

## By-Laws

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this religious corporation is "First Parish in Plymouth"

### ARTICLE II: SEAL

This corporation shall have a circular seal containing the name of the corporation and the words "Plymouth, Massachusetts" and the date "1620"

### ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

#### **A. NON-DISCRIMINATION**

This congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in all our activities and endeavors, including membership, programming, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals, without regard to race, color, gender, physical or mental challenge, affect ional or sexual orientation, age, class or national origin.

#### **B. FULL VOTING MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO ANY PERSON WHO**

- a. Is eighteen years of age or older
- b. Agrees with the purposes of First Parish in Plymouth, and The Principles and Purposes of the UUA.
- c. Has attended an orientation session conducted by a representative from the Membership Committee and the Minister
- d. Has submitted an application which has been accepted by the Parish Committee
- e. Has signed the membership roll in the presence of the Minister or a Parish Committee representative
- f. Has made a financial pledge meeting at least the minimum financial contribution, a sum that shall be set annually by the Parish Committee. The minimum financial requirement must be fulfilled or waived, confidentially through petition of the Minister and the Chair of the Parish Committee<sup>30</sup> prior to the annual meeting. The right to vote may be regained in any subsequent year by meeting the minimum financial requirement for the current year.

**C.** An associate member of First Parish is a friend who does not meet the requirements for full voting membership.

**D.** Withdrawal from membership may be made by e-mail, letter, telephone communication with the Minister, or the Chair of the Parish Committee.

### ARTICLE IV: PARISH MEETINGS

**A.** The Annual Meeting of the Parish shall be held each year in June, at such time and place to be fixed by the Parish Committee.

- B. Special meetings of the Parish may be called by the Parish Committee, and shall be called by the Parish Committee upon written request of five members of the Parish.
- C. Notice of the meetings of the Parish shall be warned by the Clerk of the Parish, or such a member of the Parish as the Parish Committee may name, by causing a true copy of the warrant or notice to be posted in the Meeting House of the Parish fourteen days, at least , before the date of the meeting. Notice of the Annual Meeting, with a copy of the warrant, the reports of the Treasurer and the Collector, the budget to be proposed at the meeting, and the report of the Nominating Committee, shall be mailed to each member of the Parish at least seven days before the meeting.
- D. Business to be transacted at the Annual Meeting and at all special meetings of the Parish shall be specified in a series of articles in the warrant for such meeting, drawn up by the Parish Committee. The Parish Committee shall insert in the warrant such matters as are useful and proper for the election of officers, reports of committees, and the transaction of Parish affairs, and any matter which five or more members of the Parish request. No matter shall be acted upon at any meeting of the Parish unless the item was inserted in the warrant for such meeting.
- E. All Parish meetings shall be conducted in accordance with [Robert's Rules of Order](#) except for item covered in these By-laws.
- F. All meetings shall use one of the following methods of voting:
  - a. Voice vote shall be used for routine matters.
  - b. Show of hands shall be used either at the discretion of the Moderator or when requested by three members.
  - c. Ballots shall be used either at the discretion of the Moderator or when requested by five members.
- G. Ten percent of the active Parish membership shall constitute a quorum for all Parish meetings, but a lesser number may meet and recess the meeting to another time.

#### **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

- A. A Moderator, a Treasurer, and a Collector shall be so elected each year from the membership of the Parish.
- B. The Parish Committee is the Executive Committee of the parish consisting of ten members: Three ex-officio members without vote, the Treasurer, and six members at large
  - a. Three members at large shall be elected each year by the Congregation for terms of two years. The Parish Committee shall elect one member of the Parish Committee to the position of Vice President at the first meeting of the new committee. The Vice President shall become President of the Parish Committee at the

completion of one year of his/her term of office. Parish Committee shall elect one member of the Parish Committee as clerk.

- b. The President shall serve as a liaison to the Minister, the Director of Religious Education, and the Music Director. The other members shall be liaisons to the standing committees as designated each year by the Parish Committee.
  - c. The Treasurer shall be a voting member of the Parish Committee and serve as a non-voting liaison to the Finance Committee, the Auditing Committee, and the Investment Committee. The Minister, Director of Religious Education, and Music Director shall be ex-officio members without vote.
  - d. A quorum consists of five voting members.
- C.** The following Standing committees shall have a liaison appointed by the Parish Committee to maintain communication and serve in an advisory capacity:
- a. Auditing.
  - b. Buildings & Grounds
  - c. Denominational Affairs
  - d. Finance and Investment
  - e. Membership
  - f. Committee on ministry
  - g. Nominating
  - h. Religious Education
  - i. Social Action
  - j. Worship & Music

#### **ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF THE CLERK**

- A.** The Clerk shall record all votes and proceedings of the Parish at all of its meetings. The Clerk shall have custody of the records of all Parish meetings, and other Parish records, and shall keep a separate record of actions taken at all meetings of the Parish Committee.
- B.** Before each Parish meeting the Clerk shall prepare a list of those eligible to vote. At the beginning of these meetings those eligible to vote shall be checked in and provide an identification tag so that the Moderator can easily establish who can make motions, participate in the discussion, and vote. The Clerk shall also have on hand a supply of pencils and paper ballots.

**C.** The Clerk shall meet annually with the Membership Committee, Minister, and Collector to determine active versus inactive membership. The Clerk will also prepare a list of the names of members who should be removed from the Membership Role. (See Article III Section D.)

## **ARTICLE VII: TREASURER AND COLLECTOR**

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Parish for a yearly term. The Treasurer shall:

- A.** Disburse all funds paid out by the Church.
- B.** Pay out upon request of the Parish Committee all sums not exceeding Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000).
- C.** Pay out any sum upon a vote of the Parish.
- D.** Keep accurate accounts of financial disbursements. The Parish books will be professionally audited every three years, or when there is a change in the Treasurer before the end of a term.
- E.** The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance and Investments Committees and serve as an advisor to the Spooner Fund and/or any other endowed monies.
- F.** The Treasurer shall make a written report to the Parish Committee at each meeting and to the Parish at the annual meeting.
- G.** The Treasurer shall be bonded.
- H.** The Collector shall be elected by the Parish for a yearly term. The Treasurer shall:
  - A.** Take custody of all monies received from all sources and keep accurate accounts of collected monies.
  - B.** Have the power to borrow money in the name and behalf of the Parish by a vote of the Parish at the Annual Meeting.
  - C.** Make written reports to the Parish Committee for meetings and to the parish for the Annual Meeting.
  - D.** Collector shall notify those voting members who have not at least met the minimum financial responsibility to maintain voting status 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting.
  - E.** The Collector shall be bonded.

## **ARTICLE IX: DUTIES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

- A.** The Parish Committee shall function as the Executive Committee of the Parish and shall establish policies and make final decisions on policy changes recommended by standing, special, or ad hoc committees. The Parish Committee shall conduct Parish business affairs and control its administration, including the appointment of such committees and agents, as it may deem necessary. The Parish Committee shall have the power to appoint and dismiss personnel, except as provided for the Minister in Article XIV. It shall have general charge of the Meetinghouse and other properties of the Parish, except as provided in Article X. no contract shall be made involving the expenditure of money exceeding \$2,000 without the vote of the Parish Committee. The Parish Committee shall submit a proposed budget of receipts and expenditures at each Annual Meeting for adoption by the Parish. The Parish Committee shall conduct an evaluation of the Minister's performance, which will be reviewed expeditiously with him/her at the Ministerial Relations Committee meeting.
- B.** The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall have general oversight of the upkeep and maintenance of the real properties of the Parish with authority to expend those monies appropriated in the annual Parish Budget. In addition, the committee shall prepare recommendations for the Parish Committee concerning maintenance and/or renovations of buildings.
- C.** The Denominational Affairs Committee shall serve as a liaison with other Unitarian Universalist Churches, the Ballou Channing district, and the Unitarian Universalist association and make recommendations to the Parish Committee on denominational projects and issues. The committee shall coordinate cluster and district activities hosted by First Parish.
- D.** The Finance Committee shall be responsible for general oversight of the current budget, monitoring from time to time the record of receipts and expenditures, working in conjunction with the treasurer and the collector; it shall prepare insurance recommendations for the Parish Committee; shall present a proposed budget to the Parish Committee. The Finance Committee shall conduct an annual pledge drive to secure individual financial pledges for the support of the parish from among members and friends. The timetable for the pledge drive shall be made by the Finance Committee in consultation with the Parish Committee. Treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member with vote.
- E.** The membership committee shall be charged with developing programs designed to increase the membership of First Parish by: 1). Creating opportunities to experience the fellowship of the church with the aim of bringing religious liberals closer together; 2). Creating an awareness of First Parish within the community, in cooperation with the Parish Committee; 3). Making available literature about Unitarian Universalism and the programs of First Parish; 4). In cooperation with the Minister, providing informational programs for new members; 5). Providing Greeter at each Sunday service who will welcome newcomers to the Parish; 6). It will be the duty of the Membership

Committee to update the full voting membership roll, in cooperation with the collector, prior to and for use as Annual Meeting. The committee shall have the responsibility for expending monies for membership allotted in the annual budget of the Parish and shall also make recommendations for the next fiscal year.

- F.** Worship and Music Committee shall have the responsibility for developing and executing policies for the weekly Sunday and special services of worship. The committee shall work with all staff in a cooperative and supportive manner to foster meaning worship. The committee may suggest changes in the “Order Of Service” which will reflect the needs and wishes of the congregation. Duties will include filling the pulpit in the absence of the minister, ordering needed supplies for services providing ushers, flowers and music. The committee has responsibility to expend monies allotted for worship and musical activities and to make recommendation for the next fiscal year. A representative of this committee shall serve on any search team elected by the Parish for Music Director or Organist. The committee, may elect subcommittees and/or chairs as needed to conduct it’s work, i.e. Music, Flowers, Pulpit Support, Ushers. The committee shall present to the Parish Committee a yearly evaluation of the Music Director and Organist.
- G.** The Religious Education Ministry, working in conjunction with the Director of Religious Education, shall be actively engaged in the Church School Program. The Committee has responsibility for overseeing the expenditure of monies allotted for religious education in the annual budget and shall also make recommendation for the next fiscal year. Whenever there is a vacancy in the position of Director of Religious Education, the committee shall serve as part of a search committee established by the Parish Committee. The committee shall present to the Parish Committee a yearly evaluation of the Director of Religious Education. The Director of Religious Education shall be an ex-officio member of the committee without vote.
- H.** The Social Action Committee shall recommend to the Parish Committee policies on social concerns; plan and oversee projects and activities that put Unitarian Universalist religious values into practice; provide opportunities for church members and friends to get involved in working for social justice.
- I.** The Auditing Committee shall examine and audit the accounts of the Treasurer and the Collector and shall make an examination of the securities of the Parish and report to the annual meeting.
- J.** The purpose of the Ministerial Relations Committee is to facilitate communication between the congregation regarding their mutual expectations and needs. The Ministerial Relations Committee and Minister will meet no less than once per month during the church year to maintain contact and assurance of clear communications. The Chair of the Parish Committee shall be notified as to the date of these meetings and shall place the date into the minutes of each monthly Parish Committee meeting.

- K. The Nominating Committee shall recommend nominations at the Annual Meeting for parish officers, standing committees, Investment, and Auditing Committees, and other committees as requested by the Parish Committee. At the Annual Meeting other nominations for any office or committee shall be allowed. If needed, the committee shall also provide nominees to the Parish Committee to fill vacancies during the church year.

#### **ARTICLE X: INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

- A. There shall be an Investment Committee consisting of three members elected from the Parish, elected for one-year terms not to exceed three years. The treasurer shall serve as an ex-officio member without vote.
- B. The Investment Committee shall see to the Investment of existing funds, all bonds, and mortgages, certificates of stock and other securities purchased with gifts and legacies made to the Parish, and the Spooner and Brewster Chapel funds.
- C. The Investment Committee shall have the power to designate in what banks or financial institutions the funds of the Parish shall be deposited.
- D. The Investment Committee may designate a corporate fiduciary or corporate fiduciaries to hold any bonds, certificate of stock, and other securities as nominee.
- E. The Investment Committee shall invest funds according to its best discretion and shall make changes in investments as it deems wise. The committee may use bank or investment counsel.
- F. The Investment Committee shall make a written report of its activities and the status of invested funds to the Parish Committee at the end of each quarter (May, June, September, December).

#### **ARTICLE XI: VACANCIES**

All vacancies in elected offices shall be filled by majority vote at any Parish Committee meeting from nominations made by the Nominating Committee. Such persons shall hold office until the expiration of the terms of office to which they have been appointed.

#### **ARTICLE XII: FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year shall run from July 1 through June 30.

#### **ARTICLE XIII: PARISH TAXES AND DEBTS**

No taxes on polls or estates of its members shall be assessed by the Parish, and no member of the Parish shall be personally liable for any debt or obligation incurred by and in the name of the Parish.

#### **ARTICLE XIV: THE MINISTER**

- A. The choice of a minister and terms of his/her employment shall be determined by vote of the Parish at a meeting duly called and held, and a vote of the Parish shall be necessary for his/her dismissal.
- B. The minister shall have his/her ministerial credentials with the Unitarian Universalist Association thus insuring his/her commitment to professional ethics as indicated by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association's Code of Ethical Practices.
- C. The Minister shall be an ex-officio member of all committee without vote.

#### **ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS AND REPEAL**

These by-laws, so far as allowed by law, may be amended or repealed in whole or in part, at any meeting of the Parish, duly called and held for purpose, at which a quorum shall be present, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, providing the notice of the general character of any such proposed amendment or repeal shall be contained in the warrant or notice of the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XVI: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

First Parish in Plymouth is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Ballou Channing District of the Unitarian Universalist Association. First Parish is a "Fair Share" congregation.