

Policy Manual Of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

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Personnel Policy Manual

Of

St. John's Unitarian Universalist
Church

Adopted November 19, 2008

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ST. JOHN'S MISSION STATEMENT

St. John's is committed to creating a safe and caring community, working for peace and social justice, and celebrating beliefs that respect freedom of thought.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Personnel Policy Manual is to document the policies of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church relating to staff. Its intent is to foster a motivated and productive staff, and to facilitate productive relationships between the staff, Minister, Board, Personnel Committee and the broader congregation.

This Personnel Policy Manual is not a contract and can be modified or changed at any time. The relationship between employer and employee is legally defined as *employment at will*, which means that such employment may be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either employer or employee, except as provided by law. Employers may not be compelled to pay wages to persons no longer in their service, and employees may not be compelled to render their labor without their consent.

NOTE THAT THE POLICIES IN THE MANUAL DO NOT APPLY TO ORDAINED MINISTERS CALLED BY THE CONGREGATION. Ministers of the Church are called according to the terms of the Church's Charter and Bylaws, and UUA and UUMA guidelines. The conditions of "employment" are defined by individual contract agreements with ministers, but the relationship between a minister and the Church exists as a covenant agreement.

This Personnel Policy Manual applies to all staff members that are employed by the Board. It does not apply to those, like childcare workers and musicians, who are hired by staff members. The manual outlines the general policies and procedures of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church (referred to herein as *Employer or Church*). Staff members should familiarize themselves with the manual, as it will provide answers to some questions they may have about their employment. Nothing in this manual or in any other written or unwritten policies and practices of the employer creates an express or implied contract, promise or representation between employer and employee.

The employer reserves the right to deviate from general policies in certain situations. Since every employment situation cannot be anticipated, this manual provides a general overview only.

From time to time, changes in the manual will become necessary. Therefore, the employer reserves the right to amend, supplement, or rescind any provisions of this manual as necessary.

This manual supersedes all previous employment policies, whether written or oral, expressed or implied. If any provisions of this manual are found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect.

Anyone with questions or comments about this manual, or with a need for more information, should please ask the Personnel Committee. Comments and suggestions are genuinely encouraged.

I. ROLES

Board of Trustees (Board): The Board, as a whole, has the role of employer. It is responsible for hiring and firing personnel, approving the policies under which staff members work, setting salaries, and conducting the church's official business with regard to personnel. However, neither the Board as a whole nor its individual members are to be the supervisors of individual staff members. The Board is also responsible for approving the individual Terms of Employment documents (See Appendix A for the template) that apply to each staff member.

Minister: The Minister has the role of programming chief for the church, and therefore, the role of leading the staff team. The Minister is also the direct supervisor of individual staff members, helping define the scope of their work. Providing the coordination of staff efforts and vacations, assisting in problem resolution, arranging for any needed training, as well as supporting and advocating for staff members are all parts of that supervisory role. The Minister will help schedule staff training in church policies, protocol, and the budget process. The Minister, supported by the Personnel Committee, will provide annual evaluations for staff members.

Staff team: The staff members, while having individual roles and responsibilities, are also members of a staff team. This team has the roles of supporting each other and coordinating their efforts in delivering the church's program.

Personnel Committee: The Personnel Committee has the role of human resources department. It serves the Board and the Minister in an advisory capacity on all things relating to personnel. It is responsible, in coordination with the Board and Minister, for developing personnel policies, salary recommendations, and Terms of Employment documents for Board approval; for conducting searches for new personnel; for dealing with personnel issues and conflicts directed to it; and for supporting the Minister in providing the annual evaluations of the staff.

Council Directors: The Board's Directors of the Property, Religious Development, and Administrative Councils have a role in supporting the

work of the staff in delivering the church's program in that Director's area of responsibility. They may need to collaborate with a staff member for such things as developing program budgets for those areas.

While each of these above entities has the responsibility for its own roles, it is highly desirable that the channels of communication between all of them remain free and open.

II. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Hiring Practices

1. Equal Employment Opportunity Statement: The employer affirms its commitment to equal employment opportunity for all individuals. Decisions about recruiting, hiring, firing, training, promotions, compensation, benefits, and all similar employment decisions must be made in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or any other classification protected by law. Any discrimination in the workplace based upon any protected classification is illegal and against policy.

Staff members who have questions about discrimination in the workplace, or who believe this policy has been violated, should report their concerns immediately to the Minister or the Personnel Committee. Retaliation against individuals who make claims of discrimination or participate in the investigation of such a claim is prohibited by this policy and will not be tolerated.

2. All staff members must meet or exceed the minimum qualifications for their positions, and may be subject to a background check.
3. Upon commencement of employment, each staff member shall receive a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual and a written statement of the Terms of Employment, including compensation, work schedule, vacation benefits, and any other items unique to the job. See Appendix A for a template of the Terms of Employment.
4. All staff members are responsible for being aware of and following church policies.
5. All staff members of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church are ultimately accountable to the Board of Trustees and therefore the Congregation, which the Board represents.

Termination of Employment

Employment with the Church is at will, which means that either party may terminate employment with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time, except as otherwise provided by law.

- a. Staff members are *requested* to provide a written notice of resignation at least one month before their last day of employment.
- b. The employer will make an effort to provide similar notice.
- c. The Personnel Committee or its designee may conduct an exit interview with a staff member.

Work Hours

Each staff member should refer to his/her Terms of Employment for specific work hour expectations. Individual work schedules may change from time to time. Attendance at church meetings will be considered time worked. Staff members are expected to attend any staff retreats or off-site events that are part of their employment. It is recognized that the demands of the individual job, the needs of the church, and the needs of the individual staff member require that work schedules be flexible. Staff members should clear any planned flexing of normal work hours with the Minister.

Leave

1. Leave without Pay
 - a. A staff member may request a leave without pay through the Minister. The Minister, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and other relevant parties, will draft a leave recommendation for Board approval that contains the conditions and length of the leave. If the conditions of the leave are not met, the staff member may be subject to termination.
2. Leave with Pay
 - a. Jury Duty: Staff members shall be given leave to serve on a jury. Jury pay will be supplemented by the Church to equal the employee's normal pay. During the specified term of jury duty, it is expected that the staff member will continue to work as scheduled on days when they are not required to report to the court for jury duty.
 - b. Parental Leave: A staff member requesting parental leave due to the birth or adoption of a child while actively employed by the Church may, upon written request to the Minister, and with approval of the Board, be granted limited leave with salary. Any additional leave will be handled according to the Leave without Pay section above.

3. Each person requesting these or any unspecified kind of leave should give as much advance notice as possible to the Minister and receive Board approval before the leave commences.

Compensation/Payroll

1. Staff members are paid as set forth in their Terms of Employment.
2. The Church will pay its staff members on a regular monthly basis by direct deposit. Deductions made from staff members' wages are reflected on the stubs of their pay receipts. Federal law requires deductions from pay for income tax, Social Security and Medicare. Other deductions may include state and/or local taxes or wage garnishments. Some deductions are optional and made only if the staff member has authorized their deduction.
3. Staff members are responsible for promptly notifying the Treasurer of any changes or errors in their deductions. Any necessary adjustments usually are made and reflected in the staff member's next paycheck.
4. Pay adjustments generally will be considered for all staff members once a year and any adjustments will normally begin at the beginning of the fiscal year. There is no guarantee of an annual pay adjustment. Pay is usually based upon such factors as individual performance, job responsibilities and other appropriate factors such as operating budget limitations.

Professional Development

1. The Church supports and encourages the personal and professional development of its staff, while recognizing that each staff member is responsible for her/his own development. Each staff member is, therefore, encouraged to add to his/her knowledge and skills through formal and informal training on the job and away. The Church will support such development activities whenever possible. Staff members are encouraged to discuss development opportunities with the Minister. Financial support for development activities is subject to annual budget constraints.
2. Subject to the needs of the Church and the approval of the Minister and the Board, staff members may apply for and participate in denominational and professional growth programs as part of their paid work schedule.
3. Any professional development activity that requires a staff member to be away from the church for two or more weeks during a program year, and/or requires an unscheduled expenditure of Church funds, must be reviewed and approved by the Minister and the Board of Trustees.

III. STAFF BENEFITS

Holidays

1. In general, the following are considered paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the next day
- Christmas Day

2 Floating Holidays to be used at employee's discretion

Since the nature of the staff member's job may require his/her services on one of the normal paid holidays, the Terms of Employment document will spell out the application of this section for each staff member.

2. When a specified holiday occurs on a day that the staff member would normally not be working, the staff member may take off another day of his/her choosing within the next month, by making a timely prior agreement with the Minister.

Vacation

1. The job requirements for the different staff positions vary considerably, both between positions and during the church year. It is not possible to create a universal vacation policy that covers all staff members. Therefore, the paid vacation benefit for each position is set out in the individual Terms of Employment document.
2. As a guiding principal, it is desirable to have a vacation policy for an individual position that would allow the staff member to travel or otherwise be away for at least a week at a time.
3. Paid vacation will be provided based on the nature of the position and the years of service. The years of service for each staff member will be calculated based on his or her individual employment date. When hiring a new employee some years of service credit may be granted based on former employment experience directly related to the position. The vacation amount for each year of employment will be received in a single block at the beginning of that year on the anniversary of the staff member's employment date. The vacation amount received for each year of employment will be as listed below:

0.5-1 year 1 week
1-4 years 2 weeks / per year
5-14 years 3 weeks / per year
15+ years 4 weeks / per year

4. The Minister and staff member will mutually agree on the scheduling of vacation time in advance. The Minister and staff member will be responsible for keeping track of the amount of vacation taken.
5. Staff members will become eligible for vacation after completing six months of employment with the Church. If a staff member is terminated or resigns prior to commencing a seventh month of employment, then that staff member will not be entitled to and will not receive any paid vacation.
6. Vacation time received in any one year of the staff member's employment must generally be used within that year. Staff members may request from the Minister a carry over of vacation, not to exceed 2 weeks, from one employment year to the following employment year. Any approved carry-over vacation must be used within the first three months of the next year or it will be forfeited. A request to carry over vacation should be directed to the Minister for consideration prior to the end of the employment year in which it was received.

Health Care Benefits

The Church does not provide a health care benefit at this time.

Retirement Benefits

1. A staff member who has completed one year of service and works 1000 or more hours per year is eligible to participate in the UUA Pension Plan.
2. For a staff member who is eligible, the Church will contribute ten percent of salary to the UUA Pension Plan.

IV. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

The Minister, as the direct supervisor of the staff team, will meet yearly with each staff member to discuss his or her performance in the past year. The Personnel Committee is available to assist the Minister in this process. Because the preparations for these evaluation meetings are

extensive, they can be staggered over the year rather than all done at the same time.

The following are recommended steps in the process for each staff member:

1. The Minister should meet with the staff member and the relevant Board Council Director early in a year to discuss any goals for the coming year.
2. At the end of that year the Minister should meet with the staff member to select a list of relevant people with whom he or she regularly interacts in his/her work, so that those people can be solicited for feedback on the staff member's performance.
3. The Personnel Committee should contact the agreed people to get their written, open-ended feedback. The committee should then summarize the feedback obtained from the Minister and the other relevant people into a proposed performance evaluation document for the Minister to review and revise, if necessary.
4. The Minister should then meet with the staff member to discuss the evaluation document and solicit the staff member's feedback. A Personnel Committee member can be present at this meeting if desired by either the Minister or the staff member.
5. Each of the people in this meeting should sign the evaluation document. The Minister and the staff member should keep a copy to guide their efforts in the next year. The Minister should keep a copy in a secure file for three years.
6. The Minister should inform the Board when an evaluation has been completed.

For the performance evaluation process to be effective, the discussions and documents need to be between the Minister, as the supervisor, and the individual staff member. Performance review documents should not be more broadly distributed. However, if there is ever a performance issue that could eventually need the Board's attention in their role as employer, the Minister or the Personnel Committee will inform the Board leadership.

V. RESOLUTION OF STAFF COMPLAINTS

It is recommended that a staff member first take any complaint or grievance to the Minister to discuss ways to resolve the issue. Either the Minister or the staff member can request the assistance of the Personnel Committee to help reach resolution. The Personnel Committee will assist in resolving the problem to the satisfaction of the staff member and the other involved parties. If the matter is not resolved to the staff member's satisfaction, the staff member may then seek a review by the Board. The

resolution recommended by the Board will be binding upon the congregation and the staff member.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Volunteer Policies

Volunteers, who are acting to supplement the efforts of the paid staff, are important and highly valued as workers. These volunteers freely choose to participate. The management of these volunteers requires creativity and flexibility on the part of the paid staff.

St. John's 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.

The volunteer is expected to:

1. Be open and honest about his/her intent, goals, and skills.
2. Understand what is expected before accepting the job.
3. Carry out duties promptly and reliably.
4. Accept guidance and direction from the paid staff or Board members associated with the volunteer job.
5. Participate in any training required for tasks assigned.
6. Respect confidentiality.
7. Notify the appropriate people of necessary absences or work schedule changes as far in advance as possible.

The Church is expected to:

1. Give worthwhile and appropriate assignments.
2. Provide a clear understanding of work assignments including the duties, responsibilities, time commitments and who will be the work supervisor.
3. Give guidance, direction, and training for assignments.
4. Treat the volunteer as a colleague.
5. Formally and informally recognize volunteers for work performed.

Business Ethics and Staff Member Conduct

1. The Sexual Harassment Policy of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church applies to all staff members.
2. In the course of conducting the business of a Church, staff members are expected to respect the confidentiality of those with

whom they interact and personal information to which they have access.

3. The staff of the Church is expected to employ safe work practices on the job and on Church property.
4. Staff members are expected to be on time for work, to dress appropriately for their particular position, and to conduct themselves professionally.
5. The Church will not tolerate illegal use, possession, sale, manufacture, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances on Church property; having any illegal or unauthorized controlled substances in one's system while at work; having excess amounts of otherwise lawful controlled substances in one's system; or having any unauthorized drug-related paraphernalia in one's possession or on Church property.
6. The staff members of the Church are expected to conduct themselves at the highest standard of ethics and integrity.
7. The staff members of the Church are expected to treat with respect those with whom they come in contact in the course of their work, including members, volunteers, clients, and other Church staff.
8. The Church will endeavor to deal with staff conduct and performance in a positive and constructive manner. Nevertheless, staff may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to meet the above performance/conduct expectations. The level of action taken will be determined solely by the Church based on the conduct involved. This is not intended to affect the at-will status of all Church staff.

Policy Implementation

1. The above Personnel Policies shall become effective immediately upon their approval by the Board of Trustees of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church.
2. The Church reserves the right to change, modify, alter, withdraw or cease in its sole discretion, any and all of its personnel policies and procedures at any time. That includes, but is not limited to, all of the policies and procedures of each section of this document. Amendments, changes, and temporary variants or suspensions of these policies shall require a majority vote of the entire Board of Trustees.

A Terms of Employment document will be prepared for each individual staff member to clarify the application of these policies to the individual. It shall be updated as needed to reflect changes in the items they cover.

3. The staff member will sign the Terms of Employment document to acknowledge that s/he is in receipt of both the document and the Personnel Policy Manual of the church and that they have been reviewed and read.

APPENDIX A: Template for Terms of Employment document

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

FOR _____
(Staff member)

This document serves as an addendum to the Personnel Policy Manual of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church. The basic personnel policies of the church are spelled out in the manual and apply to each staff member. This document details the particular matters that apply to your position. By signing this document, you agree to these Terms of Employment and acknowledge that you have received both a copy of this document and the Personnel Policy Manual of the Church. This document should be updated whenever there are changes to the items below.

COMPENSATION:

WORK SCHEDULE:

VACATION:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

BENEFITS:

OTHER ITEMS:

Signed,

Staff Member

Minister

Board President

Date

Affiliated Minister's Policy

Policy adopted **September 18, 1996**

Purpose: To outline the guidelines for becoming an Affiliated Minister

- A. An Affiliated Minister must meet all of the following criteria:
- A person in ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association
 - A member in good standing at St. John's Unitarian Church
 - A minister called to be an Affiliated Minister by the congregation of St. John's Unitarian Church upon recommendation of the Parish Minister, with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees
- B. The Affiliation Covenant is approved by:
- The Parish Minister
 - The Board of Trustees of the Church
 - The minister to be affiliated
- C. Affiliated Ministers are not employed by nor paid a salary by the church. However, appropriate services could be reimbursed as covered in the covenant.
- D. The duties of each Affiliated Minister shall be agreed upon by the Parish Minister and the Affiliated Minister, approved by the Board of Trustees, and set out in an Affiliation Covenant.
- E. When Affiliated Ministers perform services for persons who are not members of St. John's Unitarian Church, they shall expect the normal remuneration. St. John's members will receive normal pastoral services from Affiliated Ministers without charge, but are not precluded from offering an honorarium.
- F. Referrals for services shall be made to Affiliated Ministers when the Parish Minister is unable to perform them, or as agreed upon in the covenant.
- G. Affiliated Ministers shall be identified on all staff lists and annual reports to the Unitarian Universalist Association and other regional bodies. Their names will be regularly noted on the orders of service and in the newsletter as space permits.
- H. The Affiliated Ministers and the Parish Minister of the church will meet at least annually to review their relationship, to determine how the ministry of the

Affiliated Ministers is working in the life of the church, and to renew, revise or terminate the covenant.

- I. Changes in the covenant may be made by agreement among the ministers concerned and shall be effective 30 days after written notice of the change is forwarded to the Board of Trustees, unless the Board votes to delay or reject the change. In any matter of job definition, all parties will seek agreement through various channels, while realizing that the congregation has the final right to terminate the program.

Policy on Congregational Initiatives

Adopted **March 17, 2004**

Purpose: To establish procedures for obtaining Congregational review and agreement to proposed church-wide commitments and/or actions.

A. Situations covered by the policy:

The processes outlined in Section D. of this policy apply in the following situations:

- Church-wide commitment to a social action project or issue.
- Public stands on potentially controversial issues

Other relevant policies concerning congregational commitments which should be considered when deciding about application of this policy include:

- Church-wide decision-making in areas of governance--e.g. procedures for calling a minister, voting for Board members, changing by-laws--are covered in the by-laws.
- Bylaws also empower the Board to make policy on behalf of the Congregation (Article VIII, Section 4), but also limit the ability of the Minister and members to "indicate expressly or by implication that they speak for the congregation unless the Congregation has, in a congregational meeting, given them the authority to do so." (Article IV).
- The Policy on Freedom of Beliefs and Public Utterances (Board Approved, 1/03) affirms the right of the Minister and Church Committees to speak publicly *without* representing the Church as a whole.

B. Principles Guiding the Process of Achieving Congregational Approval/Consensus:

- The process should be simple, and have a clear step-by-step flow.
- The process should not discourage individual action, but rather facilitate action where full congregational commitment is necessary or desired.
- The process should provide for:

Informing the entire congregation of the issue/proposed action under consideration.

Educating all interested members in critical aspects of the issue/proposed action.

Offering opportunities for dialogue and consideration of a variety of points of view, and dissenting or countering positions in safe and respectful forums.

The method of voting should be consistent with congregational meeting by-law specifications, at a minimum. For situations where a public resolution or action in the name of St. John's is under consideration, additional specifications are required to safeguard our church community.

These safeguards include:

- Providing for a secret ballot and requiring a supermajority, rather than a simple majority for passage.

- The decision-making/voting method should allow inclusion of those who cannot attend the congregational meeting where a vote is taken.

C. Desired Outcome of the Process:

- The decision is an informed, and therefore meaningful, one.
- The full congregation owns actions taken in the church's name, not just a dedicated few activists with a special interest in a particular area.
- The action unites us—the process encourages participation, free expression and respect for diverse views, and discourages acting divisively or unilaterally.
- Our actions in the name of the church have more significance—empowering individuals and empowering our church.

D. Processes to Follow in Achieving Congregational Approval/Consensus concerning Congregational Initiatives:

Step 1: Identify an initiative by creating a statement that describes the issue and any intended actions related to it. In addition, keeping the proposed outcome in mind, the document should include those items listed in Step 10.

Step 2: Identify a group or membership (henceforth referred to as the advocacy group) to bring forth the initiative.

- Must be at least 3 members.
- The membership could be a standing committee or a task force, such as Social Action, etc.

Step 3: Share the initiative with the Board of Trustees.

- The initiative can go forward with or without the Board approval.
- The Board could offer to take over the process or share in the process.
- In any case, the Board will clarify with the advocacy group, expectations and next steps.

Step 4: The advocacy group needs to bring forward the following:

- Obtain 10 signatures necessary to call a special congregational meeting.
- Establish a timeline for completing the process
- Pulls together a written "Plan of Action", that:
 - Informs the congregation
 - Educates the congregation
 - Creates "Dialogue" with the congregation
 - Includes a timeline
 - Defines specifically how the "initiative statement" will be utilized, if approved by the congregation

Step 5: Within 60 days, the Board will review the Plan of Action to determine if the content is complete. If it is not complete (e.g. does not contain an educational component, etc.), then the Board will send the initiative back to the group for revision.

Step 6: The Board will set a date for the Special Congregational Meeting, consistent with the timeline of the group and in accordance with the church's by-laws. At the discretion of the Board, the presentation of the initiative and the vote could be incorporated into the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Step 7: The group will implement the "Plan of Action" and "Timeline"

Step 8: Call a Special Congregational Meeting to vote on the initiative.

- Establish a parliamentarian
- Voting is by secret ballot. Absentee ballots will be available for those unable to attend the meeting. No proxy voting.
- A super majority (75% of the quorum is required to pass the initiative).

Step 9: Direction of the Special Congregational Meeting

- To determine if the intent of the initiative is consistent or if significant change in the intent has occurred during the meeting, an Ad Hoc Group will be established containing 1 member from the advocacy group, the President, and the parliamentarian.
- If no significant change has occurred, the vote will go forward.
- If significant change has occurred, the vote will not occur and the initiative goes back to the advocacy group.
 - The advocacy group may determine to stop the initiative
 - The advocacy group may chose to initiate a new process, beginning at Step 3

Step 10: Within 30 days, the advocacy group and a representative appointed by the Board will complete a debriefing process following a vote of the congregational meeting:

- Determine "How the statement of the initiative" will be used (i.e. Publicized & utilized, etc.)
- Develop/modify church policy or procedures, if appropriate
- Determine if a financial commitment or budget line item is necessary
- Assess the effects of the process on the church community (including the Board, the advocacy group and the congregation).

Step 11: If approved, execute the congregationally authorized actions.

Policy on Disruptive Behavior

Approved by the Board of Trustees April 14, 1999,
Amended September 19, 1999, October 18, 2000,
November 19, 2000, and **September 15, 2004**

Rationale:

Twice in the 1990s the St. John's leadership has identified individuals who posed such a threat to others that the Board took extraordinary action, barring those members from the church. In other cases leaders have been concerned about self-destructive conduct as well as individual behavior that disrupted a worship service, committee meeting, or other church activity. Several members have left St. John's when they felt the church failed to respond appropriately to individual misconduct. Improved procedures might provide the leadership with an early warning system triggering intervention to assist individuals engaged in threatening or disruptive behavior. Even in emergency situations that require immediate and/or involuntary separation from the community, due process must be accorded to the disruptive individual based on the UU principle affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all.

Rather than attempt to define 'acceptable' or 'disruptive' behavior, this policy establishes a process for dealing with a range of problems that may include criminal conduct, violations of established conduct policies, such as sexual harassment, or other inappropriate behavior that disrupts the community.

Reaching Out On Time (ROOT)

When a member, friend, or visitor is disruptive or when an individual observes inappropriate behavior, St. John's can reach out in a number of different ways depending on the situation.

1. Interpersonal Conflict

When two individuals have an interpersonal conflict, the Committee on Congregational Concerns may provide nonjudgmental mediation.

2. Lay Ministerial Assistance

The Caring Circle may provide support to an individual experiencing stress from illness, needing assistance or transportation for doctors visits, or assistance with household tasks.

3. Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior

When disruptive behavior occurs, the responsible committee chair shall report to the appropriate Director. For example:

- The Worship and Liturgy committee chair and/or Director of the Religious Development Council should personally counsel an

individual who repeatedly makes inappropriate use of Joys and Concerns during Sunday services.

- The Property Committee Chair and/or Director of Property Council should respond directly to an individual who makes inappropriate use of church resources or facilities, such as for personal gain.

4. Pastoral Care

The Minister may offer pastoral care to a troubled individual.

5. Law Enforcement Involvement

In extraordinary situations involving criminal conduct, law enforcement involvement may be sought by church leaders.

When church leaders conclude that none of the above are appropriate or effective, St. John's requires a specially constituted Committee on Achieving Congregational Harmony-- COACH.

Committee on Achieving Congregational Harmony (COACH)

Composition:

COACH will serve as an Administrative Council standing committee of three to five members appointed by the board, each serving staggered three year terms. The committee should include at least one mental health professional and others with appropriate professional experience (law, counseling, etc.) chosen with regard for a representative membership not limited to one gender. COACH will select its own presiding officer and recorder. The Director of Administrative Council will serve as Board liaison.

Mandate:

The Administrative Council Director will convene COACH once each year to charge the members and arrange any necessary orientation. After selecting its presiding officer and recorder, COACH will review applicable bylaws provisions, board policy documents, and COACH procedures to determine whether any changes in policy and practice should be recommended to the Board. Following its initial organizing session each year, COACH will follow established meeting procedures in response to a call by two church leaders who identify a disruptive individual whose behavior seriously threatens the community.

Procedure:

1. COACH will meet at the call of two church leaders: the Minister and/or Board President and, if required, one other member of the Board. The two officers should first agree that an individual St. John's member, friend, or observer has engaged in disruptive or threatening behavior inappropriate for resolution by COCC, personal counseling by the Minister or other established procedure. An emergency COACH session will be convened immediately if the church leaders believe that urgent action is required and that intervention by the police is not possible or appropriate.

2. The COACH chair will personally notify the individual identified by the church leaders, explain their complaint, provide a written copy of the committee procedures and arrange a meeting time with the committee. The individual has the right to submit a written statement to the committee and to have a representative attend. The individual may also attend unless COACH members feel personally threatened.
3. COACH will hear from the church leader(s), the individual identified, a personal representative if desired, personally affected members of the community and others, separately or together, in one or more closed meetings, as needed.
4. COACH will review all information and proposals for action presented by church leaders and the individual before recommending an approach to resolution. If the church leaders disagree with the committee's response, they may present their recommendations to the Board at a meeting where one or more members of COACH offer their independent assessment of the situation.
5. If the individual acknowledges past misconduct and voluntarily accepts a course of action offering satisfactory assurances for the community, COACH will monitor implementation during a probationary period. If the resolution does not work out, COACH will consider an appropriate response, including the disciplinary measures described below.
6. A recorder will maintain an account of each session and the committee's activities. The committee will ordinarily report only general information to the Board, limiting disclosure of specific details unless Board members have a clear need to know.
7. If COACH agrees with church leaders that an individual unable or unwilling to change disruptive or threatening behavior poses an unacceptable threat to the community, the committee shall recommend appropriate remedial action to the Board including but not limited to:
 - i) Suspension from participation in one or more St. John's activities with conditions for reinstatement following a certain period of time and satisfaction of pre-conditions. COACH will monitor compliance and determine whether the individual fulfilled the conditions.
 - ii) Suspension from all St. John's activities and presence on church property for a defined period of up to three years subject to reinstatement after satisfaction of pre-conditions. [Amend By-Laws Article V, Sec. 6 'Inactive Membership' to add such suspended individuals and provide for review by COACH prior to re-activating membership]
8. Before acting on any recommendation for involuntary suspension, the Board will hear a COACH Representative's report and grant the individual an opportunity to be heard. If the individual chooses not to appear in person and/or if church leaders feel personally threatened, the individual has the right to representation by a person of their choice, or to submit a written statement to the board after receiving timely notice.

9. If the Board suspends an individual from all St. John's activities, the suspended person has the right to appeal to the St. John's membership at the next regularly scheduled congregational meeting which may rescind the board action by majority vote. A church leader and/or COACH Representative will explain and justify the suspension. The suspended individual may not appear at the congregational meeting but has the right to submit a written statement, and to have a personal advocate speak and offer an audio or videotape presentation.

10. If a suspended individual does not appeal to the congregation, church leaders will only share information about the suspension on a need to know basis, avoiding undue publicity that might preclude the individual from reentering the community. Church resolution of disruptive incidents should be disclosed to those personally affected, but not the public.

11. COACH will monitor the individual's compliance with suspension terms. Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person, COACH will recommend to the Board transfer to the list of active members any suspended individual who has satisfied the conditions for reinstatement and wants to return to the St. John's community.

(1) See *Antagonists in the Church* by Kenneth Haugk.

Applicable Addition to By-Laws

Adopted by the Congregation September 19, 1999
Amended by the Congregation November 19, 2000

ARTICLE-V – Membership

Section 6. Inactive Membership

c. Suspension after Disruptive or Threatening Behavior

c. Suspension after Disruptive or Threatening Behavior:

1. A Committee established under the "Policy on Disruptive Behavior" may recommend that the Board suspend from active membership an individual whose behavior seriously threatens the community. The Minister and Board President may jointly refer an individual to the Committee, or either one may do so in conjunction with another Member of the Board. Unless overruled at a Congregational Meeting, the Board may suspend an individual from active membership and all St. John's activities and presence on church property for up to three years. The individual may apply for reinstatement at the end of the suspension period. Such application should be made in writing, and should be submitted to the Board President. The Board President will then refer the application to COACH, which will review adherence to pre-conditions for reinstatement. Reinstatement will be recommended to the Board at the time if all pre-conditions are met.

Policy on Freedom of Beliefs and Public Utterances

Policy adopted **January 15, 2003**

Purpose: To clarify how a member of the congregation, staff and the minister may speak about St. John's

- A committee, task force or sanctioned group, may write, speak or take action on behalf of that group, as long as they identify themselves clearly as a Committee of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church or Chair of a Committee of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church and do not claim to be representing the church as a whole. The stance taken must be consistent with the UUA Seven Principles and our being a Welcoming Congregation.

"Writing" may include signing a letter, press release, or resolution using church stationery. "Taking action" may include affiliating with a coalition, sponsoring programs and activities, marching in a public parade, or carrying the church banner at a public function.

- The minister and other professional staff may write, speak or take action as an individual as long as they identify themselves clearly by title and do not claim to be representing the church as a whole. The stance taken must be consistent with the UUA Seven Principles and our being a Welcoming Congregation.

"Writing" may include signing a letter, press release, or resolution using church stationery. "Taking action" may include affiliating with a coalition, sponsoring programs and activities, marching in a public parade, or carrying the church banner at a public function. Quoting the UUMA Guidelines, it is the professional's or "the minister's responsibility to do everything possible to make clear when she or he is speaking as an individual."

Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment

Adopted February 16, 1994 and amended April, 1995; amended **June 15, 2005**

Related Policy: Personnel Policies

Safe Congregation Policy

Disruptive Behavior Policy

Applies To: Minister

Congregation

Staff

Volunteers

St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church of Cincinnati, as a spiritual community, affirms the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association:

We, the member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice equity and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with liberty and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

In concert with these principles, it is incumbent upon the Minister, all paid staff and volunteer adult leaders and the congregation to act with integrity and authenticity to support and enable the spiritual and personal growth of our children and congregants. In this privileged role, adult leaders will exercise caution and sound judgment to avoid sexual harassment or any other behavior that could be so construed.

No Minister, adult leader, child care employee, church school teacher nor any other person working in a paid or volunteer capacity under the auspices of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church shall engage in sexual harassment, or discrimination. Only a church environment of mutual respect and genuine care for all individuals enables this policy to be realized.

Definition of Sexual Misconduct

Conduct of a sexual nature that, although not so serious or pervasive that it rises to the level of sex discrimination or sexual harassment, is unprofessional and/or inappropriate for the educational and church environment. Examples include:

- Repeatedly engaging in sexually oriented conversations, comments or horseplay, including the use of language or the telling of jokes or anecdotes of a sexual nature in the church environment or classroom, even if such conduct is not objected to by those present;
- Gratuitous use of sexually oriented materials not directly related to the subject matter of a class or meeting.
- Failure to observe the appropriate boundaries of the teacher/youth, minister/congregant, minister/employee, church leader/congregant or youth.

Definition of Sex Discrimination

Conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that adversely affects their employment or education on account of their gender. This might include:

- Exclusion from educational activities on the basis of one's gender or sexual orientation
- Being subjected to jokes or derogatory comments about one's gender or sexual orientation

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that involves the imposition of an unwanted condition or requirement on the continued employment or education of the victim. Two forms of sex harassment are recognized:

1. Quid pro quo harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances and/or requests for sexual favors, whether explicit or implicit, that are made as a condition of employment or education. Only persons with the power to confer or withhold an employment or educational benefit can engage in quid pro quo harassment.

2. Hostile environment harassment usually involves a persistent, pervasive, unwelcome, and/or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's performance as an employee or volunteer or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment are:
 - Intentional touching
 - Explicit or implicit propositions to engage in sexual activity
 - Remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothes or body
 - Persistent, unwanted sexual/romantic attention
 - Deliberate, repeated humiliation or intimidation based upon the sex of an individual.

Policy Provisions Unique to Ministers:

With respect to married Ministers or those in committed relationships, this policy prohibits a Minister from dating, establishing or encouraging a romantic relationship with a member of the congregation. With respect to single Ministers or those not in committed relationships, this policy prohibits dating, establishing or encouraging a romantic relationship with any minor, counselee or the partner of a person in the

congregation. Romantic relationships with single members of the congregation are discouraged because of the potential for abuse of power. If a single Minister and a single congregant do find themselves in such a relationship, the Minister shall make sure the congregant understands the power differential issues. The Minister shall also promptly inform the Board of the church of the relationship to minimize allegations of impropriety.

The Minister is also responsible for following the UUMA ethical guidelines with regard to romantic relationships with congregants.

Reporting Violations

Anyone who believes that he or she or anyone else has been the victim of sexual harassment in violation of this policy shall report the allegation to the Minister, or to any Board member of the church. Specifically members of the congregation are urged to report any incident of harassment or discrimination between congregants or between staff/volunteers and congregants.

Anyone covered by the personnel policies (staff, Minister and volunteers) of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church shall never knowingly condone or fail to report violations.

All allegations of sexual harassment under this policy shall remain confidential except to the extent reports must be investigated under this policy.

Investigating Alleged Violations

- **Responsibility for Investigations**
 - Allegations of sexual harassment shall be promptly forwarded to the Board President, who will coordinate the investigation unless he or she is the target of the allegation. In that event, the Board Vice President will coordinate the investigation.
- **Appointment of Ad Hoc Committee**
 - The Board President shall then appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of the Board President, one other Board member and one member of the congregation to investigate the allegation. At least one member of this committee must have training and/or expertise in the area. The work of the committee shall be completely confidential.
- **Interviews by Committee**
 - The committee will interview the person who made the report, and the alleged victim and prepare a detailed written summary of the allegations of the victim. The committee will then interview the alleged perpetrator and prepare a detailed written summary as relayed by the alleged perpetrator.

- An interview and written summary will also be prepared for any additional witnesses possessing relevant information.
- People may be recalled by the committee after it receives the testimony of others in order to pursue questions raised by such testimony. The committee will strive to minimize recalls and will work expeditiously without sacrificing thoroughness.
- **Outcome**
 - The committee will offer assistance to the victim and the perpetrator by presenting the options that are available to him/her:
 - a. Victim and perpetrator will be urged to seek counseling and if necessary the committee will assist with the referral outside the church environment; or in the case of the victim within the church environment if he/she chooses
 - b. Victim may meet with the perpetrator with the Committee present
 - c. Victim may meet with the perpetrator with a different personal representative chosen by the victim

Consequences for Those Committing Violations

Minister:

Violation of this policy by the Minister shall constitute good cause for discipline. The Board shall also inform the following of any determinations of serious violations of this policy:

- (a) The Director of the Department of Ministry of the UUA
- (b) The Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA
- (c) The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

Staff and Volunteers:

The Board shall determine consequences appropriate to the violation including but not limited to removal from the staff and/or all positions of authority within the church.

Guidelines for Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

These guidelines apply to Ministers, employees and volunteers.

1. Refer to professional counselors all matters that you are not qualified to handle.
2. Be careful with physical contact. Some people appreciate hugs; some do not. Any unwanted physical contact could be interpreted as sexual harassment.
3. Counseling should include words of encouragement, support and affirmation—not words of love and affection. Adults working with children, minors and vulnerable

adults must establish a relationship of mutual respect and refrain from imposing their own emotional or physical needs in this situation.

4. Church-sponsored retreats, weekends, trips and overnights for minors should always have two responsible adults that reflect the gender mix of the group. There must be no use of alcohol or illegal drugs by any member of the group at these events.
5. There should be a minimum of two responsible adults in the building when meetings involving minors are held at the church.
6. The Minister will encourage counselees to attend sessions in the Minister's office. The Minister shall use discretion on a pastoral visit to the home of a person who is alone.

Policy on the Sponsorship of Ministerial Students

Policy adopted May 15, 2002, amended **September 15, 2004**

Purpose: To clarify when a prospective student will be sponsored by the congregation and the responsibilities of St. John's and the student of that sponsorship

The Board of Trustees has the authority and responsibility to address all requests for the congregation's sponsorship of ministerial students. Sponsorship indicates that we have confidence in the person's potential and suitability for UU ministry and that the person is actively committed to the Purposes and Principles of the UUA. In most cases, the person will have been active in the congregation for at least two years.

The student may be requested to participate in congregational activities.

Sponsorship does not include a financial commitment to the student, but fundraising opportunities within the congregation are possible.

Policy on Visitors at Board Meetings

Policy adopted November 15, 2000, amended **July 18, 2001**

Purpose: Guidelines for visitors. The term "visitor" refers to any individual who is not a regular or ex officio member of the Board.

- Official meetings of the Board are open to St. John's members and friends except during executive sessions of the Board. Individuals other than members and friends may attend only with the advance approval of the Board President or Vice President.
- The Board will hold an executive (closed) session only when there is a specific need; examples include discussions about personnel or other specific individuals. The decision to hold an executive session can be made by a majority vote of Board members at a meeting or by the Board President (or Vice President in the absence of the President). In most cases, an executive session will take up only a portion of a Board meeting. Votes on changes in church policy will not be made during executive sessions.
- Members and friends who wish to address the Board should request a time slot on the agenda in advance of the meeting at which they wish to speak. This request should normally be made to the Council Director whose area is most relevant to the topic. This will allow many issues to be resolved at the Council or committee level rather than having to come to the Board. Also, Council Directors can often help individuals refine their query or proposal to the Board so that issues that do come to the Board can be addressed as effectively as possible. If the individual still wishes to address the Board after consulting with the Council Director, the request will normally be conveyed to the President by the Council Director; the Council Director will subsequently contact the individual with information about whether and when the individual will be able to speak. In rare cases, requests to speak at a Board meeting can be made directly to the Board President; however, the President may refer the individual to a Council Director if that seems most appropriate.
- The Congregation has elected the Board to make many decisions that affect the church. To facilitate the Board's ability to conduct business efficiently and effectively, visitors will be asked to sit at the table with the Board only during the time period in which they are presenting the specific material that they have asked, or been asked, to present. Before and after their presentation, visitors will normally sit in an area designated for visitors. Visitors who choose to remain at a Board meeting when they are not presenting material may be invited to make comments; decisions about the frequency and timing of such invitations will be made by the Board member who is conducting the meeting (normally the Board President).