

BYLAWS OF Turning Circle
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PAGAN SPIRITUALITY GROUP

Preamble

In accordance with the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) as expressed in Article II of the Bylaws of the UUA, and in accord with the covenant statement of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia (UUCC), we, as interested and concerned affiliates of the UUCC and who adhere to ancient and original beliefs which include Earth-Based Spirituality and practices, do hereby associate in order to promote a positive, fruitful and humanitarian exploration of our religious and spiritual values. We also wish to establish and sustain understanding of those values within the UUCC, the Joseph Priestley District, the UUA and among the broader religious and civil community.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be Turning Circle, a Unitarian Universalist Pagan Spirituality group.

Article II - Purpose

Turning Circle is formed for the purposes of:

- 1) building a community among Pagan and Earth-Based Spirituality identified persons within the UU Congregation of Columbia, Maryland and the surrounding area;
- 2) fostering healing relationships with our mother the Earth, and all her children;
- 3) providing good public relations and outreach about Paganism both within and without UUCC,
- 4) encouraging the exploration of earth-based faiths with the use of interactive music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration at the UUCC; and
- 5) creating a safe and sacred worshiping environment for those persons searching for their individual spirituality, a connection to the old Gods, the practices of our ancestors, and/or their place in the interdependent web of life.

Article III - Membership

Membership in Turning Circle shall be open to any individual, without regard to race, color, gender, Pagan tradition, sexual orientation, national origin or social condition, religious background or other religious affiliation, who affirms the principles and goals of Turning Circle as stated in these Bylaws, the Principles and Purposes of the UUA, the UUCC Mission Covenant Statement and indicates in writing the desire to become a member. All members of Turning Circle shall enjoy all rights guaranteed by the laws of the United States and the State of Maryland.

Members shall donate \$10 annually for dues to cover costs associated with maintaining the group (i.e. ritual supplies, revel supplies, building rental, etc.). Dues are paid annually, "on January 1st" or pro-rated at \$5 for those joining after "June 1st". Members must be at least 16 years of age. Anyone under the age of 18 needs parental approval in writing for joining Turning Circle. "If a family joins Turning Circle, i.e. 2 adults and at least 1 child 16 years and older, their membership will be \$25 for the family." Those who choose not to become members, but who wish to be on the email list, and/or affirm Turning Circle through their attendance and interest shall be designated as Friends of Turning Circle. Affiliation with Turning Circle does not automatically provide affiliation with the UUCC..

All members are also required to fill out a membership form providing basic contact and health information. This list will be kept as confidential as possible, available to the officers of the Turning Circle, and will not be shared with any groups outside of Turning Circle or UUCC, nor will it be used for any marketing purposes. In the event of a medical emergency, officers may share information for health concerns. Contact information may also be shared with the members and friends of Turning Circle for contact purposes only if the individual wishes.

The right to vote on Turning Circle resolutions (e.g. election of officers) shall be reserved for those who have been active members of Turning Circle for at least 60 days, and have shown an active interest in volunteering and the running of Turning Circle events.

Turning Circle accepts members and friends in good faith assuming they will abide by the stated principles and goals of our group and parent organizations. Should an individual's actions and/or on-going behavior impact negatively on the Turning Circle community, they may be asked to leave the group. An individual can be asked to leave Turning Circle if a 2/3 majority of active members vote they should leave. In case of a tie, or unclear direction, the officers have the deciding vote with the best interests of the group in mind. Any member who has not attended a scheduled Turning Circle event in 12 months shall be considered an inactive member and revert to friend status.

Article IV - Offices

At least one (1) of the elected officers, specifically including Coordinator(s), shall be members of the UUCC. The persons holding office (officers) shall be elected by voting members of Turning Circle and shall include those willing to serve as:

1. Coordinator(s)
2. Scribe (secretary)
3. Pursewarden (treasurer)

"Elections will be held annually. Nominations will be put forth in October; voting will be held in November; and the installation of new officers will take place on January 1." Changes to this timetable will be at the discretion of the serving officers. Only nominations endorsed by the officers will be put forward for vote by those Turning Circle members holding voting privileges.

Candidates for elected office shall be voting members of Turning Circle. When practical, officers should not hold multiple offices. In the event the decision is made by the officers to elect more than one Coordinator to serve during a given term, the number of Co-Coordinators will be kept to a limit of 3.

Any office that becomes vacant before the term has expired may be filled by a temporary appointment approved by the officers. Other positions deemed as necessary to the operation of Turning Circle (e.g. Liturgist, Outreach Coordinator) will be filled based upon appointment of the officers.

The Coordinator(s) shall be the principal facilitator(s) and spokesperson(s) for Turning Circle, and shall serve as leaders for the functioning of the group, and as liaison(s) with the UUCC.

The Scribe shall record business meetings and activities of Turning Circle (posting when appropriate to our email list and website), maintain membership lists, and operate and moderate the email group list.

The Pursewarden shall submit the Turning Circle Annual Report to UUCC and shall be responsible for all dues receipts, disbursements, donations and shall keep accurate records of all financial transactions of Turning Circle to be reported "quarterly, in writing or via email, at business meetings or upon request of the membership." Any fundraising activities must be coordinated with the Pursewarden and approved by the serving officers. Only the Pursewarden or a Coordinator may authorize disbursements.

A more detailed listing of each of the officers' duties can be found in the document Officer's Roles located within the Turning Circle group within the files section.

Volunteer positions for the group may include:

The Outreach coordinator shall be responsible for public relations of the community and, with input from the Coordinator(s), originates all public press releases and media involvement of Turning Circle. The OC shall work closely with the Scribe in evaluating Turning Circle articles, announcements, workshops, etc., as well as requests for information about Turning Circle, for release to the general public.

The Liturgist who shall be responsible for giving support and advice with planning rituals for monthly meetings.

Article V Meetings/Voting

Turning Circle will meet once a month at the Owen Brown Interfaith Center for our regular gatherings. Social gatherings and outings to other events of Pagan interest in the area may be held as they arise.

Turning Circle does hold semi-private services known as Moon Services. Members, friends of Turning Circle, and invited guests will be asked to attend the moon rituals. These "meetings may be held at member's homes, which are not open to the general public. These meetings may also be held at the Owen Brown Interfaith Center, and then must necessarily be open to members of UUCC. Moon Services may be made open or closed to the public, at the discretion of the group. Moon Services will be held once a month."

"Business meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the officers to reflect the current needs of the group." Any proposed amendments to the bylaws or general business will become effective upon the vote of 2/3 of active members of Turning Circle. Only ½ the membership needs to be present at a business meeting or via proxy and the voting will be performed by consensus. Then upon the posting of the minutes and requesting the review of the membership, if there are no objections all interim voting will stand. Otherwise, an email vote will be cast. In case of a tie, or unclear direction, the officers have the deciding vote with the best interests of the group in mind.

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed for review at business meetings of Turning Circle or by a petition submitted to the officers at least thirty days prior to business meetings. The serving officers may call for a members' vote on outstanding issues at any regularly scheduled meeting or by mail, as they deem appropriate. Changes to the UUA Principles and Purposes, and the UUCC Constitution/Mission Covenant Statements will be assumed to take precedence over standing Turning Circle Bylaws. Changes will be incorporated into the group Bylaws at the next Turning Circle meeting.

Email Voting

If Turning Circle Members are not able to meet face to face, and want to get a group vote via the email list, we will:

- state clearly if the vote is to be done by accessing a poll or replying to the sender
- define a reasonable time limit for the vote to be taken (5 to 7 days)
- explain clearly what exactly is being voted on
- try for a 2/3 majority of the group to decide the vote, UNLESS fewer people than that have voted once the vote closes.

In that case, majority rules.

Article VI Child Care

Our monthly gatherings are planned with adults in mind, However there are times when special activities are scheduled for the children. Since we are affiliated with UUCC, they will provide babysitting service at no additional charge for our adult gatherings. This is providing that a 1 week notice be given.

Although there is no charge for this service, participants are expected to honor their commitments. If a no show occurs, a deposit of \$10 will be required upon making a second request for sitting service and will be refunded upon utilization of said service. If a second no show occurs, the deposit is forfeited and no more reservations will be accepted on their behalf.

Article VII – Group Assets and Fiscal Year

Donations will be collected at each Turning Circle meeting. Turning Circle finances will be kept by the Pursewarden, and financial records will be made "available quarterly in writing or via email, at business meetings, or upon request of the membership." Monies will be used solely for items and events used or attended by Turning Circle.

The fiscal year of Turning Circle shall be "January 1 to December 31." At the beginning of each fiscal year, a donation shall be given to the UUCC in the name of Turning Circle for providing space and support to the group.

Upon conclusion or dissolution of Turning Circle, all assets remaining after payment of all debts and liabilities shall revert to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, Maryland and shall be turned over to the Treasurer of the Church at that time for inclusion into the General Fund. Physical assets will be dispensed by the serving officers as most fairly decided.

Article VIII - Exclusions

Turning Circle shall not participate in political activity, nor will it endorse candidates for public office. Turning Circle will not seek to influence legislation, except as might pertain to religious freedom. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Bylaws, Turning Circle shall not carry on any other activities not permitted of an organization exempt from Federal Income Tax under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provisions of any future Internal Revenue Law) or of a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (C) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provisions of any future Internal Revenue Law).