

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MEETING HOUSE
CHATHAM, MA.

BY-LAWS

Article I. Name

The Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, a religious body, hereinafter referred to as the UUMH.

Article II. Purpose and Vision

1. Purpose. The UUMH seeks to foster a shared search for religious and ethical values, promote character development, nurture the spirit, and serve others.

2. Unitarian Universalist Principles. The UUMH subscribes to the following principles:

- A commitment to accept one another and encourage each other's spiritual growth.
- A recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- A belief in the need for justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
- A commitment to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Acceptance of the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our Congregation.
- A desire to further the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- A deep and abiding respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

3. Vision Statement approved by the Congregation on June 18, 2000.

“We the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House strive:

- To apply Unitarian Universalist principles in our daily living, social actions and community service.
- To nurture a safe community that encourages intellectual, spiritual and religious freedom and celebrates all the passages of life.
- To welcome diversity and pluralism as essential for our connection with all humanity.
- To provide fellowship, friendship, fun and to support a creative artistic and musical environment.
- To sustain and promote a vital religious, spiritual and life-span education program.”

4. Mission Statement approved by the Congregation on June 20, 2021.

Nurturing inclusive community
Seeking justice and equity
Encouraging free minds and spirits

5. Inclusivity. UUMH affirms and promotes the full participation of people in all our activities and endeavors including membership, programs, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, or physical limitation.

Article III. Denominational Affiliation

UUMH may be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the appropriate District or Region.

Article IV. Membership

1. Members. Any person may become a Member who is 16 years of age or older, and
 - Is in sympathy with the “Purpose and Vision” statements.
 - Recognizes his or her responsibility to contribute to the life of the UUMH through participation in activities and/or financial support.
 - Has signed the Membership Book in the presence of the minister, a Board of Trustees member or designee, or has sent a written request to be added to the membership book.
 - Members may vote thirty days after having signed the Membership Book. Only Members will be counted for reporting to regional and national UUA organizations. Only Members are eligible to vote, serve in elected positions, or as committee chairpersons.
2. Friends. Persons who have an interest in the UUMH, its philosophy, goals, and activities, but who do not wish to sign the Membership Book, or Members who are no longer local, may be designated as Friends. Friends are encouraged to participate in the life of the UUMH but are not eligible to vote.
3. Resignation and removal. Any person may resign from UUMH upon notice to the President of the Board of Trustees. Any Member who has not participated in or contributed services or funds during the current and previous year may be removed from the membership rolls by the Board of Trustees.
4. Verification for voting. The Board of Trustees shall verify prior to the Annual Meeting or any Special Meeting a current list of all Members eligible to vote. Any person omitted from a membership list may appeal to the Board.
5. Removal for Cause. A Member’s name shall be removed from the membership list by a two-third vote of the Board of Trustees for actions the Board deems a threat to the safety

or well-being of a member of the Congregation or the Congregation as a whole, provided that the offending member has the right to appear before the Board prior to removal.

Article V. Meetings of the UUMH

1. All Meetings. Notices of congregational meetings of the UUMH shall be issued by the President of the Board of Trustees in writing at least 14 days prior to the meeting and shall be announced during the services on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.
2. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall be held within the 30-day period prior to the closing of the fiscal year on a date determined by the Board of Trustees. The notice of the meeting shall specify the agenda, including the list of the nominees proposed for election, the proposed next year's budget, and other matters as determined by the Board. The Board shall designate a person to take minutes of the Annual Meeting, have them recorded and published within 30 days of the meeting.
3. Rules. All UUMH meetings will be conducted in accordance with these by-laws and "Robert's Rules of Order." The Moderator shall call the meeting to order, read the notice of the meeting including the agenda, and conduct the meeting.
4. Special Meetings. The Board of Trustees shall call Special Meetings of the UUMH within 45 days upon the written request of ten (10) or more Members. Notice shall be given as outlined in Article V Section 1. Such meetings will be limited to the business for which they are called.
5. Voting. Any measures presented for consideration at UUMH meetings, including nominations for office, must be passed by a majority vote with a legal quorum present, except that the sale or purchase of real property or adoption of amendments to these by-laws (Article XII) shall require an affirmative vote of two thirds of those constituting such a legal meeting. Twenty-five (25) percent of the Members (attending in person, by Zoom, or similar platform) shall constitute a quorum for any legal meeting of the UUMH. There will be no proxy or absentee votes.

Article VI. Elected Leadership of the UUMH

1. Enumeration. The leadership of the UUMH shall be elected by the Members at the Annual Meeting and shall consist of:
 - a. A Board of Trustees of five (5) Members of the UUMH. The Board of Trustees shall consist at a minimum of a President, a Secretary, and three at-large members. The immediate past President may be a non-voting, ex officio member of the Board regardless of the foregoing limitation.
 - b. A Moderator who shall be a Member. In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Trustees shall appoint a successor who shall serve until the first day of the next

fiscal year. In the event the Moderator cannot attend the annual meeting, the President shall appoint a Moderator for the time being. The Moderator may not simultaneously serve on the Board of Trustees.

2. Terms of Office. The terms of office of the elected positions begin on the first day of the fiscal year, and end on the last day of the following fiscal year. The elected term of office for each Trustee will be one (1) year, renewable for up to three (3) additional years with the approval of the Congregation. If a member of the Board of Trustees does not complete his/her term of office or if there are insufficient nominees for the Board, then the Board of Trustees will make every effort to fill the vacancy within 45 days with a member of the Congregation who shall have at least one year of membership in UUMH, and who shall serve until the first day of the next fiscal year. The Moderator shall serve a one-year term with no term limits.
3. Attendance. Any Member is entitled by reason of their membership to attend any meeting of the Board of Trustees. Minutes of all meetings shall be compiled promptly and made available to the membership. The Board reserves the right to enter into an executive session, provided the reasons therefore are stated and recorded in the minutes. All regularly scheduled or special meetings of the Board will be held at UUMH facilities, or via an electronic means open to all members of the Congregation.

Article VII. Duties of UUMH Officers

1. President. The President shall serve as chair of the Board of Trustees, shall preside at all meetings of the Board and represent the UUMH on all appropriate occasions. The President shall perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office. The President may be a non-voting ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nominating Committee and the Search Committee.
2. Vice-President. The Board of Trustees may, at its organizational meeting, designate one of its members to serve in the office of Vice President. The Vice-President shall act in the absence of, or at the request of, the President, at which time s/he shall have all powers reserved to the President. In addition, the Vice-President shall perform such functions and duties as may be specified by the Board.
3. Secretary. The Board of Trustees shall, at its organizational meeting, designate one of its members to serve in the office of Secretary of the UUMH. The Secretary shall also be the official Secretary of the Board, shall oversee that proper records are maintained as required by law, that the proceedings of the Board are regularly reported to the Congregation, and shall perform such other duties as may be specified by the Board. All records of the Secretary shall be the property of the UUMH. S/he shall be responsible for notifying the membership of all UUMH meetings in the prescribed manner.
4. Treasurer. The Board of Trustees shall, at its organizational meeting, designate a Member of UUMH, who need not be a member of the Board, to serve in the office of

Treasurer of the UUMH. The Treasurer shall oversee the safekeeping of all funds, securities, receipt and expenditure of funds. S/he shall provide complete financial statements to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings and to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be specified by the Board.

5. Moderator. The Moderator shall preside at all UUMH Annual or Special Meetings.

Article VIII. Duties of the Leadership of the UUMH

1. Authority and responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the UUMH ultimately rests with the Congregation. In its exercise of that authority, however, the Congregation assigns to the Board of Trustees the responsibility for achieving the “Purpose and Vision” of the UUMH. The Congregation reserves for itself the purchase or sale of real estate and the calling or dismissal of a Settled Minister.
2. The Board of Trustees shall:
 - Work toward achieving the “Purpose and Vision” of the UUMH.
 - Be responsible for all business and financial affairs including raising and expending funds, recommending an annual budget, determining salaries and compensation and other matters pertaining to the administrative operations of the UUMH.
 - Have the authority to increase the annual operating budget by 3% and incur debt up to the amount of 5% of the annual operating budget for the care and preservation of property.
 - Appoint committees, as needed, and ensure those committees have a chair, an established mission, and defined responsibilities.
 - Appoint a person not a member of the Board of Trustees to audit the Treasurer’s records at the end of each fiscal year and report to the Board within sixty days.
 - Meet and be called into session by the President. Any two members of the Board may call a Special Meeting of the Board with adequate notice. The quorum of the Board shall be at least 51% of its members. Proxies may be used to establish a quorum of the Board as well as for voting.
 - Approve all Policy and Procedure statements, in consultation with appropriate staff.
 - Be responsible for the administration of the UUMH, including employment, supervision and evaluation of all staff and employees.

Article IX. Nomination of Members of the Board of Trustees and other Elected Positions

1. Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee of no fewer than three (3) Members of the UUMH shall be elected for one year with four one-year term limits at the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consult with the BOT on its assessment of the needs of UUMH, to be considered along with its own assessment, to inform succession of leadership, and solicits candidates from the BOT, other leadership bodies,

minister, and members. The Nominating Committee shall offer the slate of candidates for the Board of Trustees and for the Nominating Committee, for election at the Annual Meeting. The Board of Trustees shall offer a slate of Endowment Board Members.

2. The Board of Trustees shall offer a slate of a minimum of three and preferably five members of the Endowment Board. No member of the Endowment Board may be a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Additional Nominations. Any Member may make additional nominations for any elected position at the Annual Meeting. Nominations from the floor must receive two seconds.

Article X. The Minister

1. Search Committee. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Minister, a Search Committee may be formed by the Board of Trustees. At least two (2) Board of Trustees members should be included on the Search Committee. The Search Committee will elect its own chair, and will develop a process for screening eligible candidates, who shall be in good standing and in fellowship as determined by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA. A candidate recommended by the Search Committee to be a Settled Minister must be approved by at least a 2/3rd majority of the Board of Trustees followed by a vote of at least 90% of a quorum of Members present at a regular or Special Meeting of the UUMH. If any person declares to be a candidate for the ministry, their frequency of pulpit appearances will be limited to no more than once per month.

In the event the Congregation does not consider or approve a Settled Minister, the Board of Trustees may, in its discretion, negotiate with and hire a Contract Minister.

2. Duties. The authority and duties of the Minister shall comprise the customary pursuits of the office, directed toward the furtherance of the “Purposes and Vision” of the UUMH. These shall include but not be limited to worship, and all duties generally understood to be the proper function of a minister. The Minister may be a non-voting ex-officio member of such committees as the Board shall designate, excluding the Nominating Committee and Search Committee.
3. Freedoms. The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit as well as the freedom to express his or her opinion outside the pulpit.
4. Letter of Agreement. Prior to any meeting at which a Settled Minister is called (a “Called Minister”) a letter of agreement without definite tenure will be negotiated by the Board of Trustees and the candidate, which shall stipulate the duties, compensation, and other conditions of employment, including resignation and termination with three months’ notice. The Letter of Agreement will be approved by the Board. Termination of a Called Minister shall require a majority vote of a quorum at the Annual or Special Meeting of the UUMH.

Article XI Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the UUMH shall begin July 1st and end June 30th.

Article XII Amendments

The by-laws may be amended at any Annual or Special meeting of the UUMH by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of the membership. All such proposed changes shall be provided in writing to the membership at least 14 days in advance of such meeting. The by-laws shall be reviewed every five years.

Article XIII Indemnification

In accordance with MGL c180, s6C, all Trustees, Officers, Employees, and Members shall be protected from liability if acting in good faith. The Board of Trustees must approve any indemnification payments pursuant to this Article.

Article XV Endowment Fund

An ENDOWMENT FUND, whose purpose, governance, and operational procedures shall be defined by special resolution adopted by this Congregation, shall be established.

A RESOLUTION TO IMPLEMENT THE ENDOWMENT FUND

WHEREAS stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts we have been given—time, talents, and money, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources; and

WHEREAS we can support the religious mission and work of this Congregation through transfers of property (including but not limited to personal property, cash, stocks, bonds, or real estate), charitable bequests in wills, charitable remainder and other trusts, pooled income funds, charitable gift annuities, assignment of life insurance or retirement plans; and

WHEREAS it is the desire of this Congregation to encourage, receive, and administer such gifts in a manner consistent with the loyalty and devotion expressed by the grantors and in accord with the policies of this Congregation:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an Endowment Fund Board (hereinafter called the “ENDOWMENT BOARD”), consisting of a minimum of three and preferably five UUMH members nominated by the UUMH Board of Trustees and elected by this Congregation, shall be the administrator of this FUND.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any contributions received and accepted by the ENDOWMENT BOARD with the approval of the UUMH Board of Trustees shall thereupon become part of the FUND;

and that if the ENDOWMENT BOARD and the UUMH Board of Trustees approve the acceptance of a proposed contribution subject to any restriction, condition, or reservation by the donor, the ENDOWMENT BOARD shall faithfully observe such restriction, condition, or reservation. All such assets are to be held in the name of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House , a Massachusetts corporation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that distributions from unrestricted funds shall require the written approval of the ENDOWMENT BOARD and the concurrence of the Board of Trustees. Only in particular, temporary, extraordinary circumstances, and where integrity of gift restrictions permit, may the Congregation, by a two-thirds vote at a duly constituted meeting, use a portion of the FUND for its own operating expenses or in excess of established guidelines;

and that distributions from restricted funds will be in accordance with the applicable instructions for the specific fund;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any amendment to this resolution which will change, alter, or amend the purpose for which the FUND is established shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a duly constituted congregational meeting called specifically for the purpose of amending this resolution.

ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION

This resolution, recommended by the Board of Trustees and accepted by this Congregation at a legally constituted congregational meeting, is hereby adopted.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MEETING HOUSE OF CHATHAM

These Bylaws were adopted by this Congregation at a legally constituted congregational meeting on June 15, 2025.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MEETING HOUSE OF CHATHAM

_____, *President*

_____, *Secretary*

Dated this _____ *day of* _____.