

## **INTRODUCTION TO AFFINITY GROUPS**

### **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort (UUFB)**

1. What is an affinity group? The definition most commonly understood in the United States is “an association of people with a common interest or aim.”
2. What is the purpose of affinity groups?
  - (a) The formation of affinity groups is one way to strengthen our congregation as we grow in numbers and diversity. Affinity groups offer a means of personal connection through our special interests, and a welcoming path for newcomers to find new friends.
  - (b) Affinity groups also offer the sharing of interests or expertise to others in the congregation through educational and social occasions, or through special events such as worship services.
  - (c) It also is desirable that each Affinity Group support and enhance congregational life; that is, support the congregation as well as the special interest around which the group formed.
3. How are affinity groups started? It takes only three UUFB members with a similar interest to form an Affinity Group.
4. Start-up pages for Affinity Groups are on our website, [www.uubeaufort.org](http://www.uubeaufort.org), on the Members' page under Policies. They also are available in hard copy from the UUFB Board president or vice president. Board liaisons are available, if wanted, to assist in completing the start-up page.
5. What are the guidelines for Affinity Groups? At present, we have only two types of Affinity Groups, General and Spiritual. Each of the two types has its own guidelines. The “Guidelines” are attached to the hard copy “Start-Up” page for each group, as well as on our website, [www.uubeaufort.org](http://www.uubeaufort.org), on the Members' page, under Policies.
6. General Affinity Groups may form around any common interest such as heritage, genealogy, parenting, travel, games, sports, books, food, crafts, and more. Members and friends may also associate because of common age interests.
7. Spiritual Affinity Groups are those who want to form because of a special interest in one of the spiritual sources of Unitarian Universalism. These sources are listed on the back of our Sunday morning Order of Service and also on the “About Us” page on our website.
8. What is the process for Affinity Groups to meet on our property? Guidelines for the scheduling and responsibilities of meetings are available on the Members' page on our website, under Policies, Facilities Use and Rental, and in hard copy as above.

**GENERAL AFFINITY GROUP START-UP PAGE**  
**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort (UUFB)**

Please fill out this page as completely as possible. Then give it to any UUFB Board member. If you want help from a Board liaison to get started, or need any clarification, contact the current president or vice president as listed in the current UUFB Directory.

1. What is the purpose of your Affinity Group?

2. Please name three or more UUFB members who will be the founding members of your Affinity Group.


3. If your founding members have chosen a group name, please write it here.  
(Or fill in later if you want to wait to decide on a name.)

4. Who among your founding members is the contact person for your group?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the group want regular meeting space?

6. If yes, how often is anticipated?

7. Please give preferred dates if known. (For example: 3rd Saturday mornings.)

8. Is this a short-term group? \_\_\_\_ Or a seasonal group? \_\_\_\_ If yes to either, please explain.

9. Please review the attached Guidelines for Affinity Groups. Do you have any questions about the guidelines? Please give some thought as to how your Affinity Group will contribute to congregational life. If you already have ideas to share, please write them here or on the back of this page.

10. Write anything else you'd like to say about your group. Use the back or another page.

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Board Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL AFFINITY GROUPS**

### **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort (UUFB)**

It is desirable for our growing congregation to welcome the formation of a wide variety of affinity groups. The UUFB Board wants to support individual personal connections that members and friends make around shared special interests. In the best interest and good health of the whole congregation, Affinity Groups will be composed of at least fifty percent UUFB members.

Therefore, when three or more members of UUFB express the desire to form a General Affinity Group within the congregation, the following guidelines, at a minimum, are to be addressed:

1. General Affinity Groups will operate in accord with our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
2. It is expected that General Affinity Group membership will include UUFB members, their families, and acquaintances. If over fifty percent of the attendees of a General Affinity Group activity are not signed members of UUFB, the group will come under the guidelines of the Facilities Use and Rental Policy.
3. In recognition of the desire to maintain right relationships within all gatherings of the congregation and its Affinity Groups, members of General Affinity Groups will follow best practices in meetings and activities.
4. General Affinity Groups are requested to envision ways they will contribute to congregational life, such as through educational offerings about their special interests.
5. The UUFB Board will provide support for the formation of each General Affinity Group, and other ongoing support and a liaison to the Affinity Group as needed.

Date Revised: 04/10/2014, Dianne Farrelly, Policy Chair; Board Approved 05/08/2014

**SPIRITUAL AFFINITY GROUP START-UP PAGE**  
**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort (UUFB)**

Please contact the minister if you want to start a Spiritual Affinity Group. Then fill out this page as completely as possible and give it to the minister. If you want help from a UUFB Board liaison to get started, or need any clarification, contact the current president or vice president as listed in the current UUFB Directory.

1. What is the purpose of your Spiritual Affinity Group?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Please name three or more UUFB members who will be the founders of your Spiritual Affinity Group.


3. If your founding members have chosen a group name, please write it here.  
(Or fill in later if you want to wait to decide on a name.)

4. Who among your founding members is the contact person for your group?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the group want regular meeting space? \_\_\_\_ If yes, how often is anticipated?
6. Please give preferred dates if known. (For example: 3rd Saturday mornings.)
7. Is this a short-term group? \_\_\_\_ Or a seasonal group? \_\_\_\_ If yes to either, please explain.
8. Please review the attached Guidelines for Spiritual Affinity Groups. Do you have any questions about the guidelines? Please give some thought as to how your Affinity Group will contribute to congregational life. If you already have ideas to share, please write them here or on the back of this page.
9. Who, together with a UUFB Board liaison, will create a covenant between the UUFB Board and the Spiritual Affinity Group?
10. Write anything else you'd like to say about your group. Use the back or another page.

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Minister's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL AFFINITY GROUPS**

### **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort (UUFb)**

It is desirable for a covenantal relationship to exist between the UUFb Board and Spiritual Affinity Groups within the congregation. The Board recognizes that the spiritual life of individual Unitarian Universalists, when shared out of a common affinity, may help the congregation grow its sense of “joyful sanctuary,” thus welcoming “all souls” within the context of Unitarian Universalism. In the best interests and good health of the whole congregation, Spiritual Affinity Groups will be composed of at least fifty percent UUFb members.

Therefore, when three or more members of UUFb express the desire to covenant with the Board as a Spiritual Affinity Group within the congregation, the following guidelines, at a minimum, are to be addressed:

1. Spiritual Affinity Groups will use language that comes from our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources, and will operate in accord with best practices in living out our UU Principles.
2. The minister will participate in the planning of any ceremony that a Spiritual Affinity Group wants to offer.
3. An educational component will be included in any ceremony that a Spiritual Affinity Group wants to offer.
4. It is expected that Spiritual Affinity Group membership will include UUFb members, their families, and acquaintances. If over fifty per cent of the attendees of a Spiritual Affinity Group activity are not signed members of UUFb, the group will come under the guidelines of the Facilities Use and Rental Policy.
5. In recognition of the desire to maintain right relationships within all gatherings of the congregation and its Affinity Groups, a covenant of right relations will be created by and among the members of each Spiritual Affinity Group.
6. Spiritual Affinity Groups are requested to envision ways they will contribute to congregational life, and include the statements in the covenant with the UUFb Board.
7. The UUFb Board and the minister will provide support for the creation of the group's covenant of right relations, and other ongoing support and a liaison to the Spiritual Affinity Group.

Date Revised: 04/10/2014, Dianne Farrelly, Policy Chair; Board Approved 05/08/2014