

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Membership in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Medford is governed by its Constitution and Bylaws, as modified on September 20, 2015, which states in Article II, Section 2:**

**Any person, 16 years of age or over, who is in sympathy with the purpose and program of this Church and whose written application for membership has been approved by the Board of Trustees may become a member by signing the Roll of Members, which is kept by the Clerk. Active members are expected to attend public worship participate in the affairs of the Church, and contribute services and/or funds to support the Church.**

**The process and decision on whether to become a member of UUCM will be an individual one. As such, establishing a policy that structures this process will help insure that it proceeds consistently, while modeling and honoring the Principles of Unitarian Universalism and the values of UUCM. The process completed intentionally and conscientiously, intends to enable members to participate and contribute actively to the Church for the duration of their membership.**

**This policy sets forth guidelines for the membership process that will be accordingly overseen and implemented by the Membership Team.**

**The membership process involves four distinct steps: Welcoming, Connecting, Engagement, and Commitment. This policy addresses primarily the last two steps of Engagement and Commitment. The important steps of Welcoming and Connecting can be handled separately as the Membership Teams determines.**

## **WELCOMING**

**Welcoming starts when a newcomer enters the door of UUCM, is offered a hand in friendship and is welcomed to our community. Those who have signed on to be Greeters and wear the Red Apron during social hour are the “point” persons of this step. Newcomers will be encouraged to sign the Visitors’ Log. This step leads, almost immediately, to the next step of Connecting.**

## **CONNECTING**

**If not done at the time of the first visit, on returning visits, newcomers can sign the visitor’s log. Newcomers who stay for social hour receive a “Visitor’s Bag” which contains information about the Seven Principles and six Sources of UUism, as well as information particular to UUCM. These materials are regularly updated and will include a copy of this policy and other information about how one becomes a member of UUCM.**

**All members of the Membership Team as well as members and friends in attendance who have remained for social hour are “Connecting” participants.**

**The Membership Team follows up on contact information that newcomers have provided on the visitors’ logs. This includes a welcoming note card/or an email, as well as, if desired, both adding their email address to the church announcement list and creation of a name tag. Their information is also put into a spreadsheet available to members of the Membership Team.**

## **ENGAGEMENT**

**Engagement is an open-ended process that begins and continues each time the newcomer returns to our community. Engagement is entered into consciously by the Minister and members of the Membership Team and, organically, by all members of UUCM who attend service, social hour, or other UUCM activities.**

**It is during this engagement process that the Minister, Membership Team and other members of UUCM explore with interested individuals what it means to be a member and how they may envision what membership would be like for them.**

**For purposes of this policy, the expectation that members**

- “attend public worship” - includes making an effort to attend service when in town.**
- “Participate in the affairs of the Church” - includes keeping informed of church events, offering feedback to the Minister, Board, and other leaders, attending congregational meetings, and engaging with others.**
- “Contribute services and/or funds to support the Church” - includes responding to our annual commitment campaign with an annual pledge of any amount, responding to requests for volunteer services, serving on a committee, team, or other church leadership position as consistent with the individual’s ability.**

**This process is open ended in the sense that some individuals may come to UUCM having chosen Unitarian Universalism or have a well-established spiritual practice that that is compatible with their first experiences of**

**our community. For others, engagement may take more time as they come to learn about our Principles, Sources, values, and activities.**

## **COMMITMENT**

**Once an individual has expressed an interest in becoming a member the Commitment process begins.**

**Individuals, by this time, would be familiar with what being an active member of UUCM means because they will have received that information as part of their Welcome Bag and participated as outlined under “Engagement.”**

**It is an integral part of the Membership process that individuals who desire to become members attend a Membership Class during which an overview of UU Principles and Sources and the history of UUCM are reviewed, and the expectations under the bylaws for membership are discussed. There will be two Membership Classes offered each church year: the first between September and New Year’s, and the second before mid-June. The classes will be scheduled at the beginning of the church year so that newcomers will have that information upon received their Visitor’s Bag. The Minister, with input from the Membership Team and Staff, will develop the subject matter, and will lead the class along with the assistance and participation of Staff and church leadership. The class time will actively ensure that the candidate for membership is familiar with the expectations of being a member of UUCM as spelled out in the Bylaws.**

**In the event that there are cases where an individual cannot make one of the scheduled classes but wishes to become a member, the Membership**

**Team and Minister shall take appropriate measures to provide an alternative to the Membership Class for those individuals, such as meeting with other church leaders.**

**Attendance in the class is an important step in applying to the Board for membership. Upon completion of the Membership Class, if an individual chooses to become a member of UUCM, s/he/they should write a brief letter to the Board stating that they understand, affirm, and promote the Principles of UU and the values of UUCM and that they intend to enter into active membership in the worship, programs, and other activities of UUCM. Upon receipt of these letters and with input from the chair of the Membership Team and the Minister, the Board will vote on each application.**

**Once an individual's application has been approved, the Chair of the Membership team will invite the individual to sign the Roll of Members at the next most convenient time for them, the Minister, and the chair of the Membership Team. This signing might be included as part of a Sunday service. If done outside of a service, other members of the Membership Team are invited to join as well in order to convey the fact that becoming a member of UUCM is an important step in the life of the new member and UUCM.**

**There will be a Membership Recognition Service once each year before mid-June to honor and celebrate their commitment to our UU Principles, the values of UUCM and to the life of the Church.**