

BY-LAWS of
THE UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF KERN COUNTY
P.O. BOX 296
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93302

ARTICLE 1. Name

The name of this religious society shall be the “Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Kern County,” a nonprofit corporation, incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

ARTICLE 2. Principles and Purposes

We 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 congregation.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- The rights of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.
- Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.
- Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science and warn against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of Earth centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As a free congregation we enter this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

ARTICLE 3. Membership

Section 1. Any person, who is in sympathy with the principles, purposes, and program of this society, as outlined in Article 2, may apply for membership to the Membership Chair. Membership becomes official upon completion of an appropriate orientation program, determined by the Chair of the Membership Committee, and signing the membership book.

Section 2. Active membership with voting power shall be maintained by those who have attended at least one regular Sunday Service of the Fellowship during the twelve months preceding any congregational meeting; and who, during the same period, have made some recorded financial contribution.

Section 3. The Board or minister may waive Article 3, Section 2 for persons unable to meet the requirements of Section 2, but who qualify for membership based on history, service, or other considerations. The Board shall review such action annually in March.

Section 4. Gains and losses to the membership shall be reported annually by name to the Board of Trustees by the Membership Chair and be noted in the minutes of the Board. Immediately prior to any Congregational Meeting it shall be the duty of the Membership Chair to prepare a list of active members qualified to vote in this meeting.

Section 5. The Board shall investigate any accusation that a member is behaving in a manner at variance from the Principles and Purposes of the UUA to the detriment of the Fellowship or any member. The Board may, at its discretion, send a letter to the offending member detailing the Board's concerns and including a notice that failure to respond within 30 days may result in termination of membership. If the Board determines it has not received an acceptable response within 30 days, it may terminate the membership.

ARTICLE 5. Congregational Meetings

Section 1. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the month of April or May, as determined by the Board of Trustees. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall include approval of the annual budget for the coming year, an election of Officers and Trustees (see Article 6, Section 1), and election of members of the Nominating Committee. Nominations for this committee shall come from the floor. Special Congregational Meetings may

be called by the Board of Trustees, or upon written petition of ten voting members. The nature of any Congregational Meeting shall be specified in the call to the meeting, including the names of any proposed nominees for office, and emailed or mailed out to all active members of the Fellowship at least two weeks prior to the meeting, except in situations calling for emergency action. Twenty five percent of the active membership shall constitute a quorum at any Congregational Meeting, except when the matter under consideration is concerned with real estate, long-term investment withdrawals, Social Concerns resolutions, amendments to these by-laws, or the call or dismissal of a minister. In those special cases the quorum required shall be forty percent of the active members. Unless otherwise stated, resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting.

Section 2. Social Concerns resolutions may be taken up in Special Congregational Meetings and must be passed by a 2/3 vote of the active members present and voting, provided a quorum of 40% of the active members is present at the meeting. Notice of any proposed Social Concern resolution shall be contained in the notice of the meeting and shall be mailed to all active members of the Fellowship at least two weeks prior to the meeting except in situations calling for emergency action.

ARTICLE 6. Board of Trustees

Section 1. The Board shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and three Trustees. All Board members shall serve staggered two-year terms, from July 1 through June 30. The person elected Vice President shall serve the first year of his or her term as Vice President and the second as President. No board member shall hold the same office more than two consecutive terms. Any exceptions must be approved by the congregation at the time of election. The Minister shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Board

Section 2. The Board of Trustees shall meet monthly. A quorum for a meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be majority of the membership of the Board.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees may fill any vacancy on the Board by requesting the Nominating Committee to recruit a replacement from the members of the congregation. The replacement will serve on the Board until the next regular election.

Section 4. All members of the Board of Trustees shall be active members of the Fellowship.

Section 5. The Board of Trustees shall have general responsibility for the property of the Fellowship, and the conduct of all its business affairs. The Board shall

establish the set of officially recognized committees and shall make appointments of chairs of these committees shortly after its election. All committees shall report monthly to the Board.

Section 6. The Board of Trustees shall be the Board of Directors specified in the Articles on Incorporation of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE 7. Duties of Officers.

Section 1. The President shall preside at the Board meetings and Congregational Meetings of the Fellowship. The President shall prepare a written report yearly on the “State of the Fellowship” for the annual Meeting.

Section 2. The Vice-President shall have the responsibility of such other duties as the Board shall determine. He or she shall preside over meetings in the absence of the President. If the office of the President is vacated, the Vice President shall assume the duties of the President.

Section 3. The secretary shall be responsible for preparing minutes of all meetings (congregational and board), maintaining a permanent file of minutes, and all other duties as assigned by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall receive monies and make disbursements as directed by the Board of Trustees. He or she shall make a report to each meeting of the Board of Trustees in writing and present a detailed report at the Congregational Meeting in April or May. The Board of Trustees shall select a person to audit or review the books at the end of each term and that person shall produce a report within 30 days.

ARTICLE 8. Committee Structure

Section 1. The new Board shall at its first meeting establish a list of committees, and each committee shall select its chair. If no chair is selected after the first meeting, the Board is empowered to choose a chair. Each committee shall inform the membership of its appointments. From time to time, the Board may establish additional committees. Each committee chair shall furnish a report for each Board meeting. Such reports may include requests for additional support.

Section 2. There shall be a Nominating Committee responsible for recruiting and nominating members of the Board and the various committees both regular and special. When requested by a committee, the Nominating Committee will seek out additional members to serve. The Nominating Committee shall consist of four members elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting to

staggered two year terms. In the event of a vacancy on the Nominating Committee, the Board shall appoint a replacement.

- Section 3. There shall be a Worship Service Committee responsible for the planning and conduct of the Sunday morning services.
- Section 4. There shall be a Member Care Committee responsible for new member outreach, pathway to membership planning, conducting new member ceremonies, managing member information, and care and concerns for all members.
- Section 5. There shall be a Committee on Ministry, which shall serve as a support group for the minister and function as a communications channel between the minister and the congregation. The purpose of the Committee on Ministry is to strengthen the quality of ministry within the congregation.
- Section 6. There shall be a Social Justice Committee responsible for organizing, planning, and implementing activities in the community regarding social justice issues.
- Section 7. There shall be a Committee on Religious Education responsible for organizing and implementing programs for teens and children as well as supervising staff and volunteers. The committee will supervise staff in the absence of ministerial supervision.

ARTICLE 9. All Ministers

- Section 1. The minister shall be responsible for conducting Sunday Services as agreed upon in their contract and other special services within the Fellowship and shall provide leadership for the Fellowship's spiritual interests and affairs. The minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as freedom to express their opinion outside the pulpit. The minister is expected to exercise that freedom with responsibility and a concern for the wellbeing of the Fellowship. Other specific duties shall be detailed in the Minister's Contract.
- Section 2. The minister shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and of such committees as the board shall designate.
- Section 3. The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the minister and the Ministerial Search Committee, shall draw up an initial contract. The contract shall state the initial annual salary and allowances, the payment procedures, and shall provide for an annual review of the financial compensation. The contract shall be reviewed annually by the Committee on Ministry and may be amended (except as to total compensation) by mutual consent of the minister, Committee on Ministry and Board of Trustees. Changes in compensation will

be approved as part of the annual budget. The contract shall specify the major responsibilities of the minister with reference to the expectations of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE 10. The Called/Settled Minister

Section 1. The minister shall be called upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee by a four-fifths (4/5) majority of the qualified members of the Fellowship present at the meeting legally called for the purpose; quorum for such meeting is to be constituted by 40 percent of the active members of the fellowship.

Section 2. The minister may be dismissed by a majority vote of the qualified members of the Fellowship present at any meeting legally called for the purpose. A quorum of such a meeting shall be constituted by 40 percent of the voting members.

Section 3. In the event of the minister's dismissal, his or her salary and allowances shall be continued for three months after the date of dismissal. Should the minister offer his or her resignation, three months' notice must be given at the time the resignation is made, except as the Board of Trustees may allow an interval of less time.

Section 4. When the congregation determines the need to call a minister, a Ministerial Search Committee shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the Fellowship. The committee will conduct a search for a minister according to procedures recommended by the Department of Ministerial and Congregational Services of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

ARTICLE 11. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall end June 30 of each year.

ARTICLE 12. Amendments

These by-laws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or repealed at a Congregational Meeting of the Fellowship by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present and voting. A quorum for these meetings shall be 40 percent of the active members. Notice of any proposed change shall be contained in the notice of the meeting and shall be mailed to all active members of the Fellowship at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 13. Policies and Procedures

The Board shall be responsible for establishing written policies and procedures that govern the operation the fellowship. The Board may delegate development of policies and procedures to appropriate committees or individuals; however, the board shall be ultimately responsible for reviewing and adopting such policies and procedures. The board is responsible for reviewing the policies and procedures annually and making updates as necessary.