

# **Policies of the Board of Trustees**

**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church**

**1330 Gotham Street**

**Watertown, NY 13601**

**As of December 13th, 2024**

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# **BOARD**

## **Board Meeting Scheduling**

The board schedules its own meetings and notifies all board members of the time and location. The President or Vice President may also call special board meetings and must notify all board members at least 24 hours in advance. The congregation shall be informed of all board meetings.

**Developed 12/18/16 Revised 9/23/21**

## **Board Participation by Internet**

1. Virtual Participation. Board members may attend and vote at board meetings virtually.
2. E-Mail Voting. Decisions of the board are made in board meetings. However, the board may pass a motion during a board meeting to vote on an issue by email. In all cases, motions cannot be made through email. If further discussion is required then a special meeting will be called. The board secretary will keep a record of the correspondence and report the decision at the next meeting.

**Developed 12/18/16 Revised 6/19/20, 9/23/21**

## **Board Rules of Order Policy**

Board of Trustee meetings shall be governed by 'Democratic Rules of Order' conducted by an informal chair.

**Developed 8/26/21**

## **Trustee Absences**

Minutes of the Board meetings will indicate which trustees are absent and excused and those merely absent.

**Developed 10/6/87 Reviewed 9/23/21**

# **COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

## **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee has four members who are all ex officio: the current President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. It has no specific function and does not have general authority like the board. It is a general-purpose committee for the purpose of dealing quickly with matters that can't wait for the full board but which don't rise to the level of calling for a special meeting. The executive committee has whatever authority and responsibilities are delegated to it by these policies of the board, no more or less. Among the matters delegated to the executive committee are authorization of building use agreements and approval of minor but urgent building and grounds contracts.

**Developed 12/13/24**

# COMMUNICATIONS

## **Board Policy on Electronic Congregational Meetings**

In reliance upon the Consolidated Laws of State of New York, Chapter 51 Article 2, Section 28, this policy of the board of trustees establishes guidelines and procedures for meetings conducted partially or solely by means of electronic communication. The person acting as chair of a meeting of the congregation is authorized to count individual online participants as present or absent. Any active member present may object to such declarations or raise a point of order regarding the legitimate presence of an online participant, in which case a simple majority of voting members present can decide the question, with or without debate (at the discretion of the chair). The secrecy of ballots cast online is unreliable, so online participants cannot expect vote privacy.

**Developed 1/9/24**

## **Personal Contact Information and Email Etiquette**

When emails are sent to the entire congregation, the email addresses will be in the blind carbon copy (BCC) line. This is to protect private contact information. The newsletter and weekly post are our primary means of notifying the congregation of news and events. Emergencies and special announcements that are approved by the Board executive committee will be sent as emails via BCC. Personal contact information will not be given out without the authorization from the person of concern.

**Developed 4/16/11 Revised 11/18/21**

## **Requests for Assistance**

Non-members requesting financial assistance shall be directed to contact their home church, the Urban Mission and other local assistance organizations. The office manual contains suggested wording. The minister or executive committee should be made aware of each request. Church members requesting assistance should bring their request to the minister or executive committee.

**Developed 8/20/13 Revised 10/28/21**

# FINANCE

## **Accounting Review**

The Board of Trustees shall appoint a committee of church members to review financial records at the close of the fiscal year using guidelines provided by the UUA. Neither the collector nor anyone with authority to sign checks should review the accounting books.

**Developed 10/6/87 Revised 9/24/13, 10/28/21**

## **Expense Reimbursement**

Permission from a committee is required prior to making purchases; Board approval may also be required. When a congregation member purchases items for the church and requests reimbursement, the reimbursement form must be completed and

submitted with the receipt to the church office. The expense will be refunded with a check within a month of the request. Tax exempt forms are available; taxes will not be reimbursed. Purchases and acquisitions given to the church should be reported to the Treasurer for determining the operating costs the church. If the purchaser does not request reimbursement, it will be considered a donation to the church.

**Developed 6/23/10 Revised 10/28/21**

### **Expenses**

The expenses by any committee exceeding \$200 shall be presented in a proposal from the respective committee chair to the Executive Committee. Committee expenses of \$200 or less that are within committee budget shall require only committee approval.

**Developed 5/16/88 Revised 12/16/09, 10/28/21**

### **Bank Account Descriptions**

#### Accounts at Americu Credit Union

- Checking Account: Funds in this account are to be used to cover church expenses as provided in the yearly budget approved by the congregation at the annual meeting. Any funds beyond what is required for payment of monthly bills may be transferred by the treasurer into the money market savings account for maximum interest.
- Money Market Savings Account: Funds in this account are earmarked in Quickbooks as follows:
  - Capital Expenses: This money is set aside in the annual budget over the years to be used by the board for capital expenses (any property with a life expectancy of more than three years and a value of over \$500). Capital expenses of \$5,000 or more require congregational approval.
  - Savings for Minister's Salary: This is money set aside in the annual budget over the years for paying the salary of a future minister.
  - Social Justice/ Hild Fund: This is money earmarked for use in social justice projects at the discretion of the board.
  - Money Market Savings: This is the non-earmarked portion of our savings that can be used by the board as provided in the annual budget approved by the congregation at the annual meeting.
- Memorial Garden Checking Account  
The money in this account, currently at Americu Credit Union, is to be used to cover expenses for keeping the garden in good condition and the Memorial Plaque and Book up to date. It may be used by the Memorial Garden committee to cover operating expenses, maintenance, or special projects in the Memorial Garden.
- Prime Share: This is a basic savings account required by the credit union when any account is opened.

**Developed 4/23/06 Revised 12/10/13, 11/18/21**

## **Financial Safeguards**

### **(1) Account Security**

All checks written during the month will be reconciled in the QuickBooks checking account to the bank statement by the bookkeeper. The memorandum section on each check shall contain invoice numbers or the purpose or both. All investment and savings accounts will be reconciled monthly by the bookkeeper. The bookkeeper shall issue a monthly balance sheet as part of the Treasurer's Report.

### **(2) Collection Plate**

Immediately following the worship service donation collection, two people who are unrelated and not the treasurer, collector or authorized check signer, will secure the collection plates in the office and lock the office door. Following Sunday worship services, they will count and double verify the total amount of collected donations and income received during the week using the Plate Collection Record. This document shall be given to the bookkeeper for recording and filing.

**Developed 2/10/09 Revised 9/24/13, 10/28/21**

## **Guest Speaker Pay**

According to UUA guidance, ASUUC may pay ministers from outside of the congregation and UU ordained ministers up to \$300 plus mileage for each engagement. The worship committee will negotiate any compensation for lay speakers.

**Developed 10/21/09 Revised 11/18/21**

## **Investment Accounts**

Any withdrawals or transfers from investment accounts require board approval.

**Developed 8/19/92 Revised 12/16/09, 10/28/21**

## **Personal Loans**

The church does not make personal loans.

**Developed 4/23/17 Revised 10/28/21**

# **HOUSE RULES**

## **Accident Prevention Policy**

The accident prevention policy is a guidance to avoid unintended harm to anyone or damage to property on the church campus or while participating in any church activity.

1. Activity Authorization: All activities associated with the church or on the church campus require prior authorization from the Board or the associated committee(s).

2. Accident Reporting: Whenever an accident occurs on the church campus resulting in harm to anyone or property damage, then the person in charge shall submit the Accident Report form to the executive committee. Any significant accident will require the Board to notify the appropriate agencies and take action to prevent similar accidents.

3. Hazardous Activities: Anyone engaging in hazardous activities must be accompanied by an adult safety person.

**Developed 2/24/22**

### **Alcohol Consumption on Church Property**

Outside groups using the church facility and intending to use alcohol must provide proof of insurance for that alcohol use.

**Developed 11/3/87 Revised 11/18/09, 10/28/21**

### **Borrowing of Equipment**

The equipment at All Souls was purchased by and is for the use of our congregation. If a member of the congregation wishes to borrow church equipment, they will complete a "Request for Equipment" form and notify a member of the Church Board executive committee. The notified executive committee member will notify the committee(s) that use and maintain the borrowed equipment. Submission of the form does not guarantee the loan will be approved.

A member of the executive committee must be present at the time the equipment is borrowed and returned. If the equipment is returned damaged, the borrower will be asked to cover costs of repair or replacement.

Members of the community who are not church members may only use the equipment when renting building space as covered by the building use policy.

**Developed 10/16/05 Revised 11/18/09, 9/24/13, 6/24/21**

### **Church Building Use**

Offering the church building for use to members and non-members is seen as a service of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church to the community. The fees designated for non-member use and the donations received from member use are intended to defray the costs of building maintenance. Building use fees for non-profit activity may be waived by the board but donations are encouraged.

To request building use, the person requesting building use must fill out a Building Use Request Form and submit it to the church office. The person requesting building use must consult the building use calendar found at [www.allsoulsuu.org](http://www.allsoulsuu.org) or on the office door to determine whether the requested time and place is available. Building Use Request Forms may be submitted with or without fees or deposit. The person requesting building use must submit the appropriate fees at least 10 days preceding the planned event, or the event may be cancelled.

Any member of the ASUUC Executive Committee has the authorization to sign the Building Use Request Form, attesting that the executive committee has been consulted. Building use approvals will be reported at the next Board meeting by the signing executive committee member. Office personnel may cancel building use requests that have not been approved within seven days prior to an event. Authorized office personnel will check and update the church calendar as events are scheduled to avoid conflicts.

When a non-church member schedules an event at the church, the person will be required to submit a security deposit equal to the total of all applicable fees for one day

of building use. If the board waives the fees the deposit may still be required. The deposit will be held and returned to the building user if there are no damages or unusual maintenance expenses. The security deposit does not limit the responsibility for all damages. If damage costs are beyond the required deposit, the person requesting building use will be billed for the full cost of repair or replacement. If the executive committee judges a building use request to be of sensitive or controversial nature, the building use reservation shall be contingent upon a consensus of the Board of Trustees. Building use requests from church member activities should use the Church Activity Building Reservation Form. This application may be approved by authorized office personnel. Other requirements may pertain to these requests.

The Board of Trustees may require a donation:

- if the event sponsors another organization
- if a fee is charged to participants
- if it is a for-profit event
- if services of the custodian will be required

Suggested donations may be determined by the ASUUC Executive Committee. All members of the executive committee shall be notified, and a donation amount determined with approval. A memorial service for a church member has traditionally been free of charge. The minister has exclusive control of the minister's office.

**Developed 10/21/99 Revised 12/18/16, 11/18/21**

### **Fire Lanes**

The following areas are designated as fire lanes: the driveway in front of the church and the paved area immediately next to the left side of the church. Therefore, no parking is permitted in these fire lanes so that there will be appropriate access to the building by emergency vehicles and equipment.

**Developed 4/21/08 Reviewed 11/26/13, 10/28/21**

### **Smoking Policy**

The building and areas within 25' of the building are smoke free.

**Developed 12/8/87 Revised 12/16/09, 10/28/21**

### **Storage Policy**

Our church does not have room for storage of personal property. Groups that meet on a recurring basis may be provided limited storage areas for equipment and supplies. Group items shall be stored in those areas neatly. Items abandoned will be placed in a designated lost and found and disposed of periodically. The church refrigerator is for temporary storage of food prior to an event, not for leftovers or for long term stockage. Everything left in the refrigerator on Sunday mornings is the property of All Souls, to be used for coffee hour.

**Developed 7/26/16 Revised 10/28/21**

## **PERSONNEL**



## **Employee Evaluations**

Board designated supervisors shall evaluate church employees annually. It is recommended that the Board approved evaluation form be used. New employees will be evaluated within 90 days. Evaluations should be an interactive process with the employee. Employees cannot supervise or evaluate other employees. Evaluations will be completed before May 1st. If a supervisor or supervising committee does not submit an evaluation prior to the May meeting, the Board will appoint someone to complete the evaluation before the June congregational meeting. Completed evaluations will be maintained in the employee's personnel folder. Personnel folders will be kept secure and confidential with access restricted by the Board. The Committee on Ministry will evaluate any Minister.

**Developed 11/15/93 Revised 11/18/09, 11/26/13, 2/24/22**

## **Employee Hiring**

Hiring decisions will be based on criteria established in advance for the particular position. The board will set hiring criteria, and shall not include special preference for church members or family members.

**Developed 11/18/09 Revised 12/16/21**

## **Inactive Member Removal Policy**

By name, the Board of Trustees may authorize the Registrar to strike from the Membership Rolls any signed member who is not currently an active voting member, and who has not attended an annual meeting of the church within the last 10 years.

**Adopt 10/28/22**

# **SECURITY**

## **Alarm Code**

The building access code should be changed at least once a year as authorized by the board. Office personnel must inform all authorized key holders, and only authorized key holders, of the new code.

**Developed 9/9/07 Revised 12/16/21**

## **Key Holder Authorization**

Office personnel may issue keys and building codes only to persons authorized by the Board of Trustees. Blanket permission is granted for the issuance of keys to elected or appointed church officers, trustees, chairs of standing committees, employees, and one responsible person in each group recurrently using the building indefinitely in accordance with the Building Use Policy. The office will keep written records of keys and key holders. The executive committee will be informed whenever a key is issued or returned. Non church members will pay a ten dollar deposit when issued a key. Deposits will be returned when the key is returned.

**Developed 12/16/21**

## **Key Holder Responsibilities**

All persons issued keys will be required to sign a form approved by the board, informing them of their responsibilities. The board may revoke key holder permissions from those failing to comply with those responsibilities.

**Developed 12/8/2010 Revised 8/20/13, 12/16/21**

### **Office Equipment**

The use of All Souls office equipment and of supplies is for official church business only and they should not be used for personal purposes.

**Developed 12/8/2010 Revised 12/16/21**

### **Office Key**

Office keys will be issued by board approval and will be limited to current members of the executive committee, the registrar, the collector, the newsletter editor, authorized office personnel, the Minister and the DRE.

**Developed 12/8/2010 Revised 12/16/21**

### **Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior**

Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and any other staff. The Board may appoint a response team to investigate the matter using this policy as a source of guidance

When any conflict arises which cannot be resolved by the involved parties, the Minister or President shall be informed, and form a Response Team. This Response Team will include the Minister, the President of the Board of Trustees and at least two other members of the congregation appointed by the President. The Response Team will gather necessary information and develop a response plan for the situation.

If the Minister and/or President are involved in the conflict, the board of trustees shall be called into a special meeting to appoint a Response Team.

The Response Team will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action that will be reported back to the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and any other staff involved. This may also include reaching out to a UUA representative for guidance. The following four levels of response are recommended.

Level One: The response team contacts the person named as the source of the disruption and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be elicited, valued and documented. Committee members will then assess the situation.

Level Two: If the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and a covenant for clearly defined behavioral change will be negotiated

Level Three: If the person in question refuses to negotiate a covenant, aided by the response team, or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, he or she may be

excluded from the church for a specified period of time, with reasons for the action and conditions for return.

Level Four: The person in question may be permanently excluded from the church and the church premises. Steps may be taken as needed to enforce the integrity of this decision.

The following are offered as dimensions to be used in assessing the nature and severity of referred problems:

1. DANGER– Is the individual the source of threat or harm to persons or property?
2. DISRUPTIVENESS - What is the extent of disruption to church functions?
3. CONGREGATIONAL INTEGRITY – How likely is it that existing or prospective church members will be driven away by the alleged behavior?
4. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
5. HISTORY – What has been the frequency and the degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?

The following principles along with guidance from the UUA shall guide the response:

1. Persons identified as being disruptive will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.
2. Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated response team members and documented before any action is taken.
3. The Response Team may offer a referral for professional services
4. If the Response Team decides that exclusion or expulsion from the Church is necessary the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and staff will be consulted prior to action.
5. In the event of imminent risk or actual harm to church members, church employees or church property, immediate action will be taken to secure the safety of persons and property.
6. All documentation developed in the course of investigating and resolving allegations of disruptive behavior will be kept confidential. The President of the Board of Trustees in counsel with the minister(s) will be responsible for ensuring its security.

**Adopted 7/2012 Revised 5/26/22**

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **Leadership Training Funds**

The Board of Trustees approves granting funds for leadership training as the budget allows.

**Developed 10/16/03 Revised 12/16/09, 2/24/22**

## **Memorial Garden**

1. The committee, established in accordance with the ASUUC By-laws, is responsible for approving all Memorial Garden transactions. Except as provided herein, the board grants blanket approval for the committee to manage the affairs of the memorial garden without further board authorization. The committee meets annually prior to the church annual meeting and may meet more frequently as necessary.
2. The cost for placing or scattering the ashes of a member, member's family or friend shall be \$300. This includes the engraved plate which will be attached to the Memorial Garden Plaque in the foyer. If ashes are not scattered or placed in the garden, the cost of the engraved plate alone will be \$200. Payment shall be made in full prior to any committee approval for the plate engraving, and/or disposal of ashes. Fees collected shall be used to cover costs for engraved plate, burial or scattering of ashes, and maintenance of garden and records.
3. Ashes must be scattered or buried only in specified areas of the property but no individual burial site map will be maintained by the committee. The Memorial Garden Committee will try to honor one's wish for location of burial. The final decision on such location rests with the committee. Individual plot markings are prohibited. Burial is considered permanent. Ashes may not be moved. If burial is chosen, ashes must be contained in a cardboard, or other biodegradable container, no larger than 10" X 8" X 6". Winter conditions may delay interment.
4. The committee must be consulted prior to any planting, so that each planting fits into the overall plan. Cut flowers and/or potted plants will not be permitted in the garden. The overall care and planting of the garden shall be the responsibility of the memorial Garden Committee.
5. This policy may not be changed without permission of both the committee and the board. Any changes must be reported to the membership at the annual meeting.

**Developed 04/20/92 Revised 06/23/10, 11/26/13, 12/16/21**

## **Religious Exploration for Adults**

Anyone interested in presenting an Adult Education Program shall contact our Minister or the Board and request a review of the course content and curriculum. The review will be by the Minister or Board with the Religious Exploration committee to determine if the proposed program is within Unitarian Universalist guidelines.

The Board will address any further questions. Scheduling will depend on the needs of the facilitator, the participants in the program, and our church calendar.

**Developed 5/22/03 Revised 1/7/14, 2/24/22**

## **YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

### **Adult Supervision**

Two or more adults are required to be present at any church activity involving the children. At least one supervisor shall be fully trained as required by the Safe Church Manual covering the Child Abuse and Reporting system.

**Developed?? Revised 2/24/22**

## **Child Care**

The Safe Church Manual requires that childcare will be provided by an employee of the church who is at least 18 years old, has satisfactorily passed a formal background check and trained in child abuse prevention and reporting. The responsibility for recruiting, hiring, and supervising this position is assigned to the Religious Exploration coordinator.

**Developed 8/06/08 Revised 9/24/13, 2/24/22**

## **Complaint Response Policy**

Anyone who suspects or is made aware of an allegation of child abuse will report that concern to the President, or Vice President and/or the Minister.

It is not the function of any member or employee of the church to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather it is both New York State Law and the policy of the All Souls to immediately report any situation in which we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. Such a report must be made to the Department of Human Services at (315) 785-5079 or, 1-800-342-3720. Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, the church will rely on the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint.

Meanwhile the President or Vice President will appoint a three-member response team, who will develop a plan to safeguard the children and also provide protection for the accused abuser from further complaints by a permanent plan once the authorities have returned a report.

**Adopted 5/26/22**

## **Safe Congregation Policy**

Supervised Religious Exploration. The Director of Religious Exploration, or a board designated substitute such as the chair of the Religious Exploration Committee, will supervise all child-oriented activities and classes at All Souls.

Authorized Child Care Workers. Children attending All Souls activities must always be either in the company of a parent or in the company of a minimum of two adults, one of whom must be an Authorized Child Care Worker.

To be an authorized child care worker at All Souls, an employee or volunteer must have a current Child Care Affirmation Form on file in the Church Office, signed within the last year by the child care worker and either the Board President or chair of the Religious Exploration committee. The President or RE Chair will not sign any worker's Child Care Affirmation unless the person has been oriented to the relevant policies and has passed a criminal background check with no felony convictions or convictions for child abuse of any kind. Violations of this policy must be reported to the President or chair of the Religious Exploration committee, and are grounds for the termination of status as an authorized child care worker.

Grounds for Contact Bans. No individual who has been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty, *nolo contendere* or “Alford” plea to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum or any forum, will have contact with children or youth or the parties involved, except in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.

If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved except in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.

**Adopted 7/2012 Revised 5/26/22**

### **Unirondack Scholarship Policy**

Applications for assistance in paying cost of attending Camp Unirondack should be submitted by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

If there’s more than one applicant, preference will be give to a child who has never attended Unirondack before. Others will share the funds depending upon the parents’ stated need.

Any funds not used in the current fiscal year will be saved and earmarked to be added to provide a larger scholarship in future years.

If the funds available aren’t adequate to meet the current need, the congregation will be asked to donate additional money.

**Adopted 6/09/23**

# Unirondack Scholarship Request Form

\*\*If you are interested in attending Unirondack and would like to request funds from the Unirondack scholarship please fill out the request form by May 31st. All requests will be considered by the board and the funds will be distributed appropriately.

**Parent's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Session you would like to attend:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you already applied for a scholarship through Camp Unirondack? YES NO**