

Constitution and Bylaws

Second Congregational Meeting House Society, Unitarian Universalist
11 Orange St., Nantucket, Massachusetts

Article 1 Name The name of this Church shall be Second Congregational Meeting House Society / Unitarian Universalist

Article 2 Purpose The purpose of this Church is set forth in its covenant: “Being in sympathy with the principles and purposes set forth in the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association and wishing to associate ourselves with this congregation, we unite in the freedom of truth and in the spirit of love, for worship and for service to humanity, to our community, and to one another.”

Article 3 Board of Trustees and Officers The Board of Trustees shall be the governing body of the Church and shall have six to nine elected members, each of whom shall serve a three-year term, excepting the treasurer, who is elected annually and may be re-elected for an indefinite number of consecutive terms. There shall be an interval of at least one year after Trustees (other than the treasurer) have completed two full or partial consecutive terms before they shall be eligible for reelection. The Board shall elect a President, a Vice President, and a Clerk from among its members. Church membership is a prerequisite for holding an elected position on the Board of Trustees.

Article 4 Membership Any person eighteen years of age or older who is in sympathy with the purpose of this Church, has read and accepts the covenant of the Church, has met with the Minister or, in the Minister’s extended absence, the Board President, to discuss membership, and has agreed to support the Church to the extent of that person’s ability, shall be welcomed to membership on signing the Membership Book. All members are expected to support the Church and to participate in its activities.

Persons who may have their principal church affiliation elsewhere may follow the procedure above to be welcomed as associate members. Associate members may vote at any Church meeting but may not hold office. The associate membership is not counted in determining a quorum at an annual or special meeting or in determining a quorum at a special meeting called to consider the dismissal of the Minister.

Membership may be terminated by a written statement of resignation signed by the member and given to either the clerk or the President of the Board. The Membership Committee shall periodically contact persons who have neither attended Sunday service nor shown any interest in Church activities for some time to ascertain whether they wish to continue their affiliation. If there has been no response to the inquiry within thirty days, the Membership Committee shall notify the clerk or President with the recommendation that said members be declared “inactive” and that their names be removed from the membership list.

The clerk of the Church shall have the responsibility of maintaining accurate lists of the members and associate members.

Article 5 Minister The Minister and the congregation share responsibility for the leadership and ministry of the society.

The Minister shall be called upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee by a ninety (90) percent majority of the members of the congregation present at a meeting called for that purpose. A quorum for such a meeting shall be fifty (50) percent of the number of members reported to the UUA in the current fiscal year.

The Minister may be dismissed by a majority vote of the qualified members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

The Minister shall be responsible for the conduct of worship and for nurturing the spiritual interests and affairs of the congregation.

The Minister shall be responsible for performing such functions as ordinarily pertain to the office of Minister in congregations of the UUA and as prescribed by the Code of Professional Practices and Guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA). The Minister shall be in fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The Minister shall be a nonvoting, ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and its committees, except for the Nominating and Ministerial Search Committees, and shall have the privileges of the floor at all meetings of those bodies, except for Executive sessions of the Board of Trustees.

The Minister shall maintain a strong working relationship with the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Music, and the chairs of all standing committees.

The Committee on Ministry shall serve as liaison between the Minister and the congregation and shall oversee the quality of ministry provided by the Minister and by the congregation as a whole. On the arrival of a settled Minister, the Ministerial Search Committee shall serve for six months as the Committee on Ministry. At the end of that period, the President and the Minister shall jointly nominate four to six persons for the Committee to be appointed by the Board. Beginning December 31 of the year following the year of the initial appointments, and every year thereafter, members' 2-year terms are to be staggered so that two members depart, and two new members are appointed, each year. Nominations to fill vacancies are to be made jointly by the Minister and the President, with appointment by the Board. If the President and the Minister are not able to agree on joint nominations, each shall nominate half the persons to be appointed by the Board. One member of the Ministry Committee shall also be a member of the Board, and shall serve as liaison between the Board and the Committee. In the event the Board declines to appoint a nominee, the nominator shall then propose three persons, one of which must be appointed by the Board.

Article 6 Fiscal Year The fiscal year of the Church shall be January 1 to December 31.

Article 7 Meetings The annual meeting of the Church shall be held within six weeks of the end of the fiscal year for the purpose of electing Trustees and transacting all other business. Special meetings may be called at the order of the Board only for such purposes as may be specified in the call. Ten days' notice shall be given for each such meeting. Notification by email shall suffice as notification for those members with established email addresses, except for those members who request written notification. A quorum for such meetings shall be thirty percent of the number of members most recently certified to the UUA.

Article 8 Nominating Committee The nominating committee shall be elected at the annual meeting following nominations from the floor. It shall consist of three members who shall serve for one year and shall present to the annual meeting a list of nominees for all vacancies on the Board of Trustees, including individuals filling any unexpired term(s) that may exist. This shall not preclude nominations from the floor at the annual meeting. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Trustees in the course of the year shall be filled through appointment by the nominating committee.

Article 9 Indemnification The Society shall indemnify and reimburse out of corporate funds all persons who at any time serve, or shall have served, as a director or Officer of the Society, whether or not in office at the time, against and for, any and all claims and liabilities to which they may be, or become, subject to by reason of such service, and against and for, any and all expenses necessarily incurred in connection with the defense or reasonable settlement of any legal or administrative proceedings to which they are made a party by reason of such service, except in relation to matters as to which they shall be finally adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of their official duties. Such indemnification or reimbursement shall not be deemed to exclude any other rights or privileges to which such persons may be entitled.

Article 10 Bylaws

1. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Church and of the Board of Trustees. The President is ex officio a member of all committees, excepting the nominating committee.
2. It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a record of all meetings of the Church and of the Board of Trustees, to keep a roll of members, to hold in custody all documents and papers belonging to the Church, and to perform such other duties as may naturally develop upon the office.
3. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to hold in custody all funds of the Church; to keep an account of all receipts and expenditures; to pay such bills as may be approved by the Board of Trustees; and to render at the annual meeting, and at such other meetings as may be required, a full financial statement of the Church.
4. The Board of Trustees shall have general charge of the administration of the affairs of the Church, but no contract involving an expenditure of money exceeding three thousand dollars (\$3,000) shall be made without a vote of the Church.
5. The Minister of the Church shall be chosen and the Minister's salary determined by a vote of the Church at special called meetings; a vote of the Church shall be necessary for dismissal.
6. The Board of Trustees shall establish such committees as may seem to them proper and necessary and shall appoint members thereto. Exceptions to this section of the bylaws are the Nominating Committee and the Committee on Ministry.
7. Full reports of the activities of the Church shall be made at the annual meeting by the Minister, department heads, and committee chairs, as appropriate.
8. At meetings of the Board of Trustees, a majority of its members shall constitute a quorum.

9. The Church declares and affirms its special responsibility to promote the full participation of persons in all of its activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, gender, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin, and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

Article 11 Amendments This constitution may be amended at any legal meeting, the proposed amendment having been previously set forth in the call, a two-thirds vote being necessary for adoption. Bylaws not conflicting with the U. S. Constitution or with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may be added or changed by a majority vote.

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- Adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation – January 2002
- Amended at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation – January 2006 (revised provision in Article 5 on appointments to the Committee on Ministry)
- Amendment to Article 3 adopted by the Annual Congregational Meeting Jan. 17, 2010 (“Church membership is a prerequisite for holding a position on the Board of Trustees.”)
- Amendment to Article 3 adopted by the Annual Congregational Meeting January 31, 2021 (‘elected’, two consecutive full terms, clarifications)
- The 1/22/2023 Congregational Meeting approved amendments to:
 - Article 3 paragraph 1 (add “six to” before the phrase “nine elected members”)
 - Article 4 paragraph 4 (add Board President and “to discuss membership” phrase)
 - Article 5 last paragraph (add “four to” before the phrase “six persons”)
 - Article 7 paragraph 1 (change quorum from 25 members to 30% of certified members)
 - Article 10 paragraph 2 (add “the” before the first instance of “Church”).