St. John’s Unitarian Universalist Church Congregational Bylaws

The following edition includes the amendments adopted by the Congregation at the Special Congregational Meeting of March 10, 2019, and at the Annual Meeting of June 2, 2019. This supersedes the edition adopted September 17, 1967 as amended May 16, 1976, February 24, 1980, March 3, 1984, March 5, 1989, September 23, 1990, May 21, 1995, November 16, 1997, September 20, 1998, September 19, 1999, November 19, 2000, September 22, 2002, November 24, 2002, June 1, 2003, June 1, 2008 and June 9, 2013, and June 12, 2016.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this Congregation shall be St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church.

ARTICLE II: Affiliation

This church shall be affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Heartland District.

ARTICLE III: Church Property

All properties of whatsoever nature shall be the indivisible property of the Congregation, its successors, and assigns, provided however, in the event of a dissolution or abandonment, all property shall be turned over to and become the indivisible property of the Unitarian Universalist Association and its successors, so that it may continue the purpose for which it was contributed.

ARTICLE IV: Purpose

The purpose of this Congregation is to aid in the free and progressive development of the human mind and spirit. No doctrinal or political test shall ever be made a condition of membership.

Our Mission: St. John's is committed to creating a safe and caring community, working for peace and social justice, and celebrating beliefs that respect freedom of thought.

St. John’s is a Welcoming Congregation, affirming and promoting the full participation of all persons in our activities and endeavors. Eligibility for membership, hiring of staff or call of ministry shall not be limited or restricted by birth, national origin, race or color, gender, sexual or affectional orientation or preference, or physical challenge.

The members and Minister shall enjoy freedom in their religious beliefs and utterances save that they are never to indicate expressly or by implication that they speak for the

Congregation unless the Congregation has, in a Congregational Meeting, given them the authority to do so.

ARTICLE V: Written Communication

Section 1. Communication from the Church:

Official notices from the Church may be sent electronically and/or via standard U.S. mail ensuring that all members are notified. Notices may include, but are not limited to: notice of annual congregational meetings, notice of special congregational meetings and other official business of the church.

Section 2. Communication to the Church:

Official communication to the Church may be transmitted in either electronic format or via standard U.S. mail. Official communication may include, but is not limited to: notification of termination of membership or other official business with the church.

ARTICLE VI: Membership

St. John's has three types of membership as outlined in the following sections.

Section 1. Active Membership

a. Conditions of Active Membership:

The conditions of Active Membership are as follows:

1. a person who is at least sixteen years of age;
2. who has signed the Membership Commitment Statement, as set forth below; and
3. who has signed the Membership Book in the presence of the Minister or the chairperson of the Membership Committee, as well as one member of the Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as the Board).

b. Membership Commitment Statement:

1. The Membership Commitment Statement reads as follows: "I am in accord with the purpose of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church and its guarantee of religious freedom to its Minister and members. I commit myself, as far as possible, to be engaged in the life of the congregation, contributing my time and talents to the support of the church and its work. I understand that financial support for church programs and denominational affiliation is an expectation of membership and I will make an annual financial contribution of record. I wish to become a member of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church."
2. The Purpose and Mission (Article IV) shall be included on the Membership Commitment Statement.

3. There is no minimum financial contribution required. The financial contribution of record may be received via a check, or an electronic transfer of funds, or cash identified as coming from a member, or a gift of financial holdings. The contribution may be given at any frequency (annually, monthly, weekly, or periodically). If an active member finds they are unable to make any financial contribution for the year, they may contact the Minister to request that a contribution be made on their behalf.

c. Privileges of Active Membership:

The privileges of Active Membership are as follows:

1. Members who have signed the Membership Book at least 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting and/or Special Congregational Meetings are eligible to vote at the meeting.
2. Eligibility for serving in elected positions is also acquired 60 days following the signing the Membership Book.
3. The Board at its discretion may identify non-elected roles within the congregation for which membership is a requirement.
4. Members may be chosen to serve as delegates representing St. John's at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly.

Section 2. Emeritus Membership

a. Conditions of Emeritus Membership:

A person who has been an Active Member of St. John's for an extended period of time and who is, because of extenuating circumstances such as age or infirmity, no longer able to actively participate at St. John's, may be granted the status of Emeritus Member. An Emeritus Member is counted as a Friend for the annual UUA membership count. There are no financial or service obligations for Emeritus Members. Names are submitted by the Membership Review Committee to the Board for approval.

b. Privileges of Emeritus Membership:

Emeritus Members are included in the Church Directory and retain privileges of Active Membership.

Section 3. Inactive Membership

a. Conditions of Inactive Membership:

An Active Member is moved to Inactive Member status when any one of the following has occurred:

1. An Active Member has provided a written notice of resignation.
2. An Active Member has died.

3. An Active Member (a) has not honored the St. John's Membership Commitment Statement for a period of two years; and (b) the Membership Review Committee has attempted to contact the person to explain that they may be moved to Inactive Member status as well as what is necessary to maintain Active Member status; this will include the offer that the Member may contact the Minister to request a contribution be made on their behalf, should this be necessary; and (c) the Membership Review Committee has recommended to the Board the change to Inactive status; and (d) the Board has voted to accept this recommendation.
4. An Active Member (a) has demonstrated behavior that is dangerous, disruptive and/or offensive as defined in Section 4; and (b) the individual's behavior has been reviewed by the committee designated by the Board for review of such situations, and that committee has recommended to the Board that the individual be placed on Inactive Member status until such time as they have met all conditions set forth by the committee; and (c) the Board has voted with a two-thirds majority to approve the recommendations of the committee designated by the Board for review of such situations.

b. Impact of Inactive Membership:
   1. An inactive member (a) will not be shown on the lists or statistics of membership, and (b) will not be a voting member at Annual or Special Congregational meetings, and (c) may not serve in elected positions or non-elected roles within the congregation for which Active Member status is a requirement.

c. Reactivation of Active Membership:
   1. Inactive Members who wish to return to Active Member status are required to complete the usual process to become an Active Member, as outlined in these bylaws.
   2. Any former member who is made inactive in accordance with Sec. 3-a-4, must first satisfy any requirements set forth by the Board at the time they were made inactive.

Section 4. Management of Dangerous, Disruptive, and/or Offensive Behavior

a. Secure atmosphere supports openness:

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist.

b. Dangerous, disruptive and/or offensive behavior:

If a Member is behaving in a dangerous, disruptive and/or offensive manner, as described below, they may be referred by congregants, minister, staff, or Board members to be reviewed by the committee designated by the Board for such review.

1. Dangerous behavior: the individual is the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property.
2. Disruptive behavior: the individual's behavior is interfering with church activities and/or hinders the church's ability to achieve its mission.
3. Offensive behavior: the individual's behavior is likely to drive existing members and/or visitors away.

ARTICLE VII: Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meetings

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held on a Sunday between May 1 and June 15 to be set by the Board of Trustees. The Board shall notify all members of the Congregation at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date set. At least 10 days prior to the annual meeting, the proposed budget and information on any other substantive matter to be voted upon must be made available in writing to the members.

Section 2. Special Meetings

a. Called by the President

Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

b. Called by Special Request

Special meetings of the Congregation must be called by the President upon written request of ten (10) or more members addressed to the Executive Committee of the Board.

c. Method of Calling and Agenda

Members shall be notified of special meetings at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting. Notices of the meeting shall state clearly the agenda of items to be considered. Only items on the agenda may be considered at special meetings.

Section 3. Quorum

25% of voting membership shall constitute a quorum at the Annual and all other Congregational Meetings. Members shall sign the register and such signatures shall be checked against the membership rolls. There shall be provision for absentee voting at either the Annual or Special Congregational Meeting as outlined in Article XI Section 5

ARTICLE VIII: Church Year

The Church Fiscal Year shall begin on **July 1** of each year, and end on **June 30** of each year.

ARTICLE IX: Trustees and Church Officers

Section 1. Board of Trustees

There shall be a Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as the Board) composed of seven (7) members: President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Finance Director, Secretary of the Board, Program Director, and one Member at Large.

The Minister is ex-officio member of the Board.

Section 2. Terms of Office

The Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President shall each serve one year sequentially. A new Vice President is elected each year and will fill the office of President after one year, and after two years will fill the role of Immediate Past President. All other members of the Board shall be elected for a three-year term. Secretary of the Board, Finance Director, Program Director and Member at Large will run in staggered years.

The terms of office will begin on the first day of the church fiscal year. No member of the Board of Trustees may serve more than six (6) consecutive years on the Board. If any member is absent from three (3) meetings during any twelve-month period, the remaining members may declare that office vacant.

Section 3. Election of Members of the Board

The election of the members to the Board shall be held on the day of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. All Candidates must be Active members in accordance with Membership Bylaws. No person who is an employee of St. John's or who provides contracted services in exchange for a fee or other consideration shall be eligible to serve.

Section 4. Powers and Duties of the Board

On behalf of the Congregation, the Board is responsible for strategic planning, policy development and implementation, and the real and personal property of the church, its business affairs, and all contracts. The Board shall keep the Congregation informed of its decisions and activities.

Through its President, the Board shall call special Congregational Meetings as needed. At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, the Board shall present a budget in itemized

form for the Congregation's approval. Neither the Board, nor its officers, shall incur any further financial obligation(s) totaling in excess of four percent (4%) of the total operating budget most recently approved during the fiscal year without specific authorization at a called Congregational Meeting.

Section 5. Meetings

The Board shall meet at least once a month. A majority of the members constitutes a quorum.

Section 6. Powers and Duties of the Officers

a) The President is the chief administrator of the Congregation and shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation and all meetings of the Board. The President is a non-voting member, except in the event of a tie.

b) The Vice-President assists the President in the execution of his or her duties, monitors task-force/ad hoc committee development and assumes the duties of the President when the President is unavailable.

c) The Immediate Past President will continue work on projects begun during the President role, mentor the President, provide institutional memory to the Board and focus on Leadership Development.

d) The Secretary of the Board has responsibility for all non-financial records of the church and keeps accurate minutes of all meetings of the Congregation and the Board.

e) The Finance Director, working with a Board-appointed Treasurer, supervises the expenditure of church monies and provides for the written accounting of all financial transactions of the church. The Finance Director keeps informed of financial condition of the church, reports to the Board and Congregation, and prepares financial forecasts as required.

f) The Program Director is responsible for keeping the Board informed of committee, program, and team activities from different areas of the church.

g) The Member at Large can fill roles delegated to him/her by the President, tagged to lead short-term subcommittee assignments (for weeks or months). They can also volunteer to lead projects that the Board deems valuable.

h) In addition to exercising the powers and duties set forth, each officer shall have those powers and duties assigned to them by the Board.

Section 7. Committees and Individuals Authorized/Appointed by Board

The Board authorizes operating committees. The Board may also create positions as needed. The Board may appoint other committees, and all committees shall report to the Board.

Section 8. Fund Trustees

The Fund Trustees shall consist of three (3) members: the Finance Director, and two Fund Trustees elected by the congregation, one elected each year. The elected Fund Trustees shall be members of the congregation, may not be members of the Board, and shall serve for two-year terms. Fund Trustees may not serve more than three consecutive full terms. The Treasurer may attend all meetings of the Fund Trustees but cannot vote.

The Fund Trustees shall serve as trustees of all endowment and other special funds authorized by the Congregation or the Board. Two (2) of the three (3) Trustees must consent to any request made by the Board for funds under their trusteeship. They shall abide by separate fund charters established by the Board or Congregation for each of the funds.

Section 9. Vacancies

If the position of the President becomes vacant, it shall be filled by the Vice-President for the remainder of the year and for the subsequent year. When vacancies occur on the Board or among the Fund Trustees or the Leadership Committee, the Board may appoint a replacement or ask the Leadership Committee to recommend a replacement. All replacements must meet the requirements for being elected to the position. Replacements will serve only for the duration of the church fiscal year, and the Congregation will elect a permanent replacement to serve any unexpired time in the vacant position.

Section 10. Financial Audit

The board will arrange for an audit or review of the church's accounting records in even numbered fiscal years by an independent, outside professional and will report the results to the Congregation.

ARTICLE X: Special Committees Reporting to the Congregation

Section 1. Leadership Committee:

There shall be a standing Leadership Committee consisting of the Immediate Past President ex officio and four members of the Congregation serving staggered two-year terms with two elected each year on the day of the Annual Congregational Meeting. The

Immediate Past President shall convene the first meeting of the Leadership Committee, at which time the committee will select its chairperson.

The primary duties of the Leadership Committee are to nominate candidates for elected offices and to administer the elections. A secondary duty is Leadership Development.

Section 2. Ministerial Search Committee

Whenever it becomes necessary to select a new Minister, a ministerial search committee shall be elected by the Congregation to conduct the search. The plan prepared by the Board for selection of the Minister shall specify the size and responsibilities of this committee.

Section 3. Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry (CoM) shall consist of four to six members, half recommended by the Minister subject to Board approval and half recommended by the Board subject to the Minister's approval. Upon arrival of a newly called minister, the Board shall include in the Committee at least two members from the Search Committee that recommended the new minister.

The purpose of the Committee on Ministry is to strengthen the quality of ministry within the congregation including professional leadership, music, social justice, religious education, pastoral care, etc. CoM is concerned with the spiritual health of the entire ministry of the congregation. It serves as a support group for the Minister and as a communication channel between the Minister and members of St. John's.

CoM's method of evaluation will be described in Board Policy.

Section 4. Other Committees

From time to time, the Congregation may create and elect other committees to perform special tasks that the Congregation deems to be necessary.

ARTICLE XI: Rules Governing the Conduct of Elections

Section 1. Time of Elections:

The election of members to the Board of Trustees, The Fund Trustees, and the Leadership Committee shall occur on the day of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, and balloting shall end at the start of that meeting.

Section 2. Nominations:

At least ten weeks prior to the elections, the Leadership Committee publishes a list of positions to be voted on and instructions on how individuals may request nomination for

these positions. The Leadership Committee shall then actively recruit and nominate one or more suitable and willing candidates for each open position. In addition to nominations made by the committee, individuals who wish to run for a specific office may also be nominated by submitting a written statement, signed by five members of the Congregation, to the chairperson of the Leadership Committee before the nomination deadline. The deadline for all nominations is five weeks prior to the election. All candidates must be Active members in accordance with Membership Bylaws. Elected members of the Leadership Committee may not be candidates for office for which they nominate candidates except to run for up to two full terms on the Leadership Committee.

Section 3. Publishing the list of Candidates:

The Leadership Committee posts the list of candidates for all offices in a public place at least four weeks prior to the election. In addition, the Leadership Committee shall publish the list of candidates in the church newsletter as soon as possible after the close of nominations to inform the Congregation about the candidates, their backgrounds, and their reasons for seeking the office.

Section 4. Administering the Election:

The Leadership Committee is responsible for preparing ballots, administering the balloting, counting the ballots, and publishing the results. The candidate receiving the most votes for a given office will be the winner of the election for that office. If there is a tie vote for a Leadership Committee member, all such tied members shall be elected to the committee, and the committee shall be expanded for that year in order to accommodate the larger membership. If there is a tie for any Board or Fund Trustee position, the Leadership Committee administers a run-off election within three weeks among those tied for the position. The results of the election shall be announced to the Congregational Meeting before it ends unless a majority of the members attending the meeting vote to postpone the announcement of the election results.

Section 5. Absentee Ballots:

Absentee ballots shall be issued to voting members of the Congregation on request. This request may be made at any time prior to the last Friday preceding the election. The procedure for casting absentee ballots will be as follows: the completed ballot, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, shall be sealed in a blank envelope. This blank envelope shall be accompanied by a slip signed by the voter. Both shall be put in a second envelope which may be mailed or handed to any member of the Leadership Committee. Signatures shall be checked off against the membership list. All absentee ballots must arrive at St. John's in time for the sealed envelope (separated from the voter's signature) to be place in the ballot box along with the votes cast on the day of the election.

ARTICLE XII: Parliamentary Authority

Parliamentary Procedures

Business sessions of the Board of Trustees and all congregational meetings are to be conducted as expeditiously and informally as possible. Whenever parliamentary authority is necessary, the meeting shall be conducted pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. The President may appoint a member to serve as parliamentarian for any meeting of the Board or Congregation.

ARTICLE XIII: Minister

Section 1. Method of Selection:

When the selection of a minister becomes necessary, the Board of Trustees will take a plan of selection to the Congregation for approval.

Section 2. Eligibility of Candidate:

No candidate shall be called unless he or she is an ordained Minister in fellowship (preliminary or final) with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Section 3 Election of Minister:

The Minister shall be elected by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

Section 4. Employment of Minister:

Terms of employment of the Minister are determined by mutual consent between the Board of Trustees and the Minister.

Section 5. Salary of Minister:

The Minister's compensation, determined by the Board after consultation between the Minister and Budget and Finance Committee, is subject to ratification by the Congregation in the annual budget.

Section 6. Worship:

The Minister shall have primary responsibility for the religious meetings of the Congregation and its spiritual interests and activities. The responsibility will be shared with the Congregation through the appropriate committees and staff.

Section 7. Membership on Committees:

The Minister is an ex-officio**,** but nonvoting, member of each Council**,** committee and task force in the Congregation with the exception of the Nominating Committees, the Ministerial Search Committee, COACH, and the Fund Trustees.

ARTICLE XIV: Ministry Review

The purpose of the review is to determine the health of the congregation and the effectiveness of the lay and professional ministry of the church. The Board of Trustees shall ensure that evaluation data is collected from the congregation (or a representative sample), summarized, and published or posted every even year. The Board will provide advance notice to the congregation identifying those responsible for collecting data, the evaluation timetable, and how members may participate if a representative sample is used.

ARTICLE XV: Amendments

Section 1. Effective Date:

These by-laws shall go into effect immediately upon their adoption and shall not be altered except by a 2/3 vote of those present at a meeting of the Congregation.

Section 2. Amendments:

a. Initiated by the Board of Trustees.

Amendments initiated by the Board or by a committee thereof, shall be voted upon by the Congregation not sooner than ten (10) days nor more than ninety (90) days after formal approval by the Board.

b. Initiated by Members of the Congregation.

Amendments, initiated by individual members of the Congregation, must be submitted in writing to the Board, signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members in good standing, and notice given to members in writing. Such notice may be made in the church

newsletter. Such amendments shall be finally acted upon by the Congregation within 180 days, but not sooner than ninety (90) days after the notice has been given.

Section 3. Method of Notification:

Written copies of proposed by-law amendments to be submitted to the Congregation for vote of approval shall be made available to members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the Congregation at which the vote shall be taken.