

BYLAWS of the UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK

Approved by Membership on December 14, 2025

Article I. Name

The name of this religious Fellowship shall be the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Rappahannock.

Article II. Purpose

Our Purpose shall be to create a fellowship of caring persons in which to inspire spiritual and intellectual growth, serve the needs of our greater community, foster the pursuit of truth, fairness, respect, and social justice, and provide a spiritual home for generations to come based upon Unitarian Universalist principles. We shall affiliate with the UUA and its Southern Region in pursuit of this purpose.

Article III. Membership

A. This Fellowship is intentionally non-discriminatory. Thus, membership is open to all persons regardless of ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, affectional orientation, age, or ability. Any person demonstrating an understanding of the Unitarian Universalist Living Tradition and striving to be in accord with the Unitarian Universalist Principles may join this Fellowship. Membership is initiated by signing the Membership Book and committing to participation in the Fellowship as an Active Member, as demonstrated by a contribution of time and/or money.

B. Voting privileges shall be limited to active members 16 years of age or older. Members may request and be granted either Temporary Inactive status, up to one year non-renewable, or Emeritus, where active participation cannot be sustained, but they wish to continue their affiliation with UUFR. Dual membership may be recognized as Active Members of this church for active members of other UU churches who are part-time residents of our area, provided the dual member supplies a letter directing which Fellowship is to record their membership with UUA.

C. Any member of the Fellowship who, for a period of one year, has neither attended nor contributed to its support by active participation and/or recorded financial contribution may be removed from active membership status by the Membership Committee. If a member is found to be in violation of the UUFR Disruptive Behavior Policy currently in effect at the time of such disruptive behavior, the member may be removed from active membership by the Board. The Membership Committee shall honor and remove a deceased member's name from the membership rolls effective upon the date of death.

Article IV. Elected Leadership

A. Composition of the Board of Stewards

The Board of Stewards shall be comprised of seven stewards. Four stewards shall be officers of the Fellowship elected by and from the Active Members. The elected officers shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The other three stewards shall be at large members elected by the Active Members of the fellowship. The Active Members of the fellowship shall also elect an Assistant Treasurer, who will be a member of the Finance Committee.

B. Terms of Office

The terms of office for all officers, at large Board members, and the Assistant Treasurer shall be two calendar years. The terms of the President, Vice President, one at-large member, and the Assistant Treasurer shall begin in even years, and the terms of the Secretary, Treasurer, and two at-large members shall begin in odd years. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, with a minimum of two years between terms before serving again. The Board may modify these provisions to allow for a transition.

C. Duties of the Board

The Board shall have general charge of the property of the Fellowship and the conduct of all its business affairs and the control of its administration, including the appointment of such committees as it may deem necessary. If a member of the Board resigns, the remaining Board members may appoint a temporary replacement to fill the vacancy. Elections to fill vacancies shall occur at the next Fellowship meeting.

1. The President shall lead Board meetings and be the overall coordinator toward meeting all the needs of the Fellowship.
2. The Vice President shall assist the President in performing the President's duties and lead the Board meetings when the President is unable to do so.
3. The Secretary maintains a record of the Board meetings, the Fellowship's minute book, the UUA database, and key correspondence within and outside the Fellowship, as well as issuing notifications of Fellowship meetings, preparing ballots, and documenting election results.
4. The Treasurer manages the Operating Fund and special project funds, maintains a record of income and expenses compared to the budget, provides monthly and quarterly status reports to the Board, and provides members with annual tax letters regarding their contributions.

Article V. Committees

A. Standing Committees

The following Standing Committees of the Fellowship shall report directly to the Board: Programs, Membership, Finance, Building and Grounds, and Leadership Development. Committee Chairs are appointed by the Board, except for Program, Membership, Finance, and Leadership Development Committee Chairs, who are elected by the fellowship.

1. The Programs Committee shall be primarily responsible for the Sunday Morning Service and shall have coordinating responsibility for other church programs, such as, but not limited to, Religious Exploration (R.E.) for children and adults, Social Justice, and community forums on key issues of the day. Close coordination with the Membership Committee is a key part of the responsibility.
2. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for pastoral care and support of the individual members.
3. The Finance Committee shall be responsible to the Board for preparing a proposed annual budget for the Operating Fund and for reviewing the financial records of the Fellowship. Further, when requested by the Board, the Finance Committee is responsible for preparing a budget for special projects and for fundraising activities, including capital fundraising. The Committee shall prepare a written report to the Fellowship for presentation at the Annual

Meeting. The members of the Finance Committee shall include the Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer elected by the Fellowship, the Trustees, and the Servetus Advisors, who are elected by the Fellowship. The Finance Committee nominates the Chair, which must be approved by the Board. The Finance Committee works with the President to develop the annual budget.

4. The Building and Grounds Committee shall be responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the building and grounds.
5. The Leadership Development Committee's focus shall be the lay and professional leadership of the Fellowship and shall include nominating candidates for all elected offices.

B. The Board may create and dissolve additional committees and sub-committees as needed and establish the responsibilities and reporting structures of each. Each committee may also create and dissolve additional sub-committees within its area of responsibility.

Article VI. Endowment Funds and Finances

A. Trustees

A three-member group of Trustees shall be elected by the membership on staggered, three-year terms, which shall have exclusive responsibility for the management of the Endowments, other than the Servetus Endowment, and shall be members of the Finance Committee advising the Board of Stewards regarding the finances of the Fellowship. The Trustees shall meet at least four times annually, make decisions by majority vote, and record their decisions in written minutes. The Trustees shall report the status and activity of the Endowments, other than the Servetus Endowment, to the Board quarterly and provide a written annual report to the Fellowship at the Annual Business Meeting of the Membership. A Trustee may serve two consecutive terms if elected. A Trustee may not be re-elected until three years after the second term has expired.

B. Servetus Trustees

A three-member group of Servetus Trustees shall be elected by the membership on staggered, three-year terms to advise the River Counties Community Foundation (RCCF) regarding expenditures from the Servetus Endowment. The Servetus Trustees shall also advise RCCF regarding an investment option after consultation with the Board of Stewards and the Trustees. The Servetus Trustees must meet at least four times annually, make decisions by majority vote, and record their decisions in written minutes. A Servetus Trustee may serve two consecutive terms if elected. A Servetus Trustee may not be re-elected until three years after the second term has expired.

C. Expenditures from Other Endowments

1. Expenditures from the Endowments, other than the Servetus Endowment, shall be the responsibility of the Trustees, who shall be governed by the Endowment Investment and Distribution policy passed by a two-thirds vote of the Membership. This policy shall provide for the protection of the corpus of the non-Servetus Endowments over the long term and require the Trustees to exercise the utmost care to respect the integrity of the restrictions placed on any gift to the Endowment.

2. Requests for expenditures from these Endowments may be made by the Board. Approval or disapproval of expenditures requires the votes of at least two Trustees. If there are not two votes for a decision, for example, because of a tie or too few Trustees, the Board's request shall be deemed to be approved.

3. The Board may decide if Exigent Circumstances exist, which require funding that is not provided for in the Operating Budget. Funding for Exigent Circumstances is funding that is essential for the ongoing welfare of the fellowship, and time-critical, i.e., alternative funding sources are not available within the necessary timeframe. In the case of Exigent Circumstances, the Board may request that the Trustees authorize the use of any funds in the non-Servetus Endowments, consistent with the purposes of the Endowment. The Trustees shall promptly consider the request of the Board, if at all possible within 48 hours, and promptly inform the Board of their decision. If the Trustees do not approve the use of Endowment Funds, the Board may still authorize the use of funds from the appropriate Endowment in excess of the original principal by a vote of at least five members of the Board.

D. No member of the Board, member of the Finance Committee, or other members responsible for the finances of the fellowship shall be liable for any losses incurred by the Endowments or other accounts except to the extent that such losses arise out of acts or omissions of willful misconduct or gross negligence.

Article VII. Ministry

A. The Minister shall be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the Fellowship and its worship services and shall perform other duties as are usual and customary or as may be prescribed by the Board of Stewards in a letter of understanding between the Minister and the Board of Stewards.

1. The minister shall be a non-voting, ex officio member of the Board of Stewards and a non-voting, ex officio member of the Standing or Special Committees as the Board shall designate.
2. The Minister may bring to the attention of the Board of Stewards any matters which seem pertinent to the general welfare of the Fellowship, and make such recommendations as seem proper. The final decision in matters of policy and procedure not vested elsewhere by these Bylaws shall remain with the Board of Stewards or the Fellowship.
3. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express opinions outside the pulpit, but shall not speak for the Fellowship.
4. The Minister shall have security and not be called in question during the first two (2) years of a ministry, nor twice in the space of twelve (12) months, nor during the summer recess (if any) of church services; except in a meeting of the Fellowship called by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Stewards.

B. When a vacancy exists or is anticipated in the position of Minister, the Board or the President of the Board may appoint a search committee. The Fellowship shall select the Minister candidate by written ballot with a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of members present and by absentee ballot.

1. The salary of the Minister, and any allowances and other compensation, shall be determined by the Board of Stewards.
2. The Minister may be dismissed by a majority vote of the members present or voting by absentee ballot at any Fellowship meeting called for that purpose.
3. In the event of the resignation of the Minister, or if the tenure of the Minister is questioned but not reaffirmed in a meeting of the Fellowship, the Board of Stewards shall determine the appropriate terms of severance, if any.

4. In case of urgent need, the Board of Stewards may hire an "interim" or temporary Minister, whose tenure shall not exceed six months, upon such terms as the Board of Stewards may determine, without necessity of confirmation or prior reference to a meeting of the Fellowship.

Article VIII. Fiscal Year

The Fiscal Year shall end on December 31.

Article IX. Meetings

A. The Annual Business Meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Rappahannock shall be held in the last month of the fiscal year at a time to be determined by the Board of Stewards. Notice of the meeting shall be provided to all members at least 21 days in advance of the meeting, and at least 25 days' notice for major corporate decisions, such as dissolution. The notice of the annual business meeting shall provide the meeting agenda, which, at a minimum, will include:

1. The election of Officers and other members of the Board of Stewards, Trustees, Servetus Trustees, Leadership Development Chair, and other members of the Finance Committee;
2. The presentation of committee reports as determined by the Board of Stewards; and
3. The review of the proposed annual budget.

Ten members or twenty percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum at this meeting, whichever is greater. Absentee ballots for the elections will be accepted before or at the annual business meeting or at any special meeting at which elections take place.

B. Special Business Meetings of the Membership may be called at the signed request of ten members or 20% of the membership, whichever is greater. Such requests shall be submitted to the Board of Stewards. The Board shall convene the requested meeting, providing at least 15 days' notice to the Membership and at least 25 days' notice for major corporate decisions. The notice shall provide the meeting agenda. Ten members or twenty percent of the voting membership, whichever is greater, shall constitute a quorum.

Article X. Dissolution

A. The Fellowship may decide to dissolve itself by a three-fourths (75%) majority vote of members present or voting by proxy at an Extraordinary Fellowship Meeting called solely for that purpose.

B. Should the Fellowship decide to dissolve itself, the Trustees shall dispose of the Fellowship's assets sufficient to pay all outstanding debts and the remaining assets shall be distributed tax free to the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association of America or its successor and, if those assets cannot be distributed tax free to the Southern Region by laws current at the time, then to the Unitarian Universalist Association or its successor.

Article XI. Amendment

These bylaws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at the Annual Meeting or a Special Business Meeting with the approval of two-thirds (67%) of the membership present or represented by proxy at a duly called Fellowship Meeting. If needed, a schedule for implementing the approved amendment(s) shall be presented at the meeting. Notice of the proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting.