

**Hopedale Unitarian Parish
Bylaws Revised March 8, 2015**

Article I. Name

The name of the Parish is *The Hopedale Unitarian Parish*, herein called “the church”.

Article II. Purpose

Celebrating life, *The Hopedale Unitarian Parish*, rich in liberal religious heritage and tradition, unites as a caring community:

1. To create an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to worship freely as we individually and communally experience the divine.
2. To nurture one another, and especially our children, through education concerning spiritual and moral growth and the wisdom of the world's religions, and to inspire the full potential of all.
3. To welcome the community with love and friendship, dignity and respect without condition or prejudice,
4. To pursue peace with justice, uphold principles of democracy, support the needy, and honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Article III. Denominational Affiliation

The Church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of the Clara Barton District.

Article IV. Membership

Section 1. Becoming a Member

Any person 16 years of age or older or who has completed the Coming of Age Program, who is in sympathy with the purpose of this church, and who wishes to become a member may do so by speaking with the minister and signing the membership book. Any person whose name is signed on the *Church Register* of *The Hopedale Unitarian Parish* on the date these by-laws are adopted shall be considered a member of the church without formality.

Section 2. Categories of Membership

1. Active Members: Those who have satisfied the criteria in Article IV, Section 1, and have demonstrated interest in the church within the last 2 years by attendance, financial contribution and general participation in church activities. Active members are eligible to vote forty-five (45) days after signing the Membership Book.
2. Associate Members: An Associate Member is one whose relationship to the church has changed, due to the member's request or other circumstances. An Associate Member shall enjoy all member privileges except that of voting and a subscription to the UU World magazine, which is paid for by Active Member dues.
 - (a) Any Active Member may request a change to Associate Membership by notifying the Clerk in writing.
 - (b) Any Active Member that for two fiscal years has demonstrated no interest by attendance, financial support or participation in church activities may be placed on the Associate Membership list by review of the Church Administrator with the assistance of the Minister, Treasurer, and Membership Committee.
 - (c) Any member who has not responded to communication from the Clerk relative to the change in membership outlined in Section 2. 2. (b), will be dropped from membership.
 - (d) Anyone who wishes to reinstate his or her membership may do so by writing to the Clerk.

Section 3. Dissolution of Membership

Any person may dissolve their membership at any time by notifying the Clerk in writing.

Article V. Officers

Section 1. Enumeration

1. The Officers of the Church shall be:
 - (a) Parish Board including Clerk/Moderator
 - (b) Treasurer or Co-Treasurers
 - (c) Collector
2. All such officers shall be Active Members of the Church and shall be chosen as follows:
 - (a) By Active Members of the Church at the Annual Meeting.
 - (b) In the event of vacancy between Annual meetings, any such vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term at the next meeting of the Parish Board by a simple majority vote of its members.

Section 2. Term of Office

1. Each officer shall hold office for an initial term of 3 years, and shall begin to hold office with the new fiscal year, July 1.
2. Each officer may be re-elected for one additional successive term of up to 3 years and will notify the committee as of January 1st as to their intentions to stay on.
3. These outlined terms are goals but flexibility on length of term is allowed to encourage fluid transition of leadership.
4. Any officer may resign by giving written notice to the Parish Board.

Section 3. Parish Board

1. The Parish Board shall consist of 7 members including the Clerk/ Moderator. This number is flexible to meet the needs of transition and to encourage continuity of leadership.
2. Responsibilities: The Parish Board is the governing body of the church that is responsible for the overall functioning of the church. The Board:
 - (a) Helps to nurture and promote the agreed upon church mission and goals in the best interest of the congregation and commits to offer strong leadership based on the Unitarian Universalist principles.
 - (b) Oversees, maintains and ensures the church bylaw compliance.
 - (c) Coordinates and supports all other committees of the church in the spirit that promotes them to fulfill their committee descriptor.
 - (d) Helps to make the decisions regarding church operation, policy and business. This includes vision, strategizing and management of the tasks necessary to fulfill that vision.
 - (e) Assists in planning and maintaining the church budget, working with the Finance/Investment committee.
 - (f) Hires, and supervises the church staff with the exception of the minister.
 - (g) Is present at the annual meeting, making a presentation in relation to the custody and care of all properties of the church.
 - (h) Attends to the prosecution and defense of legal proceedings by or against the church.
3. Quorum: A simple majority of members of the Parish Board shall constitute a quorum.
4. The Parish Board shall meet with all committees to ensure they understand their committee's purpose and responsibilities as outlined in the *Description*

Article VI Committees

Section 1. Enumeration

1. The committees of the church shall be:
 - (a) **Finance/Investment.** The Finance/Investment Committee shall be responsible for handling the investments of the church, working with the Parish Board to prepare the annual budget, working with the Treasurer (Co-Treasurers) to prepare periodic financial reports and organizing and supervising the Pledge Drive.
 - (b) **Nominating.** The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for placing in nomination at the Annual Meeting, persons to serve as Officers or members of the committees of the church.
2. Other committees may be formed, with Parish Board approval, as circumstances demand.

Section 2. Election of Committees

Members of the Finance/Investment and Nominating committees shall be Active Members of the Church, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting each year and shall hold office for one year beginning with the new fiscal year, July 1. Members of all other committees are not required to be Active Members and do not require election at the annual meeting.

Article VII. Minister

Section 1. Calling of Minister

The Minister shall be called, upon recommendation of a Ministerial Search Committee, by 90% of the votes of the Active Members of the Church present at any meeting legally called for that purpose. A simple majority of the Active Members of the Church shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Dismissal

The Minister may be dismissed by a simple majority vote of the Active Members of the Church present at any meeting legally called for that purpose. A simple majority of the Active Members of the Church shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Duties

It shall be the duty of the minister to perform such functions as ordinarily pertain to the Office of the Minister in congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association as described by the Guidelines and Code of Professional Ethics of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association. These functions usually include, but are not limited to, the following: conducting services of worship, preaching and teaching, counseling and visiting, administrating, participating in denominational affairs, development and education. He or She shall be an ex-officio member of and professional advisor to the Parish Board and to all committees and other activities of the Congregation and shall regularly attend and have the privilege of the floor at all meetings of those bodies.

Article VIII Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held on such date in June, as the Parish Board shall determine.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Church may be called by written request to the Parish Board of 5 or more members stating the matters on which they desire the Church to act. The Parish Board shall call such a meeting for a day not more than 30 days after the date the written request was received

Section 3. Warrants

All meetings, both Annual and Special, shall be called by a warrant of the Parish Board. The warrant shall state the place and time of the meeting and the matters to be acted on. Notice of each meeting shall be given by posting a copy of the warrant in conspicuous place in the Church at least 8 days prior to the date of the meeting, In event of a Special Meeting, notice shall be mailed to all members of the Church, not less than 14 days prior to said meeting.

Section 4. Voting

Each Active Member of the Church shall be entitled to one vote at each Annual or Special Meeting. A member may vote by proxy by designating this proxy vote in writing, signing the proxy vote filing it with the Clerk at or before the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum at any Annual or Special Meeting shall consist of 20% of the Active Members except in the case of the calling or dismissal of a minister (Article VII, Sections 1. and 2.), amending the by-laws (Article XI), or sale of any Church property in excess of \$10,000 (Article X) .

Article IX. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin July 1st and end on June 30th.

Article X. Sale of Church Property

Sale of Church property in excess of \$10,000 shall require a 2/3 vote of Active Members present at a Special Meeting called for that purpose. A simple majority of the Active Members of the Church shall constitute a quorum.

Article XI. Amendments

These by-laws maybe amended at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of the Church by 2/3 votes of those Active Members present at the meeting. A simple majority of the Active Members of the Church shall constitute a quorum and notification of the proposed amendments shall be included in the meeting.