

**NEW RIVER UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
AN INTERFAITH CONGREGATION
BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this religious organization shall be “*The New River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.*” Additionally, whenever possible, the sub-heading of “*An Interfaith Congregation*” will be included on letterhead, promotional literature, and Fellowship signs.

ARTICLE II. MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the New River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is to maintain and develop our religious community in Southern West Virginia; to support our members and those who come to our Fellowship in an atmosphere of love and mutual acceptance; and to encourage spiritual growth and development with intellectual freedom. Committed social action on behalf of the local and global communities will be a natural expression of this mission.

Be it understood that we are a fellowship of seekers. We seek understanding about life, the world, and the nature of the universe. We seek also to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our fellowship;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The rights of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our fellowship and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- A respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Any person sixteen years of age or more, who is in sympathy with the purposes of the Fellowship, may become a member by signing the Fellowship’s membership roster. There is established a **two-tiered membership** status with all new members required to:

- a) become familiar with both UU and NRUUF history;
- b) sign the membership book;
- c) pledge some degree of financial commitment;
- d) participate as much as they are able in the life of the congregation.

1. **Voting members** will be those who make a “fair share” financial contribution and are active in the fellowship. A fair share financial contribution will be defined as a suggested minimum contribution that is equal to or greater than the sum of the amount recommended by the Board to be given per member each year to our denominational

affiliates. Fair share contributions can be donated by giving either cash monies, volunteer work, or other material or in-kind donations.

2. **Non-voting members** will be those who are unable to fully participate in the life of the congregation, but wish to remain on the membership roles and who continue to make a financial contribution to the fellowship.

Members are encouraged to be as supportive of the Fellowship as their means allow.

Membership shall be reviewed at least annually by the Secretary of the Board. Members who have requested resignation shall be removed from the membership roles immediately. An absence of contact for one year may result in removal or a change of membership status with a two-thirds 2/3 vote of the Board.

Membership may be revoked only for cause, for actions deemed deleterious to the Fellowship, by an eighty percent (80%) vote of members present at a specially called, type II meeting, with the affected member invited to present his or her case.

ARTICLE IV. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

This Fellowship shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and of the Ohio-Meadville District (OMD) of the Association.

ARTICLE V. GOVERNANCE

Leadership of the New River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship shall be by a Governing Board. The Fellowship Board shall administer and manage the business of the Fellowship. The Board shall consist of the elected officers, three (3) elected at-large members, and the person serving in a ministerial capacity. In addition to serving on the Governing Board and exercising the powers and duties normally associated with his/her respective office, each officer shall have the powers and duties assigned to him/her by the Board. At all Governing Board meetings, a quorum of four (4) Board members must be present to pass resolutions and otherwise transact business with a majority of those present voting in the affirmative to pass any motion. Board members must be voting members.

Section 1. Duties of the Governing Board

The Governing Board shall:

1. call for meetings as required by the Bylaws and as otherwise needed;
2. appoint a nominating committee of two or more voting members in February;
3. establish other committees as needed;
4. set the agenda for the annual meeting.
5. uphold the behavior covenant;
6. periodically review the bylaws and make recommendations for amendments;
7. prepare an annual budget to be presented at the annual Congregational meeting for approval by the membership; and

8. reallocate funds as needed as long as the reallocation does not exceed ten percent (10%) of the approved budget or any obligation or indebtedness that exceeds \$5,000. The membership must approve any expenditure or reallocation above these limits.

Section 2. Officers

At each annual meeting there shall be elected a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and three (3) at-large members, all of whom shall hold their offices for one year and until their successors have been elected and qualified, and who shall perform the duties usually pertaining to these offices. The President and Vice-President may serve three (3) consecutive terms; the number of terms of the Secretary and the Treasurer is not limited.

A. The President shall:

1. chair and call all meetings of the Governing Board;
2. chair all business meetings of the Fellowship;
3. carry out the duties usually associated with the office of President;
4. be ex-officio member of all standing committees except the Nominating Committee;
5. disburse funds in the absence of the Treasurer; and
6. make a report to the membership at the annual meeting.

B. The Vice-President shall:

1. assume the office of President if the incumbent resigns, is recalled, or cannot otherwise fulfill the office;
2. stand in for the President in the temporary absence or incapacity of the President;
3. otherwise assist the President in such ways as are mutually agreeable;
4. as a primary focus serve as the program coordinator in conjunction with the person serving in a ministerial capacity; and
5. be ex-officio member of the Worship Committee.

C. The Secretary shall:

1. keep accurate records of all meetings of the Fellowship and the Board;
2. execute all correspondence of the Fellowship as directed by the Board;
3. serve as custodian of the records and archives of the Fellowship, which shall be kept in the Fellowship's business office;
4. oversee the publication and distribution of the NRUUF newsletter.
5. review the membership roles and make recommendations to the Board as to membership status; and
6. be ex-officio member of the Membership Committee.

D. The Treasurer shall:

1. ensure the safe receipt and keeping of the monetary assets of the Fellowship;
2. disperse and dispose of funds at the direction of the Board;
3. maintain a complete account of the finances of the Fellowship for the fiscal year which begins July 1st and ends June 30th, and make such accounts available for inspection by any member upon request;

4. make periodic reports as requested by the Board;
5. present a written report to the membership at the annual meeting;
6. be ex-officio member of the Finance Committee; and
7. assist the Board in establishing and maintaining a budget as set during the annual Congregational meeting.

Section 3. Trustees

There shall be three (3) trustees serving staggered, three-year terms. The Trustees shall be voting members and shall be elected at the annual meeting as needed. Additionally, the President and the Fellowship's minister shall be ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees. The trustees shall hold title to and manage the Fellowship's properties and other capital assets of the Fellowship.

Section 4. Removal of Board Members or Trustees

Any Board Member or Trustee may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President. Any Board Member or Trustee who misses three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled Board meetings or four (4) of six (6) consecutive regularly scheduled Board meetings may be removed from his/her office by the Governing Board with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the remaining Board members or removal with cause by the membership of the Fellowship with a majority vote at the annual meeting or at a special congregational meeting called pursuant to these bylaws. The vacancy shall then be filled by Board appointment until the next annual congregational meeting with a simple majority vote of the Board .

Section 5. Alternative Governance

In the absence of a functioning, duly-elected Board, a provisional voluntary Steering Committee shall function as the means of governance.

The Steering Committee shall:

1. be composed of the Treasurer and minimum of three (3) voting members to a maximum of seven (7) voting members;
2. be chaired by a committee member whose selection is agreed upon by the rest of the committee. Committee leadership shall be shared among all committee members willing to serve in this capacity with rotation occurring at regular intervals as determined by consensus among the committee members; and
3. be disbanded upon the official election of a full board as outlined in the bylaws.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

The Board may appoint standing and temporary committees as it deems necessary. All committees shall report to the Governing Board at the time and in the form determined by the Board. All committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board. Membership of all committees with the exception of Nominating and Ministerial

Relations shall be open to all Fellowship members. The Board may organize the committees into councils as it determines to best meet the changing needs of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE VII. MINISTERIAL SERVICES

The duties of the Minister shall be as prescribed by the Governing Board, agreed to by the Minister in writing and approved by the Congregation. In general, the Minister shall provide overall religious leadership and guidance in accordance with the established purposes of the Fellowship and shall be guaranteed freedom of the pulpit. The Minister is an ex officio and voting member of the Governing Board, and the Worship Committee, and is ex an officio and non-voting member of all other Committees except the Nominating Committee, the Ministerial Relations Committee and the Search Committee.

The Minister is expected to bring to the attention of the Governing Board all matters which seem pertinent to the general welfare of the congregation, and shall make such recommendations as seem proper; however, the final decision in matters of policy and procedure shall remain with the Governing Board or the congregation through a regular or special meeting.

The Minister will be employed under a written contract which clearly stipulates the duties, compensation and other conditions of employment.

The minister shall:

1. make a full report to the congregation at the annual meeting;
2. attend Board meetings whenever possible; and
3. promote liaison with the wider community.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

The Governing Board shall meet at least quarterly. The meetings shall be open to all members and notice of time and place shall be given.

Section 1. Congregational Meetings

All Congregational meetings shall be called with written notice given at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting. The notice shall include time and place, and the description of the business intended to be transacted. Written notice can be given in the newsletter, which is mailed to all members, in Sunday orders of service, and/or made available at the Fellowship Hall.

A. Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting shall be held each year in the month of April at a time and place determined by the Governing Board.

The order of business at the annual meeting shall include:

1. annual reports of the President, Treasurer, and Minister;
2. annual reports of the active Fellowship committees or groups;
3. report of nominating committee;
4. election of Trustees and Governing Board; and

5. any other business included in the printed notice of the meeting or added to the agenda at the meeting.

B. Special Meetings

Special congregational meetings may be called by the Governing Board, the Trustees, or by written request of any five (5) members of the Fellowship and given to any elected member of the Governing Board.

Business at all congregational meetings shall be categorized into three types for the purposes of determining a quorum and of determining the number of votes required to pass a motion:

Type I shall be any business other than that specifically designated below as Type II or Type III.

Type II business shall be:

1. hiring a minister;
2. purchasing or selling real property;
3. amending the bylaws;
4. disbanding the Fellowship; or
5. revoking membership.

Type III business shall be dismissing a minister prior to the expiration of the current ministerial contract.

Section 2. Quorum

For Type I business, thirty percent (30%) of the voting membership, including proxies, shall constitute a quorum, except that no person shall exercise more than one proxy at any one meeting.

For Type II and Type III business, fifty percent (50%) of the voting membership including proxies, shall constitute a quorum, except that no person shall exercise more than one proxy.

Proxies must be given in writing, signed, and must state the name of the member who cannot attend the meeting and to whom they are giving their proxy. It must also state whether the holder has the permission to vote on all items that may arise at a given meeting or it must stipulate specific items on which they wish the holder to vote. Proxies must be dated and can only be valid for a single meeting. Written proxies must be presented to the President or person chosen to officiate the meeting prior to the start of official business.

Section 3. Votes Required

For Type I business, an affirmative vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of the voting members present shall be required for passage of a motion.

For Type II business, an affirmative vote of seventy percent (70%) of the voting members

present shall be required for passage of a motion except for revocation of membership.

For Type III business, an affirmative vote of sixty percent (60%) of the voting members present shall be required for passage of a motion.

Section 4. Governing Proceedings

Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall govern all congregational proceedings, except when inconsistent with, or in conflict with the bylaws or standing rules.

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Should this Fellowship cease to function and there be a vote to disband, any assets will be assigned to the Unitarian Universalist Association, unless such action is legally prohibited under valid contract or West Virginia law.

ORIGINAL BYLAWS PASSED: APRIL, 1961
REVISED BYLAWS PASSED: DECEMBER, 1993
 MAY, 2004
 APRIL, 2005
 APRIL 2007