

## **Membership at the Winchester Unitarian Society**

The Winchester Unitarian Society is a welcoming congregation.

Membership is open to all persons without regard to race, color, gender identity, physical or mental challenge, sexual orientation, age, class, or national origin.

### *Who can become a member?*

- Anyone age 14 or older who indicates a desire to become a member. We ask all potential members to meet with the settled minister first so they may learn more about what brings you to WUS, explain the rights and responsibilities of membership and hear how the congregation can best minister to you.

### *How do I become a member?*

- Sign the book! We recommend you attend some or all of the classes offered (Beginning, Belonging, Becoming series) but it's not mandatory. Also, you should meet or speak with the minister first.

### *What responsibilities do members have?*

- You're expected to follow the bylaws of WUS. These can be obtained on the "members'" portion of the website or from the office
- You're expected to "Engage in and support the Society's activities and mission" as you are able. This can take many forms - social justice work, committee work, participating in worship/ other activities, etc.
- Any member 16 years or older is required to make an "annual financial contribution of record." Whether it is \$1 or \$10,000, you must contribute some monetary donation to the church every year with your name on it. If you feel you cannot do this, you may speak to the minister or Chair of the Standing Committee to discuss your concerns.

### *What rights do I gain as a member?*

- Members 16 years and older not on a Leave of Absence may vote in all meetings and elections.
- Members 16 years and older may serve on Standing Committee (the governing board of the church) if so elected

### *What's a Leave of Absence?*

- Any member may take a leave of absence - basically, a "break" from the church. During this time, they are not obligated to participate in activities or make a financial contribution until they reinstate their active membership in writing.
- When a member reaches the age of 19, they are automatically placed on a Leave of Absence (after proper notification in writing) unless or until they request in writing to maintain or reinstate active membership.

### *What about termination of membership? Can I be kicked out?*

- A member can terminate their membership at any time in writing
- If a member is not fulfilling their responsibilities of membership (above), the Standing Committee/ Membership committee may reach out and ask if they would like to terminate their membership or go on a LOA? If no response is received after 2 letters sent 30 days apart to the last known address, membership may be terminated by a majority vote of the Standing Committee.