

GNUUC Public Statement Policy

Context

A congregation speaks in a variety of ways. Some are quick and some are slow. Some are the result of direct democracy and some are the result of representational democracy. This policy documents the various ways in which the congregation speaks and the process we will use for these different ways.

As a church of action, it is anticipated that the congregation may not unanimously support any particular statement. People are reminded and encouraged to use the Healthy Congregation Team to express their concerns with the expectation that their concerns will be taken seriously and that we will work toward ongoing reconciliation.

Definitions

Direct Democracy means a process where a decision is made by all eligible members of a community. Example: ballot referendum.

Representative Democracy means a process where a decision is made by previously elected representatives. Example: laws passed by a legislature or appointments made by an elected official.

Congregational Referendum means a statement made by the congregation through direct democracy after a period of congregational study.

Congregational Statement means a statement issued by the board, following a congregational comment period.

Ministerial Statement means a statement made by a minister of GNUUC.

Minister means any of the following: a Settled Minister of Greater Nashville UU, a Contract Minister of Greater Nashville UU, or an Affiliated Minister of Greater Nashville UU.

Congregational Leader means any person elected directly by the congregation to a position of leadership. Within the current bylaws, this means the Board of Greater Nashville UU.

Congregational Representative means a person appointed by the Board to represent the congregation to an outside organization. Examples are

congregational delegates to the annual UUA General Assembly and congregational representatives to Nashville Organized for Action and Hope (NOAH).

Congregational Feedback

Copies of the draft policy were circulated on November 10, 2019, and members of the congregation provided oral and written feedback via email.

Policy

1. The Congregation through an exercise in direct democracy may issue a congregational referendum by undertaking a period of study and holding a congregational vote at a duly called congregational meeting. The period and course of study will be decided by the Minister of GNUUC.
2. The Board, as the elected leadership of the congregation, may issue a statement on behalf of the congregation. The Board will meet to review and approve the proposed congregational statement. The Board will seek congregational comments on any proposed congregational statement. The Board will meet again to consider congregational feedback and issue the final statement. No member of the Board may individually make a statement on behalf of the congregation.
3. Congregational representatives to outside organizations vote on behalf of the congregation. Congregational representatives are accountable to the board and expected to undertake thoughtful consideration of their votes and to vote in accordance with their understanding of the mission of GNUUC and of the 7 UU principles.
4. Ministers make ministerial statements as they are moved by their conscience to speak. When issuing a ministerial statement, the Minister will clarify the UU tradition of the Freedom of the Pulpit and the Freedom of the Pew.

Recurring Tasks

This policy does not define any recurring tasks.

Accountability

The current Settled or Contract Minister will train other Ministers to follow this policy. The Board will train any Congregational Representatives to follow this policy.