

2009 Bylaws of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford

ARTICLE I Identification

Section 1.01 Statement of Purpose. The purpose of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford, a Connecticut corporation, is to teach the universal Principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus the Christ and also taught by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, the Unity School of Christianity and the Association of Unity Churches.

In the accomplishment of this purpose, the Unity Church of Greater Hartford shall be autonomous and shall endeavor to conduct services of worship and classes of instruction and to demonstrate the Principles of Truth by using them in the operation of the ministry and to adopt other means that in the judgment of the minister will further the principles of practical Christianity among people everywhere.

Section 1.02 Association of Unity Churches Membership and Responsibilities.

The Unity Church of Greater Hartford is a member of the Association of Unity Churches. The operation and conduct of this ministry will comply with the regulations and policies of the Association as outlined in the Association Bylaws, insofar as they do not conflict with the laws of the State of Connecticut.

- (A) **Leadership.** This ministry will have as its leader an ordained or licensed Unity minister or a licensed Unity teacher or a person serving under special dispensation approved by the Association. Refer to Section 4.01(c) of the Association Bylaws.
- (B) **Teaching.** The Principles of practical Christianity will be taught through this ministry using methods, textbooks, literature, and other materials approved by Unity School of Christianity. Other related courses can be taught as approved by the senior minister.

- (C) **Mailings.** Copies of all printed matter mailed by this ministry to its membership will be sent to the office of the President of the Association.
- (D) **Reports.** The Treasurer and/or Assistant Secretary-Treasurer will prepare annual reports to the Annual Membership Meeting, and same to be forwarded to the Association, as directed by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE II

Office and Official Records

Section 2.01 **Principal Office.** The principal executive office of the corporation shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Said office shall be in the County of Hartford, State of Connecticut, or at such other place within the State of Connecticut as the Board of Trustees hereafter shall designate. The Corporation may also have offices at such other place or places, as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate.

Section 2.02 **Official Records.** Records of membership, finances, donations, corporate minutes, etc. shall be maintained at the principal office of the corporation. Official church documents are to be available to church officers and the senior minister and/or co-ministers at all times.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 3.01 **Qualifications.** A member of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford shall endeavor to live in accord with the Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity. He/she shall further the work of this ministry through his/her active interest, love, and support.

Section 3.02 **Membership.** New members will be received into Unity Church of Greater Hartford on special Membership Sundays, to be held three times each year, the exact dates to be determined by the minister and Board of Trustees. Anyone desiring membership shall file an Application for Membership card with the ministry office. He/she must attend orientation classes scheduled prior to each Membership Sunday, and/or have completed an appropriate Unity class series prior

to membership. All applications for membership will be presented for approval to the Board of Trustees at their meeting prior to each Membership Sunday. All staff ministers and licensed Unity teachers affiliated with Unity Church of Greater Hartford are considered members of this ministry.

Section 3.03 **Terms of Membership.**

- (A) **Active Member.** A member will maintain status as an active member through his/her attendance and participation in prayer, service, classes, and giving during a fiscal year. Each active member will receive an annual membership renewal card to be completed and returned to the Church as an indication of his/her continued commitment to membership in Unity Church of Greater Hartford.

- (B) **Inactive Member.** An active member will become inactive:
 - (1) Upon requesting a change in status, or
 - (2) Upon failing to return a membership renewal card.

- (C) **Reinstatement of Inactive Member.**
 - (1) Reinstatement within two years. If a member who has become inactive wishes to return to active status within the first two years after becoming an inactive member, such a member who meets membership qualifications and fills out a yearly membership renewal card or document approved by the Board of Trustees shall be reinstated as an active member. In order to vote at a membership meeting such members must fulfill these requirements at least six (6) weeks before a membership meeting.
 - (2) After two years of inactivation, members must reapply for active membership in accordance with Section 3.02.

- (D) **Removal.** Removal from the membership register of any member whose qualifications are in question requires at least a two-third affirmative vote of

the Board of Trustees, including agreement by the minister. Prior to action concerning removal, the member must be notified by mail and be given an opportunity for a hearing before the board.

Section 3.04 Powers of Active Members. Active members of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford shall have the power to do the following:

- (A) Vote at any membership meeting, at which the member is present, called in accordance with Section 3.05.
- (B) Elect members to the Board of Trustees as specified in Section 4.04.
- (C) Ratify the bylaws of this ministry or any amendments thereto as specified in Section 8.01.
- (D) Vote on any expenditure that exceeds twenty five thousand dollars in value. A two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting is required for approval. Refer to Section 4.03(C)(7).
- (E) Vote to override any action of the Board of Trustees. This vote must be taken at a duly constituted membership meeting. [See 3.05 (A) and (B).] The agenda to be voted on must be submitted to the membership in writing by certified mail ten days prior to the meeting. Two-thirds of those present and voting have the authority for determination.
- (F) Vote for the removal of any trustee from an office in accordance with Section 4.05(A).
- (G) Vote on any matters officially brought to the attention of the membership.
- (H) Offer suggestions to the minister or Board of Trustees as may seem advisable for the good of this ministry.
- (I) Any number of members constituting at least ten percent (10%) of the

active membership may request conflict management assistance from the Association of Unity Churches if direct discussions with the minister and Board of Trustees have not resolved their concerns. Upon receipt of such a request for conflict management assistance, the Association will confer with the minister, Board of Trustees and regional representative to evaluate whether action is required.

Section 3.05 **Meetings and Quorum.**

- (A) **Annual Membership Meeting.** The annual membership meeting of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford shall be held at its official headquarters within 90 days of the end of each fiscal year at the time of day designated by the minister and Board of Trustees.
- (B) **Special Membership Meetings.** Any time the affairs of this ministry warrant, a special meeting may be called by:
 - (1) The senior minister or co-ministers,
 - (2) A majority of the trustees of the board, or
 - (3) Ten percent of the active membership submitting a signed petition; a written request must be submitted to the board who shall, within a reasonable length of time, call the meeting on behalf of the requesting party.

The agenda for the special meeting shall be stated both in the written request and the written notice to the membership. Business conducted at the special meeting shall be limited to the pre-stated agenda.

- (C) **Written Notice.** Written notice stating the date, time, and place shall be mailed to all active members at least ten days before any membership meeting.
- (D) **Quorum.** Those active members present and voting at a membership meeting called pursuant to the notice provisions of Section 3.05 (C) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any membership

meeting.

- (E) **Participation.** Participation in the business affairs of any membership meeting shall be restricted to active members in attendance. Participation of other persons in discussion of business must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members in attendance. Association representatives have a right to participate in discussion when they have been invited by the minister, the board, or the membership.
- (F) **Voting.** Unless otherwise provided herein, the vote of a majority of the active members present and voting shall be necessary for approval or disapproval of the action being voted upon. Refer to Section 3.04 (D) and (F), and Section 8.01. Voting can be by secret ballot or by the show of hands. Proxy, absentee, or electronic (Internet, email, fax, etc.) voting are not allowed.
- (G) **Prayer.** In any membership meeting, the President, the minister, an Association of Unity Churches conflict management representative, or any member may request that action on an item of business be suspended while the membership enters into a time of prayer on the issue. Upon such request the President shall provide a period of prayer and silence.

ARTICLE IV Government

Section 4.01 **Administration.** The government of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford shall be vested in the minister and the Board of Trustees elected from the membership.

Section 4.02 **Minister or Co-ministers.**

- (A) **Duties.** As the spiritual leader, the minister or co-minister shall take the initiative in furthering the application of practical Christianity among people everywhere, including the congregation participating in the activities of this ministry, the members, and the Board of Trustees.

As the metaphysical teacher, the minister or those designated shall teach the universal principles taught and demonstrated by Jesus the Christ, and also taught by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, the Unity School of Christianity, and the Association of Unity Churches.

In accomplishing these duties, the minister or those designated shall conduct regular services, study groups, lectures, outreach activities, and personal counseling.

As administrative director, the minister or co-minister shall be:

- (1) Responsible for the complete functioning of this ministry, including direct supervision of all staff.
- (2) A voting member of the Board of Trustees on all matters except his/her employment, or that of successors.
- (3) A member of committees. Refer to Section 5.01.
- (4) Responsible for seeking Association's assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry.

(B) **Vacancy.** The position of a minister may be vacated by either of the following actions:

- (1) Resignation, or
- (2) After complying with Section 4.03(E), the minister is removed because of failure to fulfill the duties of the position as specified in Section 4.02 (A).

(C) **Employment of Minister.** It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to employ a licensed or ordained Unity minister for the church through cooperation with the placement management procedures of the Association of Unity Churches.

(D) **Termination of Employment of Minister.** After a ministry and its senior minister or co-ministers have cooperated with the conflict management

procedures of the Association of Unity Churches, a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Trustees is required to terminate the employment of a senior minister or co-ministers.

- (E) **Compensation.** The compensation of the minister shall be fixed by agreement between the minister and the Board of Trustees.

Section 4.03 **Board of Trustees (Members).**

- (A) **Structure.** The Board of Trustees shall consist of the minister and six trustees elected from the membership of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford. Each elected trustee shall hold office for three years, or until a successor is duly elected. The terms of two elected trustees shall expire annually and their offices shall be filled at the annual membership meeting in accordance with Section 4.04. No elected trustee shall serve more than two consecutive terms of three years each without an interval of one year between terms. No active licensed Unity teacher, individual receiving compensation from the ministry (with the exception of the minister/co-ministers), or independent contractors, or the spouse, parent, child, or significant other of an individual receiving compensation from the ministry may serve on the Board of Trustees. Further, no board member shall be the spouse, parent, child, or significant other of another board member.
- (B) **Prayer.** It is important that in addition to adhering to the normal procedures for legal functioning set forth in these bylaws, that the spiritual principles taught by Unity be utilized in the handling of decisions before the Board of Trustees. During the discussion of an item of business, any trustee may request time for prayer about the issue. Upon request the chair shall provide a period of prayer and silence.
- (C) **Duties.** As representatives of the membership, the Board of Trustees shall:
 - (1) Uphold the spiritual purpose of this ministry as stated in Section 1.01.
 - (2) Uphold the highest interest of the membership in conducting the

- business of this ministry.
- (3) Be conversant with these bylaws, and establish policy for the operation of the church.
 - (4) Interpret the meaning and application of these bylaws.
 - (5) Be faithful in attendance at services, board and membership meetings of this ministry.
 - (6) Make determination of the business needs of this ministry and authorize payment of monies for those purposes.
 - (7) Administer the property of this ministry, both real and personal.
 - (8) Make determinations on the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real or personal property belonging to this ministry. All decisions in favor of the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars in value shall be presented to the membership at a properly constituted membership meeting to be voted on in accordance with Section 3.04 (D).
 - (9) As recommended by the minister, authorize the employment of all staff personnel of this ministry and set and approve their salaries. See Section 4.02 (A).
 - (10) Set dates for the fiscal year.
 - (11) Each year cause to be prepared a complete financial statement with disclosures which will set forth the fiscal conditions and operations of the ministry.
 - (12) Secure a fidelity bond for persons handling church monies.
 - (13) Approve applicants for membership in accordance with Section 3.02.
 - (14) Act to fill the un-expired term of any trustee in accordance with Section 4.05 (B).
 - (15) Elect officers of the board and their successors to fill any unexpired term when necessary. See Section 4.07.
 - (16) Ratify committees and their chairpersons as appointed by the President of the Board and assign, direct, and monitor the activities of the committees. See Section 5.01.
 - (17) Seek Association assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry.
 - (18) Attend and actively participate in ongoing board education programs.
 - (19) Consider other duties brought to their attention by the minister and other

trustees.

- (20) Keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of membership.
- (21) Keep or cause to be kept accurate records of gifts to the ministry in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations; and acknowledge in writing contributions in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Section 4.04 **Board of Trustees -- Election.**

(A) **Qualifications.** Any person elected to the Board of Trustees must be an active member of the Unity Church of Greater Hartford. He/she will be a person who:

- (1) Desires to serve on the board.
- (2) Endeavors to live in accord with the universal principles of love and truth as taught by Jesus Christ and affirmed by Unity.
- (3) Furthers the work of this ministry through his/her active interest, love, and support.
- (4) Is a sincere and continuing student of Unity, conversant with its teachings.
- (5) Has demonstrated leadership capabilities.

(B) **Nominating Committee.** A Nominating Committee shall be formed at least three months prior to the annual membership meeting, and will initiate a search for at least one qualified candidate for each open position on the Board of Trustees. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the senior minister or co-ministers and three active members selected in the following manner:

- (1) At the annual membership meeting, the membership shall from among the active membership of the ministry select one member and one alternate to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team for the following year's election. In the event the person elected to serve becomes unavailable, the alternate shall serve. If the alternate also becomes unavailable to serve, the board will elect a person from among the active members who is not a current member of the board to fill the vacancy.

- (2) The board will elect one of its trustees to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team.
- (3) Together with the senior minister or co-ministers, the above two ministry team members will select a third person from among the active members to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team and be its chairperson.
- (4) In the event of an interim board, the Nominating Ministry Team shall complete its selection process within thirty (30) days from the establishment of the interim board.

(C) **Nominating Procedure.** As the presiding officer of the annual membership meeting, the President of the Board shall:

- (1) Read Section 4.04 just prior to the call for nominations.
- (2) Call upon the chairperson of the Nominating Committee to present the committee's nominations.
- (3) Call for additional nominations from the floor. All nominees, no matter how nominated, must qualify in accordance with paragraph (A) of this Section.

(D) **Election.** Written ballots are required if there are any partial terms to be filled or there are more nominees than open terms. The two nominees receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected to full three year terms. The candidate receiving the next highest number of votes shall be elected to the longest unexpired term.

Section 4.05 **Board of Trustees -- Vacancy and Replacement.**

(A) **Vacancy.** The office of a trustee may be vacated by any of the following means:

- (1) The resignation of the trustee.
- (2) The board voting for the removal of a trustee due to absences from three successive regular board meetings. Absences may be excused by the board upon written request.
- (3) The board voting for the removal of a trustee because of a failure to

fulfill the duties of the office as specified in Section 4.03 (C).

- (4) The active membership voting for removal of a trustee because of failure to fulfill the duties of the office as specified in Section 4.03 (C). See Section 3.04 (G).

- (B) **Replacement.** Should a vacancy occur on the Board of Trustees, the board shall proceed to fill the vacancy by ballot at its next regular meeting. In case of an emergency, a special meeting may be called. Only persons meeting the qualifications specified in Section 4.04 (A) may be considered as replacements. No replacement shall have served as a trustee during the year prior to their election. A majority vote of those present and voting shall be necessary to elect.

The appointment shall expire on the day of the next annual meeting. A person appointed in this manner is considered as having served a complete term.

Section 4.06 **Board of Trustees -- Meetings and Quorum.**

- (A) **Regular Board Meetings.** The regular business meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at the headquarters of this ministry on the third Saturday of each month, unless otherwise specified by the board.
- (B) **Special Board Meetings.** Special meetings of the board shall be called by the President of the Board under any of the following conditions:
- (1) By request of the senior minister or co-ministers.
 - (2) By request of two or more trustees.
 - (3) As the President of the Board deems it necessary.

The request shall be filed in writing with the board secretary. Reasonable effort must be made to notify all trustees of any special meeting.

- (C) **Quorum.** A majority of the total number of trustees currently serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

- (D) **Minister's Attendance.** The minister has the right to attend all board meetings. The minister must be notified of all special meetings.

Section 4.07 **Board of Trustees -- Officers.** Officers of the Board of Trustees shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. All officers shall be selected in a manner decided by the board, at the first board meeting after the annual meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose of selecting officers. Officers shall hold their respective offices for one year or until their successors are duly elected or qualified.

- (A) **President of the Board.** The President of the Board shall:
- (1) Preside at all Board of Trustees meetings.
 - (2) Preside at all membership meetings.
 - (3) Appoint committees in accordance with Section 5.01.
 - (4) Be a member of all committees by virtue of the office, except the Nominating Committee.
 - (5) Sign such papers and documents, upon proper authorization, as may be necessary.
 - (6) Be responsible for the planning of board orientation, retreats, and workshops.
- (B) **Vice-President of the Board.** The Vice-President of the Board shall:
- (1) Perform all the duties of the President of the Board in the absence of the President of the Board.
 - (2) Become President of the Board in case the office of the President becomes vacant. In such a case, a new Vice-President of the Board shall be elected from among the remaining trustees to fill the remainder of the term.
- (C) **Secretary.** The Secretary and/or Assistant Secretary-Treasurer shall:
- (1) Keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the minutes of all board and membership meetings.
 - (2) Hold in custody and be responsible for all reports, contracts, other legal

papers, minute books, and the corporate seal, which items shall be kept in the ministry office at all times, or in such other depository as prescribed by the board.

- (3) Attend to all official business required by the board.
- (4) Prepare or cause to be prepared a report for the membership meeting.

- (D) **Treasurer.** The Treasurer and/or Assistant Secretary-Treasurer shall:
- (1) Be custodian of the funds of this ministry. He/she shall pay out or cause to be paid out, funds authorized by the board. Refer to Section 4.03 (C).
 - (2) Keep, or cause to be kept, a record of all financial transactions, and submit a monthly financial report at each regular board meeting.
 - (3) Submit a financial report, covering the last complete fiscal period, at the annual membership meeting.
 - (4) Count, or cause to be counted by the appointment of qualified persons, all funds received, and be responsible for their deposit. When counting ministry funds there should be at least two persons present.
 - (5) Place, or cause to be placed, the funds of this ministry in the bank or other depository approved by the board.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 5.01 **Formation.** Committees for any specific purpose, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, shall be appointed by the President of the Board. Ratification by the senior minister or co-ministers plus ratification by the board is required.

ARTICLE VI

Seal

Section 6.01 **Description.** The corporate seal of this ministry shall include the name of the ministry in a circle, which encloses the name of the city, state, and date of incorporation.

Section 6.02 **Dissolution.** Should this corporation dissolve, all property and funds

remaining after the payment of the debts of the corporation shall be used to establish an endowment; the income from which shall be used for scholarships for the Unity School of Christianity.

Such an endowment would be held and administered by the Unity School of Christianity.

ARTICLE VII Meeting Procedures

Section 7.01 **Rules of Order.** The latest edition of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER shall be the reference of this ministry on parliamentary law and its usage, unless otherwise provided by these bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII Bylaws Amendments

Section 8.01 **Procedure.** Amendments to these bylaws must be made by voting members of this corporation at a legally constituted membership meeting. Written notice setting forth the proposed amendments must be mailed to all active members at least ten days prior to the required membership meeting. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of all active members present and voting shall be necessary to pass any amendment to these bylaws. These bylaws fully supersede all previous bylaws adopted by the Unity Church of Greater Hartford.

Attest-Secretary
September 20, 2009