

# **FIRST JEFFERSON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I (NAME)**

The name of this religious congregation shall be First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church.

## **ARTICLE II (PURPOSE)**

Our values include: recognizing and honoring the range of human experience and expression in body, mind and spirit; individual freedom of belief; responsible search for truth and meaning; the democratic process in human relations; and allegiance to the cause of a peacefully united world community.

Based upon the preceding statement of values, it shall be our purpose to maintain a religious program for the benefit and welfare of our members and the community at large, encouraging individual growth in maturity and effectiveness to better serve the needs of one another, all humanity and the earth. Furthermore, it shall be our express purpose to extend Unitarian Universalism, maintaining a full church ministry composed of worship, religious education, service and fellowship.

## **ARTICLE III (DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION)**

This Church shall maintain membership in the Unitarian Universalist Association and shall cooperate with it and its affiliate organizations and shall encourage the establishment of other Unitarian Universalist churches.

## **ARTICLE IV (MEMBERSHIP)**

Section 1. There shall be two classes three (3) of affiliation with this church: Voting Members, Lifetime Members and Friends.

A. Voting Members are those persons fourteen (14) years of age or older who, being in sympathy with the stated purposes of this congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association, have signed the membership roll and who have made an identifiable contribution of money or service within the previous fiscal year.

B. A Lifetime Member is one who has been a member for twenty years or more, has pledged regularly, and given of both time and talents. Such a Member earns the title of Lifetime Member for their past contributions and, when life circumstances alter with time, may continue to vote without further pledging or volunteer contributions. Lifetime membership may also be conferred at the discretion of the board of trustees in conjunction with the membership committee.

C. Friends are those persons who are in sympathy with the purposes of this congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association, but who, for whatever reason, do not wish to sign the membership roll. Friends are not eligible to vote at congregational meetings.

D. A Member who is absent or noncontributing for one year, or is deemed disruptive per published policy, shall be removed from the membership roll unless the Board of Trustees decides otherwise.

Section 2. To be eligible to vote in a congregational meeting, a member must attend the meeting and have signed the membership roll at least 30 days in advance of such meeting.

A. For the purposes of determining quorum requirements at meetings, only those members residing in Tarrant County and its adjacent counties will be considered. This is only for the purpose of calculating the required number of members to be present to achieve quorum and will not affect any member's eligibility for participating and voting at any meeting.

B. Voting Members who have not attained the age of eighteen (18) years, or the age of majority as defined in the laws of the State of Texas or the United States, as those laws are or may be constituted, may not vote on any matter on which by law they are not entitled to vote; otherwise such Members have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of active membership.

## **ARTICLE V (OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES)**

Section 1. The management of all of the affairs, property, business and operations of the Church shall be vested in the Board of Trustees, including the hiring and dismissal of staff and employees [except for the minister(s)]. It shall have the power to delegate and assign duties and responsibilities to committees, staff, employees, and others as it deems necessary and proper, including the evaluation of staff and employees. The Board of Trustees shall be composed of a President, Vice-president or President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and three (3) Members-at-large, all to be elected from the voting members as hereinafter prescribed. A majority of the trustees shall constitute a quorum. The Board of Trustees shall maintain a set of Standing Rules of the Church which shall outline important policies and implement these bylaws.

Section 2. The Trustees shall be nominated and elected in the following manner:

A. The Leadership Development Committee, at least fifteen (15) days before each Annual Meeting, shall submit to all voting members, nominations for President, Vice-president or President-elect, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, whose term of office shall be for two (2) years or until their successors have been elected and duly qualified.

B. The Leadership Development Committee, at the same time, shall also submit to the voting members nominations for three (3) Members-at-large. Members-at-large shall serve two- (2) year terms

C. The President shall call for any other nominations from voting members present at the annual meeting. A simple majority of those votes cast for each position shall be declared elected to the Board of Trustees.

D. Officers and Board Members shall assume office January 1, immediately following the election.

E. The President and Vice-president shall not be eligible for election to the same office for more than two (2) full consecutive terms of office. The immediate Past-President shall automatically become an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board of Trustees for a term of one (1) year. No Member-at-large shall serve in that capacity for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

F. In any year that the person nominated for President is not eligible for an additional term, the Leadership Development Committee shall nominate a President-Elect instead of a Vice President.

Section 3. Vacancies on the Board of Trustees during the year may be filled until the next mid-year congregational meeting by a majority vote of the trustees present and voting at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees shall hold monthly meetings after notification of each trustee unless the Board agrees that no meeting is necessary. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called at any time by the President, or by any three trustees after notification of each trustee.

Section 5. Three (3) consecutive absences from regularly scheduled (not special) Board meetings by a trustee shall, unless the Board votes otherwise, create a vacancy to be filled by the usual appointment procedures as prescribed in Section 3 of this article.

Section 6. The Board shall have the power to buy and sell property of the Church and to enter into loan or credit agreements respecting such property. It is provided, however, that the Board shall not have the power to buy or sell real property valued in excess of ten percent (10%) of the then current church budget without approval of the congregation by a two-third (2/3) vote of those present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering such purchase or sale.

## **ARTICLE VI (CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS)**

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Section 1. The annual meeting shall be held each year in November and the mid-year meeting shall be held in May, at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Notice of time, place, and agenda of business shall be sent to all voting members of the Church at least fifteen days before each meeting. Action cannot be taken concerning purchase or sale of real property value in excess of ten percent (10%) of the current annual church budget, the amendment of the bylaws, or the employment or dismissal of the minister(s), unless it is on the published agenda.

Section 2. The approval of buying and selling of real property valued in excess of ten percent (10%) of the current annual church budget shall require a two-thirds majority of voting members present at a regular or special meeting.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the President, a majority of the Board of Trustees, or upon written request of twenty percent of the voting members of the Church as shown on the last voting list. Notice of the time, place, and the agenda of such meeting shall be given by the Board to all voting members at least five days before the meeting. Only such business as is stated upon the notice of the call shall be considered at a special meeting.

Section 4. To constitute a quorum throughout the meeting, twenty-five percent (25%) of membership entitled to vote shall be present at the beginning of the meeting. Unless otherwise stated herein, decision of the membership shall be by majority vote of those present.

Section 5. Attendance at the meeting can be accomplished either in-person or by electronic means.

A. Electronic attendance can be accomplished by either a standard phone call or a video conferencing solution selected by the Board of Trustees. Instructions for attending the meeting will be included as a part of the meeting agenda.

B. If an alternative will be unavailable for a meeting, the congregation should be notified as soon as possible – preferably as part of the Congregational Meeting announcement. The decision to eliminate a means of attending will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

Section 6. A meeting packet will be assembled by the Board of Trustees and made available to members 7 days prior to the meeting day. This packet will be made available to the congregation on First Jefferson's web page. The availability of the packet will be announced to the congregation at least 7 days prior to the congregational meeting. A member can request a hard copy of the meeting packet prior to the meeting and a reasonable effort will be made to deliver it to the member.

## **ARTICLE VII (DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS)**

Section 1. The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Church and of the Board of Trustees. The President shall lead the Church and the Board of Trustees in envisioning and developing positive plans for direction and growth of ministry and membership, and shall have all the powers necessary to carry out the duties usually associated with that office. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, with the exception of the nominating committee (Leadership Development) and the Committee on Ministries. The President shall make a written report on the work of the Board of Trustees to be submitted to the members of the congregation at the mid-year and annual meetings. In meetings of the Board of Trustees, the President shall vote only in the case of a tie.

Section 2. The Vice President or President-Elect shall perform the duties of the President when the President is unable to act for any reason. In addition, the Vice President shall perform such functions and duties as may be specified by the Board.

Section 3. The Secretary shall be responsible for making and preserving all official records of the Church and the Board of Trustees; for official correspondence; and for maintaining a current list of Members; and shall have the powers to perform all other duties usually assigned to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. The Secretary shall be responsible for the Corporate Seal and for deeds and evidences of Church property. All records shall remain the property of the Church.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall have custody and responsibility of all Church Funds, except those assigned to other persons as established in the Standing Rules by the Board of Trustees; shall keep accurate records of all matters pertaining to this office, and shall make monthly reports to the Board of Trustees, in addition to annual and semi-annual reports to the Church.

Section 5. All meetings shall be conducted under the provisions of the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 6. Attendance at Board of Trustees meetings can be accomplished either in-person or by electronic means.

A. Electronic attendance can be accomplished by either a standard phone call or a video conferencing solution. Instructions for attending the meeting will be included as a part of the meeting announcement.

B. If an alternative will be unavailable for a meeting, the congregation will be notified as soon as possible. The decision to eliminate a means of attending will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

## **ARTICLE VIII (COMMITTEES)**

### Section 1 Standing and Temporary Committees

The Board may appoint standing and temporary committees as it deems necessary. All committees shall report to the Board of Trustees at the time and in the form determined by the Board. All committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board. Committee chairs must be Church Members. Membership of all committees, with the exception of Leadership Development, the Committee on Ministries, and the Board, shall be open to all Members and Friends. The Board may organize the committees into councils as it determines will best meet the changing needs of the Church.

### Section 2. Leadership Development Committee

A. The Leadership Development Committee shall consist of three (3) members of the congregation. The committee shall be nominated and elected at the annual meeting. The members of the committee shall serve for three (3) years in staggered terms, and the committee shall elect its chair,

B. The duties of the committee are prescribed in Article V, Section 2. In addition, the Leadership Development Committee shall assist the Board of Trustees in the identification of committee chairs and in the recruitment of committee members. The Leadership Development Committee shall solicit recommendation from the Membership through all appropriate means.

### Section 3. The Committee on Ministries

A. The Committee on Ministries shall consist of three (3) members. All members shall serve for three (3) years in staggered terms. The committee shall choose its chair. Each year the Minister and the Board shall discuss a list of names totaling the number of vacancies to be filled that year plus one (1). The Board shall choose the persons to fill the existing vacancies. Should a member of the committee resign, the place will be filled by the Board in consultation with the Minister.

B. The Committee on Ministries shall serve to promote all ministries of the Church. Functioning as a vision-oriented oversight group, the purpose of the committee is to strengthen the quality of the Church's ministries. It seeks to understand, assess, and advocate for robust ministry throughout the context of congregational life. It shall make observations and/or recommendations to the Church in a ministry report at the annual and/or mid-year congregational meeting(s).

## **ARTICLE IX (FISCAL YEAR)**

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from July 1 to June 30.

The annual budget shall be adopted at the Mid-Year Congregational Meeting in May. The Annual Budget Pledge Drive shall be held each year prior to May 1.

## **ARTICLE X (AMENDMENTS)**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Board of Trustees or by petition of twenty percent (20%) of Members. These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any legal meeting of the Church, provided that the proposed changes have been stated in the call of such a meeting. At the meeting, both the wording and the intent of the amendments thus proposed may be changed by the congregation. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at the meeting shall be necessary for the adoption of amendments to these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XI (MINISTER)**

Section 1. Candidates for Minister of this Church shall be selected by a Ministerial Search Committee expressly created for this purpose. This committee shall consist of nine (9) Members. To be eligible for consideration as Minister, a candidate shall actively subscribe to and support the principles embodied in the stated purpose of the Church and be in fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The term "minister" as used in these Bylaws means the duly settled minister of the congregation, and does not include any temporary or provisional ministers such as an interim minister, consulting minister, ministerial intern, or other person occupying any similar position.

Section 2. The Minister shall be called upon recommendation of the Ministerial Search Committee by four-fifths (4/5) majority of the Members present at any meeting legally called for the purpose; quorum for such a meeting is to be constituted by forty percent (40%) of the Members rather than twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members as called for

in other congregational meetings.

Section 3. The Minister shall be a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and all committees except the nominating committee (Leadership Development), the Committee on Ministries or a Ministerial Search Committee.

Section 4. To resign, the Minister shall give the President of the Board of Trustees written notice three (3) months in advance of the resignation's effective date.

Section 5. The Minister of the Church shall serve under such terms and conditions as set forth in a written employment agreement to be approved by the Church at any regular or special meeting. This written agreement shall contain a provision for termination of employment upon three (3) months written notice. Approval of this agreement shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting.

Section 6. Termination of the employment of a Minister shall require a four-fifths (4/5) majority of the qualified Members present at any meeting legally called for the purpose; quorum for such a meeting is to be constituted by forty percent (40%) of the Members rather than twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members as called for in other congregational meetings.

## **ARTICLE XII (DISSOLUTION)**

Should this Church cease to function, the membership may vote to disband by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of Members present.

In the event of the dissolution of the congregation, all outstanding debts shall be paid and the remaining assets, both real and personal, and including all property heretofore and hereinafter donated to said congregation, shall become the property of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 24 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts, or its successor, subject to all applicable laws.

Revised: May 26, 1969; March 22, 1970; May 21, 1972; May 13, 1973; October 30, 1977; May 18, 1980; May 16, 1982; May 20, 1984; November 4, 1984; May 5, 1991; May 17, 1992; November 15, 1992; May 1995; May 1996; December 1997; November 1998; November 2001; June 2002; November 2015; April 2020; November 2020