

UUCR Policy for Considering New Initiatives

The members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville (UUCR) are committed to: the principles of the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and the use of the democratic process within our congregations. Consideration of new initiatives proposed by members of the congregation for UUCR will be made using democratic procedures. This Policy includes initiatives that will use UUCR facilities, funding or staff time, or which are likely to require considerable volunteer effort by the congregation beyond the initiating group. Examples of a new initiative include such things as the Rainbow Youth Alliance and the Solar Panel Project. This Policy does not include fundraising, starting a spirituality group, or a ministerial-led new initiative which will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The purpose of the Policy is to define the process by which such initiatives will be considered. Consideration of whether new initiatives will go forward will be guided by Unitarian Universalist (UU) Purposes and Principles, the UUCR Mission and Vision, the UUCR Strategic Plan and other priorities, the Covenant of Right Relations, and what is discerned to be best for the congregation as a whole. The proposer(s) may request a lay minister or committee member familiar with the process to provide assistance in completing the process; if uncertain whom to ask, the proposer can consult one of the co-chairs of the Lay Ministry Council.

1. Individuals or task groups seeking endorsement of a new initiative should submit a written proposal to the committee that has responsibility for the area covered by the effort. If the proposal deals with children or youth, the Religious Education Committee is the appropriate starting point. Working through the committee structure ensures that:

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A. the leader of the initiative will receive feedback and consideration from an established committee, and;

B. any funding for the effort can become part of the committee's budget request, if applicable.

2. The proposal will address: the goals and how the effort fits with UU Principles and Purposes; existing UUA resolutions; UUCR Mission and Vision, Strategic Plan; demonstrated need and other relevant considerations, such as resources (including free or reduced rental; See Rental Policy), staff and volunteer time, and costs.

The proposal will indicate who will lead the initiative and the names of at least five other UUCR members committed to supporting the initiative.

3. The committee will determine whether it is the most appropriate committee for the effort and if so, will review the proposal to determine whether it addresses the requirements in item 2. If the committee endorses the proposal, the leader will meet with the Senior Minister to explain the proposal and to hear the minister's views and counsel. The Committee chair and the leader of the effort will then forward the proposal to the Lay Ministry Council (LMC) for discernment and request to make a presentation to the LMC at their next scheduled meeting. The proposal must be submitted at least 14 days in advance of the meeting so that it may be distributed along with the agenda for the meeting.

4. The Lay Ministry Council will consider the proposal in light of other priorities and what is best for the congregation as a whole. If the LMC approves the proposal concept, the leader will describe the effort in an e-weekly and a Quest article; supporters must be available after services at a lobby table for several weeks to answer questions; and the leader will schedule and advertise a discussion at UUCR to which all will be invited.

5. The proposal leader will then present a report to the sponsoring committee concerning the discussions with the congregation including any controversy and a summary of the feedback. The committee will make a recommendation to the Lay Ministry Council regarding approval or non-approval of the effort.

6. The Lay Ministry Council will then consider the recommendation to discern whether the initiative will go forward and will make a decision at the meeting following the meeting at which the presentation was made. No commitment of human or financial resources may be made prior to the LMC approval.

7. If the LMC approves the initiative, the leader of the new initiative will publicize the decision of the LMC and plans for the effort in Quest and the e-weekly.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, August 28, 2015