

The Constitution
of the First Unitarian Church of Toledo



Approved by the Congregation on May 23, 2010
Effective 7/1/10

CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name

The name of this congregation shall be the First Unitarian Church of Toledo, Ohio (herein referred to as "the Congregation").

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this Congregation is to provide a warm and welcoming spiritual home and a beacon of progressive religious leadership through social justice, community engagement and stewardship. We foster the search for personal truth and meaning through worship, music, lifespan religious education, and the joy of fellowship. We welcome people of diverse beliefs and needs and invite them home.

Article III – Congregational Affiliation

This Congregation shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (herein referred to as "UUA") and of the Ohio Meadville District (herein referred to as "OMD").

Article IV – Nondiscrimination

This Congregation declares and affirms its special responsibility to promote the full participation of all persons in its activities and in all forms of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, age, national origin, gender or sexual orientation, and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

Article V – Membership

1. (a) General membership is available to all persons aged eighteen years of age or older who have signed the membership book as further described in Article V (4), below. General members are welcome to participate in the services and ministry of the Congregation.

(b) A voting member is any person aged at least eighteen years of age who has signed the membership book, as further described in Article V (4), below,

and who has made an annual financial commitment of record (herein "Pledge") in accordance with the UUA's Financial Commitment guidelines but in no event in an amount less than that to be determined by the Board as the minimum amount necessary to cover membership affiliation costs for the UUA, the OMD, and other membership expenses.

(c) It is expected that voting members will give generously. In the event of hardship, including senior members who are no longer able to make a financial contribution, the Minister(s) and/or Commissioned Lay Leader (if any),¹ in consultation with the President of the Board of Trustees, may grant waivers which will allow such members to continue as voting members.

(d) For the purposes of voting at any annual or special congregational meetings, the status of a member as a voting member shall be determined from the Congregational records as of the date not more than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting, a list of voting members shall be published in writing and made available to the Congregational membership in such manner and through such procedure (i.e., e-mail, mail, internet postings, etc.) as shall be recommended by the Board. No publication of the list is required before a special congregational meeting.

2. Any person aged fourteen to seventeen who has completed a formal Coming of Age program within this Congregation may also sign the membership book but shall not be a voting member.
3. Any person who makes a pledge but has not signed the membership book shall be designated as a "supporter" in the Congregation's record books. Any person who participates in the Congregational life but has not signed the membership book and who has not made a contribution of record shall be designated as a "friend" in the Congregation's record books.
4. Prior to membership, an applicant must consult with the Senior Minister, the Minister/Director of Religious Education, the Commissioned Lay Leader (if any), or a member of the Board of Trustees about the heritage of Unitarian Universalism, its principles, and the responsibilities of commitment to the Congregation and is encouraged to attend the Congregation's religious education program leading to membership.
5. All voting members shall become eligible to vote thirty (30) days after signing the Membership Book.

¹ A Commissioned Lay Leader is an individual who has successfully achieved this designation by completing the OMD's program.

6. (a) A member's name shall be placed on the inactive list when: (1) in the event of a general membership, the member has not participated in Congregational activities or attended services during the preceding twelve-month period; or (2) in the case of a voting member, the member has not paid any portion of his or her Pledge during the preceding twelve-month period.

(b) Before a member's name is placed on the inactive list pursuant to Article V(6)(a)(1) or (2), above, the Minister(s), Commissioned Lay Leader (if any), and the Board President shall review the change in the member's status from active to inactive.

(c) A member whose name has been placed on the inactive list for a period of two consecutive years may be dropped from the membership roll by action of the Board of Trustees after a reasonable effort has been made to notify such member of the intended action.

(d) A member's name shall be removed from the membership rolls in case of: (1) the member's death; (2) a written request by the member to the President; or (3) upon removal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board for actions that threaten the well-being of the Congregation.

Article VI - Ultimate Authority/Board of Trustees

1. (a) The ultimate authority of the Congregation is vested in the members as expressed in Annual and Special Meetings.

(b) The following decisions shall not be delegated to the Congregation's Board of Trustees but shall be decided in a Congregational meeting by two-thirds vote (either oral or written) of the voting members present at which a quorum of forty percent (40%) of voting members shall be required, according to the rules established for the conduct of annual or special congregational meetings: 1) the sale, purchase or encumbrance of real property; 2) the decision to call a minister; 3) the decision to dismiss a minister; 4) a decision to encumber the endowment fund; and 5) changes to this Constitution or the Congregation's By-laws.
2. (a) The fiscal year of the Congregation is from July 1 to June 30.

(b) At each annual meeting, the Board of Trustees shall submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year. The budgeted expenses may not exceed the anticipated income. A budget shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the voting members present at the annual meeting.

(c) Once a budget is approved, the Board may authorize and expend the funds as budgeted. The Board may reallocate funds, as long as the reallocation does not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total annual budget.

(d) At the end of each fiscal year, the Audit Committee shall arrange for an audit of the books of account and shall report thereon to the Board and to the Congregation in a newsletter or other communication.

(e) Checks and other orders on the funds or credit of the Congregation, and all contracts and instruments in writing by the Congregation, shall be valid and binding upon the Congregation only when executed by such officers as shall be designated and authorized by the Board.

ARTICLE VII - Dissolution of the Congregation

Any action to dissolve the Congregation must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible voting members of the Congregation present at a meeting called to specifically consider such action, for which meeting written notice has been issued to all members eligible to vote in accordance with the provisions of the Congregation's Constitution and Bylaws. If the Congregation at its own option shall cease to exist, all property, real or personal, shall be transferred to either the Ohio Meadville District or the Unitarian Universalist Association or their successors, as decided by the Congregation at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE VIII - Constitution Adoption and Amendment

(a) This Constitution, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or replaced at the annual or any special meeting of the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members, providing that a quorum of 40 percent of voting members is present at the meeting. Proposed changes shall be announced thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. Such information shall be published in writing and made available to the Congregational membership in such manner and through such procedure (i.e., e-mail, mail, internet postings, etc.) as shall be recommended by the Board.

(b) Amendments may be proposed by the Board of Trustees or by written petition signed by at least fifty voting members and submitted to the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX - By-laws

The Congregation may adopt By-laws not inconsistent with this Constitution.