

BYLAWS
of the
PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY
of
MADISON, WISCONSIN
(As amended May 4, 2008)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this society shall be the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society of Madison, Wisconsin.

ARTICLE II: BOND OF UNION

We, the members of Prairie, wish to associate ourselves together in a religious community which affirms that we share a common humanity, that we need one another, and that our futures are inescapably bound together. Together we would expand our intellectual horizons, enrich our sensory experiences, and deepen our emotional sensitivities. We would sharpen our ethical awareness and broaden our sense of social responsibility. We would stand tall in our quest for integrity of life, yet not at others' expense.

As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world, and with one another.

The bond of union may be revised by a two-thirds vote at a business meeting, provided that the proposed revision has been used and identified as a revision in a Sunday morning service at least six weeks prior to the business meeting. When the proposed revision is published in the official notice of the business meeting, it shall be accompanied by any alternative proposals submitted to the President prior to the date of the notice. No further amendments shall be in order at the business meeting.

ARTICLE III: AFFILIATION

The Society shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of appropriate subdivisions thereof.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

- A. Members of the Society are those persons sixteen years or older who are in sympathy with the Bond of Union of the Society and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and have signed the official Membership Book. Membership shall be in effect until a member dies, resigns in writing, or the membership committee, has determined that the person has discontinued contact with the society, per Article VII.
- B. Friends of the Society are those who have not signed the Membership Book, but participate in the activities of the Society or give evidence of their support.

ARTICLE V: BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. Business meetings may be called by the President or by the Executive Board at any time, or shall be called by the President or by the Board upon the written request of ten Members. At least two weeks' notice must be given for business meetings, unless a longer time period is specified elsewhere in these Bylaws.
- B. Notice of the regular fall and spring business meetings and an invitation to the members to submit agenda items must be sent at least four weeks before the meeting. The agenda shall be specified in the final notice of the meeting to be sent at least two weeks before the meeting. Notice of meetings shall be given in the Society's newsletter, or by other electronic means, though notification will be by mail to any member who requests it. Items of business may include but are not limited to: budgets, elections, appointments, revisions to the Bylaws, committee reports, and resolutions dealing with social issues. The agenda shall be prepared by the President or Board and shall contain items of business originating from the President, Board, committees, and/or individual Members. New business, other than Bylaw changes, may be raised at the meeting at the request of ten members.
- C. A quorum shall consist of thirty Members.
- D. No actions, unless delegated by the Bylaws of the Society, shall be official unless voted upon by a majority of the Members present and voting at a properly called business meeting. Any member may require inclusion of a minority report in the minutes.
- E. Persons other than Members may speak at business meetings, but they may not vote.
- F. Minutes of all business meetings shall be taken, signed, and filed by the Secretary of the Society, or designee.
- G. The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held each spring on or before May 15th, at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Executive Board. The principal business shall be the election of officers and of members of the Committee on Committees.
- H. All business meetings of the Society and of the Executive Board, except as herein otherwise provided, shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

- A. The officers of the Society shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Youth Member, and the elected chairpersons of the following standing committees-- Finance, Religious Education, Program, Social Action, Housing and Property, Long Range Planning, Denominational Affairs, Communications Committee, and Hospitality and Membership. These officers constitute the Executive Board.
- B. Only Members may be elected to office. Officers shall serve for a term of one year and shall not serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office. Officers shall take office following a joint meeting of the outgoing and new Boards, to take place within four weeks of the election.
- C. Any officer who fails to perform the duties of his/her office or who ceases to be a Member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote at a business meeting of the Society. Due process shall be observed.

D. Duties of Officers.

1. The *President* is chairperson of the Executive Board and presides at all business meetings of the Society and of the Board. He/she is an *ex officio* member of all committees except the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Ministry, and is the official representative of the Society.
2. The *Vice-President* acts in place of the President during his/her absence and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed.
3. The *Secretary* keeps records of the transactions of all business meetings of the Society and of the Executive Board. All records of the Secretary shall remain the property of the Society. The Secretary is responsible for giving proper notice of all business meetings.
4. The *Treasurer* receives and safeguards all money and other property of the Society entrusted to his/her care, and may disburse the same under the direction of the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall keep the Finance Committee informed on the financial status of the Society. He/she keeps a complete account of the finances of the Society, which shall be open for inspection at any time to members. He/she shall render a current statement at each regular meeting of the Board and of the Society. His/her statement for the fiscal year may be audited and certified by persons designated by the Executive Board.
5. The *Youth Member* is a person between the ages of 16 and 24. She or he is a fully participating officer of the society, and is responsible for such duties as may be determined from time to time by the Executive Board.
6. *Chairpersons* of standing committees are responsible for the functions assigned to their committees (Article VII). They shall call meetings (at least once a year) and cooperate with the chairs of other committees, the Executive Board, and the minister(s).
7. All outgoing officers and appointees shall consult with their successors and invite them to participate in the activities of the officers during the time between election or appointment and taking office, to familiarize the successors with their duties. To this end, they shall convey a detailed list of duties and suggestions to their successors

E. Duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board shall be to:

1. Carry out the wishes of the Society.
2. Hold at least 10 meetings annually, open to Members and Friends of the Society. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of a majority of the number of elected officers.
3. Call business meetings of the Society.

4. Determine and recommend, in coordination with the Finance Committee, the operating budget as outlined in Article IX.
 5. Acquire, lease, and lend facilities and building space according to the wishes of the Society.
 6. Appoint non-elected committee chairpersons.
 7. Fill temporarily any office which becomes vacant after the fall business meeting. Any office which becomes vacant earlier shall be filled by special election.
 8. Approve the hiring of all employees of the Society (except ministers), and fix their compensation.
 9. Act at the direction of the Society in making official agreements and pronouncements. In general, the Executive Board functions as the Executive power of the Society, always subject to the ultimate control of the Members, as specified in Article V, Section D.
 10. Maintain a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Society.
- F. Each member of the Executive Board of the Society, as heretofore defined in this Article, shall be a Trustee of the Society, and the Executive Board as a whole shall constitute the Board of Trustees of the Society. The Board of Trustees shall exercise for the Society the powers and responsibilities specified in the Wisconsin Statutes, Section 187.01 and Section 187.07.

ARTICLE VII: STANDING COMMITTEES

The voluntary participation of Members and Friends of the Society in the work of the committees is welcomed and persons are encouraged to inform the chairperson of their interest. Committee membership is determined by each committee's Chair, who may obtain assistance from the Committee on Committees to find appropriate and willing members. Committee meetings are open to Members and Friends.

Membership on all committees except the Committee on Committees is open to any Member or Friend of the Society. Committee chairpersons and all members of the Committee on Committees must be Members. Committee appointments expire upon the installation of a new board.

The President shall be a nonvoting *ex officio* member of all standing committees except the Committee on Committees. The minister shall be a nonvoting *ex officio* member of all committees except the Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Committees.

Unless explicitly excepted, all Committee functions are delegated by the Board to Committees. The Board retains final authority and responsibility over all aspects of the functioning of the society.

- A. Committees with elected chairs serving on the Board
 1. *Finance Committee*
 - a. This Committee shall prepare a budget as specified in Article IX and

- supervise the raising of annual and/or special funds. It shall collaborate with the Treasurer regarding the financial condition of the Society.
- b. The committee shall recommend to the Executive Board the definition of an operating fiscal year.
2. *Religious Education Committee*
 - a. This committee is responsible for the church school and shall carry out a program of liberal religious education. It shall become familiar with the long-range objectives of liberal religious education and realistic methods for realizing these goals; it shall always be ready to reevaluate these objectives and methods in light of available talents and resources; and it shall establish immediate goals and curricula of the church school.
 - b. The committee may hire, with the Board's approval, and supervise personnel to assist in administration and leadership of the Religious Education program.
3. *Program Committee*
 - a. This committee is responsible for planning Sunday morning services, including liturgy, and other adult programs, in cooperation with the lay minister, and selecting lay ministers in accordance with Article VIII.B. It is responsible for seating and room arrangements for all programs.
 - b. The program committee shall also make public announcements of time, place, and topic of Sunday services. It shall arrange publicity about events, programs, purposes, personnel, etc., which would encourage those seeking a liberal religious organization to become acquainted with the society.
4. *Social Action Committee*
 - a. This committee shall keep the Society informed of local, state, national, or international issues on which the committee wishes to facilitate the formulation of Society policy and to enable the Society and its members to exert influence in behalf of worthwhile civic causes.
 - b. The committee may:
 - (1) make public statements or take public action only in its own name and by a vote of two-thirds of its members.
 - (2) take charge of the Society's local service activities, and coordinate the Society's service work with that of national and international service committees, including local fund raising for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.
 - (3) raise and disburse funds independent of the Society's control and regulation.
5. *Housing and Property Committee*
 - a. This committee is responsible for the care and supervision of Society grounds, buildings, and equipment. It is empowered to arrange for and make repairs and to purchase supplies provided that funds have been budgeted for such purposes. Recommendations regarding improvements involving large expenditures should be made to the Board.
 - b. The committee may hire, with the Board's approval, and supervise

personnel for the care of house and grounds, and make the arrangements for heating and utility services. It is responsible for the regular inspection and inventory of all Society property and shall make regular evaluation of insurance programs, recommending changes where necessary. Rentals and use of all property usually come under its supervision.

6. *Long Range Planning*

- a. This committee shall make recommendations regarding the long-range objectives of the Society, its services to the community and to its members in the years to come. Problems of expansion, building, location, and area extension come within its purview.

7. *Denominational Affairs*

- a. This committee shall maintain for Prairie Society regular relations with other Unitarian Universalist organizations and will act as the contact and liaison to the Prairie Board for persons wishing to represent Prairie at denominational meetings and affairs. It shall inform the membership as to Unitarian Universalist concerns and events, conferences, meetings and camps at all denominational levels and display Unitarian Universalist pamphlets and literature.
- b. This committee shall partner with the Hospitality and Membership Committee on orientation meetings to acquaint new and prospective members with Prairie Society and Unitarian Universalism.

8. *Hospitality and Membership Committee*

- a. This committee shall:
 - (1) Recruit, orient, and retain members.
 - (2) Maintain the official membership list.
 - (3) Publish a directory of Prairie Members and Friends periodically.
 - (4) Report required information for UUA membership and benefits to appropriate denominational organizations.
 - (5) Provide opportunities for Prairie Members and Friends to connect with each other socially.

9. *Communications Committee*

- a. This committee is responsible for overseeing the communications of the Prairie community. This responsibility includes ensuring that communications from Prairie to the world at large are consistent in design and layout, and facilitating communication in a variety of ways among members, committees, board, minister and staff.
- b. The committee is responsible for the Society's web site, email lists, newsletter, and publicity, and will work closely with other committees who will provide content.
- c. The committee will oversee use of Prairie's logo in all its uses and forms, including electronic, paper, and signs.

B. Special Committees with appointed chairs not serving on the Board

1. *Caring Committee*

- a. This committee shall establish and maintain a support system for Prairie members identifying resources and contacts within the Society and community.

- b. The committee shall encourage members to be caring and shall determine their areas of interest.
- c. The committee chair will be appointed as needed by the Board. This chair is not subject to a particular term.

2. *Committee on Ministry*

- a. The purpose of the Committee on Ministry is to enhance the quality of shared ministry within the congregation, if the congregation selects a professional minister. The committee consists of three members who serve staggered three-year terms that begin on January 1. The members are appointed by the executive board upon consultation with the professional minister. The committee elects its own chair.
- b. The committee advises and evaluates the professional minister. It facilitates shared ministry by explaining the role, expectations, and contract of the ordained minister to the congregation and by helping to make the professional minister aware of any possible concerns arising in regard to shared ministry within the congregation. The committee submits a formal report of the professional minister's performance, including salary recommendations, to the board by October 1 of each year. Due to the nature of its responsibilities, the committee's meetings are normally closed, but members of the congregation are encouraged to provide comments on the successes and limitations of shared ministry to the committee members. The committee is not intended to replace direct discourse between the professional minister and the membership.
- c. If there is no professional minister, the committee is dissolved. If a new professional minister is selected, the existing committee is dissolved and a new committee is appointed.

3. *Ceremonies Committee*

- a. This committee shall:
 - (1) offer resources, advice and assistance for the planning of dedications, weddings, memorial services or funerals, and other rites of passage.
 - (2) when requested, conduct or assist in the conducting of such ceremonies.
 - (3) maintain a file of notes or transcripts of ceremonies that have been conducted, and other written materials for possible use in future ceremonies.
- b. The Chair will be appointed as needed by the Board. This chair is not subject to a particular term. Attempts should be made to provide for continuity through commitments to serve for more than one year and overlapping terms of its Chair and members.

C. *Committee on Committees*

- 1. This committee shall consist of five members, who shall serve a term of one year. Three shall be elected at the Annual Meeting; one appointed by the outgoing Committee on Committees from its own membership; and one appointed by the incoming Executive Board from its own membership. The Committee shall choose one of its members to be chair. Only the Committee on Committees

- member elected by that committee may serve a consecutive term, and that member may not serve a third consecutive year.
2. Before the committee makes its nominations, it shall be encouraged to consult with the Board and other Members, soliciting their suggestions for nominees.
 3. The duties of this committee are to:
 - a. nominate Members, with their permission, for each elected office and the chairperson of the Ministerial Relations Committee, for presentation at the Annual Meeting.
 - (1) The list of nominations prepared by the committee shall be included in the notice of the Annual Meeting.
 - (2) Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting, provided the consent of the nominee is obtained.
 - b. encourage members of the Society to serve on committees according to their talents and interests, and to recommend such persons to Committee chairpersons.
 4. Except for the one member it elects, this committee, as a whole, may not nominate its own successors.

ARTICLE VIII: MINISTRY

Style of Leadership: The Society shall determine by a majority vote which of the following options it prefers. The selected option shall remain in effect until modified or revised.

A. *Professional Ministry*

1. An ad hoc Ministerial Search Committee, elected by the membership, solicits and interviews candidates and makes recommendations to the Executive Board, which reviews the recommendations for the membership.
2. The minister shall be selected by a three-fourths vote at a business meeting.
3. Once selected for the position, the minister need not be reelected yearly, but a review of the minister's tenure shall be undertaken at least every three years by the Committee on Ministry.
4. The minister may be dismissed by a three-fifths vote at a business meeting. In the event of dismissal, the minister's salary and fringe benefits shall be continued for three months after the date of the vote to dismiss.
5. The minister must give three months notice when resigning.

B. *Lay Ministry.*

During any period of one year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 (a fiscal year), the society may be served by one or more lay ministers to lead services and undertake such other duties as may be prescribed. A lay minister shall be selected by the program committee, which shall decide the scope and length of her/his ministry.

- C. Other options may be adopted if specifically set forth in a resolution adopted at a business meeting.

ARTICLE IX: BUDGET

In preparing and adopting the annual budget:

1. The Finance Committee shall prepare a tentative budget and fund raising plan for the coming fiscal year which may be modified by the Executive Board.
2. On the basis of the response received during the fund raising the Executive Board shall adopt a recommended budget for presentation to the Society.
3. The society shall adopt the operating budget for the fiscal year.
4. This process shall be completed before the beginning of the fiscal year, or as early in the fiscal year as feasible.

ARTICLE X: NON-DISCRIMINATION

As a Welcoming Congregation, the Society welcomes members, friends, and guests, and hires employees, including lay ministers and professional ministers, without regard to age, race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

ARTICLE XI. DISSOLUTION

- A. The Society may be dissolved by a three-quarters vote at a business meeting. Notice of proposed dissolution must be mailed at least four weeks before the meeting.
- B. In the case of dissolution, all property of the Society, both real and personal, subject to all just and legal claims upon it, shall vest in the Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association, to be held in trust for the furthering of the denomination in a manner determined by the Central Midwest District.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at a business meeting. The written agenda must carry a full statement of the proposed amendment.