# Unity Board of Trustees

*Roles, Responsibilities & Expectations for Prospective Candidates*

## The Sacred Trust of Board Service

Serving on the Board of Trustees of Unity of The Blue Ridge is both a meaningful opportunity and a sacred responsibility. Elected by the membership, trustees are stewards of the ministry's mission, resources, integrity, and future. Their duty is to act in the best interests of the organization as a whole, guided by Unity principles, sound governance, and a commitment to the wellbeing of our ministry organization.

Trustees serve three-year terms. When a trustee cannot complete a term, a replacement may be appointed by the Board or elected by the membership, as provided in the bylaws.

## 1 | Qualifications & Expectations

Trustees are expected to be active, supportive members of the ministry who demonstrate:

- **Spiritual commitment.** An understanding of Unity teachings and a sincere effort to live with love, truth, integrity, and acceptance.
- **Maturity and collaboration.** Sound judgment, cooperative leadership, prayerful discernment, and respect for differing perspectives.
- **Active participation.** Ongoing involvement in services, programs, ministry life, and opportunities for spiritual growth.
- **Integrity and accountability.** A willingness to place the ministry's interests above personal preferences, disclose potential conflicts, and honor confidentiality.
- **Respect for roles.** An understanding of the professional boundaries and responsibilities of trustees, the Senior Minister, staff and members.
- **Commitment to service.** The time, preparation, financial support consistent with one's means, and energy needed to fulfill Board duties.

## 2 | Wearing More Than One Hat

A trustee will also be a congregant, volunteer, and/or ministry-team participant. Each role carries different interests and responsibilities. As congregants, we have personal preferences; as volunteers, we focus on specific programs. As trustees, our responsibility expands to the entire ministry and its long-term health.

Effective trustees recognize these distinctions, consider perspectives beyond their own, and make decisions for the good of the whole. New trustees receive orientation at the first official board meeting, and additional training at an annual board and staff retreat.

## 3 | General Governance Responsibilities

The Board is legally and ethically accountable for the ministry's governance and organizational oversight. It establishes policy and provides stewardship rather than ordinarily managing day-to-day operations. Responsibilities include:

- **Mission and governance.** Uphold the ministry's purpose; maintain bylaws and policies; ensure appropriate organizational standards and legal compliance.
- **Financial & Resource stewardship.** Approve budgets, approve job descriptions and set salaries, oversee financial reporting and controls, ensure financial and resource development, and safeguard the ministry's assets.
- **Strategic planning.** Plan for the ongoing vitality of the organization, including facilities, infrastructure, operational resources, and assets.
- **Risk and property oversight.** Ensure appropriate attention to liability, facilities, property, safety, and responsible asset management.
- **Membership accountability.** Keep accurate Board minutes and required records; communicate significant matters appropriately; bring necessary decisions before the membership.
- **Senior Minister support.** Hire, support, and establish appropriate compensation and employment agreements for the Senior Minister, with Unity Worldwide Ministries' assistance when appropriate. Maintain regular communication and address any potential concerns at monthly board meeting.

The Board also ensures that applicable nonprofit filings, taxes, annual reports, and other statutory obligations are completed. Trustees should consult the current bylaws and Board policies for specific authority and procedures.

## 4 | Board Governance & Spiritual Leadership

A healthy ministry depends on clear, complementary responsibilities and mutual trust between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister.

- **The Board provides** governance, policy, financial and organizational oversight, and accountability for the ministry as a whole.
- **The Senior Minister serves** as Spiritual Director and Executive Director, guiding the spiritual direction, services, classes, programs, staff leadership, and day-to-day operations, except where duties are otherwise delegated or reserved to the Board.

The Senior Minister is a voting member of the Board and the only paid Board member, as described in the ministry's governing documents. Other staff ordinarily report to the Senior Minister unless otherwise duly delegated. Trustees respect these professional relationships and do not individually direct staff or ministry operations.

The strongest partnership is built on open communication, clarity of expectations, shared accountability, and respect for one another's responsibilities.

## 5 | Collective Authority & Board Unity

The Board acts as one elected governing body. Authority belongs to the Board collectively - not to individual trustees. No trustee may represent Board decisions, direct action, or make organizational commitments unless specifically authorized and documented.

Healthy governance welcomes thoughtful questions, differing viewpoints, and candid discussion. Trustees are expected to bring independent judgment to deliberations, then respect the Board's lawful decisions and established processes. Concerns may be raised through proper Board channels, without presenting personal positions as official Board policy.

Unity does not require unanimity. It requires a shared commitment to the mission and a willingness to place the good of the whole above personal preference.

## 6 | Ethical Leadership, Confidentiality & Transparency

- **Act with integrity.** Exercise sound judgment, fulfill fiduciary obligations, and model the spiritual principles of Unity.
- **Address conflicts of interest.** Disclose actual or potential conflicts and follow the ministry's policies, including recusal when required.
- **Protect sensitive information.** Maintain appropriate confidentiality around personnel, donor, financial, and other protected matters, while honoring applicable disclosure duties.
- **Communicate responsibly.** Support timely, appropriate transparency with members and respect the integrity of Board deliberations and decisions.

## 7 | Commitment & Participation

Board service requires dependable preparation, presence, and follow-through. Trustees are expected to:

- **Prepare and participate.** Review materials in advance and attend regular and special Board meetings.
- **Stay engaged.** Participate in ministry life, leadership development, governance training, and team-liaison responsibilities when assigned.
- **Honor commitments.** Communicate clearly, work cooperatively, and support the ministry through time, talents, and financial generosity consistent with one's means.

## An Invitation to Serve

We do not expect new trustees to arrive knowing everything about nonprofit governance. We do ask for a willingness to learn, a collaborative spirit, spiritual maturity, and a sincere desire to serve.

**At its heart, Board service is love in action: caring for what has been entrusted to us today while helping ensure the possibilities of tomorrow.**

Thank you for prayerfully considering this opportunity to serve Unity of The Blue Ridge.