

# Bylaws

for the

## Academy of the Ancient Arts

A Universal Life Ministry



**LIFE IS SACRED**

# Bylaws

## The Academy of the Ancient Arts

### A Universal Life Ministry

The Academy of the Ancient Arts Constitution and Bylaws Committee and Church Council approved the amended Constitution and Bylaws created May, 2001 amended June, 2025.

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

### Preamble

The Academy of the Ancient Arts is founded on the understanding that everything in nature is connected, and so are we. Inspired by ancient, earth-based traditions from around the globe, we believe that by honoring the natural cycles of the earth, sun, moon and seasons, we can live more balanced and meaningful lives. We welcome all people—regardless of their spiritual beliefs or backgrounds—who seek to live in harmony with the world around them and treat all life with respect.

The Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Honor all life as sacred.
2. Allow members to celebrate their traditions and share in sacred space.
3. Heal nature, ourselves and each other.
4. Bring peace, recognizing that all is one.

### I. Name

The name of this church shall be The Academy of the Ancient Arts.  
It shall be affiliated with the Universal Life Church.

## II. Business Location

The address of the principal office of this church shall be:  
29670 Westmoore Rd, Shingletown, CA 96088.

## III. Purpose

The purposes of the Academy of the Ancient Arts are solely religious and exist to:  
Celebrate all life as sacred and interconnected.  
Create a welcoming community where members can celebrate their traditions, grow, learn and share in sacred space.  
Minister to the needs of members by offering nature-based guidance, habits and gatherings that promote physical, emotional, mental and spiritual balance.  
Support the earth and each other through ethical action and care.  
Nurture the values and practice of honesty, kindness, compassion and personal responsibility.  
Honor all spiritual traditions in the understanding that we are all one and share one planet.

### Certification:

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the Pillar of Ministry for the Academy of the Ancient Arts, a Nonprofit Religious Place of Worship, and that the above Bylaws are the official Bylaws of the Academy of the Ancient Arts as adopted May 1, 2002.  
This is the revised version is created June 2025

Deborah Wyffels	Pillar of Ministry	_____
Charles Wyffels	Pillar of the South	_____
Katie Writer	Pillar of the East	_____
Jim Mattos	Pillar of the North	_____
Joy Joelle Odmann	Pillar of the West	_____
Debbie Brown	Pillar of Feminine	_____
?	Pillar of Masculine	_____

## Articles of Faith

1. We honor ancient earth-based philosophies and traditions of indigenous cultures from around the globe. Including but not limited to the Shamanic, Buddhist, Paganism, Wiccan, Judaism, Moslem, Hinduism, and Christianity we all celebrate diversity and respect one and others traditions.
2. We honor the wisdom of nature's cycles—daily, monthly and yearly—as tools for reflection and growth.
3. We recognize the Four Directions representing the powerful forces of Air, Fire, Water and Earth
  - East: Spring, air, mind
  - South: Summer, fire and energy
  - West: Autumn, water and heart
  - North: Winter, earth, the physical
4. We hold monthly gatherings aligned with the moon phases and seasonal holidays tied to the solar year.
5. We welcome people of all beliefs—monotheists, polytheists, atheists, agnostics—without judgment.  
We encourage each person to live ethically, in harmony with nature and community.

## Sacred Vows

1. These vows are a high code of honor from many generations of nature based origins.
2. Understand that what intents and thoughts you put out, grow strong. Not only in our world, but worlds beyond. So remember "What you sow, you will reap."
3. Only by preparing our minds can we be our highest self.
4. Above all "to thine ownself be true"  
Take responsibility for your actions and learn from your mistakes.
5. Your word should be as valid as a signed and witnessed document or oath. So give your word sparingly and adhere to it.
6. Hold back speaking ill of others, the full truth may not be known.

7. Pass not unverified words about another, for hearsay is in the large part a thing of falsehoods.
8. Be honest with others and let them know that honesty is likewise expected.
9. The fury of the moment plays folly with the truth, to keep one's composure is a virtue.
10. Contemplate always the consequences of your acts to others. Strive not to harm.
11. Different spiritual faith based gatherings, may have differing views. When attending their gatherings, please honorably respect them.
12. Dignity, a gracious manner and good humor are much to be admired.
13. As you grow, use discretion with the power you gain.
14. Courage and honor endure forever. Their echoes remain when mountains have crumbled to dust.
15. Pledge friendship and loyalty to those who deserve it. Strengthen your community and they will bring strength to you.
16. Honor the confidentiality of the sacred truths from other traditions. Others have labored long and hard for them and cherish them as treasures.
17. Hold our wisdom as sacred, until others are ready to hear.
18. As you follow your sacred path and grow in the mysteries nature teaches, be above reproach. Be the best you can be in the eyes of the world.
19. The laws of the land should be obeyed whenever possible or within reason, for the most part they were written for a reason.
20. Take pride in yourself. Take care of your mind, energy levels, heart and body. How can you honor another, unless you honor yourself?
21. For those who seek to be on their sacred path and learn the mysteries from nature, you should consider yourself blessed. With your example you will lead the human race to higher levels, beyond the stars.

## **Governance**

The Academy of the Ancient Arts is governed by its members through voluntary leadership roles known as “Pillars.” These positions are based on the four directions—East, South, West and North, Male and Female—and the Pillar of Ministry. Each Pillar is responsible for specific areas of leadership, and decisions are made in community through discussion and mutual respect.

## **Nonprofit Status**

The Academy of the Ancient Arts is a nonprofit religious organization. It does not operate for financial gain, and any funds collected are used to support the organization’s mission and events. Upon dissolution, any remaining assets will be donated to charities chosen by the Pillars.

## **Meetings and Ceremonies**

Monthly gatherings follow the lunar cycle:

- New Moon: Set intentions
- Waxing Moon: Focus on growth
- Full Moon: Celebrate and create sacred water
- Waning Moon: Cleanse and reflect

Annual solar celebrations mark the seasons:

- Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, Fall Equinox, Winter Solstice
- Midpoints; Imbolc, Beltane, Lammas, and Hallows

The Academy also provides ceremonies for:

- Weddings
- Coming of Age celebrations
- Baby Blessings
- Memorials, funerals and Celebration of life Services.

The Academy also will offer counsel and support through these important life markers.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Disagreements are addressed with kindness and a commitment to doing no harm. If a conflict arises that cannot be resolved between members, it will be brought to the Pillar of Ministry for guidance. If needed, the Pillars may choose to disavow a member if they act against the community’s values.

## **Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended through consensus of the Pillar of Ministry and other Pillars. Changes should reflect the evolving needs and values of the community while staying true to the mission.

## **Governance and Pillar Roles**

The Academy of the Ancient Arts is guided by a council of members who volunteer to serve in leadership roles known as Pillars. These roles align with the natural energies of the Four Directions and the central position of Ministry. Each Pillar is committed to upholding the values of the Academy and helping the community thrive.

### **Pillar of Ministry**

Role: Serves as the central guide and caretaker of the Academy's mission and community.

Responsibilities:

- Leads ceremonies and teaches practices grounded in nature's cycles.
- Oversees communication, planning and spiritual guidance.
- Manages community resources and funds.
- Steps in to fulfill other Pillars' duties when needed.

### **Pillar of the East**

Represents: Air, Spring, New Beginnings, Communication

Responsibilities:

- Oversees communication within the community (email, website, newsletters).
- Encourages learning, sharing of ideas and intellectual exploration.

### **Pillar of the South**

Represents: Fire, Summer, Passion, Action

Responsibilities:

- Maintains any shared land, buildings or structures associated with the Academy.
- Supports projects related to sustainability, gardening or animal care.

### **Pillar of the West**

Represents: Water, Autumn, Emotion, Reflection

Responsibilities:

- Supports emotional well-being and community care.
- Organizes assistance for those in need and creates spaces for connection and healing.

### **Pillar of the North**

Represents: Earth, Winter, Wisdom, Stability

Responsibilities:

- Oversees finances, budgeting and resource allocation.
- Ensures the long-term health and abundance of the Academy.

### **Pillar of the Feminine**

Represents: Female Energy

Responsibilities:

- Supports energies of the Pillars of West and North

### **Pillar of the Masculine**

Represents: Male Energy

Responsibilities:

- Supports energies of the Pillars of East and South