

UCM Committee Structure and Guidelines

Version 4

Written by the Executive Team, June 2013

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Prior to April 14, 2013, standing committees and their duties were described in the Church Bylaws. With the adoption of policy-based governance and the new Bylaws on 4/14/13, that section was removed from the Bylaws. The Executive Team (ET) now has the authority to “convene and authorize committees, task forces or individual volunteers necessary to implement its responsibilities and carry out the Mission.” (Art. 3.4) For clarity and ease of reference, the ET has created the present document to describe current committee structure and expectations. This document does not have the legal force of the Church Bylaws. It is intended to provide management guidance. It is a “living document,” subject to revision as needed to adjust to changing circumstances. Anyone with suggestions about how to improve UCM’s committees/ ministries/working groups is encouraged to present their ideas to the ET for consideration.

A. Standing Committees

Standing committees continue to play a significant role in the life and work of the Church. The current list is as follows:

Accessibility Committee
Administration Committee
Community Lunch Committee
Finance Committee
Leadership Development Committee
Living Lighter Committee
Membership Committee
Committee on Ministry
Music Committee
Personnel Committee
Property Committee
Religious Education Committee(s)
Safety Committee
Social Responsibility Committee
Stewardship Committee
Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) Committee
Welcoming Congregation Committee
Worship & Arts Committee

Descriptions of the standing committees are found in Appendix A of this document.

Standard practice is for each standing committee to have a Chair, a Vice Chair, and anywhere from 3-7 members. Chairs may arise from within the committee or be recruited by the Leadership Development Committee(LDC) , subject to approval by the ET. Chairs are encouraged to train and mentor their successors. There are no term limits. Chairs who plan to

step down should notify their committee members, the LDC, and the ET, and do their best to identify and orient a successor, if possible.

Each committee is encouraged to develop its own mission statement in relation to the Church Mission, and to develop a covenant that specifies how its members will relate to one another. Help with covenants and mission statements is available from the Committee on Ministry.

The Chair or another designee from each committee is expected to participate in meetings of the Committee of Chairs. (See section on Committee of Chairs below.)

If a committee anticipates changing its role or structure in a major way, it should initiate a dialogue with the ET about its plans, in order to ensure that no important functions are overlooked or dropped without due consideration.

B. Ministry Programs

These programs differ from traditional committees in that their purpose is to minister directly to individual congregants. Currently there are two: the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry (LPCM) and the Small Group Ministry (SGM). Each has a program leader who has received specialized training in their field. They are described briefly in Appendix B.

C. Task Forces and Study Groups

These time-limited groups are created when needed to accomplish a specific purpose. Once that purpose is accomplished, they are disbanded. Each group is given a charge or mandate by one of the governing bodies, either the ET or the Board, as appropriate. Examples of such groups have included the Governance Task Force, the Bylaws Task Force, and the Community-Building Study Group, to name only a few. Each has a Chair who is appointed by the governing body that creates the group and gives it its charge.

D. Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance is an independent organization that has been affiliated with the Church since its earliest days. It has its own officers, bylaws, mission and purpose. The President (or her designee) is invited to participate in the Committee of Chairs and to report on Alliance activities whenever Chairs are asked to report (see section F).

E. Appointed Positions

Some new positions and some that were formerly elected are now appointed by the ET.

Currently they are:

Event Coordinators

Historian

Safe Congregation Response Team

Treasurer

They are described in Appendix C.

F. Committee of Chairs

Chairs of standing committees, program leaders, active Task Force/Study Group chairs, and some appointed positions (e.g. the Historian) comprise the Committee of Chairs (CoC). This group meets several times a year to learn and share information. Meetings are convened and agendas planned by rotating volunteers from the CoC itself. From time to time, usually twice a year, the ET asks CoC members to report in writing on the activities of their groups. These reports enable the ET to ensure all groups are fulfilling their responsibilities in furtherance of the Church Mission. The April report is considered the official Annual Report of each group to the congregation, and is published in the all-church Annual Report.

G. Service Networks

These are informal networks of Church members and friends who offer their services on an *ad hoc* basis when a need exists and volunteers are available. They differ from ministry programs in that their structure and membership are more fluid, and no training is required. Their coordinators may (at their option) join the Committee of Chairs. Two such networks are currently active (as of October 2016): the Caring Network and “SPUDS.” They are described in Appendix D.

Appendix A. Standing Committee Descriptions

Accessibility Committee

The committee’s mission is to make UCM’s building, programs, and ways of interacting more available, accessible, and welcoming to all. Besides ongoing awareness and education activities, the committee has led the congregation in such projects as building an accessible restroom, improving doors, handrails and thresholds, and creating an accessible parking space. Future projects may include additional parking spaces and building improvements, depending on congregational priorities to be outlined in the 2016-2020 five-year plan. (Refer to *Envisioning an Accessible Church: Report of the Accessibility Task Force*, dated 4/10/14.)

Administration Committee

The Administration Committee provides support and assistance to the Church Administrator in performing his/her duties effectively and efficiently and furthering the church’s mission and goals. Members consult regularly with the Administrator and the Office Assistant/Rental Coordinator to ensure they have the financial and volunteer support needed to carry out their duties. The committee is responsible for maintaining the Office Procedures Manual and arranging for coverage of administrative functions during staff vacation periods.

Community Lunch Committee

This committee consists of the core volunteers who manage and operate UCM’s Community Lunch program on Mondays. They ensure proper food safety practices are followed in the kitchen and food storage locations. One person is trained and certified by the Vermont Foodbank in public food service practices. The committee tracks all income and expenditures for the church’s Community Lunch Fund. Their goal is to provide healthy, nutritious meals to their guests, as economically as possible. They manage a larger group of rotating volunteers

who fulfill all the needed roles in purchasing, storing, cooking and serving food, as well as cleaning the kitchen and related spaces after the meal.

Finance Committee

The responsibilities of the committee are to:

1. Assist the Executive Team in overseeing the financial health of the Church.
2. Prepare for ET review the annual Operating and Capital budgets, including:
 - Prepare a preliminary budget schedule
 - Seek budget requests from committees and staff at the beginning of the budget process (usually in December and January)
 - Submit a preliminary budget to the Executive Team
 - Submit the final proposed budget (usually in April) to the Executive Team for its consideration, review and any changes before presentation to the Board
 - Assist the Board Financial Officer in explaining the budget to Church members at the annual meeting
3. Monitor the approved annual budget.
4. Oversee the Long Term Invested Funds.
 - Make requests to the fund manager for withdrawals based on the approved budget
 - Meet periodically with the fund manager to review investment performance and to discuss fund issues
5. Ensure that the church is properly insured.
6. Recruit and schedule Sunday pouch counters.
7. Carry out related administrative functions related to Church finances, such as:
 - Serve as a resource for the Administrator on accounting issues
 - Address questions concerning the disposition of stale dated checks
 - Process electronic withdrawals for pledges
 - Review and sign off on Journal entries indicating their review
 - Assist the Executive Team to maintain the Church Financial Policies

Leadership Development Committee

The duties of the committee are:

- a. To encourage members and friends of the church to participate in the work of the church by serving on committees, task forces, work groups, and other projects of the church;
- b. To identify, on an ongoing basis, opportunities for church leadership training and development offered by the UUA and related organizations, to publicize these opportunities to the congregation, and to actively recruit participants;
- c. To oversee the Leadership Development budget and to authorize use of funds for training opportunities, in concurrence with the Executive Team;
- d. Through its activities under (a) and (b) and by other means, to identify potential leaders and encourage them to use and develop their leadership skills through service in appropriate positions within the church;
- e. To notify the congregation of vacancies in any office as needed and of the expiration of terms of office especially for board members;
- f. To advise potential nominees of the scope of duties, referring to the bylaws in the case of prospective board nominees and job descriptions in the case of each committee;

g. To nominate at least one active member for filling each vacant board position due to expire at an annual meeting and publish those nominations.

Living Lighter Committee

The committee's over-arching responsibility is to ensure expectations of the Green Sanctuary award are met. More specifically:

1. Ensure as much as possible recycling within the church. Encourage congregants to do the same at their homes.
2. Encourage energy savings in church and in homes of congregants.
3. Encourage sustainability issues be included in Sunday services and RE programs.
4. Further our work with food-challenged people in the community through work with the UCM Community Lunch Program and others as appropriate.

Membership Committee

The duties of the committee are:

- a. To arrange publicity for Membership Committee activities;
- b. To welcome newcomers, members, and friends to regular church services by arranging for ushers, greeters, elevator operators, and a fellowship/coffee hour;
- c. To contact members who for some time have not attended or participated in church activities;
- d. To devise and implement methods of increasing interest and membership in the church, to include offering "New UU" classes at least once a year;
- e. To assist the minister in contacting persons interested in the church;
- f. To have a budget which may be expended by the chair;
- g. To assist the Secretary in maintaining the membership list and updating it annually;
- h. To maintain the directory of members and friends and update it annually;
- i. To maintain an Ushers' Book which tracks Sunday attendance and other pertinent information;
- j. To provide various means of encouraging fellowship and community, such as, but not limited to, permanent name tags, community photos, and profiles in the e-news; and
- k. To provide various means of welcoming newcomers such as, but not limited to, name tags, welcome cards in the pews, and a Hospitality Table with UU literature.

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry supports and nurtures the shared ministry of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier by:

1. Serving as a support and sounding board for the minister.
2. Serving as a resource for individuals and groups in the congregation to:
 - a) Foster healthy process, relationships and decision making
 - b) Address conflicts or troubles that negatively impact ministry
 - c) Consult with the minister on matters of ministry
3. Making recommendations to the church's governing bodies and other leadership groups to enhance the health and effectiveness of ministries.
4. Conducting a mid-year and end of year performance assessment of the minister, coordinated with the UCM Board, and submitted to the UUA.

The committee shall consist of five members, recommended by the minister and approved by the Board, for a term of three years.

Music Committee

The Music Committee, a subset of the choir, assists and supports the Music Director in a variety of ways. These may include, but are not limited to, cataloguing and filing sheet music; organizing special choir events; and other support roles as needed.

Personnel Committee

The duties of the committee are:

- a. To advise the Minister, Board and/or Executive Team on best practices in the field of human resources;
- b. To maintain and update the church's Personnel Policies;
- c. To maintain and update the church's Fair Compensation Guidelines;
- d. To assist the Minister and other staff with maintaining and updating appropriate job descriptions;
- e. To develop employment letters for each staff member (other than the Minister) setting out the terms of their employment annually in June, to be reviewed and signed by a designated officer of the Board.

Property Committee

The committee's mission is to protect and maintain the church building and grounds in keeping with historical integrity and current needs. Its membership is fluid and changeable, depending on current projects. The Chair and Vice Chair ensure the performance of the following essential functions:

1. Provide ongoing critical assessment of the building and its contents to assure proper care and maintenance.
2. Develop and annually update the Building Maintenance Twenty Year Master Plan.
3. Build and recommend the annual property budget.
4. Solicit bids on approved projects from area contractors.
5. Supervise contractor work on the church and grounds.
6. Monitor monthly expenditure reports of both Capital and General Funds.
7. Report as required to the Executive Team, Committee of Chairs, Board, and congregation.
8. Establish Property Advisory task forces and study groups as necessary (examples include foundation work, bell tower visioning, paint schemes & colors, etc.).
9. Work closely with non-Property task forces and study groups whose work may impact the church building (examples include the Accessibility Task Force, the Living Lighter Committee, Safety and Energy study groups, etc.).
10. Update other church groups about capital projects (e.g. presentations to the Finance Committee, Alliance, RE Committee, Worship and Arts Committee, etc.).
11. Coordinate with fire/safety authorities such as the Montpelier Fire Department (fire doors, room capacity requirements, extinguishers, alarm issues, etc.) and Dept. of Labor and Industry (annual lift recertification and regular servicing).

Religious Education Committee

The mission of the committee is to support opportunities for transformational learning, faith formation, action, and fellowship across the lifespan within our congregation. The primary committee is supported by a related Adult R.E. Committee.

Working collaboratively with the Director of Religious Education (DRE), the committee will:

- a. Support the DRE in planning and carrying out R.E. programs;
- b. Plan and support programs for middle school and high school youth;
- c. Plan and support (via the Adult R.E. Ctee.) an adult religious education program for members and friends;
- d. Assist the DRE in developing and managing the annual R.E. budget;
- e. Assist the DRE in recruiting committee members, teachers, and other R.E. volunteers;
- f. Provide any requested feedback to the Minister concerning the work of the DRE; and
- g. Assist the DRE as requested in preparing the Annual Report of the R.E. program.

Safety Committee

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to foresee and address any issues that may involve the safety of those in our church building. Duties include organizing at least one fire drill per church year, arranging training as needed for staff and church leaders, and resolving any safety-related issues that may arise. The committee convenes as needed.

Social Responsibility Committee

The duties of the committee are:

- a. To become aware of social justice issues which arise in the larger community and to develop, promote and administer an action plan for the church community to address these issues;
- b. To maintain liaison with outside groups such as the UU Service Committee, affecting the social concerns of the church community;
- c. To keep the church community informed concerning social and political issues so members may consider appropriate responses;
- d. To inform the church community of social justice issues pending before the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly;
- e. To inform the UUA concerning the position of the UCM on social and organizational issues;
- f. To manage UCM's food donations to the Food Pantry;
- g. To manage the Community Pouch program, including designation of recipients;
- h. To provide input concerning social responsibility to all ministries of our church community, for example, the worship service, the R.E. program, financial decisions.

Stewardship Committee

As of October 2015, the Stewardship Committee reports directly to the Board, rather than to the ET. Its principal goal is to generate sufficient financial resources, annually and over time, to enable UCM to meet its budgeted expenses and fulfill its mission. The committee's responsibilities include the annual pledge campaign, the planned giving program, the "Special Gifts" (formerly "donor-based projects") program, and various all-church fundraisers such as the Holiday Fair and church auction. It shall ensure and monitor the development, implementation,

and review of effective stewardship practices, to include educating the congregation about the financial needs of the church and the most effective means to provide for them.

VIA Committee

This committee works to serve human need and protect the earth, our home, by focusing on and working for systemic change in our society through the principles of community organizing. UCM is a member of Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA), a state-wide organization with similar goals utilizing the principles of community organizing. VIA is a member of a national, faith-based organization called PICO (People Improving Community through Organizing). It uses a model for systemic change that stresses building personal relationships, doing research on issues, and carrying out actions to foster change in our society's institutions. UCM's VIA Committee attempts to carry out these community organizing principles as it 1) works on issues the congregation and committee have selected, 2) supports other VIA groups on their selected issues, and 3) collaborates with other groups working on similar issues. It considers not only community organizing principles but also our own UUA culture and the specific social setting in Vermont.

Welcoming Congregation Committee

The committee searches for ways in which UCM can become more welcoming to the LGBTQ community, and encourages the congregation to adopt them. It meets regularly and keeps written records of "action items." It played a key role in securing the "Welcoming Congregation" designation from the UUA. Following are some initiatives the WCC has led:

- Organize annual worship service with LGBTQ focus
- Co-organize book and film discussion series with local library
- Staff Welcoming Congregation table during coffee hour
- Organize marchers for area parades
- Write letters to editor on relevant topics
- Obtain and loan LGBTQ books to interested borrowers
- Observe National Coming Out Day in a worship service
- Observe National Transgender Day of Remembrance in a worship service
- Advise other committees regarding inclusive language in brochures and media
- Encourage education of committee members through films, theater, and books

Worship & Arts Committee

The Worship & Arts Committee is the steward of the Sunday service. In collaboration with the Minister, Music Director and Director of Religious Education, we strive to ensure that elements of the service -- music, meditation and prayer, joys and concerns, readings, announcements, the sermon -- nurture each person's spiritual journey. The committee is responsible for ensuring the pulpit is filled on Sundays when the Minister is away, whether by guests or with special services led by members of the church. We coordinate service elements such as flowers, candles, and multimedia offerings with a dedicated budget.

Appendix B. Ministry Programs

The **Lay Pastoral Care Ministry** is a group of volunteers trained in active listening

skills, who assist the Minister and extend the Minister's reach in providing pastoral care for UCM members and friends in times of need.

The **Small Group Ministry** program consists of a series of structured small-group opportunities for members and friends to have meaningful discussions about thought-provoking topics. Each group is led by a trained facilitator. The overall program is coordinated by a leader or co-leaders (in conjunction with the Minister) who organize the groups, topics, and meeting times.

Appendix C. Appointed Positions

The **Event Coordinators** (two Co-Coordinators) are responsible for encouraging and in some cases facilitating fellowship events in the Church. Examples might include potluck meals, picnics, birthday or holiday celebrations, and other events suggested by congregants. The Coordinators may provide individuals or groups within the Church with the resources and procedures needed to make their desired event a reality.

The **Historian** (according to the "old" 5/22/11 Bylaws) "shall record all births, deaths, bequests and memorial gifts and shall ensure the protection and preservation of the church's historical records. The historian annually shall make and preserve a report on major events in the church organization."

The **Safe Congregation Response Team** consists of the Minister, the Director of Religious Education, and two other members appointed by the ET. Their duties are spelled out in the Church's "Sexual Abuse Prevention, Education and Response Policy" found on the website along with other Church policies.

The **Treasurer** oversees Church bookkeeping and financial statements, reconciles bank statements, and reviews accounting controls. (S)he works closely with the Church Administrator, the Finance Committee, and the Executive Team.

Appendix D. Service Networks

The **Caring Network** consists of members and friends who are willing to be called upon to provide food, transportation, chore help, and other kinds of assistance to individuals who request such help due to illness, mobility issues, or other limiting circumstances. Requests are submitted to the network coordinator, who then e-mails the request to the list of volunteers.

"**SPUDS**" (Service is our Prayer bUDDieS) consists of members and friends who are willing to be called upon to do various projects for other non-profit groups in the community, usually a different project every month. The coordinator recruits from among an existing pool of volunteers, and also advertises the opportunity to the whole congregation.