

Membership Information

WILLIAMSBURG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA



The Path to Membership - a Journey to Deeper Connection

Congregational membership represents a deeper connection with your faith community. To help you discern if membership in Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists—WUU—is right for you, we encourage you to carefully read the information in this packet, speak to our minister and attend at least the first two Starting Point classes. When you decide to become a Member, WUU will be ready to welcome you.

You Too Can Join

All individuals are eligible for Membership, and we expect all members to share responsibility for the mission, vision, and financial health of the congregation. While everyone is welcome to worship with us, including friends, visitors and non-members—it is Members who accept a greater degree of responsibility for the vitality of the congregation.

Carefully consider your intentions and what membership means before you sign the book. Members give their time, talents and financial resources toward fulfillment of the Congregation Mission—because they want to and because this is their chosen faith home. This spirit of generosity and commitment develops over time and is the result of active participation in our programs.

If you decide to join us, we will welcome you and hope that your relationship with WUU will be long in duration and spiritually, intellectually and emotionally rewarding. Members who are at least 18 and have made a pledge during the current year have the right to vote at congregational meetings.

The Membership Mechanics Completed Upon Joining

- 1. Signing the Membership Book:** *The Congregation Membership Book is open for new members to sign on the first Sunday of the month. Please speak to the head of the Membership Team or e-mail membershipchair at wuu.org when you decide to join.*
- 2. New Member Bio and Photo:** *Each individual who joins provides her/his bio and is photographed for the monthly newsletter.*
- 3. Pledge form:** *Individuals and family units should complete **one** pledge per unit.*
- 4. Member Information and Time and Talents forms:** *Latter form is a statement of interest or talent you have.*

Getting Involved: The Key to Membership with Meaning

Attending the worship service on Sunday is a very special experience. To sustain their commitment to WUU, most members actively engage in a congregation program that most closely matches your needs. Find a group, program or activity in which to involve yourself as soon as possible. This is how you will start “feeling a part” of the congregation, and in return, the people of WUU will become a community for you. To see many opportunities for involvement with WUU, look at the “Opportunities to Participate” list (available on the Web site and in membership information folders). To discuss alternatives and get help making contact with people associated with the interests you choose, please contact the Membership Team or e-mail membership at wuu.org.

Stewardship: Showing That We Care

Members who give generously—to WUU and elsewhere—tell of the joy and empowerment they feel when they live out of a sense of abundance. Our faith calls us to be good stewards, to welcome the stranger at the door, to share resources with others in need, and to care for our planet.

Your Annual Pledge Is Your Financial Promise to WUU

Members annually pledge to support this congregation with their financial contributions. Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations are self-sustaining institutions. At WUU, about 85 percent of our budget is met by the generous pledging of members and others who participate in our faith community. The pledge you make upon joining is for the remainder of the current year ending June 30. Then, each spring, during our annual canvass, you will be asked along with all other congregants to make a *new* financial pledge for the *next* fiscal year.

WUU feeds your spirit and soul as well as exercising your mind. What is this worth to you? This is a question of spirit and generosity, and we ask you to carefully consider this important aspect of membership. No gift is too small, yet we do encourage both participation and the opportunity to give a sustaining gift back to the congregation. The Stewardship Chair will have further information.

Governance Overview

The WUU congregation is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (uua.org). Each congregation within the UUA is self-governing, with the congregation being the source of authority for the governance and operation of the church. Unitarian Universalists refer to this as congregational polity. As an example of congregational polity, each Unitarian Universalist congregation “calls” its own minister, using a process that culminates in a congregational vote.

WUU is also a member of the UUA Southern Region, which comprises UU congregations from Virginia to Florida and Texas. We represent tens of thousands of members. We have annual and special meetings of the voting membership. The WUU By-laws are available online. WUU operates on a Policy Governance form of organization. The Board formulates the policies of the church. The minister is an ex-officio Board member who regularly attends meetings. All Board meetings are open, and anyone can speak on any church-related issue at the beginning of the meeting.

At WUU, the minister’s role is to teach, preach, and provide pastoral care. The Board’s role is to set policies and oversee congregation finances. In addition to WUU staff efforts, teams of WUU members handle responsibilities in different areas (e.g., a caring ministry, communications, and music), and team leaders meet regularly to exchange information and coordinate activities. In short, leadership of our community is shared. We encourage you to become involved!

Honoring the Journey

WUUs form a religious community that focuses on living meaningful lives of service, integrity, and joy. We welcome people of all religious backgrounds and those of no religious background. We welcome people of all races, classes, cultures, ages and affectional orientations. At WUU, those who gather in our sanctuary for worship do so with hearts and minds open to the mysteries of love and to the wisdom of truth. With historical roots in Christian and Jewish traditions, but drawing from the world’s religions, from nature, from science, and from modern thought, Unitarian Universalism is a liberal, “non-creedal” religion. In our faith tradition, we encourage each individual to develop a personal system of belief. We believe that in the end, religious authority lies not in a book, person, or institution, but in ourselves. At WUU, religion is an ongoing search for meaning, purpose, value and spiritual depth in one’s life. We believe that we are all moving toward the same goal of social transformation and spiritual transformation. Our differing gifts and strengths connect us together to make a vibrant and loving community which we hope you will join.

About Our Flaming Chalice

Like many UUs, WUUs find a central symbol in the chalice. The lighting of the chalice provides a way to focus inward as the service opens. It unites and inspires us to hope, to embrace all, and to care for each other and the world through our vision and connectedness. We are a community bound by our principles and tied to the larger community of UU congregations. Thanks for considering WUU in your life and your becoming a part of our lives.