

**UNITY CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY, DBA
UNITY OF THE BLUE RIDGE
Mills River, NC**

ARTICLE I – Identification

The legal name of this Center shall be **UNITY CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY, DBA**, (doing business as) **Unity of The Blue Ridge**, herein after referred to as, UTBR, 2041 Old Fanning Bridge Rd, Mills River, NC 28759

ARTICLE II – Purpose

Section 1. Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of UTBR, a North Carolina corporation, is to teach the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus the Christ and other Master Teachers, as interpreted by Unity.

Section 2. Accomplishment of Purpose:

In the accomplishment of this purpose, UTBR shall endeavor to conduct services of worship and classes of instruction and to demonstrate the universal principles of Truth by using them in the operation of this Ministry and to adopt other means that in the discretion of the Minister will further the principles of practical Spirituality among people everywhere.

Section 3. Unity Worldwide Ministries:

UTBR shall be a vital part of the worldwide Unity movement and affiliated with Unity Worldwide Ministries, herein after referred to as UWM.

Any member of this Ministry may call upon the resources and support of the UWM through its Senior Minister or co-Ministers, Board of Trustees, staff, or through direct communication with UWM.

In the spirit of cooperation, the operation and conduct of this Ministry shall endeavor to work in support with UWM.

- A. **Participation:** UTBR may have its voice heard and its wishes expressed in the membership meetings of UWM, and its members may participate in workshops, seminars, and classes designed to encourage and foster their spiritual development and that of UTBR.
- B. **Resources:** This Ministry can benefit from its membership in UWM and its corresponding region through direct support materials, and coaching regarding

organization, finances, music, adult and youth education, church growth programs, ethics compliance, and other topics related to church function.

- C. **Leadership:** This Ministry shall have as its leader an ordained or licensed Unity Minister(s) approved for Ministry employment by UWM or other duly qualified minister. For the purpose of these bylaws, the term “minister” shall include a person serving under special dispensation of UWM.
- D. **Reports:** UTBR shall make annual reports to UWM

ARTICLE III –Principal Office, Official Records, and Government

Section 1. Principal Office:

The principal executive office of the corporation will be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Said office shall be in the County of Henderson, State of North Carolina or at such other place within the State of North Carolina, as the Board of Trustees hereafter shall designate. The Corporation may also have offices at such other place or places, as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate.

Section 2. Official Records:

Records of membership, finances, donation, corporate minutes, and other records required by law or as designated by the Board of Trustees shall be maintained at the principal office of the corporation. Confidential documents are available only for use by the minister(s), board members, or designated professional staff. Other documents are available to active members

Section 3. Administration: The administration of Unity of The Blue Ridge shall be vested in the senior minister or co-ministers as the administrative director(s), and the Board of Trustees elected from the membership.

Section 4. Minister(s):

A. Senior Minister or Co-ministers: The senior minister or co-ministers will be duly licensed or ordained Unity ministers, or other duly qualified minister(s).

- 1. **Duties:** As the spiritual leader(s) of this ministry, the senior minister or co-ministers will be responsible for the scheduling, conduct, and content of services, classes, and all other activities that further the purpose of this ministry.
- 2. **Sr. Minister as Administrative Director shall:**
 - a. Be responsible for the complete functioning of this ministry, including the hiring and termination of all employees including associate or assistant ministers;
 - b. Serve as voting member(s) of the Board of Trustees on all matters except their

- own employment or that of their successor(s);
- c. Oversee the function of ministry teams related to these duties;
- d. Serve as ex officio members of all ministry teams;
- e. Be responsible for seeking the Unity Worldwide Ministries' assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry.

3. Compensation:

Compensation of the Senior Minister shall be fixed by agreement between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees.

4. Vacancy:

Should a vacancy occur in the office of the Minister, the Board of Trustees shall communicate with the office of UWM and seek guidance in recruiting and hiring a new Minister.

B. Associate and/or Assistant Ministers: Associate and/or assistant minister(s) will be duly licensed or ordained Unity ministers, or other duly qualified minister(s).

1. **Duties.** The associate and/or assistant minister(s) will perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities assigned them by the senior or co-ministers.
2. **Compensation.** To the extent financially approved by the board, the compensation of the associate and/or assistant minister(s) shall be fixed by the senior minister or co-minister(s).

Section 5. Board of Trustees:

A. Nominating Committee and Nominating Procedure:

1. A Nominating Committee shall be formed at least three (3) months prior to the Annual Membership Meeting, and shall initiate a search for qualified candidates for the Board of Trustees. The congregation shall be invited (through regular Sunday announcements and other notices) to make their recommendations for Board candidacy known to the Nominating Committee prior to the annual cut-off date. The Nominating Committee will accept nominations from the congregation anytime between the day after the Annual Membership Meeting and 30 days prior to the next scheduled annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Minister and three (3) members selected in the following manner:
 - a. At the Annual Membership Meeting, the Membership shall elect one of its members and his/her alternate, to serve on the Nominating Committee for the next year's election.
 - b. The Board shall elect one of its Directors.

- c. Together with the Minister, the above two (2) Committee members shall select a third Committee member from the Membership.
2. **Nominating Procedure:** As the presiding officer of the Annual Membership Meeting, the President shall:
 - a. Read Article III, Section 5, A
 - b. Call upon the Chairman of the Nominating Committee to present the Committee's duly qualified nominations.
3. **Election:** Votes shall be cast by ballot or slate. The nominees receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected to the Board of Trustees.

B. Membership:

The Board of Trustees shall be composed of the Minister or co-Ministers and eight (8) Trustees elected from the active membership of UTB.

C. Term of Office:

Elected Trustees will hold office for three (3) years, or until their successors have been elected and assume office. Trustees elected at any annual meeting shall take office at the conclusion of the annual meeting at which they were elected. No elected Trustee will serve more than two consecutive terms without an interval of one year between terms. Any person who serves on the Board more than half of a term shall be credited with having served a full term.

D. Qualifications, Duties and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees: As representatives of the membership, the Board of Trustees shall:

1. Uphold the spiritual purpose of this ministry as stated in Article II, Section 2 of these bylaws;
2. Have fulfilled all requirements of the nominating process;
3. Demonstrate the ability to manage and protect confidential information; uphold the highest and best interests of the membership in conducting the business of this ministry;
4. Be conversant with these bylaws and establish policy for the operation of this ministry;
5. Be faithful in financial support and in attendance at services as well as board and

membership meetings of this ministry;

6. Determine the business needs of this ministry and authorize payment of funds for those purposes;
7. Administer the real and personal property of this ministry;
8. Make decisions regarding the purchase, sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry provided that all decisions concerning the purchase, sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property exceeding twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) shall be presented to the membership at a properly constituted membership meeting for final approval;
9. Employ a licensed or ordained Unity minister(s), or other duly qualified minister, through cooperation with the employment management procedures of the UWM;
10. After a ministry, and its senior minister, or co-ministers, have sought to reconcile differences and cooperated with the procedures and guidance of UWM, the Board of Trustees may terminate the employment of a senior minister or co-ministers by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of sitting board members.
11. As recommended by the senior minister or co-ministers, determine staff positions and authorize funds for their financial support;
12. Establish the dates for the beginning and ending of the fiscal year;
13. Cause to be prepared each year a complete financial statement with disclosures that will set forth the financial conditions and operations of the ministry; and have an audit of the financial records of this ministry at least every other year;
14. Secure a fidelity bond or theft and dishonesty insurance for persons handling church funds;
15. Approve applicants for membership;
16. Provide a yearly process for membership renewal cards to all active and inactive members;
17. Fill the unexpired term of any trustee;
18. Elect officers of the board and their successors to fill any unexpired term when necessary;

19. Create such ministry teams as needed to support the functions and responsibilities of the board;
20. Seek UWM assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry;
21. Attend and actively participate in ongoing board education programs; and commit to ongoing personal spiritual growth and development;
22. Consider other issues brought to their attention by the minister or members of the board;
23. Keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of active and inactive members;
24. Keep or cause to be kept accurate records of gifts to the ministry in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
25. Issue or cause to be issued necessary 1099 and W-2 forms in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
26. Acknowledge in writing contributions in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;
27. Secure liability insurance for all Board of Trustee members and minister(s); and
28. Take such other actions as may be deemed necessary for the best interests of this ministry.

E. Prohibition of Service:

The following persons are prohibited from serving on the Board of Trustees:

1. Any active licensed Unity teacher;
2. Relatives, significant others or household members of any Board member or licensed Unity teacher;
3. Individuals receiving compensation from the Ministry, with the exception of the Senior Minister or co-Ministers; and
4. Relatives, significant others, or household members of any individual receiving compensation from the Ministry. Exception can be made with approval of the Senior Minister and Board President.

F. Meetings and Quorum:

1. **Regular Board Meetings:** The regular business meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held at the headquarters of this Ministry on a regularly scheduled monthly

date, unless otherwise specified by the Board.

2. **Special Board Meetings:** Special meetings of the Board shall be called by the President under any of the following conditions:
 - a. By request of the Minister(s);
 - b. By request of two (2) or more Trustees;
 - c. As the President deems it necessary. The request shall be filed in writing with the Board Secretary. Reasonable effort must be made to notify all Trustees of any special meeting.
3. **Quorum:** Four (4) Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
4. **Minister Attendance:** The Minister has the right to attend all Board Meetings. He/She must be notified of all special meetings.
5. **Prayer:**

It is important that in addition to adhering to the normal procedures for legal functioning set forth in these bylaws, that the spiritual principles taught by Unity be utilized in the handling of decisions before the Board of Trustees. During the discussion of an item of business any trustee may request time for prayer about an issue. Upon such request the President shall provide a period of prayer and silence.

G. Vacancies:

1. Should one or two vacancies occur among the elected members of the Board of Trustees, the Board shall select qualified replacements to fill the position(s). A majority vote shall be necessary for election. The term of service for any replacement shall expire on the same date as the term of the Trustee he/she succeeds.
2. Should more than two vacancies occur simultaneously among the elected members of the Board of Trustees, or should the total number of Trustees fall below four (this includes the Minister), two special membership meetings will be called.
 - a. The first Special Membership Meeting will occur within sixty (60) days of the vacancy. The purpose of this meeting shall be:
 1. To elect interim board members;
 2. To constitute or reconstitute the Nominating Committee;
 3. To set the date for a second meeting.

b. The Nominating Committee shall:

1. Complete their search for Board nominees within thirty (30) days of the first Special Meeting.
2. The results of their work shall be mailed to all members within forty-five (45) days.

c. The second Special Meeting will be held no later than seventy-five (75) days after the first meeting.

1. **The Board members** will be elected at the second of these Special Meetings. If the regular annual meeting of this Ministry should be scheduled in this time period, then Board elections will be held at the regular annual meeting of this Ministry.

3. **Election Procedure:** The candidate receiving the largest number of votes will fill the longest unexpired term; the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes receives the next longest term. This procedure is followed until all vacancies are filled.

H. Removal from Office by the Board of Trustees:

Any trustee may resign at any time as necessary. In addition, any trustee may be removed by the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the sitting board members due to unexcused absences from three successive regular board meetings or because of a failure to fulfill the duties of the office.

I. Officers and Duties:

Officers of the Board of Trustees shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President shall be elected at the last regular Board meeting prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. He/She shall assume office at the first Board meeting following the Annual Membership Meeting, at which time all other officers of the Board shall be elected. All officers shall be elected by a majority vote of Trustees present and voting, and shall hold their respective offices for one year, or until their successors are duly elected or qualified.

1. The President shall:

- a. Preside at all Board of Trustees Meetings;
- b. Preside at all Membership Meetings;
- c. Be a member of all committees by virtue of his/her office, except the

Nominating Committee;

- d. Sign such papers and documents, upon proper authorization as may be necessary.

2. The Vice President shall:

- a. Perform all duties of the President in his/her absence;
- b. Become President in case the office of the Presidency becomes vacant. In such a case, a new vice-president shall be elected from among the remaining Trustees to fill the remainder of the term.

3. The Secretary shall:

- a. Keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the minutes of all Board and all official meetings;
- b. Be responsible for all reports, contracts, other than legal papers, minute books, and the corporate seal, which items shall be kept in the Ministry Office at all times, or in such other depository as prescribed by the Board.

4. The Treasurer shall:

- a. Have a thorough understanding of financial procedures and reports, with an ability to translate financial information and financial concepts for the Board, or with the Board's approval, shall appoint such person(s) to assist with these matters;
- b. Partner with the staff and leadership to develop a yearly budget; and assist with any scheduled financial audit;
- c. Be accountable for all funds belonging to this ministry; pay out or cause to be paid out funds authorized by the Board; keep, or cause to be kept, a record of all financial transactions; submit a monthly financial report at each regular board meeting; submit a financial report covering the last complete fiscal year to the annual membership meeting; and account for, or cause to be accounted for by the appointment of qualified persons, all funds received being responsible to assure that they are deposited in accounts authorized by the Board. When counting ministry funds there should be at least two (2) persons present.

ARTICLE IV – Members

Section 1. Qualifications:

A member of UTBR will endeavor to live in accordance with the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus the Christ and other Master Teachers as interpreted by Unity.

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A member will further the work of this Ministry through active support, interest and love, and uphold the current Mission, Vision and Core Values of UTBR.

Section 2. Membership Approval Procedure:

Anyone desiring membership in UTBR will file an application for membership with the Ministry office. Prospective members may need to meet additional requirements according to current Ministry policy. The application will be presented to the Board of Trustees at its next regular meeting. A majority vote of the Trustees present and voting will be required for the applicant to become an active member. The applicant will be notified thereafter and will be invited to the next new member induction ceremony. All staff Ministers and active Licensed Unity Teachers are considered members of this Ministry.

Section 3. Memberships:

A. Active Members:

1. **New Members:** After acceptance as a new voting member, each shall have voting rights at all membership meetings up through and including the next regularly scheduled annual membership meeting after joining the church.
2. **Existing Members:** To retain active membership rights, each member must indicate a desire to remain a member by completing and returning to the Church a yearly membership renewal card or such other document as approved by the Board of Trustees. If no current membership renewal card or approved document is on file prior to the annual membership meeting, that person becomes inactive and cannot serve on the Board of Trustees or vote at any membership meeting.

B. Reinstatement of Inactive Membership:

1. Reinstatement Within 12 Months:

If a member who has become inactive wishes to return to active status within the first 12 months after becoming an inactive member, such a member who meets membership qualifications and fills out a yearly membership renewal card or document approved by the Board of Trustees shall be reinstated as an active member. In order to vote at a membership meeting such members must fulfill these requirements at least four (4) weeks prior to a membership meeting.

2. Reinstatement After More Than 12 Months.

If an individual has been inactive for more than 12 months and desires to become an active member again, that individual shall reapply for active membership in the same manner required of new members.

C. Transfer of an Active Unity Membership:

Individual active members in good standing with another Unity church may submit a membership application and be eligible for a membership transfer after meeting with the Senior Minister and subsequent approval by the Board of Trustees.

D. Removal of Membership for Cause:

A member may be removed for cause by the Board of Trustees. Prior to any vote concerning removal, the member in question must be notified by certified mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Board of Trustees meeting of the charges that may lead to removal of membership and thereafter be given an opportunity for a hearing before the Board. A two-thirds (2/3) vote by the Board of Trustees shall be required for removal of membership provided that the Senior Minister or co-Ministers are in agreement with this action.

E. Power of Members: Voting members of UTBR shall have the power to do the following:

1. Vote at any membership meeting at which the member is present;
2. Elect members to the Board of Trustees;
3. Speak in debate at any membership meeting according to the rules provided for debate;
4. Ratify the Bylaws of UTBR or any amendments thereto ;
5. Vote on any question of purchase, sale or pledge of real property owned and used for the operation of this Ministry which exceeds twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in value. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those present and voting is required to approve the purchase, sale or pledge;
6. Elect a member, and his/her alternate to serve on the Nominating Committee;
7. In cooperation with this ministry, contact the UWM regional representative or the UWM directly for guidance, support or information on available resources;
8. Call a special meeting when the affairs of this Ministry warrant such action;
9. Participate in all activities and programs of this ministry.

ARTICLE V – Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meetings:

There shall be one annual membership meeting each year.

A. Date and Location of Annual Meeting:

The annual membership meeting shall be held at the principal location of UTBR on a Sunday in February, on the date and time designated by the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees. The date will be established at the prior year's annual meeting.

B. Notice:

Written notice stating the date, time, and place of the annual meeting will be sent to all active members at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.

C. Quorum:

Those active voting members present will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any annual membership meeting. In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances that would hinder normal attendance, the annual meeting would be rescheduled at the discretion of the Senior Minister and President of the Board of Trustees.

D. Participation:

The right to make motions and vote during annual meetings shall be restricted to those active voting members present. Others present may participate in the discussion in accordance with established meeting parameters. UWM representatives have a right to speak when they have been invited by the Senior Minister or co-Ministers, the Board of Trustees, or any member.

E. Voting:

Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, a majority vote of the active voting members present and voting, will be necessary for approval or disapproval of the action being voted upon. Proxy, absentee, or electronic (internet, email, fax, etc.) voting are not allowed.

F. Power and Authority:

Active voting members attending the annual meetings shall have the power and authority to do the following:

1. Elect members to the Board of Trustees;

2. Approve proposed amendments to these bylaws;
3. Approve by a two-thirds (2/3) vote any expenditure regarding the purchase, sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry that exceeds twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000);
4. Elect a member and an alternate to serve on the Nominating Committee;
5. Override any action of the Board of Trustees provided that notice of the action to be voted upon is submitted to all active member in writing fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting and is approved by a three-fourths (3/4) vote;
6. Remove by a three-fourths (3/4) vote any or all trustee(s) from the Board of Trustees;
7. Vote on any matters officially brought to the attention of the membership.

G. Prayer:

In any annual meeting, the Board President, Minister(s), and UWM Representative, or any voting member may request that action on an item of business be suspended while the membership enters into a time of prayer on the issue. Upon such request, the President will provide a period of prayer and silence.

Section 2. Special Membership Meetings:

- A. Requesting Special Meetings:** Any time the affairs of this Ministry warrant, a special membership meeting may be requested by the Senior Minister or co-Ministers; a majority vote of the Board of Trustees; or a petition signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the active membership and submitted to the Board of Trustees.
- B. Calling Special Meetings:** Upon receiving proper request and written petition for a special membership meeting, the President of the Board of Trustees shall call the meeting on behalf of the requesting party within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the request. The location, official notice and mailing, quorum, presiding officer, participation, voting, and prayer provisions for special membership meetings shall be the same as those for annual meetings.
- C. Special Meeting Business:** Business conducted at a special meeting shall be limited to the pre-stated purpose(s) given in the official written meeting notice.

ARTICLE VI - Ministry Teams

With the exception of the Nominating Committee, voluntary teams and committees may be established by the President of the Board or the senior minister or co-ministers for their respective areas of responsibility.

ARTICLE VII - Dissolution

In the event that this corporation is dissolved, the voting membership reserves the right to invest and/or donate the funds to a duly approved agency in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations; otherwise, all property and funds remaining after the payment of the debts of the corporation will be delivered to the UWM, a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Georgia, for religious and educational purposes. Such funds or property will be for the use and benefit of the UWM as may be determined by the Board of Trustees of the UWM, in alignment with current policies and procedures. The UWM will make available according to its current policies and procedures, funds for the reestablishment of a Unity ministry. Should the UWM no longer exist, any assets remaining of this corporation after dissolution will be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the County in which the principal executive offices of the corporation are then located and shall be used exclusively for such purposes or distributed to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for purposes set out in Section 5.01(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

ARTICLE VIII – Seal

The corporate seal of this Ministry shall include the name of the Ministry in a circle, which encloses the name of the city, state, and date of incorporation.

ARTICLE IX – Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the meetings of this corporation in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-Laws and/or any special rules of order set forth by the presiding officer.

ARTICLE X - BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws must be made by voting members of this Corporation at a legally constituted Membership Meeting. Written notice setting forth the proposed amendments must be sent to all members at least ten (10) days prior to the required Membership Meeting. An affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (3/4) of all voting members present and voting shall be necessary to pass and/or ratify any amendment (s) or general revision of/to these By-Laws. These By-Laws fully supersede all previous By-Laws adopted by Unity Center of Christianity.

