

MANUAL OF POLICIES FOR THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF MIAMI

As of May 14, 2018

POLICY ON THESE POLICIES

These policies have been established by the Board of Trustees of The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami and are subject to change by the majority vote of the Board. While some of these policies provide more detailed guidance to some of the Bylaws of the Congregation, in case of conflict the Bylaws supersede these policies. This manual will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to be completed by November of each year. New policies may arise at any time with the approval of the Board. Upon approval the Secretary or President of the Board shall:

Include a synopsis of the new policy along with a summary of the other business transacted by the Board in the next congregational newsletter.

Insert new policy into the electronic master copy of the manual with a date policy approved immediately after the policy. Add printed copy into the official copy(ies) of the manual.

A copy of the policy manual shall be available in the office at all times. Policies will be grouped together in general categories in this manual and a Table of Contents and Index included for improved visibility. Policies will be numbered by category, year, month, and series if more than one policy is passed in a given category during a particular month. Any modification to a policy will result in a new number reflecting the new approval date by the Board. For example, if the Board passes two policies in category 1 during the month of February 2005, then they shall be numbered 1_2005_01_1 and 1_2005_02_2.

The Bylaws of the congregation specify authority, organizational structure, forbidden actions, required actions, etc. It is the intent of the Board of Trustees that the policies of the congregation be assembled here for approval by the Board and communicated with the congregation. Policies in the Bylaws generally require congregation approval for Bylaws changes. Similarly, it is not the intent of this manual to over prescribe the policies or procedures implemented by committees or other officials of the congregation. To that extent Appendix A allows for a listing of documents referenced in this manual but developed by the committee or official implementing them. For example, while the Board may have a policy that the Religious Education Committee in cooperation with

the Director of Religious Education develop certain documents, follow certain procedures, send a representative to the Church Council meeting, etc., the Board does not specify method for implementation.

Finally, it is the intention that any policy that may be deemed controversial should be communicated with the congregation requesting their input prior to its implementation. The Board will consider whether to get a congregation vote prior to implementing very controversial policies or actions not prohibited by the Bylaws.

It shall be the policy of the Board to provide childcare for congregational meetings. Details of the arrangements shall be published in the newsletter in advance of the meetings.

No person shall hold more than one elective congregation office at a time. No officers of the Board of Trustees shall serve as a committee chair except as required by the Bylaws.

Board meetings are open to all members. Person(s) wanting to speak should give the president 24 hours notice prior to the meeting.

Meetings dealing with personnel or confidential matters may be closed at the Board's discretion.

BOARD POLICIES

When a meeting of the Board is impractical and the President deems that a matter must be decided upon immediately, a telephone poll of all available members of the Board may be made. A vote may be taken through E-Mail. An affirmative vote by more than half the voting members will fulfill the requirement for a special meeting. The results of the vote will be recorded in the minutes of the following formal Board meeting.

Board shall decide liaisons for all church committees and major groups during the month of July, which follows new elections to the Board.

Confidentiality

The Board of Trustees of The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami affirms the official guidelines of Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association regarding confidentiality between the Minister and members. A copy of these guidelines is on file in the UU office.

The confidentiality of private communications between members of the Board of Trustees, acting in their official capacity and other members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami community shall be respected absolutely.

The Congregation shall keep on file only personal information specifically provided by members and friends such as directory and pledge information. Records of pledges and other donations will be shared only on a "need to know" basis unless the donor gives specific permission.

Contracts: Legal Review

All contracts to be entered into by the Congregation may be referred, at the discretion of the Board, President or Minister to legal counsel, and reviewed by the Board to the extent counsel deems appropriate. The Board will take counsel's advice into consideration prior to approving the contract. Contracts to be reviewed will include, but are not limited to, contracts with: the Minister, other contract-based employees, consultants, professionals and contractors employed by The Congregation for long-term or on-going renters of building space: any contractors whose activities may have a significant impact on building liability insurance, and others as deemed appropriate by The Board from time to time.

CHURCH COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES POLICIES

Committees, General

Unless membership in a committee is specified in the Bylaws, a committee may be made up of any interested members and friends of the Society. However, the chairperson must be a Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami member.

Committee appointments shall be for renewable two-year terms. Committee chairs will serve for a two-year term, with one renewal possible. (2011).

Members of the same household may serve on congregational committees with the exception of the Committee on Ministry, the Leadership Development Committee, and the Business Affairs Committee. Members of the same household may not serve on the Board of Trustees. (November 2012)

Committee chairpersons shall be responsible for keeping expenditures within the approved committee budget and will present or have presented a signed voucher to the Society Treasurer before a request for reimbursement from any budget category will be honored.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY POLICIES

Commercial or Display Use of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami.

Any items to be sold, the methods for sale of such items, and any potential remuneration to the UU Society from such sales are to be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Donation of Goods Policy: Any decision of whether (or not) to accept any major donation of physical supplies—books, clothing, furniture, etc.—needs to be pre-approved by the BOT.

Exhibitors of items of value for purposes of sale or display of said items must sign a Waiver of Responsibility form.

Directory and Mailing List

Active members and contributing friends will receive one copy of the directory free each year. The Membership Committee will determine additional distribution.

The membership directory will include the following three categories: voting members, non-voting members, and pledging friends. (2012)

The directory is intended for personal use only. Any use of the directory for commercial purposes or by any organization other than The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami is prohibited. This disclaimer is to be published in front of every edition of the directory. As a general rule, the Congregation mailing list will not be provided to anyone outside the denomination. Only the Board of Trustees can override this rule should such a request for use be made.

Publicity-Newsletter

The content, editing, and format of each issue of the newsletter are the responsibility of the appointed Newsletter Editor.

The Public Relations Committee will regularly review Newsletter policy and practices, and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Editor.

Committee Chairs are responsible for the publicity of matters within their jurisdiction, and for submission of news items relative to their committees to the Newsletter Editor.

Board of Trustees shall give a summary of their actions for inclusion in the newsletter. The Congregation office staff will duplicate and mail the newsletter.

Priority for inclusion of items in the newsletter shall

be: Announcements of future UU Society events.

News of the Congregation's programs, events, members, and summary of Board of Trustees actions.

A column by the Minister.

Comments and suggestions submitted by members and friends of the congregation, and Brief notices of community events of probable interest to the Congregation.

The Publicity Committee and/or editor shall set the schedule for the newsletter.

Website Photo Policy: No recognizable photos will be placed on our website without written consent from the subject(s). Also, no names will be attributed to a photo unless in the members' photo directory.

Sunday Morning Announcements

Announcements shall pertain to Congregation related activities. Announcements shall be submitted to the Office Administrator for inclusion in the Order of Service by the prescribed deadline.

Board members who will take turns on a volunteer basis shall deliver announcements verbally to the Congregation on Sunday morning. Verbal announcements shall be written on the forms provided at the Greeter's Table and given to the designated Board Member by 10:20 AM. Sunday Announcements that appear in the Order of Service will not be repeated verbally. Refusal to read specific announcements will be at the discretion of The Board member if the announcement appears in the Order of Service, if it is not received by 10:20 AM, and if the subject matter is not congregation related. Exceptions are: With respect to major Congregational-wide events, i.e., Canvass, representatives from the respective committees may be allowed to make special announcements from the lectern on Sunday mornings. These need to be arranged with the minister and the Board member concerned prior to 10:20 AM on Sunday.

Use of Congregational Name

Individuals who wish to sponsor some event or support some view which is not directly part of the regular Congregation functions or programs may do so in their own names, or in the name of the sub-group they represent, upon the endorsement of the subgroup. An individual or group who wishes the Congregation, to act as a sponsor or as a supporter of a particular secular view or matter of public policy must present the proposed action to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may decide to refer the matter to the membership for action or it may act for the membership. Any proposal to use the name of the Congregation as sponsor or supporter, which is referred to the public media regarding the proposal, will be disseminated by the Public Relations Committee or a Board appointed spokesperson and will specify the actual vote.

FACILITIES & GROUNDS POLICIES

Nut Policy: UU Miami is a "Nut Free Zone". This include peanuts, almonds, walnuts and other nuts in accordance with the FDA.

Accessibility Policy

As far as possible, the Congregation, and its staff shall make reasonable accommodation in its programs and facilities to make all aspects and areas of the Congregation accessible to members and others with disabilities. These accommodations may include facilities enhancement, alternate materials and

publications, adaptive equipment and/or accommodations by staff.

Building Use and Rentals

All requests for use of the building or premises must be cleared through the UU Miami Office, under the supervision of the Minister and/or the President. If the appropriateness of the proposed use is in question, it will be referred to the Building Management Committee. In case of conflicting requests, the following priorities apply:

1. Regularly scheduled UU functions
2. Members
3. Rentals

All users of the UU building shall pay the required fees as set forth in the current Rental Fee Schedule and shall abide by the Rules and Regulations for use of the Society premises with the following exceptions:

Rental fees will only be waived for members and may be waived by the Building Management Committee, in the case of an emergency by Minister and/or President, for personal occasions; such as weddings (including weddings of children of members), anniversaries, memorials of non-members, and as seems appropriate.

Rental Fees may be reduced up or waived for recognized charitable, educational or social service organizations, all-day meetings or on-going classes. This determination and the rate of reduction will be made by the Building Management Committee, comprised of two Board trustees and one at-large UU Miami member in good standing.

In our intent to promote shared ministry, any member in good standing may champion an activity, training, or event proposed by the above-mentioned slate of non-profit organizations. Said member will serve as the liaison, point of contact, and ensure that our space is used respectfully and that guidelines are followed.

When the special services of the custodian are required, that fee shall not be waived.

When UU facilities are leased or rented over an extended period of time to another institution, that institution shall be required to carry its own liability insurance and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, Florida, named as an additional insured in such policies.

No smoking shall be permitted inside any UU building.

Alcoholic beverages may be served at official UU functions only. The Board of Trustees may grant exceptions.

All UU building tenants and users must abide by Miami-Dade noise ordinances, which limits loud noise/music to specific levels and times.

No animals, with the exception of Service Dogs are permitted in the building. The Minister may grant waivers.

Use of UU property (interior and exterior) is restricted to the timeframe specifies in the Lease Agreement.

All paid childcare providers must be 18 years of age or older.

A current Rental Fee Schedule and Lease Agreement along with the Rental will be the guideline.

Key/Security

A key to the building or any part thereof shall be loaned to persons who need to use them to perform their duties in a timely and efficient manner. Key holders must sign a statement, which shall be an addendum to the policies.

Scattering of Cremated Remains Policy

On request, cremated remains of members and friends of The Society may be appropriately scattered over the UU grounds, in accordance with applicable local laws.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

There shall be one checking account to handle the money for the immediate needs of the Congregation. Money not needed to meet the immediate needs of the Congregation and other Fund money should be deposited in instruments and funds as voted on by the Congregation. The Treasurer's responsibility includes the regular functioning of moving money between checking account and other accounts in order to obtain a prudent level of interest income but retain necessary funds on hand to pay Congregational obligations.

Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses and donations to, or purchases at any fundraisers, will not be considered pledge payments unless prior arrangements by the Treasurer have been made prior to the expense being incurred, and the appropriate budget line will be charged for expenses.

Budget Expenditures

Approval of committee expenditures is generally the responsibility of the committee chairperson or, in the absence of the chairperson, of the Board trustee acting as liaison of the committee. The committee chairperson is responsible for keeping committee expenditures within the approved budget. The Treasurer shall have a signed form approving payment before reimbursing anyone for expenditures from any budget category.

Purchasers must provide receipts for reimbursement or invoices.

Board shall allocate funds from the Lay conference and travel budget to official denominational delegates (RE, Youth, GA, PNWD, etc.) prior to the event.

The Stability Fund shall be managed as follows:

At the end of the fiscal year, excess General Fund income shall be transferred to the Stability fund. Any pledge payments received after the Treasurer closes the books for a given year shall also be placed in the Stability Fund

If a deficit arises in the General fund during the fiscal year the Board may transfer money from the Stability Fund only to pay: a) staff salaries and payroll taxes; b) mortgage payments, and c) costs or repairs for major damage to Congregation property not covered by insurance.

Any deficit in the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year may be covered by transferring money from the Stability Fund.

Any deficits in the General Fund that remain after the provisions of the Stability Fund given above have applied shall be handled as follows:

During the fiscal year, if the remaining deficit exceeds 2% of the total budget and The Board does not believe the deficit can be made up in the following month, a special meeting of the membership shall be called with at least 14 days written notice to deal with the situation. At the end of the fiscal year, if the remaining deficit exceeds 1% of the total budget, a special meeting of the membership shall be called with at least 14 days written notice to deal with the situation.

The Board upon recommendation from congregants set a family top rate for meals at UUCM functions (e.g., Sunday Hospitality). There are those that cannot afford food and therefore do not purchase food. Signage should be modified from the present \$2, \$7.50, \$10, and \$12.50) was set. 2004_09_?_01.

Quarterly reports of assets, liabilities, and fund accounts shall be made to the Board by the Finance Committee, 2004_12_?_01.

Investment in socially responsible funds will be considered prior to any new or change in investments. 2004_11_?_01.

Professional Expenses Policy: Any staff professional expense more than \$50.00 needs to be pre-approved by the BOT.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES of The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, Florida shall be an addendum to the Policies.

Policy Against Hiring Members and Friends

Members and Friends of our congregation kindly offer donations of their precious time

and talents for the good of our religious community. In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, it is the policy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami not to hire Members or Friends as employees or independent contractors; however, Members and Friends donating time and talent to the congregation will be reimbursed for materials. (September 2012)

OFFICE & ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Computer Policy

Computer programs will not be loaded on the hard drives of the office computer without permission of the Office Administrator. All work done by committees shall be saved on disk, rather than hard drive, unless the Office Administrator gives approval. The Office Administrator may remove unauthorized programs and files at his/her discretion to enhance proper computer use. Congregation owned computers are only to be used for approved congregational business. The Office Administrator thereof coordinates use.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Personnel policies and procedures and job descriptions for all ministerial and non-ministerial personnel shall be included in a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual which will be maintained in the congregational office and available to any employee.

The Personnel Committee shall recommend Personnel Policies and Procedures to the Board of Trustees and carry out the same.

The Personnel Committee shall:

Review the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (at least annually) and recommend changes, if any, to the Board of Trustees.

Review the job performance of non-ministerial employees (at least annually) and report results to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Recommend a proposed salary for each non-ministerial employee to the Budget Committee prior to the setting of the annual proposed budget.

The personnel Committee shall act as the selection committee to fill vacant, non-ministerial staff positions and recommend them to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. As needed, the Personnel Committee will recommend any reduced, expanded or new staff positions to the Board of Trustees.

Minister/Employee Contracts

The Minister's contract and all employee contracts shall be on file in the church office and available to members.

Sabbatical Leave

The Minister will be entitled to sabbatical leaves based on years of service to accrue at one month for each year of service.

A sabbatical may be taken after the fourth year of service, but accrued entitlement will not exceed six months.

When the Minister wishes to take a sabbatical leave, he/she will submit a request in writing to the Board of Trustees three months in advance; the request shall be accompanied by a plan for the use of the sabbatical time.

The timing of the sabbatical will be negotiated with the Board of Trustees who will approve, in writing, and who will appoint a sabbatical committee to arrange for normal ministerial tasks during the sabbatical period.

The minister may accept any special funds from study grants, gifts, etc., but shall not accept any ministerial position during the sabbatical leave period.

The minister shall agree in writing to return to this Congregation for at least a year following sabbatical and the congregation shall agree to maintain the ministerial contract for at least one year following a sabbatical.

Sabbatical funds or accrued time will not be a part of any termination package.

A copy of this policy shall be part of any contract (letter of agreement) with a called Minister of the Congregation. Should this sabbatical leave policy be changed, the Minister's contract will be changed accordingly.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

Policy for Voting at the Annual Meeting

A waiting period of 60 days after signing the Membership Book and having made a financial contribution of record are required to be eligible to vote in congregational meetings. 75% of a recorded pledge must be paid by May 1st to be eligible to vote in annual meeting in May. (2011)

Ceremonies/Rites of Passages at UUCM Policy: Ceremonies are an important part of a congregation's spiritual expression, and at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, we value and welcome opportunities to sponsor and support rites of development and passage that align with both the Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles and our stated mission. Below are a few of the rites for which we welcome ceremonial exchange:

Child dedication

Marriage

Vow Renewal

Divorce

Memorial

Any arrangement for ministerial service during such ceremonies rests with the select minister under contract with UUCM, in accordance with the policies and principles of this congregation. In particular, ministers shall undertake plans for UUCM-supported ceremonial activities within the following guidelines:

If the party seeking a ceremony is a member-in-good-standing* of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, the event may be eligible for whatever space support the congregation offers its members (see "Facilities & Grounds Policies: Building Use and Rentals"), including a waiver of associated ministerial fees.

If the party seeking a ceremony at UUCM is not a member-in-good-standing* of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami, their use of the grounds and facility falls under the basic space accommodations offered through the "Facilities and Grounds Policies: Building Use and Rentals" section of this document, subject to the most current ministerial fees and fees for space use posted on the UUCM website.

As regards ceremonies that are typically featured during a UUCM Sunday service (e.g., child dedications or vow renewals), only members-in-good-standing* can request arrangement of such a ceremony to be held during a particular Sunday service. All other similar requests for ceremonial services fall under the basic space accommodations offered through the "Facilities and Grounds Policies: Building Use and Rentals" section of this document, subject to the most current fees for space use posted on the UUCM website. Negotiated ministerial fees will be paid directly to the presiding minister.

Any adjustment of these space-use policies is wholly the responsibility of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami Board of Trustees.

*As established by the UUCM Constitution and By-Laws (Article II), a "member-in-good-standing" refers to "a person, 16 years of age or older, who: is in sympathy with the purpose and mission of this Congregation, has signed the Membership Book, makes a financial pledge in support of the church within each fiscal year, and makes an identifiable financial contribution to the church within each fiscal year. Prior to membership, an applicant shall consult with the Minister or a member of the membership committee or of the Board of Trustees about the heritage of Unitarian Universalism, its principles, and the responsibilities of commitment to the congregation. ... Members are considered to be in good standing if they meet all of the requirements as defined above."

Safe Congregation

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami is committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment supportive of personal and spiritual growth. This Congregation recognizes the right of its ministers, employees, contractors, members, and guests to have an environment free of interpersonal violence such as harassment and abuse.

Violations would include abuse or harassment of a physical, psychological or sexual nature. We believe that harassment and abuse are not the fault of the victim. A person who has been harassed or abused needs support, empowerment and a structure which provides an effective, safe and prompt response to his or her complaint. We understand that harassment and abuse may not be intentional, but may, in fact, arise through miscommunication or lack of awareness. When uncomfortable and/or unacceptable behaviors occur, individuals can sometimes resolve the situation themselves through direct discussion with the responsible party.

Since this direct approach is not always appropriate, a Safe Congregation Committee shall be formed to provide the Congregation with a means of safely and effectively resolving such situations. We recognize the right of an individual who is accused of inappropriate behavior to respond to the allegations at least in a written form.

This Congregation supports the policies of Unitarian Universalist Association and its Ministerial Fellowship Committee regarding professional behavior that are not part of this document. These Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures are also considered to include prohibitions against all criminal behaviors. Specific Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures that include guidelines for the formation and functioning of the Safe Congregation Committee are added as addendum to these policies.

Reconciliation Process

Preamble

The well-being, strength, and reputation of our congregation depend on a sense of fellowship among the members, friends, and staff, in keeping with the mission and vision of the congregation and based upon the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Within such a context, conflict may arise, and its reconciliation or resolution through compromise or consensus may enhance community and further the goals of the congregation.

Conflict that is not resolved, however, can diminish our community and hamper the achievement of our goals.

We preface these suggestions with the commonsense wisdom that we should adhere to the UU Principles and Purposes and our own congregation Covenant of Right Relations.

As responsible members of this community, we have an obligation to directly address and resolve conflict in accord with our Covenant of Right Relations and within our self-governance structures including the congregation bylaws and existing policies, procedures, and committees of the congregation.

Whether in a situation of conflict or in any other interactions within our congregation, all members of this community have an obligation to learn what those policies, procedures, and committee structures are and how they may be used to promote beloved community. Conflicts which cannot be resolved by reliance on church policies and procedures may become a subject for this Reconciliation Process.

Although this Reconciliation Process is voluntary, it is recommended to any congregation member in conflict. Any member may refuse to mediate with any other party, but we urge all parties to participate in the reconciliation process.

Participation in this process may encourage and sustain beloved community within our congregation and the strengthening of its principles, mission and vision.

The Process:

Step 1) Talk directly with the person (fellow member, minister, etc.) with whom you have the disagreement.

- Examine your own role in the conflict. Why is this matter important to you? What do our principals and purposes say to you about this conflict?
- Own your issue.

Anonymous complaints are not acceptable.

- Get a reality check from a trusted third party. Compare your perceptions.
- Agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk in private with the persons or persons with whom you are in conflict.
- Use “I” statements in your discussion (“I feel...” not “You did...”); use active listening.

- If a direct conversation is too difficult, put your thoughts into writing. Be available to hear the response.
- If you feel that safety is an issue, use an appropriate third party or committee to provide a safe environment for the discussion as in step 2 below.
- If the conflict is less with a person than with how they are performing a job (staff, religious educator, etc.), address the concern to the proper supervisor or committee so that individuals are not being “supervised” from all sides.

Step 2) If a resolution or reconciliation is not achieved, all members involved are asked to seek mediation by a third party or go to the professional minister for counseling regarding the issue.

- If all parties agree that a minister is neutral and appropriate, the minister may act as the mediator at his or her option. If the minister is not appropriate or declines to mediate, the minister will direct the parties to an appropriate mediator.
- If the conflict involves the program staff, the mediation body is one of the congregation's trained mediators.
- If the conflict involves support staff, the mediation body is the Supervisor.
- If the conflict involves the board or a decision of the board, then the mediator shall be a past chair of the board chosen by the aggrieved party and agreed upon by the executive committee of the Board. The Board shall choose two current Board members to mediate the conflict on behalf of the Board.
- If the conflict involves a committee of the congregation or a decision of a committee, then the mediator shall be a member of the Executive Committee of the Board chosen by the Board.

Step 3) If the parties used both steps 1 and 2 in good faith and if the situation is still not reconciled, upon agreement of the parties, the matter may be taken to one or more independent board appointed mediators.

- The mediator(s) will excuse themselves if they have any bias about the conflict.
- The mediator(s) will report to the Board of Trustees on the nature and outcomes of all conflicts brought before them.
- The mediator(s) will also keep records in a format which provides an abstract of events while allowing for privacy considerations.
- The mediator(s) are empowered to set standards and formulate behavior agreements for consideration by the parties in conflict. They are not limited to achieving compromises. When the mediator(s) believe that a situation exists where behaviors are harmful to our congregation, or demonstrated behaviors do not express the mission, vision and values or our church, the mediator(s) may recommend one or more of the following: Counseling to one or more of the parties involved. Specific limitations to the participation in the active life of our church by one or more of the parties involved. Suggest other demonstrable and/ or observable behavior changing strategies for one or more of the parties involved.

Step 4) If the mediation process delineated in step 3 does not manage the conflict, upon agreement of the parties, the matter may be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for consideration and resolution. The Executive Committee may consider

recommendations coming from the mediators and shall hear appeals from the parties. In the event of a failed mediation with the Executive Committee or upon recommendation to the Board from the Executive Committee independent of mediation, the Board may take one or more of the following actions: actions as outlined in the Policy on Disruptive Behavior, solicit assistance from the UUA, call a congregational meeting for resolution, take such other action as is permitted by the Church governing documents, or take no action.

Other than a call for a congregational meeting, in all other cases, any action by the Board shall be taken in executive session to protect the privacy of the persons involved to the greatest extent possible. The names of individuals involved shall not be published in the official minutes of the Board unless approved by a two-thirds majority vote of all members of the Board.

Communication of such Board action shall be done so as to preserve the confidential nature of these actions to the greatest extent possible.

Role of Mediator

The mediator has the responsibility to bring the conflicted parties together for discussion of the ways in which the conflict can be managed and to facilitate an agreement, if possible, which meets the needs of the parties and the congregation. The mediator is not a judge and cannot force a resolution of the conflict on the parties, make awards or advocate on behalf of one side or the other. The mediator can discuss congregation values and principles with the parties and lead discussion, express opinions, suggest compromises, and recommend solutions or settlement to the conflicted parties. The mediator shall report findings, recommendations and impressions of the conflict to the Board or Executive Committee, and may report to committee chairs, or church staff as appropriate. The mediator also may make other findings and recommendations as set out in Step 3, above. Other than these reporting options, all meetings and discussions between the parties and the mediator are confidential.

Concluding Comments

The members of this community hope that most, if not all, conflicts can and will be resolved by effort on the part of individuals to live our covenant and Principles and directly interact with the individual with whom they are having a conflict.

We, the members, further anticipate that all who participate in the process will use the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes to inform their own actions and will treat everyone with compassion and dignity.

Finally, when no resolution is possible, concern for the well-being, openness, safety and stability of the congregation as a whole shall be given priority over the feelings or actions of any one individual.

Note: This Reconciliation Process is not meant to replace or take precedence over the Policy for Disruptive Behavior.

Addressing Disruptive Behavior by Members, Friends, or Guests

While openness to diversity is one of the prime values held by our congregation, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. Concern for the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual.

The following policy shall guide us in actively and promptly addressing situations in which individuals' behavior threatens the emotional and/or physical security of our members, friends, and guests. The privacy/anonymity of the allegedly offensive individual will be maintained at all times, except in cases in which he/she poses a threat to others. The Congregation will follow all applicable state laws and reporting procedures for child sexual abuse.

Since it is serious business to file a formal complaint against a fellow member, doing so should never be taken lightly. Every attempt should be made to resolve disruptive situations by addressing them directly, with compassion and concern, and with the assistance of the Minister or an objective facilitator if needed, before resorting to the use of this policy.

If a complaint is brought against the Minister: a written, signed explanation of the disruptive behavior and its impact, is to be submitted from the person or people who experienced or witnessed it to the President of the Board of Trustees. He/she, in turn, will consult with the Transitions Team, if an interim minister, or the Committee on Ministry, if a settled minister.

Procedure for an immediate response

When a person's disruptive behavior requires an immediate response, it will be undertaken by the Minister and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave the premises, or suspending the meeting or activity until it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required, the Police Department may be called.

- Anytime such actions are required and the Minister is not present, then the Minister and President of the Board of Trustees must be notified as soon as is practicable.
- They, in turn, will consult to determine whether to handle the situation privately, or request the formation of an ad hoc Conflict Resolution Panel (hereafter noted as the "Panel") appointed by the Board of Trustees (that shall include at least three Congregation members not on the Board, related to a Board member, or involved in the situation, and the Minister as a non-voting process observer and advisor to the Panel), to further investigate the matter. When appropriate and whenever possible, the Minister will inform the person that a complaint has been filed and is being investigated.

Procedure for a more deliberate response

For ongoing situations and those not requiring an immediate response, the process begins with a written, signed explanation of the disruptive behavior and its impact, from the person or people who experienced or witnessed it, to the Minister or President of the Board of Trustees.

They, in turn, will consult to determine whether to handle the situation privately, or request the formation of an ad hoc Conflict Resolution Panel (as described above).

The Panel will respond to situations as they arise, using their own judgment, without defining acceptable behavior in advance.

- People and situations will be dealt with individually.
- Stereotypes or stereotyping will be avoided.
- The Panel will collect any additional information required to obtain a complete picture of the situation and research any applicable laws.

When the Panel considers such information essential to performing its task, the Board shall authorize funds to pay costs for a professional background check, to provide such facts as the correct identity of the person in question and records of past criminal activity involving threats, harassment, or actual harm to other persons or property.

Note: Unitarian Universalists have a long history of public engagement with issues of individual freedom and social justice.

Therefore, acts of conscience or civil disobedience that may have resulted in criminal charges or convictions will receive distinct consideration and careful attention under this policy.

The following questions must be considered by the Panel:

- **Dangerous:** Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to other persons or property, including him or herself?
- **Disruptive:** How much interference with church functions is occurring?
- **Offensive:** How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

The following questions may be considered by the Panel:

- **Causes:** Why is this disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the fellowship? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness? Are there other factors to be considered?
- **History:** What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?
- **Probability of Change:** How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

The Panel will respond on a case-by-case basis. Mediation by a neutral party is also a possibility. The following levels of response are options the Panel can implement:

- **No Action:** It may be determined that the complaint is not warranted, and the Panel will explain and discuss this with the person who filed the complaint.

- **Warning:** The Panel shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern and expectations for future behavior made clear in writing.
- **Suspension:** The offending individual is excluded from the congregation and/or specific activities for a limited period of time, with the reasons and the conditions of return made clear in writing. A suspension may not be appealed.
- **Expulsion:** The committee recommends that the offending individual should be expelled from membership in UUCM. If expulsion is approved by a 2/3-majority vote of the Board of Trustees, the Panel will write a letter to the individual explaining the reasons, the individual's rights and

possible recourse. The offending individual may appeal the decision to a Special Congregational meeting.

Procedure for Special Congregational Meeting (SCM) for Appealing an Expulsion:

This circumstance is so extreme that it seems to necessitate a very specific procedure in order to keep it focused. Expulsion is the worst-case scenario we can imagine; this process will always be painful.

- Adult members equal to thirty percent (30%) of the UUCM membership must be present in order to have a quorum for the SCM. Proxy votes are not permitted for an SCM.
- The President of the Board of Trustees, or someone he or she designates, shall serve as Facilitator for the SCM.
- The Facilitator for the SCM shall be the final authority on all procedural matters or disputes during the SCM.
- The Facilitator will open the SCM by stating to those present that 1) this appeal is a serious matter 2) they should vote based solely upon what they learn during the SCM and 3) that all dialog and discussion must be conducted respectfully.
- The offending individual then shall have up to ten (10) minutes to make a presentation regarding why he or she should not be expelled from the UUCM. No one is permitted to interrupt or disrupt this presentation.
- The Panel then shall have up to ten (10) minutes to make a presentation regarding why the offending individual should not be readmitted to the UUCM. No one is permitted to interrupt or disrupt this presentation.
- The offending individual then shall have up to five (5) minutes to respond to what was said by the Panel and to summarize again why they should not be expelled from the UUCM.
- The members present then have up to fifteen (15) minutes to ask factual questions of either the offending individual or the Panel. Speeches, arguments and debating shall not occur during this 15-minute period and the Facilitator has the right to ask a person who is debating or arguing to either stop doing so or ask a specific factual question.
- The members present then have up to twenty (20) minutes to debate, discuss and argue the sole issue before the SCM, should this congregation reverse the expulsion of Jane Doe or John Smith from the membership of the UUCM.
- Those present can decide by a voice vote to extend any time frame listed in these rules.
- At the end of the debate there shall be a secret ballot vote on one discrete issue: "Should the expulsion of Jane Doe or John Smith from the membership of the

UUCM be reversed?"

- The expulsion of the offending individual shall remain unless 2/3 of those members present and voting vote "yes" on the question listed in the previous rule.
- It shall not be permissible to change the substance or content of the one discrete issue that is to be voted upon at an SCM.

Procedure for Possible Reinstatement of an Expelled Member

Any request for reinstatement must be made by the expelled member and may be made no sooner than one year following an expulsion. The request must be in writing to the Board of Trustees and include:

- A statement of understanding of the reasons for which s/he was removed from membership.
- An explanation in detail of how circumstances and conditions have changed, such that a reinstatement would be justified.
- The Board will review the request and respond within 60 days as to whether or not to reinstate the removed member.
- The decision of the board is final and shall not be subject to further appeal.
- In the event that a reinstatement request is not granted, any subsequent reinstatement requests may be made no sooner than one year following the ex-member being informed of a negative decision on the previous request.

Child Care Program

All paid childcare will have a qualified supervising person who is 18 years or older.

Any youth working childcare must: have taken Red Cross Baby Sitting classes, be approved by the Youth Leader and RE Coordinator, always be under direct supervision of other adult staff.

Membership

The only requirement of membership under the current Bylaws is signing the Membership Book. To facilitate integration into the church, new members will be requested to:

complete a New Member Information Sheet

attend an orientation series conducted by the Membership

Committee and participate in an official welcoming ceremony at a worship service.

New members are to be informed of the general financial condition of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami and the cost to the Congregation of each membership is to be explained clearly.

New members are to be informed on opportunities for participation in Congregation activities and for volunteering time to maintain Congregation operations.

New members are to have read the “Principles and Purposes of Unitarian Universalism”.

A new mentor, Board of Trustees Liaison, or the Minister will help in welcoming a new member in the above ways, and by emphasizing that the primary value of each member to the Society is the gift of their personhood, and not their tangible contributions.

Memorial and Other Gifts

The Board of Trustees encourages the contribution of unrestricted memorial gifts and bequests. Gifts with specified restriction will be accepted only after the Board of Trustees’ review. When the gift is landscape material or an art object, the Board of Trustees or an appointed committee,

will consider the compatibility of such a gift with long-range plans, its preferred location, and general suitability. All gifts will be acknowledged and careful record shall be kept of all gifts and acknowledged each year in the Annual Report.

Speakers/Candidates for Public Office

Candidates for public office shall not be invited to speak at The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Miami to promote their candidacy except as part of a public forum to which all candidates for the same post have been invited.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE POLICY MANUAL

In order to maintain the flexibility of committee and church operations it is not the intention of the Board of Trustees to micromanage or implement inflexible policies/ Therefore the documents contained in this appendix have been referred to in this manual but are subject to change by committee or official of the congregation in charge of implementing them without Board approval. Each document listed below has upfront the committee or official of the Congregation responsible for implementation.