

Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC)		Charter: Welcoming Congregation Committee Principal Author: David Massey	Document No. Submission Date: 2/19/2021
Approved By:	President: Matthew Blondell	Signature/Date:	
Approved By:	Chief of Staff: Chris Buice	Signature/Date:	

A. Purpose of the Charter

This Charter establishes the **Welcoming Congregation Committee** as a permanent entity within TVUUC and describes its mission, composition, and responsibilities.

B. Authority

The Welcoming Congregation Committee operates under the authority of the Program Council.

C. Scope / Mission

1. Support TVUUC’s intention to foster an inclusive religious community that is supportive of and welcoming to all persons whose sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions are, for the purposes of this document, included in the umbrella term LGBTQIA+ (*see footnote*). This commitment shall serve to develop a safe space for all whose lives are touched by TVUUC.
2. Educate committee members, the Congregation, and the larger community about the accomplishments of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as the oppression and discrimination to which that community has been subjected, not only in society at large, but also within the Unitarian Universalist Association and at TVUUC itself.
3. Provide opportunities for TVUUC and its members to advocate for the civil and human rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals.
4. Increase awareness of the ways in which racial, sexual, and other forms of oppression reinforce one another.

D. Membership

1. Members or friends of TVUUC can join the Welcoming Congregation Committee by contacting the chair or by attending a meeting.
2. To ensure a diversity of participants, a minimum of six people constitute the required quorum for decisions in committee meetings.

E. Responsibilities of the Welcoming Congregation Committee

1. Work with TVUUC staff and leadership to identify positive ways to make TVUUC a more inclusive, welcoming, and supportive community for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

2. Encourage TVUUC to conduct, as needed, outreach to persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in the larger community.
3. Work with staff and other church committees to conduct a wide range of educational programming (*including but not limited to re-certification tasks enumerated by the Unitarian Universalist Association that are necessary for TVUUC to maintain its status as a Welcoming Congregation*).
4. Serve as the focal point and clearinghouse for TVUUC's observance of and participation in events and celebrations such as the annual Pride March, the Transgender Day of Remembrance, and the Interfaith Pride Service. The Committee may take sole responsibility for some activities and share responsibility for other activities with others in the church.
5. Work with staff and the Board to establish and maintain the funding sources, such as the Advancing Equality Fund, that are needed for outreach, educational programs, and advocacy.

F. Responsibilities of Welcoming Congregation Committee Members

1. Attend meetings.
2. Participate in open and candid discussion.
3. Volunteer for assignments as necessary to advance the work of the committee.
4. Recruit new members and train new leaders.
5. Serve as ambassadors for the committee's mission within TVUUC and in the larger community.

G. Direction and Control

1. On an annual basis, the Committee will select a convenor/chair, a notetaker/secretary, and other leaders as needed.
2. To fulfill its mission, the Committee recognizes that a significant percentage of its membership must be persons who identify as LGBTQIA+ along with straight and cis-gender persons. If possible, at least half of the leadership team will identify as LGBTQIA+.
3. The Committee works with the church staff, Program Council, Leadership Team, Board of Directors, and other committees so that its initiatives are well timed and coordinated within the life of the Congregation.

H. Decision-Making Process

The Committee utilizes consensus as the primary decision-making method, but votes will be taken as necessary. It utilizes its own common-sense rules of order.

I. Meeting Frequency and Duration

The Committee meets at least four times per year. Meetings will be advertised so that all TVUUC members and friends feel welcome to attend. Meetings generally last 60-90 minutes.

Note: In 2021, the year this Charter is written, the acronym LGBTQIA+ is widely understood to stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and ally, PLUS other identities. In this document, we intend that LGBTQIA+ also includes gender queer, gender fluid, non-binary, and other variations of gender identity and gender expression. Even this expanded definition will become outdated as our understanding of sexuality and gender evolves, and so we recognize the limitations of using the LGBTQIA+ acronym. As noted at UUA.org, “Language about sexual orientation and gender identity shifts and changes: new words are born; other words change meanings.”