

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
Cincinnati, Ohio

CONSTITUTION
Adopted January 28, 2007

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this corporation shall be First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is to foster a continuing search for truth, a reverence for the life force, and a respect for the preservation of the dignity of every person as each seeks fulfillment.

ARTICLE III – DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

The First Unitarian Church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and may be a member of any Unitarian Universalist area organization.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. There shall be four categories of members as follows:

1. Active Member
2. Friend
3. Inactive Member
4. Absentee Member

Section 2. An Active Member shall be a person over sixteen years of age, who, being in sympathy with the purpose of this Church as given in Article II, has signed the Membership Register and who participates in the life of the Church in a manner described in Section 7. Only Active Members are entitled to all the privileges of this Church. An incomplete list of privileges follows:

1. The right to vote. (This privilege must be established by attending one regular congregational meeting as an observer.)
2. Free use of the Church building (except as limited by guidelines imposed by the Building Use Committee and other policy-makers of the Church) and of the services of the Minister in rites of passage.
3. Free use of the Church building (see limitations in Privilege No. 2) for properly scheduled meetings and social functions where these have a Church related purpose and are generally open to all members.

4. Receipt of the Church Newsletter.
5. Inclusion in the annual Directory.
6. Certification to UUA with the right to attend the General Assembly and district meetings, and to receive The World.

Section 3. A Friend shall be a person who is involved in the life of the Church on a regular basis but has not signed the Membership Register. Friends shall have privileges numbered 4 and 5 above.

Section 4. An Inactive Member shall be a person who was formerly an Active Member but who has been reclassified in a manner described in Section 7.

Inactive Members shall not have any of the privileges listed unless such privilege is granted by the Board of Trustees.

Section 5. An Absentee Member shall be a person who would qualify as an Active Member but who does not live in this area. Absentee Members shall have privileges numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5 above.

Section 6. The Membership Register shall be a suitable book kept by and under the control of the Registrar. Signatures placed in the Register must be witnessed and initialed by at least one Active Member with voting privileges.

Section 7. Changing Membership Status: It shall be the joint responsibility of the Registrar and the Vice President of the Board and another person designated by the Board to keep the Membership List current. Once each year in the month of January these three persons shall meet for this purpose. If at that time it is determined that a person listed as an Active Member has for a period of 25 months participated in the life of the Church in none of the following ways:

1. Attended a regular congregational meeting.
2. Been a member of a Church committee or participated in a recorded activity such as a work party.
3. Pledged money for the Church canvass.

Then it shall be recommended to the Board of Trustees that such person be re-listed as an Inactive Member. The Board shall, if the action seems appropriate, direct the Registrar to make the indicated change. This shall not be done, however, without communicating or attempting to communicate with such person with a view toward maintaining his/his active status. After three years as an Inactive Member a person shall be dropped from the Membership List by the Registrar.

An Active Member may change her/his status from Active to Inactive at any time by addressing a written communication to the Board of Trustees indicating a wish to do so. After proper consideration, the Board shall direct the Registrar to make the change if that seems appropriate.

An Inactive Member may regain Active status at any time by addressing a written communication to the Board of Trustees indicating that such member is participating or will

participate in the life of the Church. As above, the Board shall direct the Registrar to make the appropriate change.

Change of status from Active Member to Absentee Member shall be made by the Registrar on receiving notice that a member has moved out of this area.

Section 8. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as requiring a change in the status of any long-term Active Member, who in the judgment of the Board of Trustees, is prevented by factors beyond his/her control, from participating in the life of the Church as prescribed in Section 7.

ARTICLE V – FISCAL YEAR

Fiscal year 2002-2003 shall be April 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003; thereafter the fiscal year for the Church shall be July 1 through June 30. *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, April 24, 2002)*

ARTICLE VI – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held in the month of September each year, and additional regular meetings shall be held by March 15 and May 31 respectively. This time and date shall be set by the Board of Trustees. *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, April 24, 2002)*

Section 2. Notice of every regular and Annual Meeting shall be communicated by written or electronic mail to every member family at least ten (10) days in advance of meeting, and shall be announced from the pulpit on the two Sundays prior to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in every notice. *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, May 21, 2017)*

Section 3. Special Congregational Meetings:
Members of the Congregation shall be notified by the Board of Trustees by written or electronic mail of the purpose at least fourteen (14) days prior to the special meeting. . *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, May 21, 2017)*

A Trustee may at any time, upon fulfilling the above requirements, call a special meeting of the Congregation.

The Trustees, upon receiving a petition for a special meeting, signed by a at least thirty-five (35) members with voting privileges, must call such a meeting in accordance with the above requirements within thirty (30) days.

Section 4. Quorum - Any number of members with voting privileges who appear at a legally called meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 5. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes cast, unless otherwise provided in this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII – TRUSTEES

Section 1. Number – There shall be a Board of Trustees composed of nine (9) members with voting privileges, one third being elected at the last Congregational Meeting prior to the close of each fiscal year, to serve a three (3) year term, or until their successors have qualified. A Trustee may be eligible for re-election only after the expiration of one year following a term of service on the Board of Trustees. A Trustee may not be a paid Church staff member. *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, April 24, 2002)*

Section 2. Vacancies – Vacancies in the Board of Trustees owing to death or resignation shall be filled by appointment by the Trustees until the last Congregational Meeting prior to the end of the fiscal year in which the vacancy occurs when the Congregation shall fill any unexpired terms by election. *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, April 24, 2002)*

Section 3. The Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Congregation, shall have charge of the real and personal property of the Church, conduct all the business affairs of the Church and have control of the administrative affairs of the Church consistent with the constitution and By-Laws.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees shall not authorize any expenditures that would cause the operating budget as most recently approved by the Congregation, to be exceeded by more than twenty percent (20%) of the total amount of the receipts shown in that budget without the concurrence of at least two-thirds (2/3) of those qualified voting members of the Congregation who are present and vote at a legal meeting of the Congregation. Such meetings shall be held no earlier than fourteen (14) days after all members of the Congregation have been mailed a notification of the meeting location, date, time, agenda and summary of the action for which the concurrence is proposed.

Section 5. The Board of Trustees shall not sell, encumber, or otherwise dispose of the buildings and land of the Church without the concurrence of at least two-thirds (2/3) of those voting members of the Church who vote on the proposition whether at a special meeting, or by mail as hereinafter directed, and then only after compliance with and in strict conformity to all the laws of Ohio on such subjects in force at the time. Notice of such meetings shall be made by mail to every member at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting, and shall be announced from the pulpit at a regular Sunday Service. A ballot for absentee voting and an agenda for the meeting shall be included in the notice of the meeting. Members who wish to vote by absentee ballot shall be given fourteen (14) days after the legal meeting to be held to register their votes with the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. At that time all votes registered shall be counted and tabulated by the official tellers and the results shall be made known to the entire membership by mail. Buildings or land of the Church may then be sold, encumbered, or otherwise disposed of if two-thirds (2/3) of these official votes approve this action.

ARTICLE VIII - ENDOWMENT FUND *(Most recently amended by congregational vote, January 28, 2007)*

Section 1. The primary repository of all permanent or legacy gifts shall be known as the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati Endowment Fund (Endowment Fund). Into the Endowment Fund shall be placed specific gifts or bequests designated for the Endowment Fund, and all gifts and bequests given through a will, trust or other testamentary document dated prior to November 1, 1987, which are given to the Church and not designated for another purpose or otherwise restricted. All other gifts and bequests may be retained in the General Fund of the Church or placed in the Endowment Fund as the Board of Trustees, in its discretion, designates.

Section 2. Responsibility for the Endowment Fund management shall be vested in Endowment Fund Trustees each of whom shall be members of the Congregation, appointed by the Church Board of Trustees to a five-year, staggered term subject to ratification by a majority of the voting members attending and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Congregation.

Section 3. The relationship of the Endowment Fund shall be set forth in a Trust Agreement or other governing document. The Trust Agreement or other governing document, together with any amendments thereto, shall be effective upon approval by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members attending and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Congregation.

ARTICLE IX – NOMINATING COMMITTEE (amended 1/24/10)

Section 1. There shall be a Nominating Committee composed of five (5) members, as follows:

1. Each year at the spring meeting of the Congregation, two members of the Congregation shall be elected to the Nominating Committee from and by the voting members of the Congregation present to serve for a term of two (2) years;
2. Each year, at or prior to the spring meeting of the Congregation, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a fifth member to the Nominating Committee from among the outgoing members of the Board of Trustees, to serve for a term of one (1) year;
3. Nominating Committee meetings shall be convened by the senior members of the Nominating Committee;
4. Vacancies on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. Only members of the Congregation with voting privileges shall be eligible for election to the Nominating Committee. No member of the Board of Trustees may serve on the Nominating Committee.

Section 3. Every year, the Nominating Committee shall make known to the members of the Congregation by written notice the list of nominees for the position on the Board of Trustees at least forty-five (45) days prior to the election date.

Section 4. Additional nominations for the Board of Trustees may be made by means of a nominating petition signed by twenty-five (25) voting members of the Congregation. Such petitions shall be filed with the Office Administrator no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the election and shall be made known to the Congregation by written notice.

ARTICLE X – THE MINISTER

Section 1. A Minister shall be called by the Congregation only with the consent of three-fourths (3/4) and dismissed by the Congregation with a simple majority vote of the voting members present at a meeting expressly called for such a purpose, as set forth in Article VI, Section 2. Voting shall be by secret ballot and both Minister and Congregation shall be notified of the votes cast.

Section 2. The Minister shall be called for an indefinite tenure. Contractual arrangements will be made by the Board of Trustees unless such provisions are included in the official call of the Minister by the Congregation.

Section 3. The Minister shall be granted freedom of the pulpit without restrictions as to beliefs and teachings.

Section 4. In case of proposed dismissal or resignation, the Trustees will instruct the Ministerial Relations Committee to study reasons for proposed dismissal or resignation, and make a report with recommendations to the Congregation.

Section 5. In case of dismissal by the Congregation, notice of at least four (4) months shall be given.

Section 6. When it becomes necessary to call a new Minister, the Board of Trustees will appoint a Ministerial Search Committee composed of seven (7) to nine (9) members, at least one (1) but not more than three (3) Board members to be appointed by the Board, and six (6) other members of the Congregation to be elected by the membership from a slate prepared by the Nominating Committee.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The By-Laws may be amended at a regular meeting or at any other meeting called for that purpose, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast.

Section 2. The Constitution may be altered or amended at a regular meeting by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present, provided that the proposed alteration or amendment has been mailed in the notice of the meeting, as specified in Article VI, Section 2 o3 3, and has been read at the previous meeting.

Section 3. However, no alteration or amendment affecting the manner of voting on the disposition of the Church buildings or land shall be valid unless approved in the same manner as set forth in Article VII, Section 5.