

# UUCNC Bylaws

## Article I: Name

1. The name of this religious congregation shall be the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua, and it shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of the St. Lawrence District UUA. *[Note: Name changed by vote at 2006 annual meeting: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua. Our bylaws are amended to reflect this.]*
2. It is the intention of this congregation to make annual financial contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the St. Lawrence District UUA in the amount equal to its full fair share as determined by these bodies, except reduced in the amount determined by those members who specify a lesser amount be paid on their behalf at the time of pledging.

## Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this congregation is to affirm, promote and implement the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The congregation shall devote its resources for religious, educational, and humanitarian goals. The purpose of the congregation is also to address the ethical and spiritual needs of its members, friends and community, to spiritually support its members and friends in times of joy and sorrow, and to act for peace and social justice in the community, the nation and the world.

## Article III: Membership

1. Membership in this congregation is open to any person, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, spiritual background or economic status, who is in sympathy with its purpose and programme and who is willing to support the work of the congregation through gifts of time, talent and financial resources.
2. Prior to joining, prospective members should have attended at least four (4) worship services and have a basic understanding of Unitarian Universalist history, guiding tenets and organizational structure by participating in educational sessions sponsored by the congregation, or independent study programs as determined from time to time by the membership committee, or previous membership in another Unitarian Universalist Congregation.
3. One becomes a member of the congregation upon:
  1. Making financial pledge to the annual operating fund and a service pledge, both pledges for the balance of the congregational year, and
  2. Making a financial gift to the annual operating fund in fulfillment of the first installment of such pledge, and
  3. Signing the membership book in the presence of a Board member. and/or minister.

4. To be eligible to vote, make motions, nominate candidates and hold office at any Business Meetings of this congregation, a person must be eighteen years of age or older, and a recorded member for at least ninety days.
5. A person's voting membership will terminate under any of the following conditions: a person gives any member of the executive board a written resignation of membership, or verbally resigns membership purposely and knowingly in the presence of at least three other members who will attest to the same in writing, or has made no identifiable financial contribution of record to the annual operating fund during the current or previous fiscal year. [Revised, Spring 2008]
6. All members have the right to a printed copy of the By-Laws of the congregation and access to material on the history of the Unitarian and Universalist movement. Members have the responsibility to familiarize themselves with the same to the extent of their time and ability, in order to better understand and participate in the purposes and governance of this congregation.

*[Article III revised June 2012 and June 2015]*

#### **Article IV: Meetings**

1. The dates of the regular nonbusiness meetings of the congregation shall be determined by the congregation itself, or by any persons designated by it. The annual business meeting shall be held each year in the month of May or June, at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Executive Board. Special Business Meetings may be called at the written request of any five members. The business to be transacted at all meetings shall be set forth in the notice of the meeting, which shall be sent to all members by mail fifteen days prior to the meeting. Twenty percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum. In such cases as the purchase or sale of property, and the calling of a minister, the quorum shall be forty percent of the voting membership. For the dismissal of a minister, the quorum shall be fifty percent of the voting membership. *[Quorum requirements for purchase/sale of property and calling/dismissal of minister amended Nov. 11, 2007. At the May 23, 2010, Annual Meeting the congregation voted to delegate authority for setting meeting dates of summer services to the Executive Board.]*
2. Real Property shall not be purchased, sold, conveyed, encumbered, or made subjected to any lien; and no church building shall be erected by this congregation unless such purchase, sale, conveyance, encumbrance, or building shall be first authorized by a vote of 75% of the voting members in attendance at a duly called meeting of the congregation for that purpose, which purpose shall be stated in the notice of the meeting. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 40% of the voting members of the congregation. *[Paragraph 2 added at a special business meeting on July 15, 2012.]*

#### **Article V: Executive Board**

Definition: If the first day of a fiscal year falls in a year that ends in an odd digit, the entire fiscal year is considered an "odd year." If the first day of a fiscal year falls in a year that ends in an

even digit, the entire fiscal year is an “even year.” Thus, the fiscal year that runs from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, is an “odd year.”

The Executive Board shall consist of six members, elected by the members of the congregation at the annual meeting. Each board member shall be a voting member of the Congregation. The positions on the Executive Board shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two (2) Members-at-Large.

All Executive Board positions shall serve two year terms. The Secretary and one Member-at-Large shall be elected for terms that begin in odd numbered years. The Treasurer and the other Member-at-Large shall be elected for terms that begin in even number years.

A Vice President shall be elected each year. The person elected as Vice President shall serve on the Executive Board for two years: Beginning in the first year, he or she shall serve as Vice President. Barring resignation, death, or removal (by unanimous action of the remainder of the board), at the beginning of the second year, he or she shall automatically become President.

The Executive Board shall have general charge of the property of the Congregation and the conduct of all of its business affairs and the control of its administration, including the appointment of such committees as it may deem necessary. It may fill Executive Board vacancies with persons who shall serve until the next annual meeting.

Term Limits: No person shall serve for more than six consecutive years in any executive board role or combination of roles, appointed or elected. After an absence of at least 12 months, he or she shall again be eligible for election or appointment to a board position.

Transition: In order to allow for a smooth transition to staggered terms, adjustments as to lengths of initial terms and numbers of board members elected may be made as necessary during the first year of implementation.

*[Article V revised June 2007 and June 2015]*

## **Article VI: Ministry**

It is the intent of the congregation to engage in shared ministry with a professional minister trained in and called to the Unitarian Universalist parish ministry. The length of the ministry shall be indefinite, subject to resignation, retirement or dismissal.

### **1. The Minister**

a) The minister’s duties and responsibilities shall be enumerated in a contract and job description, the initial one of which shall be proposed to the Executive Board by the Ministerial Search Committee following a congregational vote to call a minister. The contract shall also contain information on the minister’s compensation, fringe benefits and other appropriate matters.

- b) The minister shall be an *ex officio* member of the Executive Board and all standing committees of the congregation.
- c) The minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as the freedom to express his or her opinion outside the pulpit.
- d) The minister shall supervise any other paid employees of the congregation.

## **2. Ministerial Search Committee and Selection Process**

- a) A Ministerial Search Committee shall be elected by the congregation at a duly called meeting and shall consist of between five and seven members.
- b) In calling a Consulting Minister, already serving the congregation, to a Settled Ministry, the Executive Board may appoint a Ministerial Transition Committee of not fewer than three voting members of the congregation to act in place of a Ministerial Search Committee. *[This provision was approved at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011.]*
- c) The committee shall have a budget, approved by the congregation, for the conduct of its work.
- d) The committee shall, after carefully considering and evaluating potential candidates, present one candidate to the congregation.
- e) The minister shall be called at a special congregational meeting duly called for this purpose. A quorum of 40 percent shall be required at the meeting. An affirmative vote of 80 percent of those present and voting is required to approve a candidate and call them to ministry within the congregation.
- f) An Interim Minister or Consulting Minister, to serve for a period of one year or less, may be called directly by the Executive Board by a less formal process decided upon by the Board, provided there has been timely opportunity for input into the decision by members of the congregation. *[This provision was amended at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011.]*

## **3. Termination**

- a) The minister may be dismissed by the congregation at a special meeting duly called for this purpose. A quorum of 50 percent shall be required at this meeting. An affirmative vote of 80 percent of those present and voting shall be required for such dismissal. The minister's salary and benefits shall be continued for a period of ninety days following the effective date of dismissal.
- b) The minister shall give at least ninety days' notice in writing to the Executive Board of his/her resignation or retirement.

## **4. Committee on Ministry**

The Committee on Ministry and the Minister shall do an annual review of the minister's letter of agreement and leadership covenant and recommend any changes to the Executive Board. The committee shall also recommend to those preparing the proposed annual budget any changes to the salary and benefits package for the minister, based on merit and cost of living increases.

*[Note: Article VI was drafted and approved on Nov. 12, 2000. Article VI, 4. was revised June 2007.]*

### **Article VII: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall end June 30.

### **Article VIII: Amendments**

These bylaws, as far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at any meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting. Notice of any proposed changes shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.

### **Article IX: Dissolution**

Should this congregation cease to function and the membership vote to disband, any assets of the congregation will be transferred to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its general purposes; this transfer is to be made in full compliance with whatever laws are applicable.

### **Article X: Committees**

Committees designed to further the interests of the Congregation shall be formed only with the consent of the elected officers.

The Standing Committees of this Congregation shall include:

- Leadership Development Committee (to consist of three voting members who shall not officers and who will serve two-year overlapping terms; member/members of which shall be elected by voting members at the annual business meeting).
    - The Leadership Development Committee is responsible for:
      - Selecting the slate of Executive Board members and member/members of the Leadership Development Committee to be elected at the annual business meeting;
      - Facilitating congregational leadership development and training
    - If a vacancy should occur on the Leadership Development Committee, the Executive Board may fill such vacancy by appointment of a voting member who is not an officer.
- [This provision was amended at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011 and again in June 2012.]*
- Worship Committee

- Religious Exploration Committee [*Committee name amended at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011.*]
- Site Committee
- Communication Committee
- Membership Committee
- Campus Ministry
- Finance Committee
- Caring Circle [*Committee name amended at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011.*]
- Social Action Committee
- Stewardship Committee
- Committee on Ministry (This committee shall consist of three members, initially one chosen by the minister, one chosen by the Executive Board, and one member chosen by the other two, with members serving three-year terms, staggered so that there is one new member each year. New members to an ongoing committee shall be chosen by the Board from a list of three names submitted by the minister.) This committee's charge is to support, inform, advocate for, and evaluate the ministry of the congregation in its entire context, including the minister.

*[Article X revised June 2007 and May 2009.]*

- Building Acquisition Committee (BAC) The purpose shall be to monitor the local real estate market for suitable properties that may become available, and if a property looks promising to its members, the BAC shall have the authority to investigate and evaluate the property and make a recommendation to the congregation at a business meeting. When the BAC is involved in an active search to acquire a building, or anticipates being in such a search, the BAC shall have at its disposal a budget for inspection, legal fees and, if necessary, earnest money, such budget to be voted on as a special contingency line item at the annual business meeting or at a special business meeting called for this purpose. The BAC will be activated only after a majority vote of the congregation at a duly called meeting of the congregation affirms the feasibility and appropriateness of searching for a building to purchase. [*This committee added on Nov. 11, 2007 at a special congregational meeting. Revised June 2015 and June 2017.*]
- Space Committee. The Space Committee shall be responsible for ongoing evaluation of the space(s) in which the congregation holds Sunday Worship and other activities. The committee shall develop and present (to the Board and/or congregation as appropriate) recommendations for improvements or alternatives to such space(s). Such recommendations shall include cost estimate(s) and method(s) of funding. [*This committee added on June 11, 2017.*]

## **Article XI: Nondiscrimination**

UUCNC affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in all our activities and endeavors, including but not limited to membership, programming, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals, without regard to race/ethnicity, color, physical or mental

challenge, gender identity, affectional or sexual orientation, class, or national origin. *[Article XI added on June 23, 2013, at the annual congregational meeting.]*

*Bylaws Revised May 22, 1994 at Annual Meeting, Grange Hall, Fredonia NY. Additional additions made Nov. 12, 2000 and revisions made at the 2006, 2007 and 2009 Annual Meetings and at a special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011, as noted. Section on Voting Membership revised spring 2008. BAC and Quorum Requirements for purchase/sale of property and calling/dismissal of a minister added/revised November 2007. In approving these bylaws with changes at the special business meeting on Feb. 27, 2011, voting members approved the entire set of bylaws, which encompasses all known changes made in the past. Additional revisions June 17, 2012 at Annual Meeting; July 15, 2012, at a special business meeting; June 23, 2013 at Annual Meeting, June 7, 2015 at Annual Meeting, and June 11, 2017 at Annual Meeting.*