



# BYLAWS REFRESH TOWN HALL

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA

WELCOME!

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
COMMUNITY CHURCH



## BYLAWS REFRESH TOWN HALL

# OUR AGENDA

- Welcome
- Chalice Lighting
- Personal Check-In
  - “Awakening” Theme: Share a book or movie helped you to awaken?
- Introduction to Task Force
- Guiding Principles
- Good Process
- Structure of Proposed Bylaws
- Overview of Changes
- Summary of Significant Changes
- Proposal Review
- Feedback & Questions





## INTRODUCTION

# BYLAWS REFRESH TASK FORCE

- Task Force Established by Board of Directors in December 2020
- Purpose to Achieve a Developmental Ministry Goal
- Refreshing our Congregation's Bylaws (Governing Structure)
- Patricia Wright, Chair; Beth Brownlie (Board Liaison); John Zinner; Bob Dietz; and Rev. Jeremiah Kalendae (Developmental Minister)
- Began Meeting in January 2021
- Appreciate Pastoral Nature of Task
- This is Only a Proposed Draft





**REFRESH TASK FORCE**

# **DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGE**

- **Rev. Greg Ward observed that past conflicts and wounds of the congregation were written into the Bylaws**
- **The Board tasked our Developmental Ministry with examining and redeveloping systems and structures of the congregation, including the Bylaws**
- **To move beyond a hierarchical culture with a low degree of trust**
- **to a culture of transparency, simplicity and clarity to better serve together interdependently and cooperatively**





REFRESH TASK FORCE

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Clarity
- Trust
- Transparency
- Simplicity
- Interdependence





## REFRESH TASK FORCE

# GOOD PROCESS

- Board Charter, Guiding Principles, & Covenant
- Research & Analyze:
  - UUA Best Practices
  - Similar Congregations' Bylaws
  - Consult with Dr. Melissa James, UUA Liaison
- Draft Bylaws
- Board Input & Approval
- Congregational Feedback
- Final Draft Approval
- Propose Bylaws for Adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting





## BYLAWS REFRESH TASK FORCE

# STRUCTURE OF BYLAWS

- Article 1: Name
- Article 2: Purpose
- Article 3: UUA Membership
- Article 4: Membership
- Article 5: Congregational Meeting
- Article 6: Governance Structure
- Article 7: Committees of the Congregation
- Article 8: Ministry
- Article 9: Changes to the Bylaws



# OVERVIEW OF CHANGES



- Incorporated UUA Recommendations
- Streamlined and Organized Information to be Consistent with Best Practices
- Simplified the Bylaw Language for Clarity
- Eliminated Redundancy Throughout
- Removed Sections which are Church Policy or Belong Elsewhere per Organizational RASCI Protocols (i.e., committees, ministerial agreements, etc.)
- Added Sections to Address Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities (i.e., online meetings, additional ministers, etc.)
- Updated Information to be Consistent with Contextual Changes (i.e., added the Pacific Western Region)
- Reduced the total length by about 50% for Clarity

# SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES



- **Bylaw Purpose Statement removed because it was not standard and unnecessary.**
- **Non-discrimination statement removed because it is a policy.**
- **“Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Monica” name recommended for consideration by congregation in addition to our present name.**
- **Faith in Action through social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppression added to the Purpose Statement.**
- **Pacific Western Region added**
- **UUA District removed.**
- **Members required to reside in Greater Los Angeles Area since district is being dissolved.**
- **Considered Virtual Members but decided they are best described as official “Friends” of the Congregation.**

# SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES



- **“Honorary Member” designation created for our longtime members who are no longer able to pledge or regularly participate in the life of the community.**
- **Board approves all new members each month. We felt this was a necessary safeguard to protect the community.**
- **Excused absences permitted for Board Members.**
- **Online Congregational Meetings permitted in an emergency.**
- **Leadership Development and Nominating Committee with broader responsibility.**
- **Additional Congregational Ministers section added.**
- **Affiliated Community Ministers section added.**
- **Removed all Committees that should be responsible to the Board and not the Congregation as a whole per RASCI (i.e., Finance, Personnel, Faith in Action, Religious Education Council) and defined by policy.**
- **Removed the Related Organizations Section.**



# PROPOSED BYLAWS REVIEW

- **Article 1: Our Name**
  - **A Time for Reflection**
  - **Is there enough of a consensus to make a change?**
- **Articles 2-9**



# THE QUESTION OF OUR NAME



- UUA Guidelines encouraged us to carefully consider our name
- We are cognizant that our congregation has modified its name two times in the past century and at some points this has been a source of conflict in the congregation
- We were founded as All Souls Unitarian Church, later we changed the name to the Unitarian Community Church of Santa Monica, and then we changed it again after the 1961 merger to its current form, the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
- We noted that there had been passionate movements in the congregation in the past decade or so to remove the word “church” from our name and equally passionate movements to retain our name
- We thought it was important that we solicit feedback from the congregation to see if a greater consensus had emerged around evolving our name. We decided that we would only recommend a change to our name if we found that greater consensus has emerged around the recommendation
- We discovered that one the UU congregations we were studying in our analysis had adopted a both/and approach and included both a historic and a contemporary name in their refresh bylaws
- We were cognizant of the movement towards UU Communities calling themselves “Congregations” instead of Churches, Fellowships, or Societies in contemporary times

# ARTICLE 1: NAME



- We recommend calling our community the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Monica and the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
- Our rationale is as follows:
  - “Congregation” is a more inclusive term than “church.” “Church” had negative connotations for some Jewish, LGBTIAQ+, humanist, and others members in our community and presumably in the larger community
  - “Congregation” is shorter than “Community Church” and, perhaps, more easily marketable in the digital age
  - “Congregation” is in line with the UU and Jewish trends around community names
  - “Community Church” is a valuable historical destination
  - “Community Church” is what we’ve been known as in the larger community
  - “Community Church” is on the building
  - “Church” is a commonly understood term for a religious body
  - “Church” has positive connotations for some of our Christian and other members
  - Adopting both names could help us embrace “both/and” thinking instead of tendencies towards polarizations and “either/or” thinking”



# PROPOSED BYLAWS REVIEW

— Articles 2-9

