

Policy Manual (February 2025)
Unitarian-Universalist Church of Canton, NY

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Introduction

The UU Church of Canton is a self-governing, democratic congregation and is governed by its elected Council, and the Minister as the head of staff. Church Council is responsible for many specialized tasks delegated to various committees staffed by volunteers. The most important issues of governance are reserved for the congregation, including calling a minister, elections, approval of property purchases, construction or sale, borrowing money and amending bylaws.

This Policy Manual is intended to serve Council level policies that govern the whole congregation.

Persons updating the manual will submit their content to the Congregational Administrator and Secretary of Council in an acceptable digital format. The Congregational Administrator shall maintain the original comprehensive, working document.

When an existing policy is amended or a new policy is enacted, the authorized person submitting the information to the Congregational Administrator and Secretary will include the source, the date and where the policy should logically be located with respect to the Table of Contents.

Official Name of Church

The organization shall be called the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, New York, legally incorporated as the First Universalist Society in the Town of Canton.

Applicable Civil Law (see Appendix 1)

Mission Statement of the Congregation (2018)

Creating a welcoming, compassionate faith community, committed to social justice and open to wonder

Together we strive to:

- Foster a spirit of inclusion and connection

- Encourage exploration of truth and meaning
- Nurture respect for all life and the environment
- Live our values in the North Country and in the wider world

Current Bylaws

Policy Categories

1.0 Governance

1.1 Current Council

<https://www.uucantonny.org/committees/church-council/>

1.2 Role of the Church Council (in Bylaws)

Article IX of the ByLaws sets forth the various duties of Church Council members.

1.3.1 Expectations of Trustees

Five trustees serve on Church Council.

Eligibility

Trustees must be members of the church and, in accordance with religious corporation laws of the state, must be 18 years old and citizens of the United States.

Term

The term of office for trustees is two years, with three trustees elected each October at the annual meeting. Terms run for the calendar year. Trustees may serve three consecutive terms but are not then eligible for election until a full year has passed. (A trustee appointed to fill a vacancy may be elected for two consecutive terms after having completed the term of the vacancy.)

Attendance

Attendance at Council meetings is required for all members. A quorum of a majority of voting members, including *at least one trustee*, is necessary for all votes. If any member of Council is unable to attend a meeting, they should notify the president or the minister(s). (This is particularly important for trustees, since at least one must be present for voting.) It is the responsibility of anyone who misses a meeting to find out about information and assignments missed.

Responsibilities

According to the bylaws, trustees:

- a. Have legal charge and care of all the properties of the church, in accordance with provisions of the religious corporation law of the State of New York.
- b. Authorize the conveyance or mortgaging of the real estate belonging to the church, but only with a vote of the church approving the same.
- c. Perform such other duties as may be requested by the President or by Church Council.
- d. In addition, Church Council will assign a trustee to each church committee to act as liaison between that committee and Church Council. Trustees are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their assigned committees and reporting on their committees as necessary or according to the reporting schedule. Regular committee attendance is not required, though periodic visits may be necessary. Regular communication between committees and their liaisons is expected. (See section 1.6 for information about liaisons)

1.3.2 Expectation of all council members

1. Attend regularly and arrive on time for Council meetings.
2. If you are not able to attend a meeting, notify the president, minister or another Council member in advance, if possible. Take responsibility for finding out as soon as possible what happened at the meeting and whether you have any assignments or responsibilities.
3. Participate in sharing and reading time.
4. Carefully review the agenda, minutes, and other material distributed before the meeting.
5. Bring your own copy of the agenda, minutes and other important documents to the meeting.
6. Everyone should be afforded an opportunity to speak and every issue should get a fair airing.
7. Each Trustee/Officer will be a liaison to at least one church committee. Each liaison is tasked to be in regular communication with the committee chair
8. Attend church functions and events as often as possible
9. Support the Stewardship Committee in some capacity during the annual pledge campaign, e.g., by serving as a canvasser or small group facilitator, helping with follow-up, offering a Journey to Commitment, etc.

1.3.3 Council Covenant

We agree to be honest, straightforward, patient, respectful, and empathetic with each other.

We will meet together with a sense of shared purpose, be transparent in our actions, and ultimately speak with one voice.

We will show up, be present, listen intently, and be a contributor.

We will have fun. (!)

1.4 Conflict of Interest (Adopted December 4, 2024)

Council expects all of its members to carry out their duties with loyalty to the Church and its mission. A conflict of interest exists whenever a Council member has interests or duties that may hinder or appear to hinder the member from fulfilling that duty.

1.4.1 Definition

Conflicts of interest arise when the Council member:

Stands to gain or lose financially because of an action of the Church in which they have a decision-making role;

Cannot set aside their personal preferences as an individual to act in behalf of the whole Church and its mission;

Faces any other situation that impairs or reasonably appears to impair their independence of judgment.

Has a close relationship with someone who has a conflict of interest. A close relation includes any person, corporation, or other entity with which the Council member has a close, personal, family, or business relationship.

1.4.2 Process

When a Council member reports a potential conflict of interest related to a matter of Council, Council, minus the affected person, will disclose in the minutes the nature of the conflict, make decisions, have discussions, and vote without the affected person present.

1.5 Duties of Officers

The officers of this church shall be a President, Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The duties of these officers are specified in Article VI of the Bylaws.

1.6 Liaison Reporting Schedule

1.6.1 [Committee Liaison Job Descriptions](#)

1.6.2 [Annual Church Calendar Overview and Task List](#)

1.6.3 [Church Council Roles and Calendar](#)

1.7 Teams (Adopted November 6, 2024)

Teams can be created by the Church staff, by Church Council or by a member or members of the Congregation. In some cases, a committee may feel it more appropriate to convert to a team. Regardless of a team's genesis, it is essential that both the Minister and the President of Church Council be informed of the following:

1. Name of the Team
2. Nature of the project, task, activity, event, etc.
3. Anticipated duration and schedule of #2 above.
4. Organizer/main contact
5. Participants, if known
6. Proposed budget, if appropriate
7. Desired start date

Church Council shall review the creation of a team with respect to: (1) determining when an activity or event is appropriately church-sponsored, (2) reconciling such activities or events with respect to the budget, and (3) ensuring that Church policies and procedures are followed.

Church Council shall determine appropriate funding for a team's activity.

The Minister shall keep Church Council informed and/or may invite a team member to report on the team's progress as needed.

A team shall maintain records in a form acceptable to the Church Administrator.

2.0 Financial Updated (Adopted December 4, 2019)

2.1 Accounts Payable

Approved payments are issued by the Congregational Administrator and must be supported by a bill, invoice, statement, or written request for every check drawn. Authorized signers of checks are the Minister, Treasurer and Congregational Administrator. The church's accountant completes monthly bank reconciliations after which monthly financial statements are produced for the Budget and Finance Committee (hereafter B & F) review. The completed bank reconciliations and statements are reviewed by the Treasurer.

2.2 Annual Pledges

A member's annual pledge cannot be restricted. All annual pledges are directed to support the annual operating expenses of the church.

2.3 Annual Budget

Each year, Church Council works with the Minister to develop goals and set priorities for the next year, and then B & F works with the Stewardship Committee to develop an annual budget for the upcoming year. B & F will solicit budget requests from all church committees during this process. A budget draft will be prepared for Church Council approval, which is balanced and does not include any anticipated surplus for the current year as revenue. Church Council may request B & F to make revisions before approving the budget, which will then be presented to the congregation for final approval at a meeting to be held in January.

2.4 Capital Reserve Fund

A Capital Reserve Fund for building, equipment, and maintenance, separate from the annual budget and the endowment, is established and is to be used for long range capital projects and current building needs when the costs exceed the money available in the annual budget for maintenance of building and equipment. Additions to the fund may be allocated from bequests or gifts. The Capital Reserve Fund will be invested in short term instruments that will be secure and available on short notice if needed. (As of October 2019, a portion of the Capital Reserve Fund is held in a 1 year term CD, and the balance is in a checking account – see also section 2.12 Special Bank Accounts.)

2.4.1 Recommendations for use of the Capital Reserve Fund should be directed to B & F, which will recommend expenditures from the Capital Reserve Fund to Church Council for final approval. In the event of an emergency requiring the expenditure of Capital Reserve Funds to protect or repair Church property, the Buildings and Grounds Committee is authorized to make such expenditures and to notify B & F and Church Council for review at their next meetings.

2.5 Endowment

The Church's Endowment has been established by gifts and bequests, and is one measure of the long term financial strength and stability of the Church. A strong endowment benefits the Church in good times, and allows its survival in hard times. The prudent management of endowment assets is necessary to preserve and enhance principal, and provide a source of income for current operations. The Endowment includes all Church funds intended to be held in perpetuity to enhance the mission of the Church apart from the general operation of the Church and to provide a long-term stream of income to the Church. Church Council places funds in the Endowment either by accepting gifts restricted by the donor to Endowment use or by voluntarily placing funds into the Endowment. (See also Section 2.10 Unrestricted Gifts and Section 2.5.7 Record Keeping.)

2.5.1 Delegation and Guidance to the Investment Committee

An Investment Committee consisting of three members of the congregation appointed by Council (the Minister and Treasurer of Council shall be advisory members of the Investment Committee) and acting by majority vote, is empowered to direct the investment of all Endowment funds. The Team shall meet as needed to review the performance and allocation of assets, and it should act at least semi-annually to rebalance the portfolio if market performance has caused a shift in the previously approved allocation, or if it is prudent to alter the allocation. The Investment Committee should not hesitate to seek investment advice from qualified professionals.

2.5.2 Investment Objectives

Endowment funds must be invested to produce a maximum rate of total return consistent with the following: prudent management of investments, preservation of principal, potential for long term asset growth, and socially responsible investment practices.

2.5.3 Permissible Investments

Endowment fund assets may be invested in publicly traded common and preferred stocks, convertible bonds, bank common stocks, mutual funds, and fixed income securities (including corporate bonds and money market instruments). No other investments are permissible unless authorized by Church Council.

2.5.4 Shareholder Initiatives

In keeping with our ethical values, the Church is an activist shareholder, lending its support to shareholder initiatives and coalitions of shareholders in support of:

- Disclosure of lobbying and political spending.
- Action to address climate change.
- Nondiscrimination based on skin color, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national origin or ancestry, economic status, union membership, or political affiliation.

2.5.5 Ethical Investment Screen

Endowment funds shall be invested in a socially responsible manner, which consists of making investment decisions that reflect Unitarian Universalist values and contribute to positive social and environmental change.

2.5.6 Endowment Spending

Church Council shall determine, at least annually, the use to be made of Endowment Fund income. Such income shall be used (1) to expand the mechanisms by which individuals, groups, and organizations can contribute to the mission of the church; (2) to promote liberal religion as appropriate; (3) to meet extraordinary expenses of the Congregation, as defined by Church Council; and (4) to provide financial resources for the Congregation in the event of an extreme financial crisis. Except in extraordinary circumstances (which shall be determined by Church Council and confirmed by a congregational vote) the expectation is that the Endowment shall not be invaded for maintenance and repairs, building projects, or annual operating expenses beyond the pre-determined figure of 4%. An annual distribution from the Endowment to the operating budget shall not exceed 4% of the average market value of that fund for the last 12 quarters. Each year B & F will review the recommendation of the Investment Committee and recommend to Church Council whether to authorize the 4% contribution to the operating budget, or some smaller percentage.

2.5.7 Record Keeping

The Investment Committee shall abide by and keep a record of the terms and restrictions of all gifts to the Endowment Fund and shall determine what is principal and income according to accepted accounting procedures. A gift to the Endowment Fund in excess of \$10,000 will carry the name of the donor(s) in perpetuity unless the donor(s) request anonymity. An annual report to the congregation will be made setting forth the named endowments. (See also Section 2.5 Endowment and Section 2.10 Unrestricted Gifts.)

2.5.8 Reports

The Investment Committee will provide information annually (or as needed) to Church Council as well as an annual report in January of each year setting forth the performance of the Endowment for the past year including a report measuring portfolio performance in the past year against standard indices. The Committee will also report at such other times if requested to do so by Church Council. The majority of the church's Endowment is currently (2019) invested with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Common Endowment Fund and is managed by the UUA Investment Committee in consultation with an investment advisor. (As of 2019, approximately \$5,000 of the Endowment is also invested in the Calvert Fund Micro Loans.) The value of named endowments will be updated at least annually. Particular care shall be taken to distinguish donor restricted, temporarily restricted, voluntarily restricted, and unrestricted funds.

2.6 Fundraising Policy

All requests to hold a fundraising event will be submitted to the Stewardship Committee for review and scheduling using a Fundraising Event Request Form (e-mail is preferable).

All such requests need to be sponsored by a committee with expenses to be taken from that committee's budget line. The Stewardship Committee chair will be the contact person for fundraising event requests coming from both within and outside the church. The Stewardship Committee will be the scheduling clearinghouse for all fundraising events. To determine whether a fundraising request is granted or not, the Stewardship Committee will review all requests and determine whether they are appropriate. A request that is denied by the Stewardship Committee may be appealed to Church Council.

2.7 Internal Controls Review

Article IX (9.2.e) of the By-Laws provides that the Church Council "shall have a report on internal financial controls of the church made at least every 5 (five) years."

2.8 Inventory of Assets

The Congregational Administrator will maintain an inventory of church assets valued at \$500 or more.

2.9 Transfers

Retained income, or the amount by which income exceeds expenses in the operating budget at the end of the fiscal year, will be used at the discretion of Church Council based on recommendations from B & F. It will not be used to supplement the operating budget. Transfers will generally be made each January.

2.10 Unrestricted Gifts

If an unrestricted gift or bequest exceeds \$5000, and is not a payment on a pledge, 50% will be allocated to the Endowment Fund. Church Council will consult with B & F to determine how to allocate the remainder. (See also Sections 2.5.7 Record Keeping and Section 2.5 Endowment.)

2.11 Financial Controls

Written procedures shall govern the handling of receipts, whether in the form of cash or checks, and whether received during the week or during a Sunday Service. Two unrelated persons who have been approved by Church Council as counters and who have signed a confidentiality agreement, shall be responsible for totaling and preparing receipts for deposit. Detailed instructions for this process entitled "Sunday and Weekly Collection Policy" are maintained in the office of the Congregational Administrator.

2.12 Special Bank Accounts

The Church maintains special bank accounts as follows: Memorial Garden checking account, Caring Fund checking account, Capital Reserve Fund checking account (see also section 2.4 Capital Reserve Fund), and multi-year savings accounts for various multi-year expenses. The Church also maintains a checking account for the Social Justice Initiative; however, this account is only to be used for this program and must be considered separate from Church funds.

2.13 Approval of Contracts or Large Expenditures

Article IX of the Bylaws (9.2.b.) provides: "The Church Council shall not enter into a contract or obligation involving any expenditure in excess of 5% (five percent) of the annual budget without a vote of the church approving the same."

3.0 Staff

3.1 Delegation to the Minister as Chief of Staff ([Council Minutes March/2016](#))

Church Council delegates to the Minister oversight of the paid staff. All hiring and dismissal decisions, with the exception of any called ministers, are delegated to the Minister.

The minister's oversight will be in accordance with UUA principles, will comply with legal requirements and good risk-management practices, and be in compliance with the Church Council's Personnel Policies. In accordance with our UU principles, all personnel decisions, evaluations, hiring, and dismissal decisions must be made without influence or bias toward any non-job-relevant factor. [e.g. race, gender, age, sexual identity, physical handicap, socio economic class].

Delegation of this authority also assumes that as the Chief of Staff, the minister will, whenever possible, continue to partner with and involve leaders and congregants in significant employment decisions and practices.

New paid staff positions, permanent or temporary, must be approved by Church Council. Changes in compensation and/or benefits must be approved by Church Council.

3.1.1 Rendered Services (Adopted by Council on Feb. 1, 2023)

Rendered Services are deemed to be personal actions that contribute to the mission of the Church. Members of the Church shall not receive monetary compensation for non-contractual services unless they are employees. Approved out-of-pocket expenses for material items related to program expenses may be reimbursed.

3.2 [Personnel Policy Manual Canton February 2024.doc](#)

3.3 Retired Ministers' Covenant

[Anne and Wade Covenant](#)

4.0 Care for Members and Guest

4.1 Safe Congregation, Disruptive Behavior and Behavior Guidelines

SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY

PREAMBLE

We adopt the following to make our spiritual community a Safe Congregation.

We recognize that conflict may occur; therefore, in a spirit of goodwill, and with good humor whenever possible, we agree to:

- be responsible for ourselves and our feelings,
- do our part, not leaving the work to others,
- treat each other respectfully,
- "share our truth," while keeping in mind that language matters,
- address conflict and disagreement with open communication and respectful listening,
- complain constructively, and
- endeavor to be part of the solution.

PURPOSE

Our church strives to ensure the existence of a caring religious community free of violence and abuse of all kinds, including intimidation, coercion, sexual harassment, and physical and sexual abuse. Examples of these might include:

- offensive sexual remarks,
- inappropriate physical contact,
- demeaning comments,
- threatening gestures or statements.

POLICIES

To the extent possible, our goal as a Safe Congregation is to prevent dangerous or abusive situations from developing. To that end, we establish the following policies.

1. All adults and older youth who work with children or youth will be asked to read and sign the Unitarian Universalist Association Code of Ethics. All church employees will also be asked to read and sign the Code of Ethics. (See Appendix for text.)
2. All settled and interim ministers called to serve the congregation will be bound by the Code of Professional Practice of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association. <https://uuma.org/guidelines/>
3. All Directors of Religious Education employed by the church will be bound by the Code of Professional Practices of the Liberal Religious Educators' Association. [Code of Professional Practices](#)
4. At least two unrelated adults will be in each classroom on Sundays and on every outing and other church activity. In the Nursery, there will be a minimum of two child care providers, at least one of whom is over the age of 25. Exceptions must be approved by the Director of Religious Education or the Acting Director of Religious Education. Teen Nursery caregivers must be approved in accordance with our Child Care Policy.
5. Information about Safe Congregation policies and procedures will be part of the teacher training program. A copy of this Safe Congregation Policy will be given to all who work with children and youth.
6. All children and youth participating in our religious education programs should be registered. Permission slips for outings to be signed by parent(s) or guardian(s) will be part of the registration process.
7. First aid kits will be available in the kitchen and in the main room on the lower level. Information about location of first aid kits will be part of the teacher training program.
8. An all-church fire drill will be held at least once each year. Diagrams showing exits and escape routes will be posted in each classroom.
9. Council will annually review the Key Use Policy, which is part of the Building Security Policy (Section 4.8.1).
10. Hard copies of the list of contacts related to building operations and maintenance, and the evacuation policy/recommendations will be posted near the Church Office and in our lower level. Church Council members will keep a list of emergency contacts.
11. Hard copies of the list of emergency contacts for the Minister, Chairperson of Buildings and Grounds Committee, and Church Administrator will be posted near the Church Office and in our lower level. Church Council members will keep a list of emergency contacts. These contacts will be supplied to the Canton Police Department.
12. Church Council will work with the Building and Grounds Committee to develop a comprehensive protocol for locking up the building. This is particularly important for outside groups that use our building regularly.

13. To address problems of safety that may arise in the sanctuary during a service, the minister(s) will provide for training of selected members and friends of the congregation to assist visitors in distress and address other problems that may have the potential to result in an unsafe situation. Church Council will develop a protocol for distribution throughout the sanctuary during services to identify problems and assist as needed.

PROCEDURES

A Safe Congregation Team will be available to all who have concerns about violence, abuse, harassment, or other inappropriate behavior in the church. The Team will consist of the Minister(s), the Director of Religious Education, the President, and one other member of the congregation chosen by Church Council.

The names of the members of the Safe Congregation Team and contact information for each will be posted in the Social Room and available in the Church Office.

Problems or concerns may be brought to any member of the Safe Congregation Team. The team will proceed at all times in a sensitive and confidential manner and will attempt to resolve the situation with care and respect for all concerned. The Team will be knowledgeable about resources and reporting procedures.

If allegations of Safe Congregation Policy violations involve any member of the Safe Congregation Team, that member will recuse themselves from the Team while those allegations are being investigated and deliberated.

Special procedures apply in the following cases:

Child abuse: Allegations of child abuse, whether reported or suspected, must be handled in accordance with the New York State child abuse reporting statute. As provided by New York State law, reports may be made anonymously. Reporting information and the Child Abuse Hotline number will be given to all teachers and is also available from any member of the Safe Congregation Team.

Ministerial abuse: If an allegation of ministerial sexual misconduct or abuse is made, the Safe Congregation Team will contact the District Executive of the St. Lawrence District of the Unitarian Universalist Association for advice and assistance. The District Executive will also be able to provide instructions for reporting the situation to the UUA Department of Ministry and to the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association.

Harassment of church employees: Allegations of harassment of church employees by persons in a position to affect the employee's job security will be handled in accordance with New York State law.

Disruptive Behavior Policy (Adopted December 9, 2014 and updated June 2020)

We accept a diversity of religious beliefs and support the values of compassion, justice, and integrity in our daily lives, in the education of our children, and in the larger world. We recognize that conflict may occur; therefore, in a spirit of goodwill, and with good humor whenever possible, we agree to:

- Be responsible for ourselves and our feelings,
- Do our part, not leaving the work to others,
- Treat each other respectfully,

- Use words that are supportive and caring, not belittling or demeaning,
- "Share our truth," while keeping in mind that language matters,
- Address conflict and disagreement with open communication and respectful listening,
- Refrain from displays of temper,
- Complain constructively, and
- Endeavor to be part of the solution.

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in the purposes and principles of our denomination, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express their beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires that the offending person or persons be expelled from Church membership and excluded from Church property. Disruptive behavior of an individual in the Church building, Church grounds, or via electronic media creates concerns about one or more of the following:

- Sexual harassment which includes offending sexualized language and behavior and unwanted sexual advance
- Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child
- Disruption of Church activities
- Diminished appeal of the Church to its potential and existing membership.

Therefore, the following shall be the policy of the Church with regard to disruptive behavior by an individual or individuals.

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the minister, if available, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, OR suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required, the Police Department may be called. Any time any of these actions are undertaken without the minister, the minister must be notified; a follow-up letter detailing the offense and the action taken because of the offense should be written and distributed to the minister and the president of Church Council.

2. For situations not requiring immediate response the process begins with a signed letter from the person or persons who witnessed it to the minister explaining the disruptive behavior and its impact. The minister will determine whether the situation should be handled privately, or will request the formation of an ad hoc committee appointed by Church Council to further investigate the matter. In addition, the minister may determine that it is appropriate for the alleged disruptive person to submit a letter setting forth their position. That committee shall include the minister and at least two other members of the congregation. At any time, the minister, the committee, or Church Council may seek the advice and assistance of the district office of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The committee will use its best judgment, and shall observe the following:

- a. The committee will not attempt to define "acceptable" behavior in advance and will avoid stereotyping.
- b. The committee will collect any additional information required to obtain a complete picture of the situation.
- c. To aid in evaluating the problem the following points will be considered:
 - * Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
 - * How much interference with Church functions is occurring?
 - * How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away by the disruptive behavior?
- d. To determine the necessary response, the following points will be considered:
 - * Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it perhaps due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
 - * What is the frequency and degree of disruption in the past?
 - * How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
- e. The committee will decide on the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, three levels of response should be considered:

Level One

The minister and/or a member of the committee shall meet with the offending person or persons to communicate the concern.

Level Two

The offending individual is excluded from specific Church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and conditions of return written and made clear (with a copy going to the offender and one going in congregational files). Level Two action taken by the committee may be appealed by the offender to the Executive Committee of Church Council.

Level Three

If the committee chooses to recommend that the offending individual be expelled from Church membership and

excluded from Church premises and all Church activities, the committee will refer the matter to Church Council and the minister. After careful consideration, Church Council may, by a two-thirds majority vote, determine that the offending individual is to be expelled from membership and excluded from Church premises and all Church activities. A letter will then be written and sent by the minister to the individual outlining the decision of Church Council, the individual's rights, and possible recourse.

3. Any action taken under Level Three may be appealed, in writing, to Church Council within 30 days of the letter of notification. An ad hoc appeal committee shall be formed by Church Council if action taken under Level Three is appealed. The appeal committee shall be composed of two members of the executive committee of Church Council, two members of the congregation selected by the ad hoc committee appointed pursuant to paragraph "2." above, which two members will not be members of that ad hoc committee nor members of Church Council, and a fifth active Church member, chosen by the expelled person. In a case where the individual does not have a member to propose, the fifth member would be selected by the other four

members of this appeal committee. The majority decision of the appeal committee shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

4. Any request for reinstatement must be made by the member who was expelled from membership. Such request may be made no sooner than one year following the expulsion. The request must contain information concerning the rationale for the reinstatement: 1) a statement of understanding of the reasons for which the person was expelled and 2) an explanation in detail how circumstances and conditions have changed, such that a reinstatement would be justified. The request shall go to Church Council. The Council will review the request and respond within 60 days as to whether or not to reinstate the expelled member. Any decision of Council to reinstate shall be by a two-thirds majority vote and shall be final and not subject to further appeal. In the event that a reinstatement request is not granted, any subsequent reinstatement requests may be made no sooner than one year following the member being informed of a negative decision on the previous request.

SOURCES:

- (1) UUA sample "Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior";
- (2) Policy of UU Church of Rockford, Illinois [Rev 6/8/2008];
- (3) Policy of Quimper UU Fellowship, Port Townsend, WA [Adopted 3/18/2002]; (4) UU Church of Canton, NY, "Safe Congregation Policy" [Updated June, 2012].

4.2 COVID Safety Plan (Adopted August 2021, Amended 10/21: [COVID Safety Plan August 2021 Amended 10/21](#) Suspended on 10/2023)

4.3 Alcohol Consumption Prohibition (Adopted by Church Council March 1, 2006)

After consultation with our insurance carrier, Church Council unanimously approved the following policy on March 1, 2006: No alcohol shall be consumed on church premises.

4.3.1 Smoking Prohibition

There is no smoking anywhere inside the church building.

4.4 Emergency Planning

[Emergency Evacuation Policy and Procedure](#)

4.5 Child Protection

See Childcare under Section 5 and in Section 4.1 (Safe Congregation Policies).

4.6 Harassment

See Safe Congregation and Disruptive Behavior Policies in Section 4.1.

4.7 Firearms

No person or persons shall be in possession of any type of firearm or firearms on church property or at any church sponsored event. Law enforcement will be notified immediately of any violation of this policy. The

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Canton reserves the right to refer any violators for further action under the church's, ***Disruptive Persons Policy***.

This policy shall not be construed to limit recognized law enforcement officers, who are acting in the performance of their normal duties.

4.8 Building Security

4.8.1 Key Use Policy (Adopted November 6, 2024)

The purpose of this policy is to define who may be issued keys to the church building. The intent of this policy is to promote the safety of the church employee and the security of the church building and its contents.

For purpose of this policy, two types of keys are recognized:

Core Keys open all the doors inside the church building.

Entrance Keys open the two outside entrances on the west side of the church building and the main entrance to the sanctuary on the south side of the building.

Core Keys will be issued only to church staff, the Council President, and the Buildings & Grounds committee chair.

The distribution of the **Entrance Keys** will be limited to the following:

- Current Church Council Members
- Chairs of church committees
- Members of the Buildings & Grounds Committee
- Worship Team members
- Church staff
- The recognized representatives of outside groups approved to use the building.
- Other church members, by request and with the approval of the Council President or the Minister.

It is expected that individuals or groups wishing to use the church building for any reason will contact the Congregational Administrator in advance to reserve the date, time and place.

Keys that are used on a temporary or emergency basis must be returned to the church office after the stated need has been resolved. Keys should not be loaned to others.

If a key is lost, the holder of that key will be required to pay a \$10 replacement fee to the church. Keys are not to be duplicated except by members of the church staff. The Congregational Administrator should be notified once members are no longer in need of their keys. The church staff and Church Council reserves the right to change the locks of the church on an as needed basis.

The issuance and use of keys shall be strictly controlled and accounted for. Key holders shall indicate agreement with the policy by signing the **Key Log Book** which is kept in the church office and maintained by the Congregational Administrator.

4.8.2 Building Use Policy

[Building Use Policy.docx](#)

4.9 Universal Access

4.9.5 Animals on Church Property (Adopted on October 4, 2017)

For the safety and comfort of all attending services and other events at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton (building and/or grounds), the following guidelines regarding dogs and other animals are set forth.

- Service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are welcome in all church spaces. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices.
- Pets (any animals not defined as a service animal by the ADA) are not allowed at church events, worship or memorial services, or programs involving children, except when they are expressly invited (e.g., for events such as an animal blessing service).
- If any animal becomes out of control or displays threatening behavior, the owner will be required to remove it from the church property.
- Pets are permitted on the church grounds only when in the presence of and under the control of the person who brought them.
- Owners are required to clean up after their pets, including on church grounds. Owners will be held responsible for any costs incurred due to soiling or other damage to church property.

5.0 Religious Education

5.1 RE Teacher Requirements

<https://www.uucantonny.org/youth/volunteer/>

5.3 Childcare (Adopted January 8, 2025)

Childcare is a critical component of both Sunday services and other church functions. In order to provide quality child care we will observe the following:

Childcare attendants will complete a Code of Ethics form and receive a background check.

All childcare will be supervised by two unrelated people. A minimum of one adult over the age of 25 will be present.

The Director of Religious Education (DRE) will organize and work with RE volunteers to provide childcare during Sunday church services.

The committee or organization sponsoring an event outside of Sunday morning worship will be responsible for arranging and paying for childcare.

A list of current childcare providers will be available by contacting the DRE. It is recommended that the providers on this list be the first choice for childcare.

Should none of the providers on the church list be available, substitutes and/or personal contacts (e.g., parents, high school students, recommended babysitters from the wider community) should be used. All childcare providers who are not on the current church list must fill out and sign a copy of the Code of Ethics form and, where applicable, will undergo a background check.

6.0 Green Sanctuary UUA Designation and Commitments

Green Sanctuary Covenant

The church's Environmental Action Committee was established in 2012 to initiate and maintain Green Sanctuary status with the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Green Sanctuary program was designed to develop the vision that together we can create a world in which all people share reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth, which is so essential to our lives. Adopting a Green Sanctuary Covenant was a critical step in the program. Our congregation voted unanimously to affirm this covenant on January 19, 2014:

As members of this congregation and participants in the Green Sanctuary program, we pledge our encouragement to one another in a personal and congregational commitment to our Unitarian Universalist Principles, including the Seventh Principle – *respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

We commit to transforming our church into a beacon of environmental sustainability and justice, and educating and inspiring our members to lead more environmentally sustainable, just, and spirit-filled lives.

Green Sanctuary Policy (Adopted March 6, 2024)

Church Council will make decisions with that Green Sanctuary covenant in mind as will staff and volunteers always remaining mindful of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

7.0 Property and Maintenance

7.2 Disposition of Surplus Church Property and Equipment (Adopted November 6, 2024)

Definition: Surplus Property shall mean material goods in excess of those needed for the Church to function. Such material goods shall have realistic value and not be considered trash, refuse, or waste. Compostable material collected on Church grounds shall not be deemed surplus property.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall, from time to time, report accumulation of surplus property to Church Council, describing items and quantities.

Disposition of surplus property and accounting for revenue from the sale of the same shall be at the discretion of Church Council.

7.3 Max Coots Library Collection

<https://www.uucantonny.org/our-church/coots-library/>

7.4 Snow Removal – Historical Society Parking Lot

[Memorandum of Understanding.docx](#)

7.8 Property and Equipment

Church owned property and equipment should be used by its members responsibly for the mission of the congregation. Any equipment used outside the physical building and grounds needs to be approved by the Congregational Administrator and should be returned in a timely manner.

8.0 Larger Fellowship and Ministry

8.1 Welcoming Congregation Advertising (Adopted May 3, 1998; Amended October 2008)

The Church will use the phrase “A Welcoming Congregation” in all of our print and other ads as appropriate.

8.5 Social Media Use Policy (Adopted May 1, 2024)

<https://www.uua.org/offices/staff/communications/outreach/institutional-social-media-policy>

APPENDIX I

Applicable Civil Law:

New York State Consolidated Laws, Religious Corporation Law, Article 19 Unitarian and Universalist Societies

<http://codes.findlaw.com/ny/religious-corporations-law/#!tid=N9B1EE11ECC8F46A298167251624FB900>