

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County By Laws

Adopted _____

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County

BY LAWS

Adopted _____

I Name

The name of this congregation shall be the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County. (UUCLC)

II Purpose

The purpose is to promote and sustain liberal religious study, Sunday service and fellowship (friendship), as expressed in the Principles of Unitarian Universalism, and to bring together those who believe in free inquiry into matters of religion. We believe in the discipline of and the search for truth, irrespective of its source and in the spirit of universal love. Undivided by nation, race or creed, sexual orientation or gender identity, we unite to express our convictions in the value and need for liberal religion, bound by no dogma, but relying upon reason as our guide, and upon freedom, we seek to grow in understanding of ourselves and of our world, and to serve humanity.

III Congregational Membership in the UUA

This congregation shall be affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and of the Southern District of the UUA.

IV Nondiscrimination Clause

This congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of members and friends in all our activities and endeavors including membership, programming, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals, without regard to race, color, gender, physical or mental challenge, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity, class or national origin.

V Membership

A **Qualified Persons:** Any person, 18 years or older, may become a Voting Member of this Congregation by:

- * Demonstrating sympathy with its purposes and program;
- * Supporting it through financial and/or personal participation;
- * Signing the membership book

It is generally expected that prospective members will have had a discussion of the Unitarian Universalist movement with the minister and/or such other person as the Board of Trustees (Board) may designate, and become familiar with the UUCLC By Laws. It is specifically understood that membership is open to all regardless of race, color, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.

UUCLC By Laws

B Becoming a Member: The Board or its designee shall review each prospective member, using known information at hand, to identify:

1. If the prospective member is a risk to the physical or mental health and safety of others in the congregation or of the congregation as a whole.
2. Groups that wish to take over the congregation.

C Categories of Membership

A **Voting Member** is any Member who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years and has been a Member of the Congregation for at least ninety (90) days. Only Voting Members may vote at congregational meetings.

An **Associate** is any person less than eighteen (18) years of age and is part of a family in which adults are members.

A **Friend** is a person who is in sympathy with our objectives and principles, and who attends our activities and contributes financially to the congregation, but who does not wish to become a Member.

An **Honorary Member** is one who is no longer able to participate in the activities of the church, but who wishes to retain an affiliation, and may be elected to an Honorary Membership in the Congregation upon recommendation of the Membership Committee, favorable action by the Board, and notification to the person that Honorary Membership has been conferred.

D Removal of Membership

The official roster of members shall be reviewed at least annually. A member's name shall be removed from the Membership Roster in case of: (1) the member's death; (2) written request by the member to the President; (3) a period of inactivity over one year, pending review by the Board; (4) removal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board for actions that threaten the well-being of the Congregation. (5) no response to inquiries after a period of one year.

VI Congregational Meetings

A Annual Meeting of the Congregation

An Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held each year on the first Sunday in April unless that Sunday falls on a holiday, in which case the meeting shall be held on the second Sunday in April. Such date must be determined and publicized by the Board of Trustees not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Meeting. At this meeting the President, or his/her designee, shall preside as Moderator.

The Board, Officers and any committees required to be elected at that time shall be elected, a budget for the ensuing year shall be presented by the Budget Committee for discussion, changed if necessary, and presented to the Board of Trustees for adoption prior to the last Sunday in April, and any other appropriate business transacted.

The time, place, and agenda of the annual meeting shall be as designated by the Board, and all such information shall be published in writing and made available to the congregation membership in such manner and through such procedure as shall be adopted by rule of the Board.

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B Special Congregational Meetings

Special Congregational Meetings may be called by a majority of the Board, or by the President, or by receipt of a written petition requesting such a meeting signed by at least fifteen percent (15%) of all voting members of the Congregation. A call for a Special Congregational Meeting, either by the Board, President, or petition, shall state the purpose of the meeting. No other business shall be transacted at such a meeting.

C Method of Notification

Notice of call of a Congregational Annual or Special Meeting shall be provided to the Voting Membership by at least one of the following methods, at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the meeting:

- 1) By publishing it in the official congregation newsletter,
- 2) By Email, using the official roster,
- 3) Or by regular mail to members requesting that method.

The notice shall be read on two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The notice shall state the business to be transacted.

D Quorum

Twenty- five (25) percent of Voting Members of the congregation shall constitute a quorum, except that forty (40) percent of Voting Members of the congregation shall constitute a quorum for:

- 1) Amendments to the By Laws,
- 2) Purchase or sale of real estate,
- 3) Employment or dismissal of a Minister.

A simple majority of those voting may decide any question.

E Absentee and Proxy Voting

Absentee ballots shall be on such form as may be stipulated by the Board and shall be processed for consideration in such manner as may be prescribed by the Board. If the Board decides absentee ballots are not to be allowed for a given meeting, such decision must be included in the notice of meeting.

Proxy votes shall be available to members who cannot attend a given meeting for reasons of incapacitation or travel. All proxies shall be in writing and specifically state the issue and how the proxy is to be voted. Proxies must be conveyed in duplicate, one copy to the president and one to the secretary.

If absentee ballots and proxy votes are allowed by the Board of Trustees, they shall count towards a quorum.

F Other Meeting Provisions

Sunday Services shall be held regularly at such time and place as shall be determined by the Board.

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VII Governing Structure

A Board of Trustees

1 Composition of the Board and Election Provision

The governing body of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County shall be a Board of Trustees (Board). The Board shall be composed of the four (4) Officers and three (3) Trustees who are members of the Congregation. Only a Voting Member who has been a member of the Congregation for at least one (1) year may serve as an officer or trustee.

Each Officer and Trustee shall attend in person at least every other monthly meeting of the Board. Trustees shall be elected to serve for staggered three (3) year terms. Upon approval of these By Laws, The Board shall review the expiration dates of the current Officers and Trustees and shall adjust the terms of those next elected so that those elected thereafter shall serve staggered three year terms of office.

Terms of office for Trustees and Officers shall begin on the first Sunday in May and end when their successors are installed. The Board may waive the one (1) year qualification limit for a voting member who is a prospective officer or trustee, for the benefit of the Congregation. The minister and the immediate past president of the Board may serve as ex-officio, non-voting members. Only one member of a family shall be eligible to serve on the Board at one time.

2 Responsibilities of the Board

The Board shall be responsible for the finances, administration, property and business affairs of the Congregation. The Board shall supervise all Congregation programs. Any decision, action, or omission of the Board may be appealed at an Annual Meeting, or at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Board's specific duties and obligations are:

* To hold Board meetings monthly at such time and place as the Board shall designate, except in July and August when meetings may be held as needed.

* To hold Special Board meetings when requested to do so by the President, the Minister, four (4) members of the Board, or by written petition by fifteen (15) percent of Voting Members of the Congregation. Due notice of Special Board meetings stating the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting, shall be given to each Board member. At Special Board meetings, no business except that stated in the notice shall be acted upon, but other matters may be discussed.

* To give notice to the Congregation at least seven (7) days in advance of Special Board meetings, except when the President, Board, or Minister determines the existence of an emergency which allows insufficient time for prior notice as described herein.

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* Whenever a special Board meeting relating to an emergency is held without prior notice to the congregation, the Board shall make written report to the Congregation of the business transacted at such meeting.

* To make available minutes of each Board meeting, or a summary of all business transacted at the Board meeting, within seven (7) days after the meeting.

* To appoint and dismiss all employees of the Congregation and fix their salaries.

* To establish budgets for Congregational review and discussion, monitor those budgets, and see that expenditures are within those budgets.

* To fill unelected positions needed to carry out Congregation programs or administration.

* To authorize emergency expenditures for an item exceeding its budget.

* To establish Board Rules for conducting its own business.

* Any other duties approved by the Congregation at its annual meeting

3 Board Meetings and Other Provisions

a. Frequency and Notice

Regular meetings of the Board shall be held monthly, on such dates, and at places as the Board shall from time to time fix, except during July and August when meetings shall be held as needed. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the President, the Minister, four (4) members of the Board, or by written petition by fifteen (15) percent of Voting Members of the Congregation. A notice of, and a tentative agenda for each Regular Board meeting shall be made to Board members, at least one week prior to the meeting, and be made available to the congregation.

b. Quorum

The quorum shall be four (4) persons, physically or electronically present; at least two (2) of whom shall be Officers. There shall be no voting by proxy or by absentee ballot in Board meetings.

c. Decision Making and Voting

Any action by the Board of Trustees (except as herein stipulated) may be decided upon by a majority of the votes cast, in a meeting at which a quorum is present. Tie votes shall not constitute approval.

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d. Open Meetings

Meetings shall be open to the members of the congregation. Provision shall be made at meetings for non-Board members and Committee Chairpersons to address the Board, but they may not make motions or vote at Board meetings. The Board may meet in Executive (private) session only to discuss personnel matters, sensitive issues, or to receive legal advice.

e. Workshop Meetings

Workshops of the Board may be held if notice of the meeting is provided. Workshops are defined as informal meetings of members of the Board and are for providing efficiency in discussing matters pertaining to the congregation. No binding votes will be taken at workshops, nor will final decisions be made on policy, business, administrative or other matters. Congregation members are welcome to attend workshops but the discussions will be limited to Board members except when committee representatives or congregation members are invited by the Board to speak at the meeting.

f. Minutes

Complete and accurate typed minutes shall be kept of any and all regular or special meetings of the Board excluding Executive Sessions and Workshops. An official set of final approved minutes shall be kept by the Secretary at a place determined by the Board. A second set of such minutes shall be kept in a place and under conditions which shall make them readily available to all members of the Congregation. All recorded minutes shall be formally approved by a majority vote of at least a quorum of the Board, and shall be signed by the Secretary certifying that such minutes are as approved by the Board.

g. Vacancies

A vacancy in any elected position, except President, shall be filled within sixty (60) days by vote of the Board, and the appointee shall hold office until a successor takes office on the following May 1st. If the vacancy occurs with more than one year remaining in its term, there shall be an election at the next Annual Meeting of the Congregation to serve the remainder of the outstanding term. A vacancy in the office of the President shall be filled by the Vice President until a successor is elected and takes office on the following May 1st.

h. Removal of Board Members or Officers

Any trustee or officer may resign by giving notice in writing to all trustees, and may be removed, with or without cause, by action of five (5) Board members, or by vote of a majority of the Voting Members present at the annual meeting of the Congregation or at a special meeting of the Congregation called pursuant to these By Laws, with removal of that individual in the call for the meeting. If three (3) or more vacancies exist at any one time, a congregational meeting for the purpose of filling these vacancies shall be held within sixty (60) days.

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Failure of an Officer or Trustee to personally attend three (3) consecutive Regular monthly Board meetings or four (4) of any six (6) consecutive regular Board meetings shall be an automatic resignation from the Board without further action or notice.

B Officers

1 Officer Composition and Election Provisions

The Officers are the elected leaders of the Congregation. The four Officers are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Only a Voting Member who has been a member of the Congregation for at least one (1) year may serve as an Officer. Officers shall serve for a term of two (2) years, or until their successors are elected and qualified. Terms of Officers shall start on the first Sunday in May, and end every second year when their successors are installed.

2 Officer Responsibilities

The Officers shall perform the duties normally associated with their respective offices. In addition and not in limitation, the Officers shall have the duties defined herein and in a statement of "Officer and Committee Responsibilities" approved by the Board.

3 Responsibilities of the President

The President shall serve as chair of the Board of Trustees, shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation, and shall represent the Congregation on all appropriate occasions. She/he shall perform such other duties as usually appertain to the office. The President shall have one vote in all matters considered by the Board, and may bring matters before the Board but shall not have the power to make or second motions. The President shall establish standing and special committees, with the approval of the Board.

4 Responsibilities of the Vice President

The Vice President shall act in the absence of or at the request of the President, at which time she/he shall have all powers and functions applicable to the President. The Vice President shall serve as the liaison between, and the facilitator of, the various committees and the Board, and shall perform such other functions and duties as may be specified by the Board.

5 Responsibilities of the Secretary

The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all Annual, Special, and Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees, and upon approval of the records by the Board, the Secretary shall provide copies for posting at Congregation meetings and in the newsletter. The Secretary, or his or her designee, shall maintain an accurate, current roster of the members, to include their mail and email addresses and phone numbers. This roster shall be the official roster of the Congregation and it shall be used for all notifications and communications. It shall be the responsibility of the members to notify the Secretary of changes in their contact information. . It shall be the Secretary's responsibility to see that updates to the UUCLC's Congregational data base are made to reflect changes to the official roster.

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6 Responsibilities of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive, safely keep, and disburse moneys and securities entrusted to the Congregation, keep complete and accurate records of income, receipts, and expenditures of the Congregation, and render written reports including an annual statement at the close of each fiscal year. The Treasurer shall also perform other functions relating to fiscal matters as requested by the Board. The Board shall adopt rules regarding confidentiality of pledges and donations

C Committees

1 Basic Provisions on Committees

The Board may appoint standing and temporary committees as it deems necessary. All committees shall report to the Board at the time and in the form determined by the Board. All committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board. Membership of all committees with the exception of Nominating and Ministerial Relations, shall be open to all Voting Members and Friends.

2 Standing Committees

Standing committees shall be designated by the Board. Chairs of these committees shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Board. The President shall stipulate to each appointee, the term of office for that Chair, and the right of the President to terminate the appointment. Each chair, in consultation with the President, shall be responsible for recruiting additional committee members as needed. Chairs of committees shall report to the Board.

3 Nominating Committee and Procedures

A Nominating Committee, consisting of three (3) members who are not members of the Board, shall be chosen by the Board at its December meeting. They shall prepare from the Official Roster of members a slate of eligible candidates for election as officers and trustees to fill expiring and vacant terms of office and shall announce these names at a Sunday Service at least four (4) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Potential nominees shall confirm their consent prior to being included in the Nominating Committee's slate. At the time the Nominating Committee's slate is presented, the President shall ask the membership for any additional nominations from the floor. Nominees from the floor shall be notified immediately and must consent to having their names placed into nomination at least one week prior to the Annual meeting.

4 Ministerial Relations Committee

There shall be a Ministerial Relations Committee whose function shall be to recognize and nurture the needs of the Minister and to maintain a channel of communication between the Minister and the Congregation. The Committee shall consist of two (2) members selected by the Minister and one (1) selected by the Board. Members shall serve for one (1) year and may be reappointed for no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

5 Other Committees

As needed by changing circumstances and/or emergencies, other Committees may be established by the President, who may appoint Chairs of the other Committees for specific terms with the approval of the Board. All Committee Chairs will report to the Board.

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6 Terms of Office for Committee Chairs and Members

Unless otherwise appointed by the president to serve for a lesser period, the terms of committee chairs and members shall expire with the term of office of the President who appointed them.

VIII The Minister

A Duties

The duties of the Minister shall be negotiated and prescribed by the Board, agreed to by the Minister in writing and approved by the Congregation. In general the Minister shall provide overall religious leadership and guidance in accordance with the established purposes of the Congregation, and shall be guaranteed freedom of the pulpit. The minister shall also have the freedom to express her or his opinions outside the pulpit, but not to represent the Congregation without authorization from the Board. The Minister is an ex officio and non-voting member of the Board of Trustees, and of all Committees other than the Nominating Committee, the Ministerial Relations Committee and the Search Committee. The minister will be employed under a written contract which stipulates the duties, compensation, other conditions of employment, and termination conditions.

B Qualifications of the Minister

The voting membership shall have complete freedom in its choice of a minister, and this minister shall be in Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

C Calling a Minister

1. Ministerial Search Committee

In the event of a vacancy in the position of minister, a Search Committee shall be established as a Special Committee in accordance with these bylaws for the purpose of identifying, screening and bringing to the Church for consideration candidates for the position of Minister. The Search Committee shall consist of one (1) Board member and four (4) Voting Members. The Search Committee shall submit the nominees to be voted upon at a Congregational Meeting called for such purpose.

2. Quorum and Plurality of Call

The minister shall be called, upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee, by a four-fifths (4/5) majority of the Voting Members of the Congregation present at any meeting legally called for the purpose; quorum for such a meeting being forty percent (40%) of the Voting Members of the Congregation.

D Dismissal and Termination of Call

The contract may be terminated by the Minister upon at least ninety (90) days consent. The Minister's services may be terminated by a majority vote by secret ballot of those present and voting at a Special Meeting of the congregation. Such a meeting may be called by the Board or upon written petition of twenty (20) members. Quorum and notice for such a meeting shall be the same as that for calling a minister.

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IX Other Staff

Terms of employment, duties and review procedures for other staff shall be established by Rules adopted by the Board of Trustees.

X Fiscal Matters

A Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Congregation is from July 1 through June 30.

B Budget Process

At each annual business meeting, the Board shall submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year. A budget is adopted by a simple majority vote of the Board. Once a budget is approved, the Board may authorize and expend the funds as budgeted. The Board may reallocate funds as needed.

C Financial Indebtedness

The Congregation shall not become indebted unless said indebtedness is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Voting Members present at a duly called special meeting, at which a quorum of the Voting Members of the Congregation are present.

D Congregation Funds

All funds and property received by or coming into the custody of the Congregation belong to and are trust funds and the property of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County, to be held and expended only for the purposes authorized and only in accordance with the regulations and/or written agreements prescribed or accepted by the Board of Trustees of the Congregation.

E Execution of Instruments

Checks and other orders on the funds or credit of the Congregation, and all contracts and instruments in writing by the Congregation, shall be valid and binding upon the Congregation only when executed by such officers as shall be designated and authorized by the Board.

XI Dissolution Clause

Should the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County cease to function and the membership vote to disband, any assets of the Congregation shall be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its general purposes. Such transfer will be made in full compliance with applicable laws.

XII Other Procedural, Financial, Legal, and Insurance Provisions

A Rules of Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern Board and Congregational meetings. The President or his/her designee shall serve as parliamentarian at all Board and Congregation meetings.

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B Indemnification

A duly elected or appointed officer, trustee, employee, or agent of the Congregation shall not be personally liable to the Congregation or to its Members for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty, except for liability resulting from: (1) any breach of duty or loyalty to the Congregation or its members, or (2) acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law. The Congregation shall indemnify any person and his/her estate and personal representative against all liability and expense incurred by reason of the person being or having been duly elected or appointed as an officer, trustee, employee or agent of the Congregation

C Real Property

At any meeting of the Board or any Congregational meeting where the sale, encumbrance, or acquisition by the Congregation of real property or improvements thereon is to be discussed or acted upon, notice of the same shall be posted on the congregation bulletin board and website, and read from the pulpit at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. Approval shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational meeting, at which a quorum is present, with such action in its call. If approved by the Board, emergency repairs, safety improvements and minor changes to a previously approved project, are not subject to the notice and voting requirements of this paragraph.

XIII Independent Affiliated Organizations:

The Board of Trustees may admit to Independent Affiliated status those independently constituted and operated organizations whose purposes and intentions it finds to be in sympathy with the principles of the Congregation, and may terminate such status upon finding that the organization no longer meets the foregoing qualifications or is not in compliance with the rules relating to such organizations. The status granted is that of Independent Affiliated Organization. The Board shall adopt rules governing the requirements for admission to and retention of independent affiliated status. The requirements may include financial support of the Congregation by payment of an annual contribution. The Congregation shall neither exercise control over nor assume responsibility for the programs, activities, and finances, and shall not provide funding of any Independent Affiliated Organization.

XIV Other Legal and Public Relations Provisions

A Expectations of Members and Affiliates.

Members are expected to participate actively in the Congregation's activities and to make a recordable financial pledge to the Congregation each fiscal year. The financial contribution should represent an amount judged by the member to be a fair share of the Congregation's needs, in light of the member's income and means.

B Open Records.

All records of the Congregation other than those of a personal nature shall be made available for inspection by any member during reasonable office hours.

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C Interpretation

These By Laws shall be liberally interpreted in order to accomplish their basic intent, which is hereby stated to be the efficient operation and management of the Congregation in order to accomplish the purposes stated in the Congregation's mission statement.

D Protection of Non-Profit Status.

Neither the Congregation, nor the Board, nor any officer or employee of the Congregation shall take any action or allow any activity or use of Congregation property which shall endanger the non-profit corporate status or charitable, tax-exempt status of the Congregation or its property. Nothing in these bylaws shall be construed to allow a violation of this section.

E Representation.

The president, or any other member of the Congregation, who is specifically authorized by the Congregation, or the Board of Trustees, may represent the entire Congregation in any public or private meeting. A Committee may, with approval of the Board, act or speak on an issue on behalf of the UUCLC.

F Public Statements in the Name of the Congregation.

Public statements by individual members on social or other public issues, in the name of the Congregation, may be made only after a vote of approval by the Board of Trustees.

G Amendments to By Laws

These By Laws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of those Voting Members present and voting, providing that a quorum is present at the meeting. Proposed changes shall be announced and posted on the web site and at each Sunday service twenty-seven (27) days prior to the meeting. Amendments to these By Laws may be proposed by the Board or by petition to the Board of at least fifteen percent (15%) of the Voting Members.

XV Effective Date

These By Laws shall be effective upon adoption by the Congregation, and shall supersede and void all previous By Laws of the UUCLC.