

**First UU San Antonio
Membership Policy
Approved by Board 2.15.2023**

Membership requirements of First UU San Antonio are defined in Article IV of the bylaws. Per Article IV 1.D, additional requirements or exceptions for membership shall be determined by the Board and set down in the policies of the church. This policy is intended to clarify and standardize processes and reporting requirements concerning membership and related categories of affiliation.

Membership requirements: In addition to the membership requirements listed in Article IV of the Bylaws, anyone who wishes to become a member of First UU San Antonio should either meet with the Senior or Assistant Minister and/or attend the new member class UU101. This requirement may be waived by the Senior or Assistant Minister if the person is transferring their membership from another UUA congregation, is a former member of First UU San Antonio, or has been an engaged non-member of First UU San Antonio more than one year.

Eligibility to Vote: As stated in the bylaws in Article IV, Section 3, the President of the Board of Trustees shall certify the list of members eligible to vote at least annually and at least eight (8) days prior to any congregational meeting or vote. Any member who has paid all or part of their pledge for the current fiscal year within the preceding twelve (12) months shall be eligible to vote. Emeritus members, who are not required to provide annual financial support, will be counted among those eligible to vote.

Per the bylaws, members between the ages of 14 and 17 are exempt from pledge requirements until they reach 18 years of age but are conferred all rights and privileges of adult members. These younger members will therefore be certified as being eligible to vote if they have fulfilled all other requirements for membership.

A list of members eligible to vote will be provided to the President of the Board of Trustees for certification. If there are questions or uncertainty about the eligibility of any individuals, the President will consult with the Senior or Assistant Minister and/or Chair(s) of Stewardship and/or Membership Committee as appropriate.

The certified list of members eligible to vote shall be publicly posted at least eight (8) days prior to an official meeting of the congregation. Anyone affiliated with First UU San Antonio who believes that their omission from the eligibility list is incorrect (e.g., due to a clerical error), may request a check of records and correction if indicated. The results of any vote reported to the congregation will include the number of certified voters.

All Officers and At-Large Trustees of the Church, members of the Committees of the Board of Trustees, members of the Committees of the Church, and Chairs of the Program Committees, shall be voting members of the church.

Certification for Annual Program Fund Contributions to the UAA: Congregational membership is included in the formula used to calculate Annual Program Fund (APF) contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Membership and other information must be reported annually to the UUA through a certification process that closes on the first day of February. The number of members reported to the UUA will be certified by the President of the Board of Trustees using the same processes used for certifying eligibility to vote, with the exception that members between the ages of 14 and 17 will not be included in the

APF certification number. The number of certified members will be reported annually to the Board and to the Congregation no later than February 15th. Corrections to the membership database made during the APF certification process must also be completed no later than February 15th to prepare for the annual Stewardship campaign.

Non-Members Affiliated with First UU San Antonio: It is in the interest of our congregation and the UUA to also acknowledge and track the number of non-members who identify with the values of Unitarian Universalism but have not yet made a commitment to membership. Using an adaptation of the guidelines suggested by the UUA, First UU San Antonio will define Friends as individuals who are involved in one or more aspects of the life of the congregation (e.g., attend worship services and/or participate in adult RE and/or enroll their children in youth RE programs), but for reasons of their own, have not yet or will not become members. These individuals may or may not pledge or make non-pledge financial contributions to First UU San Antonio. First UU San Antonio staff and leadership should continuously strive to encourage and inspire friends to become members, especially after one year of engagement with the congregation.

The following individuals will not be counted as friends:

- people served by a community justice program that otherwise have no connection to the congregation;
- attenders at events for which another organization has rented First UU San Antonio facilities;
- families whose children go to pre-school or school programs that use First UU San Antonio facilities that have no other connection to the congregation

Withdrawal or Removal of Membership: Per the bylaws, members may voluntarily withdraw their membership at any time and should inform the Church office of such intent. If members are moving to another city but indicate their willingness to continue pledging and stay engaged with the congregation virtually, they may continue their membership at First UU San Antonio.

As a partial or fully paid financial commitment is a requirement for membership, the bylaws state that at least once a year the Church shall inquire of members who have paid zero toward their responsible pledge in the current fiscal year beginning June 1 as to whether they wish to continue their affiliation. Because the bylaws also state that member pledges must be renewed annually, individuals who fail to respond to the Stewardship Campaign will also be asked whether they wish to continue their affiliation at the end of the public portion of the Stewardship Campaign (i.e., at the end of March). Exceptions may be made for members granted temporary waivers as described below under “Exceptions to Stewardship.”

Members who do not respond to these queries and are not making regular payments of support will have their affiliation changed from “member” to “friend” if they are still active in the life of the congregation. Individuals who do not respond to the query and who have no record of engagement with the congregation after six months will have their affiliation changed from member to former member.

Reporting for Annual Stewardship Campaign: Corrections to the membership rolls due to membership withdrawal or removal will be made at the end of the Stewardship Campaign. The following must be reported to the Board and to the Congregation at the May Congregational Meeting:

- number of pledging members and total amount pledged
- number of pledging friends and total amount pledged

Exceptions to Stewardship: A temporary waiver during the Stewardship Campaign may be granted by the Senior Minister to members who have previously pledged, but who do not respond during a subsequent membership campaign due to a life-threatening event for themselves or a family member, or other personal upheaval (e.g., divorce). Prior to sending out queries to members who fail to respond to the Stewardship Campaign, the Committee Chair(s) will ask the Senior Minister to review the list. The Senior Minister may recommend temporary waivers from the pledging requirement based upon knowledge of pastoral affairs, such that persons will retain their member status and voting eligibility since experience shows that many of these members continue or restart their pledging within a few months (if they do not withdraw their membership). Waivers may not exceed more than one year. The number of members who are granted waivers (but not their names) will be reported to the board and tracked by notations in the member database that only the Church Administrator, Stewardship Chair(s), and Ministers can see.

Members who have previously pledged and who continue to fulfill their financial commitment by auto-pay, and members who have a long-standing record of continuous annual financial contributions will retain their member status even if they do not formally respond each year to the Stewardship Campaign. Anticipated financial contributions of these members based upon prior year history will be reported to assist in drafting the proposed budget. The Office and/or Stewardship Chair(s) will contact these individuals if auto-payments are stopped or if financial contributions are not made within the expected time frame to clarify intentions and modify status in member database, if needed.