties shall be those usually assigned to their offices. The President shall preside at the Sunday services, and the Chairman of the Board shall preside at Executive Board meetings. If unable to do so, they shall delegate said responsibility to one or more officers or members-at-large of the Executive Board. At the beginning of each year the President and the Chairman of the Board shall divide the other administrative responsibilities of the Fellowship between them. At the option of the Nominating Committee, the same person may serve both positions.

Section 3: During their term of office, the officers of the Fellowship shall also serve as Trustees of the real and personal property of the Fellowship. When required by law, the signatures of any two Trustees shall be sufficient to attest any action by the membership or the Executive Board with respect to the funds or property of the Fellowship. In the discharge of duties in accordance with provisions of law and these Bylaws, officers and trustees of the Fellowship shall be held harmless from personal liability.

Section 4: In order to serve as an officer or a member of the Executive Board, an individual must have been a member of the Fellowship for at least one (1) year.

Section 5: Officers may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 6: In case an officer is unable to fulfill his or her job, the Executive Board may appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term.

Article VII - Executive Board

Section 1: The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the Fellowship and additional At-Large Members. The additional members will be the immediate past President. If the immediate past President is serving another position on the Board, the Executive Board may select some other past President to fill that position. In addition, the Board may appoint an additional Member at Large. Also, the Board may vote to have up to two specified committee chairs serve on the Executive Board for one-year terms as At-Large Members.

Section 2: The Executive Board shall conduct the business affairs of the Fellowship. The Executive Board shall meet at least once each calendar quarter, and may hold special meetings, upon the call of the President, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, the First Vice-President,

or any two members of the Executive Board.

Section 3: Nominating Committee. At least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting, the Executive Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) representative members of the Fellowship not serving as officers, although they may be Members at Large of the Executive Board. The Committee shall nominate at least one qualified person willing to serve for each office to be filled in the succeeding Annual Business Meeting.

Section 4: Election. Election of officers shall be conducted during the Annual Business Meeting of the Fellowship, the report of the Nominating Committee having been made at least two (2) weeks prior thereto. Nominations for any office may be made from the floor at the time of the election, however intent to do so and consent of those to be nominated shall be made known to the presiding officer at least one week prior to the election so that a secret ballot may be arranged for positions for which two or more persons shall have been nominated.

Article VIII - Standing Committees

Standing committees shall be created and dissolved, and chairpersons appointed, by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. Members of committees shall be appointed by the chairpersons thereof. As soon as practical in each official year, a list of committees and members shall be provided the members of the Fellowship. All committees shall report and be accountable to the Executive Board.

Article IX - Parliamentary Authority

Except as specifically provided in these Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern the proceedings of this Fellowship.

Article X - Property of the Fellowship

Section 1.a: Major Transactions: Major transactions involving assets of the Fellowship shall include: the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of any real property (improved or unimproved); the creation of any bonded indebtedness (secured or unsecured); the conversion or expenditure of the corpus of any capital or designated funds of the Fellowship. All such major transactions shall require a two-thirds vote of the membership expressed in the annual or special business meeting.

Section 1.b: The Board is authorized to respond to emergencies without a dollar limit on expenditures.

Section 2: Ordinary Expenditures: The ordinary expenditures of the Fellowship shall be in accordance with an Annual Budget, which shall be adopted by the Executive Board and approved by the members at the beginning of each fiscal year. The Executive Board at its discretion may spend up to \$5,000 for expenses not included in the Annual Budget.

Section 3: Investment of Capital Assets: Investment of capital assets, or any designated or undesignated funds not included in the Annual Budget, shall be made by the Treasurer and two other members of a committee appointed by the Executive Board, in accordance with policies and strategy approved by the Executive Board. This committee shall report on the current status and balances of all funds under investment at least twice a year, and it shall make timely recommendations to the Executive Board for changes in the governing investment policies and strategy.

Section 4: Capital Funds: The Fellowship may receive by grant or bequest capital funds for designated or undesignated purposes consistent with the general purpose of the Fellowship, and the principal as well as the capital growth of such funds shall be held for the purposes originally designated by the donors or assigned by the Executive Board. In financial exigency, upon the recommendation of the Executive Board and approval of the membership, the income only from invested capital funds may be loaned or applied to the Annual Budget of the Fellowship.

Section 5: General Financial Powers: All financial powers relating to the Fellowship shall be exercised by the Membership, or by the Executive Board, in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws except as otherwise provided by the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act.

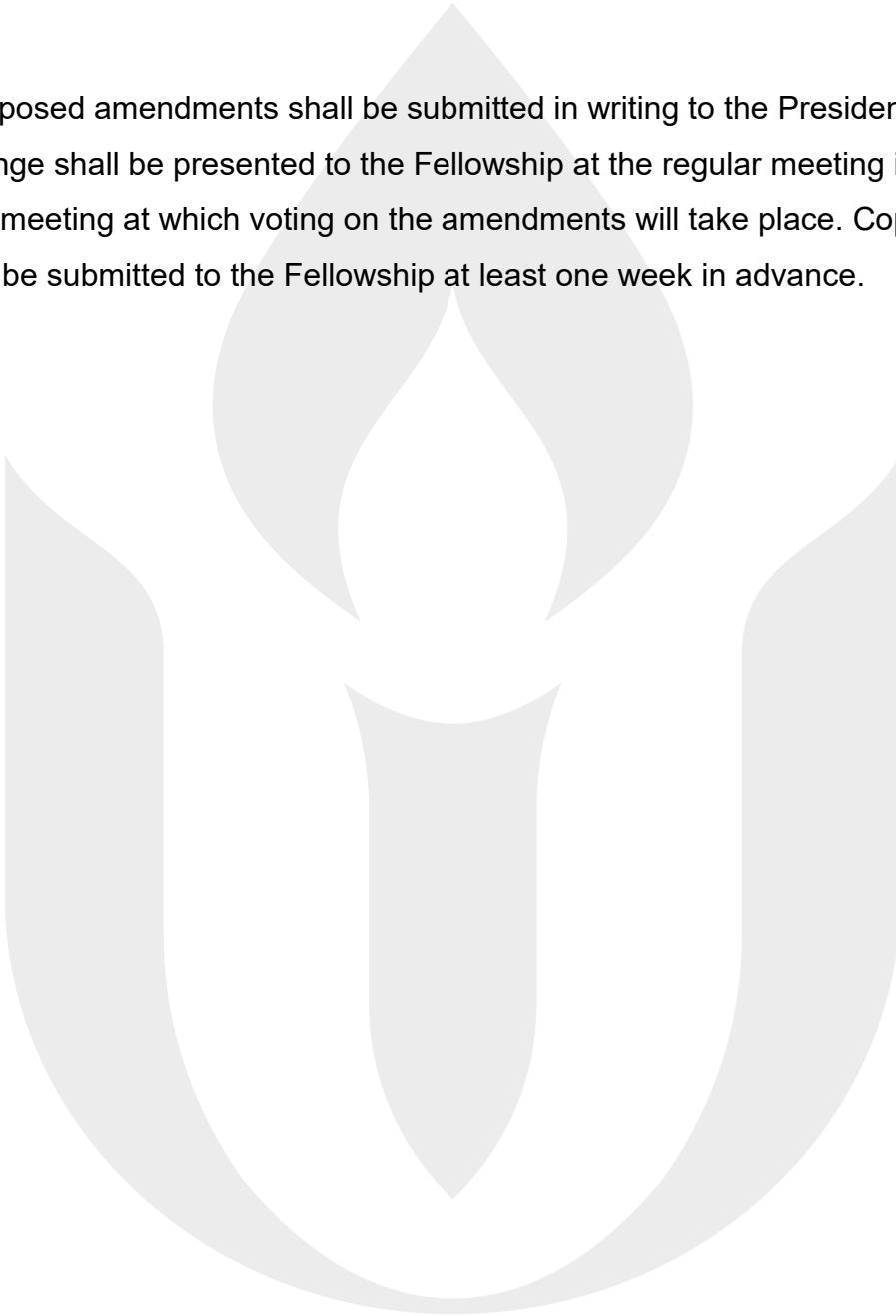
Section 6: Dissolution of the Fellowship: Upon dissolution of the Fellowship, its designated capital funds shall be applied to whatever charitable secondary purposes may have been stipulated by the donors of funds or property valued in excess of \$5,000. All other funds and property of whatever nature shall be transferred upon dissolution to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in North America to be used by it in encouraging the establishment and growth of emerging Unitarian Universalist congregations and fellowships.

Article XI - Amendments and Additions

Section 1: These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Fellowship by a two-thirds vote of those eligible members present and voting.

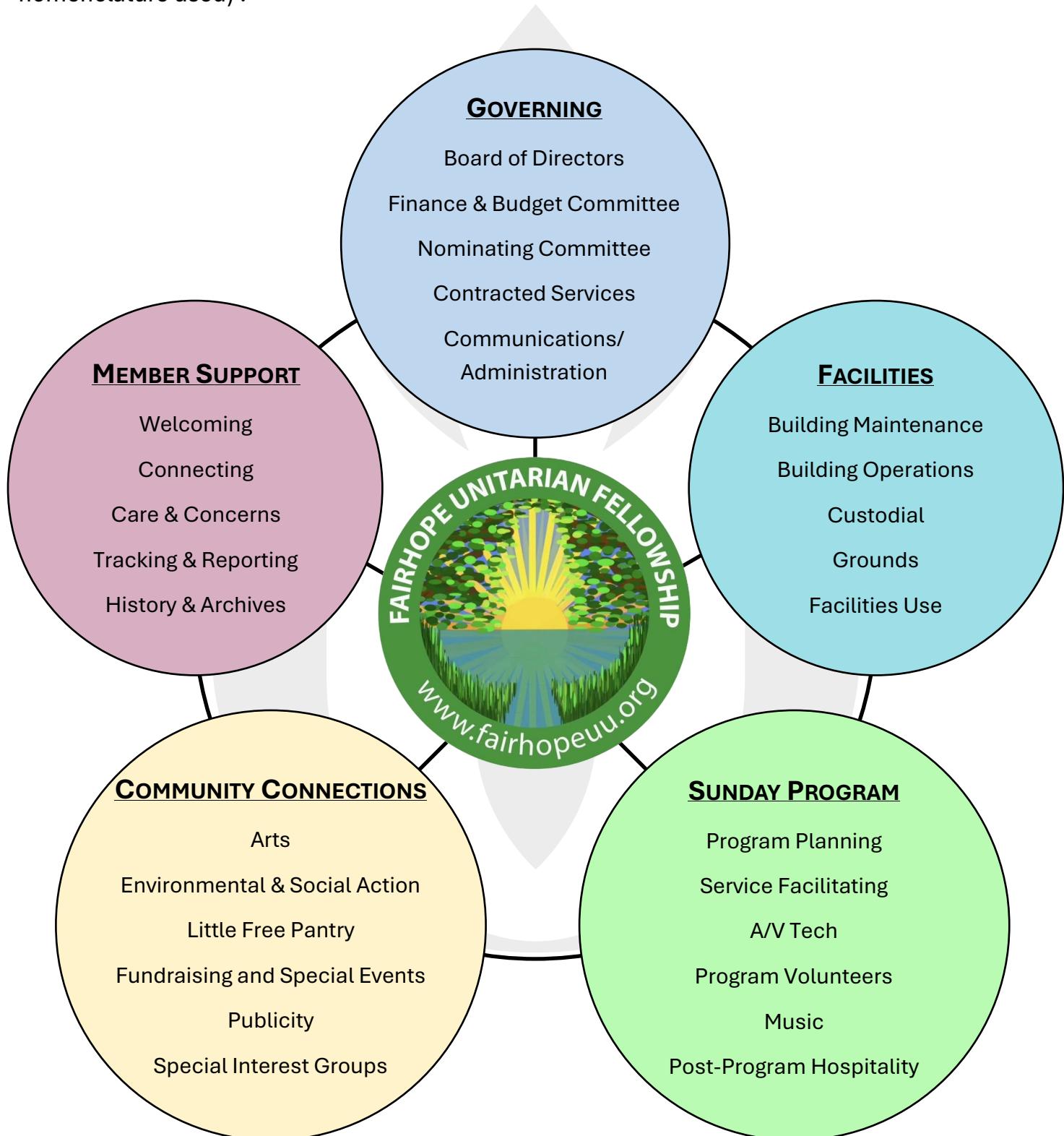
Section 2: Amendments may be proposed by the Executive Board or by any member of the Fellowship.

Section 3: Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the President. Notice of any proposed change shall be presented to the Fellowship at the regular meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which voting on the amendments will take place. Copies of proposed changes shall be submitted to the Fellowship at least one week in advance.



3.1—ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Fairhope Unitarian Fellowship has organized its mission into five functional areas that work together to further FUF's goals and purpose (see 1.2 Terminology for organizational nomenclature used) :



3.2—GOVERNING

Purpose: To preserve and maintain the Fellowship's history, assets, and resources by adhering to the bylaws and established policies with actions that encourage growth and continue to advance the Fellowship's mission and vision.

3.2.1—BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President

- Preside at Sunday services or arrange for substitute
- Coordinate with Program Chair on Sunday speakers
- Coordinate with those responsible for chalice lighting, reading, music, and introducing speaker/presenter, and oversee opening, closing, and setup on Sunday morning
- Collect information and make announcements
- Write column for FUF monthly newsletter (optional)
- Be alert to any special needs of the FUF members and friends and alert the Caring & Concerns Committee if needs arise

Chairman of the Board

- Appoint committee chairperson(s)
- Supervise Administration and Building contract employees, unless otherwise determined by the Board
- Schedule and preside at monthly Board meetings and other special meetings as needed
- Serve as liaison to the national and regional Unitarian Universalist Association
- Periodically consult with the Building and Ground Maintenance Committees and report to the Board

First Vice-President

- Preside at Sunday services in the President's absence and/or perform other responsibilities as requested by the President
- Help with programs as needed

Second Vice-President/Programs

- Arrange for Sunday speakers
- Prepare report on upcoming programs for monthly Board meeting
- Obtain photograph and biographical material for FUF newsletter and FUF Publicity chair
- Coordinate information for the Program with the President, communication volunteers, technical support volunteers, and others as needed
- Upon their arrival, arrange to meet and greet presenter/speaker and orientate them to setting
- Have a reserve program lined up in case of speaker cancellation or “no show”
- Obtain recommendations from FUF members and friends for future speakers and topics
- Send information to the speaker regarding time, place, and FUF audiovisual setup
- Ensure that timely thank you notes are sent to speakers, as appropriate
- Alert FUF Treasurer if check for speaker is required

Corresponding Secretary

- Handle correspondence requested by Board members
- Send thank you notes to those sending memorial contributions
- Send a note to the family of the person memorialized advising them of the contribution in memory of their loved one, or in the case of an honorary contribution to the honoree
- Take minutes of Board meetings when Recording Secretary is absent.

Recording Secretary

- Record minutes of Board meetings, submit drafts, make changes, present finals for Board approval and send Board members final approved minutes
- Maintain the book of official minutes of Board meetings, other special meetings of the membership, and the Annual Meeting
- Prepare a summary of Board meetings for the FUF newsletter
- Maintain old Fellowship records

Treasurer

- Take or arrange for Sunday collection and deposit funds in a timely manner
- Pay all bills as required by FUF budget
- Have checks for speakers on Sunday, as needed
- Maintain all FUF financial records
- Reconcile bank statements
- Track all investments
- Prepare a financial report for each Board meeting
- Prepare financial records as needed to assist the Annual Budget/Finance Committee to develop a new budget
- Prepare and submit required tax forms
- Let members know that contributions to FUF are deductible (Tax No. 63-808147)
- When necessary, update the bank and investment account signature cards
- Act as member of the Annual Budget/Finance Committee and report to the Board

Board Members-At-Large

- Members-at-Large may be asked to chair any current FUF committees that have no chair
- Perform duties of the Board as requested
- The Past President serving as a Member-At-Large helps provide perspective of past board decision making and advocates for preservation of appropriate FUF records and information

3.2.2—STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance/Annual Budgeting Committee

- Prepare a budget for the upcoming fiscal year to be presented at the December FUF Annual Meeting
- Coordinate funding needs with the special event/fund raising committee
- Monitor operational funds, investments, and assets and office advice

Nominating Committee

At least 60 days prior to the annual meeting, the Executive Board shall appoint three representative members of the Fellowship not serving as officers to:

- Review Board terms for vacancies
- Assess and match needed skills of potential voting members willing to serve on the Board
- Conduct interviews of willing candidates
- As a courtesy, advise the Board of eligible candidates willing to serve to fulfill the obligations of the Board
- Prepare the slate of candidates for the annual meeting and oversee the voting process including a call for nominations from the floor

3.2.3—COMMUNICATIONS/ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Assistant

- Obtain Board Officers' and Committee chairs' information for the newsletter
- Prepare monthly newsletter and distribute
- Maintain website and social media platforms
- Maintain a notebook of FUF newsletters and bulletins
- Keep calendar of FUF events and building usage up to date
- Coordinate with Building Usage Manager and A/V tech on requests for Building Usage
- Maintain records of Building Usage and make copies of leases for the Treasurer's records
- Work with Secretary to keep Board and annual meeting minutes organized

3.3—FACILITIES

Purpose: To preserve and maintain the physical spaces of FUF as a reflection of our values and message, ensuring they remain safe, welcoming, and well cared for. We strive to keep our buildings and grounds beautiful and functional, inviting members, friends, and the wider community to gather and connect in accordance with our usage guidelines.

3.3.1—Building and Grounds

Building Operations and Maintenance

- Oversee building repair and maintenance
- Coordinate with building maintenance contractors
- Monitor utilities use and issue

General Grounds

- Oversee FUF grounds and advise the Board on any actions required
- Arrange for service to mow lawn regularly
- Maintain the FUF Living Memory Garden

Signage

- Have notable signage displayed to reflect welcoming and FUF values

Flower/Vegetable Garden (adjacent to shed)

- Manage and maintain flower/vegetable garden
- Arrange for volunteer gardening help as needed

Security

- Monitor cameras

3.3.2—Facilities Use

- Attend Fellowship when the building is used by others or, if unavailable, arrange for other members to attend
- Schedule use of building and coordinate with administrator regarding calendar availability and updates
- Establish building use payment and contract forms and procedures to be readily accessible for users to complete prior to building use
- Collect assessed fee, provide receipt, and submit the payment to the Treasurer
- Coordinate A/V support for date and time as requested by building user

3.4—SUNDAY PROGRAM

Purpose: To provide a variety of thoughtful programming and engaging speakers to educate attendees on Unitarian Universalist values, principles, and living traditions, our relationships and interconnectedness with the community, and our support for social and environmental justice activism.

3.4.1—Sunday Program Planning

- Arrange for presenters/speakers for Sunday services
- Determine support needed by speakers (e.g., projector, music, etc.) and coordinate with A/V tech volunteer(s)
- Provide speaker info to Bulletin, Newsletter, and Website managers, President, and to Treasurer if honorarium is accepted.

3.4.2—Sunday Service Facilitation

- Performed by the FUF President or their arranged substitute
- Provide greetings and welcome
- Lead order of service
- Gather information and make announcements
- Provide introduction of speaker

3.4.3—A/V Tech

- Serve as sound engineer for Sunday programs and arrange for replacement when absent
- Provide A/V and tech support as needed for Sunday programs and speakers

3.4.4—Program Volunteer Coordinator

- Check and maintain chalice functionality
- Schedule and instruct chalice lighting volunteers
- Schedule and instruct reader volunteers
- Provide names of chalice lighter and reader for Sunday Bulletin, Weekender, and Newsletter

3.4.5—Music Coordinator

- Arrange for pre-program and special music services
- Coordinate information with the Program and Communication Committees
- Oversee maintenance of the piano

3.4.6—Bulletin/Weekender

- Gather relevant information for weekly bulletin (such as speaker information, music, chalice lighter, and reader)
- Format, print, and provide Bulletin for Sunday program
- Create a PDF version of the Bulletin for the Administrator to post on the website
- Create “The Weekender”—a publication similar to the Bulletin, but with additional information for the upcoming week
- Format a PDF version of “The Weekender” for online distribution (email, social media, and website)

3.4.7—Post-Program Hospitality

- Arrange for volunteers to bring snacks, make coffee, set up, and clean up for each Sunday’s Coffee Hour
- Inventory and stock supplies
- Oversee sufficient tables and seating
- Launder table linens and kitchen towels after each use
- Arrange for the potluck on the last Sunday of each month

3.4.8—Religious Education

- Adult RE
- Youth RE

3.5—MEMBER SUPPORT

Purpose: To provide a welcoming, warm, and inclusive reception to members and friends, help connect members and friends with offerings and opportunities within the Fellowship, provide care and concern for friends and members in need, track and report membership status, recognize and celebrate contributions of members and friends to the history of the Fellowship.

3.5.1—Welcoming & Connecting

- Welcome visitors and friends/members to Sunday services and provide each person with a name tag and, to newcomers, a copy of the Visitor brochure
- Following Sunday service, Member Support Committee members should make special efforts to engage visitors and invite them for coffee, treats, and fellowship including making introductions to other members and friends

3.5.2—New Members

- If a known non-member is attending periodically or regularly, the Member Support Chair may approach them to invite them to become a voting member, noting the difference between the categories of “Friend” and “Member”
- If/when an individual indicates interest in voting membership, the Chair of Member Support or the Administrative Assistant will provide them for completion the New Member Form.
- Upon return of the form, they will be invited to sign the Membership Book and be provided with a new packet
- The Member Support Chair will review the completed New Member Form, update the membership roster, and note indicated areas of interest of the individual so they can be referred to the area lead or committee chair for potential volunteer participation
- The completed member form will be retained on file for at least one year
- New members will be invited to New Member Orientation and to a scheduled Welcoming Ceremony, held at least twice a year, at which time they will be introduced to the Fellowship

3.5.3—Membership Status

- At least three members of the Member Support Committee shall annually go

through the Membership List identifying those who have not attended over the last year, moved, or otherwise known to have a change in circumstances preventing them from attending or otherwise participating in Fellowship activities

- Those identified will be contacted via email and asked if they wish to remain on the active list as a Member/Friend
- If they do not respond or otherwise request a change in member status, their names should be presented to the Board for “Associate” designation and those names moved to the list of “Associate Members.” This list will be maintained on file for at least two years
- If a person on the “Associate List” resumes attendance and participation and so requests, they will be reinstated as an active Member or Friend.

3.5.3—Cares and Concerns

- Keep abreast of members’ needs
- Inform the President/Fellowship, as appropriate, of member illnesses or other problems
- Send card or flowers as appropriate
- Arrange and organize appropriate support for identified FUF members needing care (Transportation, Meal Brigade, Cards, Visits, Correspondence)

3.5.4—History and Records

- Maintain the active membership list according to the membership policy
- Make copies of the current membership list available to members and friends
- Recognize and honor contributions of members to the history of FUF
- Gather and preserve historical records

3.5.5—Tribute Book Keeper

- Maintain and update the Tribute Memory/Honor Book
- Educate FUF on the Book’s purpose and procedures for maintaining
- Arrange for the Tribute book to be displayed periodically

3.6—COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Purpose: To build visibility and connections within the Fellowship and outward to the community by providing opportunities for involvement with causes related to our mission, vision, values, and principles.

3.6.1—Environmental Action

- Stay informed on UUA environmental issues and keep FUF informed
- Organize involvement in community environmental action events (e.g., Earth Day)
- Advocate for eco-friendly practices and methods of reducing FUF's carbon footprint
- Recommend to the Board annual charitable contributions to be made by FUF
- Report to the membership periodically on environmental issues of concern and recommend appropriate actions the Fellowship might take to address them

3.6.2—Social Activism

- Stay informed on UUA social issues and relay to FUF
- Organize involvement in community social action events (e.g., Pride Day)
- Recommend to the Board annual charitable contributions to be made by FUF
- Report to the membership periodically on social activism issues of concern and recommend appropriate actions the Fellowship might take to address social activism issues

3.6.3—Arts Committee

- Arrange for art exhibits in the FUF building
- Arrange opening receptions as appropriate
- Prepare a list of artwork on the exhibit
- Provide artist and exhibit information for the newsletter

3.6.4—Little Free Pantry

- Stock pantry and rotate perishables
- Organize volunteers to fill pantry regularly
- Encourage donations for pantry and purchase pantry items, as needed
- Keep abreast of items that are in particular need and relay requests to congregation

3.6.5—Special Events/Fundraising

- Recommend fundraising events for Board approval
- Organize special events, including festivals, yard sales, outings, and other special activities to engage members/friends and the local community
- Coordinate with Administrator on calendar availability and relay event information for website and newsletter
- Coordinate with Treasurer and relevant committees as needed for events
- Determine and utilize means to promote and publicize events
- Prepare announcements, local advertising, and social media features

3.6.6—Community-Building Interest Groups

- Women of Wisdom (WoW)
- Men's Group
- Fiction Club
- Non-Fiction Club
- Thursday Club
- Eastern Shore Ukelele Club—Open Jam
- Back Porch Folk Singers
- Small Group Circles

4—CURRENT CONTACTS

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