

**MANUAL FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS**  
**Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene**  
**April 2004**  
**revised November 2004, October 2007**

**Covenant.** We gather to celebrate life, to minister to one another, to shape a community that hears all our voices, honors each search for meaning, and reaches out to enrich the world with caring. Thus we live our covenant, one with another.

**Mission Statement.** We are a compassionate, welcoming community that promotes spiritual growth, ethical living and social justice in our church and in the world.

The purpose of this manual is to provide information and guidelines for chairs of committees. Committees are an important part of the intricate web that we call our church and one of the main vehicles for living out our mission and goals. We have a small effective and overworked staff, and much of the church's work is done by volunteers. Be assured that this work is essential and greatly appreciated.

The first version of this manual was prepared with significant help from Carolyn Madsen, Secretary of the Board at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Corvallis in 2004. The UUFC Committee Handbook provided a framework for creating this manual.

A great deal of information, including much of the information provided here, is accessible on our website, <http://www.uueugene.org/>. See especially "Board & Committees" under LEADERSHIP, or go directly to <http://www.uueugene.org/UUCE/Committees.html>.

**UUCE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.** The Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene (UUCE) supports and is supported by the national Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and the UUA's regional organization, the Pacific Northwest District (PNWD).

Like other Unitarian churches, the UUCE is self-governed by an elected Board of Trustees, which meets monthly, usually on the second Thursday of the month. The Board focuses primarily on policy, planning and financial matters. The Executive Committee, which consists of the four Board officers, deals with business that arises between Board meetings and also prepares the Board agendas.

Bylaws, all of which have been approved by the congregation, provide the legal framework under which the church operates. Board Policies are policies adopted by the Board that provide long-term guidelines. The bylaws and Board Policies that pertain to committees are given in Appendix D. See also Appendix A.

Some other church policies can be found in the following documents, which are available on our website and in the office: Policies, Guidelines and Procedures for the Children and Youth Religious Education Program; Safe Congregation Procedures; Personnel Policies; and Rental Policies and Guidelines.

**COMMITTEES IN THE CHURCH.** In addition to standing committees mandated in the bylaws (Committee on Ministry, the Nominating Committee, and the Membership Committee), the Board Policies refer to the following committees: Budget [now FAB = Finance, Audit and Budget], Computer [died circa 1990], Facilities Council, Finance [now FAB], Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council], Personnel, Planned Giving, Publications, Safe Congregation [now Committee on Congregational Ministry and Safety] and Stewardship. The Board has created other standing committees and also task forces. In addition, there are various interest groups.

If a group feels that the church needs a new committee, the current recommended procedure is as follows. Take a proposal to the Coordinating Council; first contact the secretary of the council at least one week in advance. The council may then forward the recommendation to the Board.

### **Committee Structure**

It is important for each committee to have a clear understanding of its role in the church. The purpose of a charge is spelled out in Board Policy COMM.5, which was approved in April 1997, as follows: "Committee charges will be generally construed as the job description of each committee in order to provide clarity and continuity as to the function of the committee." In other words, the charge represents the committee's mission or statement of purpose. The charge should be a brief general statement giving the fundamental rationale for the committee.

Many committees benefit from having documentation less formal than a charge, documents that normally don't need Board attention. Such documents are extremely useful to future committees who need to know the history and traditions of a committee. Such documents may be statements of procedures and responsibilities, a collection of past committee minutes, other committee records, and a committee calendar.

Several Board Policies, and a few bylaws, directly relate to certain committees. From time to time such policies and bylaws should be reviewed by the committees. If a change seems needed, the recommendation should be submitted to the Board.

### **Committee Meetings**

Most standing committees meet regularly. A brief notice of committee meetings and events should be placed in the monthly newsletter or listed in Sunday orders of service. Also, it should appear in the weekly email UUpDate. The Office Administrator should be notified if a meeting or event is cancelled.

Having an agenda and minutes will help the committee function more effectively and provide a useful tool for communicating with members who were unable to attend the meeting. They also provide history for future committees.

Prepare a meeting agenda prior to each committee meeting. Have someone take brief notes including assignments to members, a summary of the discussion and especially any decisions that are made.

Place the agenda and the minutes for each meeting in a notebook, to build a reference document for future committee work. Copies of committee minutes should always be given or sent to the Office Administrator and to the Secretary of the Board.

It is church policy to have child care available for church meetings. See Appendix B.

To help members feel connected to the church and to each other, it is recommended that meetings have brief check-ins and also check-outs to discuss how the meeting went. The lighting of a candle or some opening words also help create the atmosphere of a UU community.

### **Committee Budgets**

It is good practice for committees to prepare specific goals annually for the next year. Some committee goals have financial implications, in which case the committee may need a budget.

The church's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. In January or February the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee [FAB] will begin developing the tentative budget for the following fiscal year so that it will be available prior to the all-church canvass in the early spring. During this period, the chair of FAB will request that committee chairs submit their budgets using budget-request forms that will be provided.

During the year, the status of committee budgets can be obtained from the Treasurer. Committee chairs are responsible for keeping within their budgets. Forms for requesting reimbursement are available from the Treasurer and in the church office. Reimbursement requests should be accompanied by documentation such as a sales slip.

The Fundraising Committee coordinates fundraising activities, so requests should go first to the Fundraising Committee. The purpose of this policy is to avoid different groups from innocently undercutting each other's fund raisers or the annual canvass. Normally, requests for fundraisers that have been approved in the past (such as fundraisers to help support delegates to attend PNWD or GA meetings), and fundraisers whose proceeds will go to the General Fund and/or to the church group planning the fundraiser, will continue to receive prompt approval. Other requests also will be handled promptly, but first will be taken to the Executive Committee for approval. All fundraising proposals should be sent to the chair of the Fundraising Committee,

### **Committee Membership**

Another area where some committees may need and want help concerns committee memberships. Relevant Board Policies are: *COMM.2 Unless membership on a committee is specified in the Bylaws, a committee may be made up of any interested members and friends of the church. However, the chairperson must be a church member. COMM.3 Chairs of committees shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. (revised 6/12/03)* New committee chairs are usually recommended by the current committee. The Board [or Coordinating Council?] should be notified so that they can be formally approved.

For healthy committees to continue to carry on their missions, it is important to identify future leadership, i.e., one or more people who would consider taking on the leadership during the next year or so. When possible, committees should identify "chair-elects" about a year before a current chair's terms end. Some committees are structured so that the chair and other members have specified terms. A Volunteer Database may be developed so that committee chairs, Board members, and staff can locate people willing to help with projects and events in our congregation. See Appendix E for policies on church volunteers.

Committees often need and want to publicize future plans and past accomplishments to the full church membership. Sometimes they need to appeal for wider participation. Articles and announcements may be submitted to the newsletter and to UUpdate. Some announcements may appear in the Sunday orders of service.

## **Communications with the rest of the Church**

There are mailboxes for most committees in the lobby of the church sanctuary. Members of the congregation are encouraged to use them to communicate with committees. There are many ways for a committee to use the church website for the benefit of both the committee and the congregation. See Appendix C.

Each committee is invited to provide a member on the Coordinating Council. This is the group where ideas and requests can be worked out that involve more than one committee or involve issues with a large number of stakeholders.

Committees may take ideas or requests to the Coordinating Council. If they involve major changes or expenses, the Coordinating Council may refer them to the Board or to the Facilities Council.

The church publishes an Annual Report every year or so. Committee chairs are invited to submit reports on the activities and general status of their committees. A typical report will be half a page to a full page in length. It should state the mission and highlight the recent work of the committee along with a review of the overall status of this portion of the church's operation. For models, see the most recent Annual Reports, which are available on our website and in the office. The Annual Reports provide vivid evidence of the wide variety of activities in the church. Preparing committee reports for the Annual Report is often a pleasant exercise as this helps the committees realize how much they have accomplished.

## **APPENDIX A Nitty Gritty Details that Chairs Need to Know**

All committee meetings should be listed on the church calendar. Except for special interest groups, like book clubs, committees normally meet in the church. The Office Administrator should be contacted in order to list a committee meeting on the church calendar and to schedule meetings in the church. Also, be sure to arrange for access to the room, which may involve borrowing a key. The Board Policy "Key/Security" specifies the church procedure for loaning keys.

Rooms should be left in the same condition and configuration that they were initially. This also applies to the kitchen if the group makes use of that room. Unless your meeting is held during normal office hours, it is the committee chair's responsibility to close up the building and be sure all lights are turned

off. The last one out should also turn down the heat unless it is known that it has been set on automatic.

Committee chairs should not use church letterhead or write letters to the editor on behalf of the church without prior approval of the Executive Committee or the minister. General guidelines are provided in Board Policies, "Political Activities" and "Use of Church Name."

**APPENDIX B**  
**Child Care for Meetings and Other Events**  
**(prepared by Candee Cole, May 2004 and September 2007)**

In order to make church-sponsored meetings and events accessible for families with children, we have made a commitment to provide child care. Below are some things to keep in mind when organizing child care for your gathering.

1. Childcare funds are ONLY for church events, not for events organized by an outside entity that is renting/borrowing our space (*even if the organizer is a church member*). Approximately 10 hours per month are allocated for church meetings and parties. (*If it is possible, scheduling your meeting when other committees are present and need childcare is the best use of childcare hours and funds.*)
2. It is policy that we have two childcare providers available at all times, even if there are only one or two children. This keeps the children and the providers safe. Ratios according to our policy are as follows:
  - Infant and preschool children: two caregivers.*
  - 4–10 children, with no more than two under age 2: two caregivers.*
  - 4–10 children, with two or more under age 2: three caregivers.*
  - 10 or more children: three or more caregivers, based on ages of children enrolled.*
3. If only one childcare provider is available, call a volunteer; someone from the group (not necessarily a parent) should be asked to help, or childcare must be done in the very next room with the door open. If the door cannot remain open, a frequent check-in must be made from another adult during the meeting/event.
4. Childcare providers must be age 18 or older. Providers under 18 may not be left alone with the children. The exception to this is if the childcare is being held in the next room (*with the door open or a frequent check in*) and all parents are made aware that the provider is under 18. **In any case, a provider under 18 may not be left alone with more than 4 children.** Two providers under age 18 may work with a group of 8 if there is not more than one infant in the group.
5. It is suggested that you get a commitment from committee members that need childcare, and ask them to call the chair or the providers if they need to cancel. If you are offering an event or class, please have parents sign up ahead of time for childcare so you can have enough providers on hand. If

no children have shown up to a meeting with 25 minutes of the start time, the provider may leave and clock in for 1 hour.

6. If you have called the childcare list and the volunteer list but no one is available for your event, you will need to find your own provider. If you can find a volunteer, then you won't need to worry about paper work and an orientation. If you find someone that wishes to be paid, but they are only doing a one-time job or very infrequent work, they do not need to do paper work. They need only to fill out a time sheet. If someone is being hired for a longer period of time or frequent jobs, they must schedule a time with the DRE to fill out paperwork, including bringing in their I.D. and SS card or a passport. They must also have an orientation (1 hour) with the DRE or the Childcare Leader. The orientation includes behavior management policies, snack and allergy information, location of First Aid supplies, etc...
7. If you have any questions about child care, please contact the DRE at 743-0641.

**APPENDIX C**  
**Ways to Use the Web**  
**(assembled by Martha Osgood, April 2004 and October 2007)**

1. Provide an overview of your committee's work: your mission statement, what you've done, what you want to do in this committee so as to inform the congregation. In particular, when you do a special push of a project in the newsletter, add it to your webpage and in the PR push you can say "there's more information about this aspect of the committee's work on the website."
2. Keep your Committee Minutes and current Agendas there so you can find them when you want to write your Annual Report and brag a little. Archives of events, press releases, articles, surveys are valuable. Some of these pages might be better "unlinked" so the public does not inadvertently find them. This is all possible.
3. Store your strategies and solutions to problems on the website so next year's committee doesn't have to re-think the whole thing again. This is also a good place to explain how the committee solved certain issues and why.
4. Link your committee members from your page so church members can contact them easily while reading that page. Use one of the pages as a job description page for potential committee members. It can usually be changed within hours as your needs change.
5. Put photographs of a few of your events or meetings or products/results on your page. Thumbnails can be clicked on to provide larger pictures. Photos work best when there are fewer people and objects, and they are less complicated. Emphasize close-up shots and choose clean backgrounds.

6. Think of the UUs in 2053 who are preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of this local church in 2059. What might they find useful or amusing?

**APPENDIX D**  
**Bylaws and Board Policies**  
**concerned with committees and the Coordinating Council**

**BYLAWS: Standing and Other Committees**

100.1 There shall be standing committees of the church, including the Committee on Ministry, the Nominating Committee, and the Membership Committee.

100.2 The Committee on Ministry shall consist of five persons selected by the Board President from lists of names provided by the Minister and the Board of Trustees. Members of this Committee may not be members of the Board of Trustees.

100.3 The Nominating Committee is elected by the Congregation.

100.4 Any other standing committees shall be established by the Board of Trustees.

100.5 The Board may establish other committees for particular purposes and specific lengths of time as it deems necessary.

**BOARD POLICY: Committees, General** (adopted 5/9/96)  
[Bylaw references 100.4, 100.5]

COMM.1 Committees not listed as standing committees in the Bylaws may be established by the Board of Trustees as needed.

COMM.2 Unless membership on a committee is specified in the Bylaws, a committee may be made up of any interested members and friends of the church. However, the chairperson must be a church member.

COMM.3 Chairs of committees shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. (revised 6/12/03)

COMM.4 Committee chairpersons shall be responsible for keeping expenditures within the approved committee budget and will present or have presented a signed voucher to the church Treasurer before a request for reimbursement from any budget category will be honored.

COMM.5 Charges to committees as approved by the Board of Trustees shall be included in the Policy Manual as addenda to the Board Policy, "Committees." Committee charges will be generally construed as the job description of each committee in order to provide clarity and continuity as to the function of the committee. (adopted 4/10/97)

**BOARD POLICY: Facilities Council** (adopted 4/06; revised 4/13/06)

FAC.1 The Facilities Council is charged with maintaining the church's building and property, including equipment, electrical and plumbing systems and furnishings. These guidelines empower the Facilities Council to make decisions whenever possible. At the same time, in the spirit of a church community, the impact of Facilities Council's work on other church members will be kept in mind.

FAC.2 (a) Proposed work to be done, including repairs, which will not materially change the facility, and which can be done within the Facilities Council budget, can be undertaken by the Facilities Council without delay. (b) Proposed projects which will not materially change the facility, but cannot be done within the Facilities Council budget, must be approved by the Executive Committee. Then the Facilities Council and Executive Committee will work together to determine a time-table and to work out how the project will be financed. (c) Proposed work which will change the facility materially, or will be apparent to members of the church, requires that the interests of other stakeholders be taken into account. Such changes may include repairs, changes in appearance such as painting the church, disposal of items, and substantial changes in the grounds. The Facilities Council should take the proposal, including a suggested list of possible stakeholders, to the Executive Committee. If the Facilities Council is in doubt whether the Executive Committee should be consulted, then the Facilities Council is advised to consult the Executive Committee. If no action is needed by the Executive Committee, then the Facilities Council will be promptly notified so that it can proceed.

FAC.3 The Facilities Council has the authority to approve essential work for the church. By "essential work" is meant work needed for safety or to maintain the integrity of the building and grounds. Non-essential work may include, but is not limited to, work that would improve the church aesthetics and work requests received by the Facilities Council from other groups in the church.

The Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council] has the authority to approve non-essential changes after all stakeholders have been consulted. Non-essential work should be prioritized jointly by the Facilities Council and the Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council]. Projects that cannot be done within the Facilities Council budget need to be taken to the Executive Committee. Projects approved by the Facilities Council and the Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council], whose costs will exceed \$500, should be taken to the Executive Committee for approval; the Executive Committee may take them to the Board for approval. (originally adopted by the Board on February 10, 2005)

FAC.4 The coordinator of the Facilities Council shall call regular meetings. The coordinator will be the primary contact person on the Facilities Council. Someone on the Facilities Council should watch the budget and be in contact with the church Treasurer when questions of the budget occur. Also, this person should take the lead when the Facilities Council creates a budget for the next fiscal year. (adopted 04/13/06)

**BOARD POLICY: Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council] (adopted 4/06)\_(revised 3/23/06)**

LEAD 1. The Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council] is made up of the chairpersons or their designees of all the working groups in the church, including committees, affinity groups, etc. The meetings of the council are quarterly or as needed, and all church members interested in leadership process are welcome to attend. The meetings provide a forum for cross-program communication and collaboration, as well as for leadership development and selective problem solving.

LEAD.2 The Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council] shall have the authority to review changes in aesthetic elements or fixtures of the church suggested by committees or individuals. The Council may approve or deny the change, or it may choose to allow the congregation a comment period, or other process for approving or denying the change. The Leadership Council [now Coordinating Council] will work with the Facilities Council on non-essential changes to the building. As in FAC.3, costs exceeding \$500 should be taken to the Executive Committee for approval; the Executive Committee may take them to the Board for approval. (adopted 6/08/06)

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Volunteer Policies**

NOTE. The following item was removed from the church's Personnel Policies Manual in about 2004, since it was felt that that was not the appropriate place for it. A very abbreviated version was adopted as Board Policies in June 2006.

*1. Purpose of these volunteer policies is:*

- a. To clarify the nature of the relationship between the paid staff and the volunteer staff of the Church;
- b. To clarify the rights and responsibilities of volunteer workers;
- c. To clarify the expectations of the Church's paid staff regarding volunteers.

*2. The nature of volunteerism:*

a. Church members and friends voluntarily assist in the life and work of the Church for a variety of personal reasons, including a generous desire to be helpful, a concurrence of personal values with those of the Church, social interaction with like-minded people, opportunities for personal growth, and a wish to contribute to the success of the institution and its missions.

b. Volunteering is not a requirement of Church membership; volunteers freely choose to participate. The management of volunteers requires creativity and flexibility on the part of the paid staff.

c. The Church does not have the financial resources nor the paid staff to fully satisfy the many needs and desires of the membership. Volunteers are, therefore, extremely important and highly valued as workers to supplement the efforts of the paid staff. The Church has developed specific methods for accomplishing certain tasks and will provide adequate instructions to volunteers as to the most efficient and effective ways of doing work. The paid staff is responsible for clearly communicating to volunteers the expectations, procedures and work rules regarding tasks to be accomplished. Volunteers may receive a copy of the current Personnel Policies from the staff member with whom they are working. It should be pointed out to them that although many of the policies do not apply to them, the Church wishes them to have access to these policies. It is assumed that all volunteer work is undertaken to mutually satisfy the needs of the volunteer and of the Church.

*3. Responsibilities of a volunteer:*

- a. To be open and honest about intent, goals, and skills.
- b. To understand what is expected before accepting the job.
- c. To carry out duties promptly and reliably.
- d. To accept guidance and direction from the work supervisor and adhere to the directions given.
- e. To participate in any training required for tasks assigned.
- f. To respect confidentiality.
- g. To discuss with the work supervisor satisfactions, dissatisfactions, and suggestions for changing work assignments.
- h. To notify the supervisor of necessary absences or work schedule changes as far in advance as possible.

*4. Rights of a volunteer:*

- a. To be given worthwhile assignments, i.e. work which needs to be accomplished for the Church. The tasks assigned should not exceed the volunteer's skills or abilities.
- b. To have a clear understanding of work assignments including the duties, responsibilities, time commitments and who will be the work supervisor.
- c. To receive guidance, direction, and training for assignments.
- d. To be treated as a colleague.
- e. To be formally and informally recognized for work performed.