

Bylaws of the Concord UU Earth-Centered Spirituality Group

Last updated August 2011

I. Purpose of Group: To provide an opportunity for worship, networking, education and socialization for pagans and other individuals who follow or have an interest in pagan, neo-pagan, reconstructionist, earth-centered or nature-based religions. The Group and its activities are open to both members of the Concord Unitarian Universalist Church and members of the community at large.

II. Non-discrimination statement: The Group does not discriminate against any participant or member on the basis of faith, beliefs, spiritual background, race, color, gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, or physical, mental or emotional challenge.

III. Membership

The Group uses a tiered membership structure.

General Members have met the criteria for general membership (per policy) and may cast votes for the elected Organizations Roles.

Voting Members have met the criteria for voting membership (per policy), may be elected to the Organizational Roles, and may vote in all other matters that require a vote.

IV. Organizational roles:

The Group's organization is facilitated by a Voting Member acting in each of the following roles. The term for each of the roles is two years, with no term limits. An individual may occupy more than one role at a time.

A. Organizational Coordinator

- Acts as coordinator for ensuring that each ritual has a leader.
- Writes a report for the Church's Annual Report each year.
- Coordinates elections for Organizational Roles and Membership Committee
- Coordinates a facilitator for the annual meeting, using the same decision hierarchy used for ritual leadership.
- Manages and updates the Group's member-only online calendar or equivalent internet resource.

B. Publicity Manager

- Maintains an electronic mailing list of individuals wishing to receive information about the Group and emails periodic announcements to the members of the list.
- Creates and distributes posters and/or flyers to advertise the Group and its public activities.
- Coordinates with the church's webmaster to maintain a page within the Church's website, dedicated to the Group's activities.
- Writes a monthly column in the Church publication Parish Notes, to apprise church members of the Group's activities.

- Acts as an administrator on the Group's Facebook page and/or equivalent internet resources.

C. Treasurer

- Collects any monetary contributions made to the Group
- Maintains group funds in a safe location
- Distributes funds to ritual leaders who request reimbursement for materials purchased
- Distributes funds for other purposes that may be voted by the Group members.

D. Archivist

- Actively solicits copies of ritual material from ritual leaders.
- Maintains copies of ritual materials, bylaws, and other information about the Group in an organized fashion.
- One set of printed material is to be left in the Church Library, with the designation that the material does not circulate, except to Group members.
- The other set is to be maintained by the Archivist in a safe location, and used to create a new set of materials if the circulating set becomes lost or damaged.
- May also use the Group's internet space to store ritual and other materials.

E. Church Liaison

- This role must be filled by a church member.
- Acts as the primary liaison between the church administration and the group
- When requested, facilitates communication between churchmembers/administrators and the group and its members
- Reserves rooms at the church for ritual and meetings
- Obtains a seasonal fire permit each year
- Acts as an administrator on the Group's Facebook page and/or equivalent internet resources.

F. Membership Committee

1. Consists of four Voting Members of the group, each with a two year term. In order to support consistency and continuity, two committee members are elected each year, resulting in staggered terms.
2. A chair is elected annually by the members of the committee, from among the four committee members.
3. The Membership Committee is responsible for
 - Curriculum development for membership classes, and arranging for the classes to be held periodically.
 - Responding to requests for conflict mediation between members of the group.
 - Implementing group policy and procedure regarding the processing of ethics/behavior complaints.
 - Processing membership requests from parolees and sexual offenders, per group policy.

- The chair acts as an administrator on the Group's Facebook page and/or equivalent internet resources.

V. Elections for Organizational Roles

- A. Elections for the Organizational Roles shall be conducted every other year in January.
- B. Newly elected members take office after the annual business meeting in February.
- C. If a member resigns from an Organizational Role midterm, an election will be held to fill the position until the end of the term.
- D. The Organizational Coordinator will be responsible for announcing and conducting elections.
- E. A member may be removed from an Organizational Role by a 2/3 majority vote of the membership base, including both General and Voting members..

VI. Voting procedure

- A. All significant decisions to be made by the Group will be completed in a democratic and collegial manner by the Group's Voting Members. Such decisions topics include, but are not limited to:
 - Significant changes to the Groups ordinary activities.
 - New public activities, such as workshops and networking opportunities that will bear the Group's name as sponsor.
 - Expenditure of treasury funds (except for ordinary reimbursement of ritual expenses.)
 - Changes to by-laws or policy.
- B. When a member requires the input and/or votes of the Voting Members outside of the Annual Meeting, he or she will email the Group with the issue to be voted upon. In the event that a member does not have email, the member requesting the vote will contact that member in person, by telephone, or by mail in order to obtain his/her vote.
- C. Discussion will take place electronically when possible (using the group's internet resources) or by email, using a "reply to all" procedure so that all members see the input and vote of all other members. The member requesting the vote is responsible for keeping members who do not have email "in the loop."
- D. The member requesting a vote will allow a reasonable period of time (4-5 days) for other members to respond.
- E. If it becomes impossible to conduct a discussion and vote by email, the member requesting the vote will arrange for a meeting of members in order to resolve the matter in person.

- F. All Voting Members are encouraged to vote in each matter. For each matter requiring a vote, a quorum consisting of 25% of the current Voting Membership (or a minimum of 4 Voting Members if the Voting Membership falls below 12) must cast a vote, or be present at a meeting where a vote is taken, in order for the matter to be resolved. From within that quorum, results will be determined by a simple majority.
- G. When the vote concerns the removal of an individual from an Organizational Role, the voting standard shall be a 2/3 majority within a quorum of 25% of the entire membership.
- H. All General Members shall be privy to discussion and may weigh their opinions on any matter. However, only Voting Members may vote (excepting general elections for Organization Roles, or the removal of an individual from an Organizational Role.)

VII. Annual Meeting

- A. The Group holds an annual business meeting on the first Sunday after Imbolc (February 1 or 2).
- B. The meeting is conducted by member who currently holds an elected position in the Group. It is the meeting facilitator's responsibility to obtain someone to take minutes and distribute them to the entire membership.
- C. All members may attend and speak at the Annual Meeting, but only Voting Members may vote.

VIII. Public Activities:

- A. The Group offers public rituals for each of the following neo-pagan holidays (to the best of its ability given availability of members to lead the rituals). Each ritual will be organized and led by a member of the Group.
 - Imbolc/Candlemas- on or about February 2
 - Ostara/Spring Equinox - on or about March 21
 - Beltane/May Day - on or about May 1
 - Litha/Summer Solstice - on or about June 21
 - Lammas/Lughnasadh - on or about August 1
 - Mabon/Fall Equinox - on or about September 23
 - Samhain - on or about November 1
 - Yule/Winter Solstice - on or about December 21
- B. The Group may offer other public events, such as workshops, social/networking gatherings or public education activities.

IX. Participation in public events:

Participation in public events is open to all adults, age 18 and older, from the Church and from the community at large.

X. Participation by Minors:

The Group recognizes that many youth are attracted to neo-pagan religions and their activities. However, the Group believes that religious education and guidance are the right

and responsibility of parents. Therefore, minors may participate in public events only when accompanied by a parent or guardian. A youth whose parent or guardian has expressly given permission to a member of the Group may attend public events unaccompanied.

All literature advertising the Group and its activities shall include a statement regarding the Group's policy on participation by minors.

The leader of a public ritual/event (or his/her designee) is responsible for observing attendees, and if necessary, asking for proof of age from those who appear to be unaccompanied minors.

The Group shall make a good-faith effort to ensure that no unaccompanied minors participate in the Group's activities. However, it is recognized that, at very large events such as the Winter Solstice Celebration, stringent monitoring may not be possible.

XI. Private events:

Any member may organize "members only" events, such as full moon rituals, workshops, classes, and social events. Such events do not require approval by the larger Group, but must be made available to all members of the Group if they are to be considered official Group events.

XII. Relationship with Concord UU Church:

- A. The Group and its members will at all times conduct themselves in accordance with the Church's by-laws and philosophies, particularly the "Seven UU Principles," which are attached to this document.
- B. The Group will comply with the Church's procedures for reservation of room space and clean-up expectations after events.
- C. The Group will respect the church's physical property.
- D. In order to help allay the costs of materials (such as winter solstice candles), building upkeep and janitorial service, the Group shall donate 50% of net income collected at rituals or through fundraising.
- E. At any given time, at least one person fulfilling the "Organizational Roles" (Section III) will also be a member of the Church.
- F. At any given time, membership of the Group will include at least 3 individuals who are also members of the Church. If the number of dual members falls below 3, the Group will place itself "on probation" for a period of 6 months. If the dual membership requirement is not met within that period, the Group will suspend its activities until such time as the membership requirement is met.

The Seven UU principles

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 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 congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations 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.