

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) regarding Proposed MEMBERSHIP BYLAWS CHANGES

Version: 12/31/2018

## 1. *Why are you recommending changes in the St. John's membership bylaws?*

There are several reasons for the changes.

- a. We want to promote consistency from when the time a new member signs the Membership Commitment Statement throughout their period of membership, with **membership expectations that are consistent and clear.**
- b. We wanted to improve the **clarity of some language.** For example, instead of Membership Pledge (which could be confused with the language used in the annual pledge campaign), we chose to use the phrase "**Membership Commitment Statement**" to describe what members are asked to sign. Similarly, the old language was "Membership Register" but everyone calls it the "**Membership Book**" so why not use that clearer terminology? The Membership Commitment Statement was revised to encourage active participation in the congregation and to clarify the expectation of an annual financial contribution that is documented (for example, by check or with cash in an envelope with the member's name).
- c. We believe that **commitment** to an organization – in this case, our congregation – **should be backed up with action.** In support of this, we introduced the concept of "annual financial contribution of record." It affords great flexibility in giving while not requiring a specific financial pledge or contribution amount.
- d. The "**Youth Membership**" section was recommended for deletion because this has not been practiced at St. John's for over 5 years; both Rev. Mitra and the Membership Bylaws Workgroup did not see a need for a specific youth membership status. Those 16 and older can still become members.
- e. Each year the Membership team goes through a challenging **process of identifying who is no longer a member.** The changes we're proposing will make this decision much clearer and more consistent. The changes also remove the phrase "termination of membership" (not very friendly language), opting instead for a process whereby anyone who no longer meets the requirements for "Active Member" can be moved to "Inactive Member" status.

## 2. *What does "make an annual financial contribution of record" mean?*

You may make your annual financial contribution of record to St. John's in any of the following ways:

- (a) Cash in an envelope identifying that the contribution comes from you;
- (b) Check identified as payment on your pledge or written as a contribution for St. John's operating budget;
- (c) automatic bank transfers from your account to St. John's;
- (d) Payment from a trust or 401(k) account that is documented as your contribution to St. John's; and/or
- (e) A gift of stock or other financial holding.

3. ***I don't want to make a financial pledge during the annual pledge campaign each spring; I prefer to put my cash contributions in the plate on Sunday mornings. Does that count?***

We are grateful to receive cash designated as your contribution at least once during the year, as frequently as every Sunday, or somewhere in between! Just be sure to put your name on the envelope so that we know the contribution came from you.

4. ***Do the new bylaws require me to give a certain amount of money each year in order to be a member?***

No, there is no requirement of a specific amount. We ask that you give an annual financial contribution of record (meaning a contribution that can be identified as coming from you). You are invited to review the UUA's Fair Share Guidelines if you are seeking input about how much to give.

5. ***What's the minimum amount all members must give?***

There is no required minimum. We encourage you to be generous and give as you are able, reflecting your commitment to St. John's and the resources you have available.

6. ***Can I make an annual financial contribution of ANY amount – even just \$1.00?***

Yes. Of course, we want everyone to give to St. John's in accordance with their means and how their heart moves them.

7. ***Because "old" members signed the existing "Membership Pledge," doesn't this proposed "Membership Commitment Statement" pertain only to people who join after the bylaws are changed?***

When we conduct the annual pledge campaign in the spring of each year, we have asked members to confirm their membership when they make their financial pledge. After these revisions to the bylaws are passed, members will be asked to sign the new Membership Commitment Statement in conjunction with (a) making a financial pledge OR (b) committing to an alternative financial contribution of record during the fiscal year. The congregation will continue to depend upon members to pay their pledge or make their alternative contribution to support St. John's.

8. ***Who were the members of the team that worked on the Membership Bylaws review and updating?***

The team was led by Debbie Combs (former Membership Chair). The other members of the team were: Nancy Henry (Membership Chair), Greg Terhune (Greeting Coordinator), Gay Glasscott (Connections Committee Chair), and Joetta Prost (Annual Pledge Campaign Coordinator). You are welcome to address questions to these St. John's members.