

Membership

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Membership

Purpose

To articulate the meaning of membership at Foothills Unitarian Church, define the shared promises of partnership, and outline how membership may begin and end in alignment with our values and bylaws.

I. The Meaning of Membership

Membership at Foothills is a **sacred partnership** grounded in covenant, not a set of privileges or beliefs. We are a **covenantal, not creedal** community. This means we are bound together by the **promises we make**—to one another, to our mission, and to the world.

Membership means:

- Moving from guest to **co-creator** of our shared spiritual life
- Joining in a **mutual commitment** to the mission of courageous love
- Deepening in your **Unitarian Universalist faith**
- Making and keeping **promises in community**

Our shared covenant reminds us:

“Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.”

— James Vila Blake, 1894

II. The Five Promises of Partnership

These five practices shape what it means to belong at Foothills—not just in word, but in daily life.

1. **Practice the Covenant of Right Relations**
2. **Show Up Where You See the Need**

3. **Mentor and Be Mentored**
 4. **Practice a Culture of Invitation**
 5. **Practice a UU Tithe**
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III. Privileges of Membership

Members are eligible to:

- **Vote** in congregational decisions—budgets, vision, ordination, bylaws, and board elections
 - **Serve** in elected leadership roles and as a group leader
 - **Receive** a print subscription to *UUWorld* magazine
 - **Access** pastoral rites of passage (e.g., weddings, memorials, dedications) at no charge for themselves and close family
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IV. Becoming a Member

1. Complete BaseCamp and Inquirers Sessions
 - These include sessions on partnership, belonging, and governance.
 2. Discern Your Readiness
 3. Submit Your Membership Form
 4. Sign the Membership Book
 5. Participate in a New Member Celebration
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V. Leaving Membership

Membership at Foothills may be ended in the following ways:

1. **Death** - automatic removal
 2. **Written Resignation** - member requests removal in writing
 3. **Prolonged Inactivity** - defined as: Members are considered inactive after more than one year of not attending services or activities in person or virtually, and/or not pledging or contributing to the Church (without requesting a financial hardship waiver).
 4. **Board Decision** - 2/3 vote if actions threaten the well-being of the congregation
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VI. Lifetime Membership

Members who can no longer participate due to aging or health may be designated as **Lifetime Members**, ensuring continued care and connection.

Criteria

To be eligible for Lifetime Membership, a person must:

- Have a long history of meaningful engagement at Foothills
- Be unable to participate in worship, service, or giving due to age, illness, or other life circumstances
- No longer meet the standard criteria for active membership (attendance and/or giving)

Designation

- The **Senior Minister** has the authority to designate someone as a Lifetime Member.
- Staff and ministers may nominate individuals they believe meet the criteria.
- Designation is based on a pastoral assessment of connection and life circumstances, not numerical thresholds.

Care and Connection

- Lifetime Members remain on the membership rolls.
- They are offered ongoing connection and care through:
 - A **Caring Listener**, if desired, for regular companionship
 - At minimum, an **annual check-in or note** from the congregation

This designation affirms that we are a church for the whole of life—not just the seasons of high participation.

3. Related Content

Bylaws and Policies

- [Bylaw Article IV - Membership Definition](#)
- [Bylaw Article IV.4 - Termination from Membership](#)
- [Board Policy 3.2.1.1 - Membership Rolls and Eligibility](#)
- [Board Policy 3.2.3.1 - Harassment and Destructive Behavior](#)

Organizational Guidances & SOPs

4. Revision History

- Updated by Rev. Sean on April 23rd 2025

Group Leadership

Purpose

This guidance defines the role, expectations, and eligibility criteria for individuals serving as group leaders within Foothills Unitarian Church. It reflects our values of covenantal community, shared ministry, and mission-centered leadership.

Group leaders are not just facilitators—they are ministers in partnership, co-creators of community, and stewards of our shared mission. This guidance ensures that all group leaders are spiritually grounded, ethically accountable, and relationally aligned with the church as a whole.

Group Leader Requirements

All group leaders must:

- Be **active members** of Foothills Unitarian Church
- **Attend an annual Group Leader Training**
- **Commit to the Group Leader Code of Ethics**
- **Abide by the Foothills Covenant of Right Relations**
- **Track attendance** at all group events and use event promotion and communication tools provided by Foothills
- **Stay true to the mission** of Foothills and never misuse the power of leadership
- **Reach out for support** when challenges arise
- **Model joy and humility**, remembering that leadership at Foothills is about learning to be human together
- **Hold a personal annual spiritual deepening intention**, shared with staff or lay leadership

Why Membership is Required

Foothills groups **are not separate from the church—they are the church** in action. Groups are how we embody our mission and bring our vision to life. Therefore, the people who lead our groups must also be those who have said yes to this mission, yes to this vision, and yes to this community through the act of becoming a member.

Group leaders are called to be:

- The **connective tissue** between their group and the broader life of Foothills
- **Mentors and inviters**, guiding others into deeper participation
- **Cultural stewards**, upholding and transmitting our values
- **Partners in ministry**, co-creating spaces of transformation and care

Requiring membership ensures that group leaders are equipped to:

- Articulate Unitarian Universalist values and Foothills' mission
 - Navigate our systems, relationships, and opportunities
 - Understand the full context of the congregation—not just one slice
 - Practice accountability and partnership with clarity and integrity
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Scope

This guidance applies to **all ongoing group leaders** at Foothills who operate with **autonomy** under a **Shared Ministry Covenant (SMC)**. These leaders steward groups that are:

- Recurring or open-ended in duration
- Mission-driven and community-integrated
- Not directly overseen by staff or a designated lay program leader on a weekly basis
- Responsible for shaping the group's spiritual direction, relational culture, and group dynamics

These **group leaders** are expected to meet the full list of requirements outlined in this guidance, including being active members of Foothills and participating in annual leader training.

Not included in this guidance:

This guidance **does not apply** to individuals serving as **program facilitators**, defined as those who:

- Implement a **staff-developed or staff-directed curriculum**
- Lead a **time-limited group or class**, typically within a seasonal offering
- Operate under **ongoing supervision or coaching** by a staff member or designated lay leader
- Do not shape the group's ongoing identity or mission alignment

Examples of Program Facilitators:

- Anchors of a single season of Journey Groups or *Anchor Groups*

While program facilitators are also expected to align with Foothills values and abide by our Covenant of Right Relations, they are **not required to be members** or complete annual group

leader training.

Related Content

Bylaws and Board Policies

[Board Policy: Global Delegation of Authority](#)

Establishes the Executive Team's authority to create operational guidance, including eligibility and leadership requirements.