

First Unitarian Universalist Church Columbus, Ohio		
Chapter: V. Property and Facilities		Source: Task Force on Church Committees and Groups (2005-2006)
Title: Use of Church Facilities		
Approved by: Board of Trustees		Date Approved: 1/03/07
Effective Date: 1/03/07		Date of Last Review: 1/03/07

The intent of this policy is to define the various types of activities that may occur at the church and the conditions under which those activities may occur. It is anticipated that common sense, cooperation and good will, rather than this policy, usually will govern how the church makes its decisions about facility scheduling, use and fees. However, where necessary, this policy shall serve as the final arbiter.

I. Policy.

We shall make the facilities of the church available to the members and friends of our congregation and the people in our community to:

- engage in common worship,
- further the mission and goals of the church,
- support the aspirations of our community, and
- generate income to keep the facilities safe, clean, and appealing.

II. Definitions.

Church Facilities: any part of the building and grounds owned or controlled by the church.

Program Staff: paid clergy, church administrator, Director of Religious Education and other staff directly responsible for administering Church Programming.

Worship Services: opportunities created cooperatively by the Worship Committee and Ministers for members, friends, and visitors of all ages to share in religious experiences and commemorate the life passages of members and Friends. Worship Services are open to the entire congregation and shall consider the need for child-care, interpreter, and transportation services.

Church Programming: one-time events and ongoing activities planned and implemented by a Standing Committee, a Board-Linkage Committee, or a Ministerial/DRE/MRE-Linkage Committee to achieve its defined goals and objectives. Church Programming shall also include the activities scheduled by and related to the work of the holders of Board Appointed Positions. Program Staff and Church Council members shall complete a “Room Reservation Form” to request a slot on the Church Calendar. All Church Programming shall consider the need for child-care, interpreter, and transportation services.

Member Activities: First UU welcomes member use of the Church Facilities. A Member or Friend actively involved in the event needing space may reserve the church facility, list the event on the Church Calendar and avoid the full space use fee. A donation amount determined by the church administrator is recommended in recognition of the cost of facilities maintenance and upkeep. Prior to the activity, the member or Friend shall complete the Facility Use Application and Facility Use Agreement.

Open-Door Activities: The Church Facilities shall be available for one-time or ongoing events involving the community beyond First UU Members and Friends. Prior to the use of space, a representative of the group conducting the activity shall complete the Facility Use Application and Facility Use Agreement and pay a space use fee.

Church Group: Standing committees shall confer the designation of “Church Group” to individuals organized around a common purpose within the domain of the committee’s area of responsibility and programming. So designated, a Church Group operates under the auspices of the conferring committee, are the responsibility of that committee, and in effect, are Church Programming.

- i. An activity or group becomes “church programming” only after the staff issues a consensual positive recommendation and the designated Standing Committee accepts responsibility for the group (by its majority vote).
- ii. Groups not incorporated into the programming of a Standing Committee are not “Church Group.” However they shall be eligible to conduct Member Activities and Open-Door Activities.

III. Procedure.

A. **Management of Church Facilities Use.** The Board delegates day-to-day responsibility for managing church facilities use to staff, but remains the final decision-maker.

- i. The church facilities shall be made available to a wide range of activities of diverse origin and expression. Facilities use shall be prohibited only for activities that conflict with the church mission, vision or values or puts the church tax exemption status at risk, as determined by the minister(s) or a member of the Executive Committee.
- ii. The safe and welcoming character of the Worship Center shall be preserved at all times. Any activity in the Worship Center that could disrupt the pastoral care and guidance of the congregation shall be denied use or relocated to another room. The ministers shall make this determination, or in their absence, the Executive Committee.
- iii. The determination of an activity as either “member” or “open-door” rests with the Church Administrator.
- iv. The Church Administrator shall make available, to activity sponsors, information about the privileges and responsibilities associated with each level of affiliation and provide procedures for moving from one level to the other.
- v. All individuals and groups using church facilities shall be responsible for:
 - 1) behaving in an orderly and safe manner,
 - 2) taking necessary measures to protect church property,
 - 3) refraining from committing any unlawful act,
 - 4) following church policy, including “Building Use Requirements for Youth Groups and Overnights” if applicable, and
 - 5) knowing and using emergency procedures if necessary.

- vi. Six documents shall be kept updated as described herein and readily accessible to the congregation and visitors:
 - 1) Worship Schedule
 - 2) Church Calendar
 - 3) Facility Use Agreement
 - 4) Space Use Capacity/Fee Schedule
 - 5) Facility Use Application
 - 6) Room Reservation Form

B. **Worship Schedule.** The Worship Schedule shall establish the locations, dates, and times for Worship Services. The Worship Schedule shall be reviewed and set cooperatively by the Worship Committee and Ministers annually, in advance of the review of the Church Calendar. The Worship Committee and Ministers may add or remove Worship Services from the Worship Schedule and Church Calendar at any time.

C. **Church Calendar.** The Church Calendar shall determine the use of Church Facilities and include for each scheduled activity the date, time, duration, location, and special need requirements. The Calendar shall run from September to September and maintain a three-year time horizon.

- i. **During the first month of each fiscal year**, the Board Chair, Chair of Church Council, Church Administrator, and Program Staff shall:
 - 1) review the Church Calendar,
 - 2) incorporate the Worship Schedule, and
 - 3) schedule major Church Programming such as religious education and fundraisers.

- ii. **During the second month**, the Church Administrator shall work with Church Council to negotiate and finalize the scheduling of Church Programming with consideration given to:
 - 1) each activity's need to meet on church property,
 - 2) number of people involved,
 - 3) potential for noise production, and
 - 4) special needs of participants.

Program Staff and Church Council members only shall schedule Church Programming onto the Calendar. During this negotiation and at all other times of the year, Church Programming shall yield location/date/times to Worship Services. Worship Services only shall enjoy a permanent assignment on the Calendar.

- iii. **During and after the third month of each fiscal year**, the Church Administrator shall:

- 1) publish the Church Calendar to the congregation,
- 2) approve Facility Use Applications and schedule Open-Door Activities, and
- 3) approve Room Requests and schedule Member Activities.

Member Activities and Open-Door Activities shall be considered on a first-come first-served basis.

D. **Changes to the Church Calendar.**

- i. The Church Administrator (or designee) can change at any time, the assigned location of church programming, open-door activities, or member activities to maximize the appropriate use of the facilities. Any change of location will be communicated to the convener of the event as soon as possible.
- ii. Unforeseen opportunities for programming arise during the calendar year and the congregation will benefit from collegial negotiations among committee chairs to accommodate these occasions. On occasion, Member Activities may be required to alter their scheduled location/date/time to accommodate a Worship Service or Church Programming.
- iii. On a case-by-case basis, the Church Administrator shall be empowered to settle scheduling conflicts. If necessary, the Church Administrator shall refer the matter to the Executive Committee for a decision on facility use.

E. **Facility Use Agreement and Space Use Capacity/Fee Schedule.** In the first month of each fiscal year the Board shall review and approve:

- i. **Facility Use Agreement.** This agreement is prepared by the Church Administrator and legal counsel and shall include:

- 1) a detailed description of the requirements of section III, A, vi, above,
- 2) the kinds of activities allowable and prohibited under our 501c-3 tax exemption,
- 3) restrictions on the use of the church name and ability to represent the church publicly,
- 4) church procedure and contact information in case of an emergency, and
- 5) a provision allowing the cancellation of any Member or Open-Door Activity upon 48 hours notice, with full refund of any fees paid.

Applicants for space use for Member and Open-Door Activities shall sign this agreement-indicating acceptance of the provisions contained therein.

- ii. **Space Use Capacity/Fee Schedule.** This schedule is prepared by the Church Administrator and Finance Committee and shall include:

- 1) a list of the rooms available for general use,
- 2) the number of people each can accommodate,
- 3) any restrictions on type of usage and time limits on availability,
- 4) the proposed space use fee and donation amounts,
- 5) a process to waive the fees for space use, and
- 6) stipulations that:
 - (a) church facilities be reserved for worship and religious education on Sundays until a time determined jointly by the Director of Religious Education and the Church Administrator, after which time the facilities become available for other uses,
 - (b) spaces occupied by the School for Young Children and nursery are available only at times and for uses consistent with their primary function, and
 - (c) the Worship Center and Fellowship Hall, together, shall be held in reserve every other Saturday and Sunday afternoon throughout the year to be available for memorial and other special Worship Services.

- 7) On a case-by-case basis, the Church Administrator shall be empowered to set the space use fee within the limits approved by the Board. If necessary, the Church Administrator shall refer the matter to the Executive Committee for a decision regarding facility use fees.

The Facility Use Agreement and Space Use Capacity/Fee Schedule shall remain in effect until updated versions are approved, as necessary.

- F. **Facilities Use Application and Room Reservation Forms.** The Church Administrator will review and modify as needed the Facility Use Application and the Room Reservation Forms.
- G. **Space Reservation System.** The Church Administrator and his or her designated office staff will maintain a Space Reservation System that:
 - i. provides information about space availability, fees and donations to potential users,
 - ii. processes Facility Use Applications and Room Reservation Forms, and determines fees in a timely manner,
 - iii. ensures the set-up and tear-down of furniture and equipment,
 - iv. manages the securing of and payment for child care, interpreter, and transportation services if necessary,
 - v. tracks and secures fee payments, all fees are to be paid in advance of space use, and
 - vi. regularly updates and publishes the church calendar

IV. **Communicating the Policy.**

- A. **Policy Summaries.** The Church Administrator shall make readily available a summary description of the policy on “Use of Church Facilities” and a decision tree diagramming how the policy is implemented. These two documents are for informational purposes only and may be modified by the Church Administrator, as needed, to maintain their effectiveness as summaries of the policy.
- B. **Informing the Congregation.** The Church Administrator shall regularly inform Committee Chairs, group leaders and the congregation of the procedures, schedules, and fees set forth in this policy.
 - i. In September of each year, summaries of the policy, and links to the full policy will be shared with all Committee Chairs and group leaders.
 - ii. Summaries of the policy and links to the full policy shall be made available to individuals who register to form a new group at First UU.

Summary of Approved “Use of Church Facilities” Policy

This policy classifies the various activities that occur at First UU. For each kind of activity it defines the space use options, fee requirements, scheduling process, and the associated privileges and responsibilities. This policy also describes how the church calendar is administered. The following is a summary only and not meant as a substitute for the entire policy.

Church Groups:

1. “Church Groups” are only those groups that have been integrated into Standing Committees and, as a result, they and their activities are considered “Church Programming”.
2. All other groups are eligible to conduct “Member” and “Open-door” activities.
3. A group can become a “Church Group” only after:
 - a. The staff issue a consensual positive recommendation and
 - b. A Standing Committee accepts responsibility for the group (by majority vote).

Activities:

1. Kinds of Activities:
 - a. Worship Services – no fees
 - b. Church Programming – no fees
 - c. Member Activities – administrator sets reduced fee
 - d. Open-door Activities – rental fees
2. A “Member Activity” or “Open-door Activity” can become “Church Programming” only after:
 - a. The staff issue a consensual positive recommendation and
 - b. A Standing Committee accepts responsibility for the activity (by majority vote).

Church Calendar:

1. Runs September thru August, (church year is July thru June) and has a 3-year horizon.
2. Calendar is set by: Board Chair, Council Chairs, Administrator, Program Staff, and Chairs of Standing Committees.
3. Scheduling order:
 - a. The customary worship services are put on the calendar in July, unforeseen services can be added at any time throughout the year and have top space-use priority.
 - b. Church Programming is put onto the calendar in August.
 - c. September onward, Member and Open-door Activities are scheduled first-come, first-served.
 - d. Under exceptional circumstances ALL activities, other than Worship Services, are subject to cancellation or changes in date and location.

The Board delegates day-to-day management and scheduling of the Calendar to staff, but remains the final decision-maker.

In Particular:

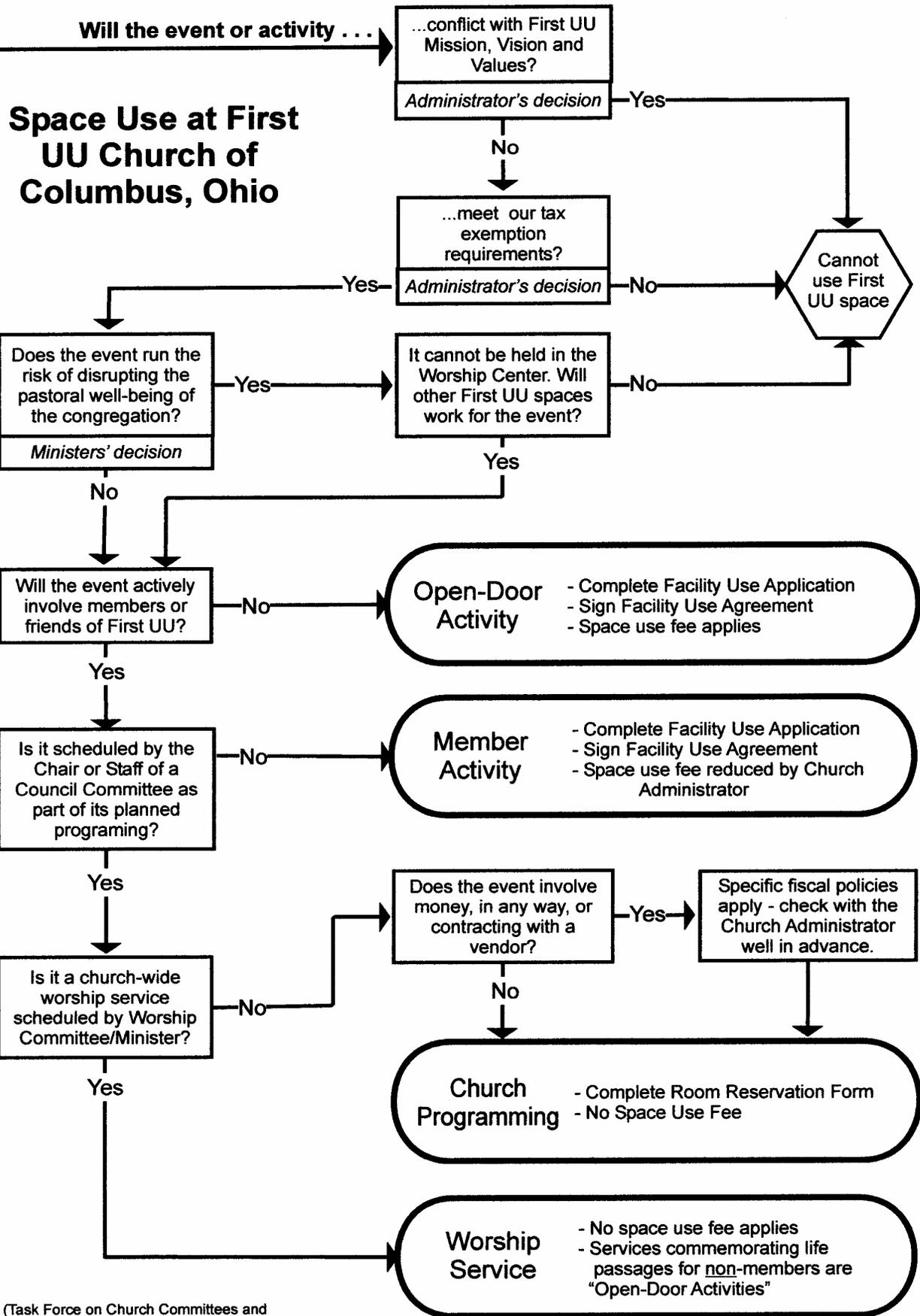
1. All facility users are to honor the Covenant of Respectful Relations and the Facilities Use Agreement.
2. Events that might disrupt the pastoral well-being of the congregation cannot occur in the Worship Center.
3. When an activity involves money in any way, or contracting with a vendor, specific fiscal policies apply and special arrangements must be made well in advance with the Church Administrator.
4. When scheduling, all activities should consider child care, transportation and interpreter services and remember that on Sundays, Religious Education owns the south, north and middle wings until 1pm.
5. If you cancel or change your scheduled time, call the office to delete your existing reservation.

Role of the Church Administrator:

1. Assigns (reassigns as needed) location of all church activities except Worship Services
2. Settles conflicts and questions of policy
3. Maintains Space Reservation System
4. Administers fee structure, room assignments, furniture set-up/tear-down, equipment needs
5. Administers database on church activities for publication.

All Committees and Groups:

All committees and groups shall annually register with the Church Administrator or designee in September so as to provide contact information, membership requirements, meeting times and locations and other information of value to the congregation. This information will be maintained in the church office, posted on the web site and advertised in print.



(Task Force on Church Committees and Group. Columbus Ohio, 12/28/06)