

UNITY OF THE LAKES BYLAWS
As recommended by the Association of Unity Churches International
Amended February 7, 2010

Preamble. We, as the representatives of our church community, establish and ascribe to the following spiritual guideposts that will enable Unity of the Lakes to serve its church community and members and manage its affairs in accordance with the spiritual practices of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, the teachings of the Unity School of Christianity, and the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this association shall be Unity of the Lakes.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

Section 1. Statement of Purpose. The purpose of Unity of the Lakes, a Michigan corporation, is to teach the spiritual principles developed by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, the teachings of the Unity School of Christianity, and the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Unity of the Lakes is affiliated with Unity Institute School of Christianity and is a member of the Association of Unity Churches International, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the state of Georgia with headquarters at Lee's Summit, Missouri, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

Section 2. Accomplishment of Purpose. In the accomplishment of this purpose, Unity of the Lakes 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 opinion of the minister will further the principles of practical Christianity among people everywhere.

Section 3. Association of Unity Churches International. Unity of the Lakes shall be a vital part of the worldwide Unity movement and a member of the Association of Unity Churches International. Any member of this ministry may call upon the resources and support of the Association through its senior minister or co-ministers, Board of Trustees, staff, or through direct communication with the Association.

In the spirit of cooperation, the operation and conduct of this ministry shall 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 Michigan.

- A. Participation.** This ministry may have its voice heard and its wishes expressed in the membership meetings of the Association, and its members may participate in workshops, seminars, and classes designed to encourage and foster their spiritual development and that of the ministry.
- B. Resources.** This ministry can benefit from its membership in the Association and its corresponding region through direct support, materials, and coaching regarding organization, finances, music, adult and youth education, church growth programs, ethics compliance, and other topics related to church function.
- C. Leadership.** This ministry shall have as its leader an ordained or licensed Unity minister(s)

approved for ministry employment by the Association or a person serving under special dispensation approved by the Association. For the purpose of these bylaws, the term “minister” shall include a person serving under special dispensation of the Association.

- D. Teaching.** The principles of practical Christianity shall be taught through this ministry.
- E. Mailings.** Copies of all printed matter mailed by this ministry to its membership shall be sent to the offices of the Association.
- F. Reports.** The ministry shall make annual reports to the Association as required.

ARTICLE III - Office and Official Records

Section 1. Principal Office. The principal executive office of the corporation will be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Said office shall be in the County of Ogemaw, State of Michigan, or at such other place within the State of Michigan 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. [NOTE: Governments commonly require designation of the principal office of a corporation, at which legal service can be made.]

Section 2. Official Records. Records of membership, finances, donation, corporate minutes, and other records required by law or as designated by the Board of Trustees shall be maintained at the principal office of the corporation. Confidential documents are available only for use by the minister(s), board members, or designated professional staff. Other documents are available to active members upon request.

[NOTE: Until such time that Unity of the Lakes is housed in a permanent location, the principle office of the corporation shall be the home office of the spiritual leader, at 423 S. Kenwood, Royal Oak, MI. Additional copies of meeting minutes will be held by the secretary and an additional copy of the financial reports will be held by the treasurer. A copy of the bylaws shall be kept on the premises of the meeting place at 191 Page Street, West Branch, MI and will be available for viewing by any active member of the ministry upon request.]

ARTICLE IV - Members

Section 1. Qualifications. A member of Unity of the lakes will endeavor to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity and further the work of this ministry through active interest, love, and support. Members are free to continue membership at another church as membership at Unity of the Lakes is not exclusive.

Section 2. Election of Members. Anyone desiring membership in Unity of the Lakes must file a membership form with the ministry office. Membership will be reviewed for approval at the next Advisory Team meeting. Upon acceptance of the membership application, members will receive a membership card at the next Sunday service. All staff ministers and Licensed Unity Teachers are considered members of this ministry.

Section 3. Classes of Members. There shall be two classes of members of this ministry, active and inactive. Active members have full membership rights and may participate and vote in any membership meeting.

A. Active Membership.

- 1. New Members.** After acceptance as a new member, each member shall have voting rights at all membership meetings up through and including the next regularly scheduled annual membership meeting after joining the church.
- 2. Existing Members.** To retain active membership rights, each member must indicate a desire to remain a member by completing and returning to the church a yearly membership renewal form or such other document as approved by the Board of Trustees. If no current membership renewal form or approved document is on file prior to the annual membership meeting, that person becomes inactive and cannot serve on the Board of Trustees or vote at any membership meeting.

B. Reinstatement of Inactive Membership.

- 1. Reinstatement** To become an active member again, such a member must reapply for active membership in the same manner required of new members.

C. Removal of Membership for Cause. A member may be removed for cause by the Board of Trustees. Prior to any vote concerning removal, the member in question must be notified by certified mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Board of Trustees meeting of the changes that may lead to removal of membership and thereafter be given an opportunity for a hearing before the board. A 2/3rds vote shall be required for removal of membership provided that the senior minister or co-ministers are in agreement with this action.

Section 4. Powers of Active Members. Each active member of Unity of the Lakes shall have the following powers:

- A.** To vote at any membership meeting at which the member is present;
- B.** Serve on ministry teams if selected; speak in debate at any membership meeting according to the rules provided for debate;
- C.** Offer suggestions to the minister(s) or Board of Trustees as may seem advisable for the good of this ministry;
- D.** Contact the Association regional representative or the Association directly for guidance, support, or information on available resources; and
- E.** Participate in all activities and programs of the ministry.

ARTICLE V - Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meetings. There shall be one annual membership meeting each year.

- A. Date and Location of Annual Meeting.** The annual membership meeting shall be held at the principal executive office of the ministry on a Sunday in April at a time established by agreement

between the senior minister or co-ministers and Board of Trustees.

- B. Notice.** Written notice stating the date, time, and place of the annual meeting will be mailed to all active members at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. *[NOTE: "Mailed" because the notice needs a postmark for legality.]*
- C. Quorum.** Those active members present will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any annual membership meeting.
- D. Presiding Officer.** The President of the Board of Trustees shall serve as the presiding officer of the annual membership meeting.
- E. Participation.** The right to speak in debate, make motions, and vote during annual meetings shall be restricted to those active members present. The right of other persons to speak during membership meetings may be extended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Association representatives have a right to speak when they have been invited by the senior minister of co-ministers, the Board of Trustees, or any member.
- F. Voting.** Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, a majority vote, of the active members present and voting will be necessary for approval or disapproval of the action being voted upon. Proxy, absentee, or electronic (Internet, email, fax, etc.) voting are not allowed.
- G. Power and Authority.** Annual membership meetings shall have the power and authority to do all of the following:
 - 1. Elect members to the Board of Trustees;
 - 2. Approve proposed amendments to these bylaws;
 - 3. Approve by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote any expenditure regarding the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry that exceeds twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) or 25% of the previous year's income, which ever is greater;
 - 4. Elect a member and an alternate, to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team;
 - 5. Override any action of the Board of Trustees provided that notice of the action to be voted upon is submitted to all active members in writing ten (10) days prior to the meeting and is approved by a three-fourths (3/4ths) vote;
 - 6. Remove by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote any or all trustee(s) from the Board of Trustees; and
 - 7. Vote on any matters officially brought to the attention of the membership.
- H. Prayer.** In any annual membership meeting, the Board President, minister(s), and Association of Unity Churches International 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 will provide a period of prayer and silence.

Section 2. Special Membership Meeting.

- A. Requesting Special Meetings.** Any time the affairs of this ministry warrant, a special membership meeting may be requested by the senior minister or co-ministers; a majority vote of the entire number of trustees currently serving on the Board of Trustees; or a petition signed by one-tenth (1/10th) of the active membership and submitted to the Board of Trustees.

B. Calling Special Meetings. Upon receiving proper request for a special membership meeting, the President of the Board of Trustees shall call the meeting on behalf of the requesting party within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request. The location, notice, quorum, presiding officer, participation, voting, and prayer provisions for special membership meetings shall be the same as those for annual meetings.

C. Special Meeting Business. Business conducted at a special meeting shall be limited to the pre-stated purpose(s) given in the meeting notice.

ARTICLE VI – Board of Trustees (aka Advisory Team)

Section 1. Membership. The Board of Trustees, also known as the Advisory Team, shall be composed of the senior minister or co-ministers and no fewer than six (6) **other** trustees elected from among the active membership of Unity of the Lakes at the annual membership meeting. *[NOTE: Churches with fifty (50) members or less may choose to have less than six (6) trustees, but no fewer than three (3) trustees.]*

Section 2. Term of Office. Elected trustees will hold office for two years, or until their successors have been elected and assume office. Trustees elected at any annual membership meeting shall take office at the conclusion of the annual membership meeting at which they were elected.

Section 3. Prohibition of Service. The following persons are prohibited from serving on the Board of Trustees:

- any active licensed Unity teacher (except a licensed Unity teacher serving as the spiritual leader);
- relatives, significant others or household members of any board member or licensed Unity teacher;
- individuals receiving compensation from the ministry with the exception of the senior minister or co-ministers;
- relatives, significant others, or household members of any individual receiving compensation from the ministry.

Section 4. Regular Board Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees will be held at the principal executive offices of this ministry on the first Sunday, of each month, unless otherwise stated by the board.

Section 5. Special Board Meetings. Special meetings of the board will be called by the President of the Board if requested by the senior minister or co-ministers; if requested by two or more trustees; or if the President of the Board deems it necessary. Any request for a special board meeting shall be made to the Board Secretary. All current board members, including the senior minister or co-ministers, shall be given notice of any special board meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. The attendance of any member of the board at the meeting shall serve as a waiver of this notice requirement. A quorum must attend the special meeting in order to conduct business.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of the total number of trustees currently serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 7. Minister(s) Attendance. The senior minister or co-ministers has/have the right to attend all board meetings, with the exception of those meetings or portions thereof that pertain to determinations of the minister's salary and/or review of the ministers work record.

Section 8. 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 an issue. Upon such request the President shall provide a period of prayer and silence.

Section 9. Duties and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. As representatives of the membership, the Board of Trustees shall:

- A. Uphold the spiritual purpose of this ministry as stated in Article II, Section 2 of these bylaws;
- B. Uphold the highest best interests of the membership in conducting the business of this ministry;
- C. Be conversant with these bylaws and establish policy for the operation of this ministry;
- D. Be faithful in attendance at services as well as board and membership meetings of this ministry;
- E. Determine the business needs of this ministry and authorize payment of funds for those purposes;
[Note: All gifts to this ministry are to be deposited to the general fund and administered by the board unless designated as "Restricted" or as being donated for a specific purpose by the donor, i.e., building fund, youth program, etc.]
- F. Administer the real and personal property of this ministry;
- G. Make decisions regarding the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry provided that all decisions concerning the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) or 25% of the previous year's income, which ever is greater shall be presented to the membership at a properly constituted membership meeting for final approval;
- H. Employ a licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) or a person serving under special dispensation approved by the Association through cooperation with the employment management procedures of the Association of Unity Churches International;
- I. After a ministry and its senior minister or co-ministers have sought to reconcile differences and cooperated with the procedures and guidance of the Association, the Board of Trustees may terminate the employment of a senior minister or co-ministers by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote;
- J. As recommended by the senior minister or co-ministers, determine staff positions and authorize funds for their financial support;
- K. Establish the dates for the beginning and ending of the fiscal year;
- L. Cause to be prepared each year a complete financial statement with disclosures that will set forth the financial conditions and operations of the ministry;
 - 1. Additionally, financial gifts to this ministry in excess of \$10,000.00 will be disclosed to the full church membership in a timely manner, independent of the annual statement.

- M. Secure general liability insurance for the church, and all people acting on behalf of the church;
- N. Approve applicants for membership;
- O. Provide for the mailing of yearly membership renewal cards to all active and inactive members;
- P. Fill the unexpired term of any trustee;
- Q. Elect officers of the board and their successors to fill any unexpired term when necessary;
- R. Create such ministry teams as needed to support the functions and responsibilities of the board;
- S. Advise the President of the Board on appointments to ministry teams;
- T. Seek Association assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry;
- U. Attend and actively participate in ongoing board education programs;
- V. Consider other issues brought to their attention by the minister or members of the board;
- W. Keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of active and inactive members;
- X. Keep or cause to be kept accurate records of gifts to the ministry in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
- Y. Issue or cause to be issued necessary 1099 and W-2 forms in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
- Z. Acknowledge in writing contributions in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
- AA. Take such other actions as may be deemed necessary for the best interests of this ministry.

Section 10. Nomination and Election.

- A. Qualifications.** To be eligible to be elected to the Board of Trustees, a person must be an active member of Unity of the Lakes. In addition candidates for election shall endeavor to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity; work to further the purposes of this ministry through active interest, love, and support; be a sincere and continuing student of Unity always remaining conversant with its teachings; and shall have demonstrated leadership capabilities.
- B. Nomination Procedure.** The presiding officer of the annual membership meeting shall:
 1. Read Article VI, Section 10A and 10C of these bylaws just prior to beginning the process of nomination and election;
 2. Call for additional nominations from the floor

[NOTE; As the ministry grows, a nominating team may be formed to accommodate the needs of a larger congregation]

C. Election Procedure. The election shall be by ballot if there are any partial terms to be filled or there are more than two nominees. The result of the vote shall be announced to the annual meeting. The two nominees receiving the largest number of votes will be elected to full two (2) year terms. The candidates receiving the next highest number of votes will be elected to the longest unexpired term.

Section 11. Removal from Office by the Board of Trustees. Any trustee may resign at any time. In addition any trustee may be removed by the Board of Trustees due to unexcused absences from three successive regular board meetings or because of a failure to fulfill the duties of the office.

Section 12. Vacancies. Should a vacancy occur among the elected members of the Board of Trustees, the board may select a qualified replacement to fill the position. A majority vote shall be necessary for election. The term of service for any replacement shall expire on the date of the next annual meeting.

Section 13. Board of Trustees Officers. The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer. All officers will be selected in a manner determined by the board at the first board meeting after the annual meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose of selecting officers. The term of office shall be two years or until successors are elected.

Section 14. Duties of Officers.

A. President. The president shall preside at all Board of Trustees meetings; preside at all membership meetings; appoint members of ministry teams with the advice of the board; serve as an ex officio member of all ministry teams except the Nominating Ministry Team; sign such papers and documents upon proper authorization as may be necessary; and be responsible for the planning of board orientation, retreats, and workshops.

B. Vice President. The vice president shall assist the president in the performance of that officer's duties; perform all the duties of the president of the board in the absence of the president; and succeed to the office of president in case the office of the president becomes vacant. In such a case, a new vice president will be elected from among the remaining trustees to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

C. Secretary. The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the minutes of all board and membership meetings; hold in custody and be responsible for all reports, contracts, other legal papers, and the meeting minute books which will be kept at the principal executive office of the ministry at all times or in such other depository as prescribed by the board; attend to all official business as directed by the board; keep or cause to be kept accurate active and inactive membership lists; and send or cause to be sent yearly membership renewal cards to all active or inactive members.

D. Treasurer. The treasurer shall be custodian of all funds belonging to this ministry; pay out or cause to be paid out funds authorized by the board; keep, or cause to be kept, a record of all financial transactions; submit a monthly financial report at each regular board meeting; submit a financial report covering the last complete fiscal year to the annual membership meeting; and account for, or cause to be accounted for by the appointment of qualified persons, all funds received being responsible to assure that they are deposited in accounts authorized by the board. When counting ministry funds there should be at least two (2) persons present.

ARTICLE VII – Administration, Management and Leadership

Section 1. Administration. The administration of Unity of the Lakes shall be vested in the senior minister or co-ministers as the administrative director(s), and the Board of Trustees elected from the membership.

Section 2. Minister(s).

A. Senior Minister or Co-ministers. The senior minister or co-ministers will be duly licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) or a person serving under special dispensation approved by the Association.

1. **Duties.** As the spiritual leader(s) of this ministry, the senior minister or co-ministers will be responsible for the scheduling, conduct, and content of services, classes, and all other activities that further the purpose of this ministry. As administrative director(s), the minister(s) shall:
 - a. Be responsible for the complete functioning of this ministry, including the hiring and termination of all employees including associate or assistant ministers;
 - b. Serve as voting member(s) of the Board of Trustees on all matters except their own employment, or that of their successor(s);
 - c. Create ministry teams related to these duties;
 - d. Appoint the members of such ministry teams;
 - e. Serve as ex officio members of all ministry teams;
 - f. Be responsible for seeking the Association's assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry.
2. **Selection.** The Board of Trustees shall select the senior minister or co-ministers following the employment procedures for ministerial personnel of the Association.
3. **Compensation.** The compensation of the senior minister or co-ministers employed by this ministry shall be set by the Board of Trustees.

B. Associate and/or Assistant Ministers. Associate and/or assistant minister(s) will be duly licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) who function(s) with less responsibility than the senior minister or co-ministers.

1. **Duties.** The associate and/or assistant minister(s) will perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities assigned them by the senior or co-ministers.
2. **Compensation.** To the extent funded by the board, the compensation of the associate and/or assistant minister(s) shall be fixed by the senior minister or co-minister(s).

Section 3. Definitions.

A. A Unity Ministry. A member ministry in the Association of Unity Churches International recognized by the Association will have a duly ordained or licensed Unity minister, or a person serving under special dispensation as its Spiritual Leader. (For additional criteria, contact the

Association of Unity Churches International office.)

- B. Senior Minister.** A Unity minister duly ordained, licensed [or serving under special dispensation] by the Association of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), who assumes the spiritual and administrative leadership role in a member ministry. This leader works in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the member ministry, and is to oversee the teaching, preaching (lesson), worship services, healing, counseling, prayer, administrative, and fellowship activities of the ministry.
- C. Co-Minister.** In shared partnership ministries, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed by the Association of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), who equally assumes the spiritual and administrative leadership role with another co-minister in a member ministry. These leaders work in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the member ministry, and oversee the teaching, preaching (lesson), worship services, healing, counseling, prayer, administrative, and fellowship activities of the ministry.
- D. Associate Minister.** In ministries with more than one minister, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed by the Association of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), serving in a member ministry. The Associate Minister may be equal in ability, but functions with less responsibility than the Senior Minister. The Associate Minister reports to the Senior Minister, who determines the scope of the associate's responsibilities.
- E. Assistant Minister.** In ministries with more than one minister, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed by the Association of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), serving in a member ministry. The skills and/or experience of the Assistant Minister may be less than those of the Senior Minister. The assistant may be placed in a specialized service area of the ministry, i.e., pastoral visitation, or administrative support. The skills of the assistant are, therefore allowed to develop for a more comprehensive range of ministry service of the assistant, and the ministry.

ARTICLE VIII - Ministry Teams

With the exception of the Nominating Ministry Team, ministry teams may be appointed by the President of the Board or the senior minister or co-ministers for their respective areas of responsibility.

[NOTE: When a Nominating Ministry Team is formed, the senior minister or co-ministers will work together with the President of the Board to select team members.]

Article IX - Dissolution

In the event that this corporation is dissolved, all property and funds remaining after the payment of the debts of the corporation will be delivered to the Association of Unity Churches International, a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Georgia, for religious and educational purposes. Such funds or property will be for the use and benefit of the Association as may be determined by the Board of Trustees of the Association, in alignment with current policies and procedures. The Association will make available according to its current policies and procedures, funds for the reestablishment of a Unity ministry in West Branch. Should the Association no longer exist, any assets remaining of this corporation after dissolution will be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the County in

which the principal executive offices of the corporation are then located and shall be used exclusively for such purposes or distributed to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for purposes set out in Section 5.01(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

ARTICLE X – Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the meetings of this corporation in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the corporation may adopt.

ARTICLE XI – Amendment of Bylaws

Any amendment(s) to or general revision of these bylaws may be adopted at any annual or special membership meeting provided that written notice setting forth the exact wording of such proposed amendment(s) or general revision has been mailed to all active members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which they will be considered. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4ths) of the active members present and voting will be necessary to adopt any amendment(s) to or general revision of these bylaws.