

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF
THE MAIN LINE UNITARIAN
CHURCH**

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ARTICLE 1 NAME

The name of this church shall be Main Line Unitarian Church (hereinafter referred to as the Church).

ARTICLE 2 AFFILIATIONS

The Church shall be a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and any successor association.

ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. New Membership. Any person age sixteen (16) years or older may become a member if she or he (a) is in sympathy with the spirit and purpose of the Church; (b) recognizes his or her responsibility to contribute to the life of the Church through participation; (c) provides financial support in the form of an annual pledge; and (d) signs the membership book.

Section 2. Privileges of Members. Only members of the Church shall be permitted to vote or to serve in elected positions. A member is eligible to make motions and vote at congregational meetings and hold office after he or she has been a member for thirty (30) days. Members below the age of twenty one (21) shall be prohibited from signing binding documents on behalf of the Church and may not serve as President.

Section 3. Resignation. Any member may withdraw his or her membership at any time by notifying the Senior Minister or the Board of Trustees (hereinafter referred to as the Board) in writing.

Section 4. Cessation of Membership. The Senior Minister may remove from membership, by written notice, any member who has not made a financial contribution of record or been otherwise active in the life of the Church for the previous two (2) years. Exceptions to this requirement for continued membership may be made by the Senior Minister. A member who cannot be located at his or her last known address in the Church membership registry may also be removed. Reasonable efforts shall be made to contact a member prior to removal. The Senior Minister may also remove from membership, by written notice, any member who has acted adversely to the best interests, or in contravention of the stated values, principles or policies, of the Church. Any person removed from membership may appeal in writing to the Board, whose decision, after having provided the member with an opportunity to be heard, shall be final. Notice of the Board's final decision shall be given to the member in writing.

Section 5. Membership Registry. Upon becoming a member, the member's name

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and address shall be entered in the membership registry maintained by the Church. The membership registry shall be amended to reflect any change of membership status.

ARTICLE 4 CONGREGATIONAL AUTHORITY

Section 1. Authority. The ultimate authority for all matters pertaining to the Church shall rest with the congregation, which shall consist of the members of the Church. The congregation shall function as a legally constituted body at all annual and special meetings. The congregation shall elect Board trustees and committee members when specified in these bylaws or Church policies. The congregation shall call the Senior Minister and any other minister called for ministerial positions.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the Church shall be held at a date, time and place determined by the Board. The business of the annual meeting shall include elections specified by the bylaws or Church policies, approval of the budget for the next fiscal year, reports of committees and staff, and any other Church business that may need to be conducted.

Section 3. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Board or upon written petition of fifty (50) Church members or five percent (5%) of the membership, whichever is fewer. The purpose and agenda must be stated in the petition. At special meetings, the business acted upon shall be restricted to items on the agenda. The Secretary shall fix the time of the meeting, which shall be not more than sixty (60) days after the request.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings. The Secretary shall give written notice and an agenda for all annual and special congregational meetings, which shall be sent by first class or express mail, email, courier, fax or personal delivery to each member entitled to vote at least fourteen (14) days before the meeting. A member may, in writing, waive the foregoing notice requirements and elect to receive notice by other means as are acceptable to the Secretary. Alternatively, notice of the date and time of the meeting may be read from the pulpit on at least two (2) days on which regular services are conducted within thirty (30) days of the meeting, one of which shall be the last regular service day immediately preceding the meeting, which may be the day of the meeting. The notice shall state the business to be transacted.

Section 5. Parliamentary Procedures. The then current version of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern procedure at all meetings of the Church.

Section 6. Quorum and Conduct of Meetings. A quorum for conducting business shall be sixty (60) members or ten percent (10%) of the membership, whichever is greater, except in the following five (5) cases.

a. Calling or dismissing a minister. In this case the quorum shall be forty percent (40%).

b. Removing from office a person elected by the congregation. In this case the quorum shall be twenty percent (20%).

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- c. Buying, selling or encumbering real property. In this case the quorum shall be twenty percent (20%).
- d. Changing the stated purpose or approved distribution from an endowment fund. In this case the quorum shall be twenty percent (20%).
- e. Amending these bylaws. In this case the quorum shall be twenty percent (20%).

Absentee ballot votes will be counted toward the quorum, except with respect to the twenty percent (20%) and forty percent (40%) quorums required for the five (5) cases referred to in the preceding paragraph. The Secretary shall make a ballot available to all members who are eligible to vote but cannot attend a given meeting for reasons of incapacitation, travel, or similar grounds. All ballots shall be in writing and specifically state the issue to be voted upon and how the ballot is to be voted. Absentee ballots must be received by the President or his or her designee on the last business day before the meeting, but in no event less than twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting. If, during the meeting, a majority of those members attending in person vote to amend the issue as presented on the absentee ballot (other than for technical corrections and clarifications), the absentee ballots shall not be counted when the final vote is taken.

Section 7. Voting. Any member who has been a member for at least thirty (30) days prior to a meeting of the congregation shall have the right to vote at that meeting.

a. In any election in which the number of nominees for any specific position is equal to or less than the number of specific positions to be filled, election shall be by aye or nay vote.

b. In any election in which the number of nominees for any specific position is greater than the number of specific positions to be filled, the following procedure shall be used:

Each member shall have a number of votes equal to the sum of the digits from one (1) through the number of positions to be filled. (For example, for five (5) positions the number of votes per member shall be five (5), plus four (4), plus three (3), plus two (2), plus one (1) = fifteen (15) votes.)

Each member shall vote by secret, written ballot, listing the nominee for whom he or she wishes to vote and the number of votes not to exceed the number of votes as determined above. The maximum number of votes that can be cast for any one (1) nominee shall not exceed one (1) plus the total allowable votes as in this Section 7(b) above, less the total number of offices to be filled. (For example, the maximum would be four (4) if there were three (3) offices to be filled and eleven (11) if there were five (5) offices to be filled.) This maximum shall be clearly indicated on the ballot.

Nominees shall be elected to fill the offices in order of number of votes. In case of a tie for the last office, a run-off election among those who are tied for the office shall be held.

c. At least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) shall be required to approve expenditures of Church assets or sales of Church property

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exceeding One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) (escalated to an equivalent value from 2010 dollars to account for inflation, as determined by the Board from time to time) on any single purchase, sale, or contract for services, other than Letters of Agreement for called ministers and employment contracts for other employees.

d. At least ninety percent (90%) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) to call a minister must be votes in the affirmative to issue the call. The vote shall be by written secret ballot.

e. At least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) to dismiss a called minister must be votes in the affirmative to dismiss. The vote shall be by written secret ballot.

f. At least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) to alter or amend these bylaws must be in the affirmative to alter or amend.

g. A majority of all members of the Church who have been members for at least thirty (30) days must cast an affirmative vote to dissolve the Church.

h. At least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) to change the stated purpose or approved distribution of an endowment fund must be in the affirmative to change.

i. In response to a petition for removal pursuant to Article 7 of these bylaws, at least two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) to remove a person holding a position elected by the congregation from that position must be in the affirmative to remove. The vote shall be by written secret ballot.

j. A majority of the votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) shall be required for all other decisions.

k. Absentee ballot votes are not allowed for votes to call or dismiss a minister, to remove from office a person elected by the congregation, to alter or amend the bylaws, to dissolve the Church, to sell, buy or encumber real property, or to change the stated purpose or approved distribution of an endowment fund.

Section 8. Moderator. A Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting to serve a term of three (3) years. The Moderator shall be eligible for re-election. The Moderator shall not be a member of the Board. The Moderator shall preside at all annual and special meetings. The Moderator shall determine whether or not an amendment to an issue on which absentee ballots have been submitted is a technical or substantive amendment for purposes of determining whether or not absentee ballots will be counted or disqualified.

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ARTICLE 5 BOARD OF TRUSTEES and OFFICERS

Section 1. Authority. The Board shall act on behalf of the congregation as the overall governing body of the Church. The Board is responsible only to the membership, which assigns the Board the responsibility to provide strategic leadership in the achievement of the Church's purpose, and the authority to oversee the finances, business, property, programs and affairs of the Church. Without limiting the foregoing, the Board shall have the power in any one (1) year to incur debts up to the amount of ten percent (10%) of the annual operating budget for the care and preservation of the property of the Church and for any other purpose of the Church which the Board deems necessary.

Section 2. Responsibilities. The duties and responsibilities of the Board shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. ensuring that the Church has an up-to-date mission and strategic plan, and assessing progress toward their achievement.
- b. establishing appropriate and necessary written policies to guide the Church, and monitoring compliance with such policies.
- c. developing appropriate and necessary written policies and procedures to guide the operation of the Board.
- d. having general charge of raising, expending and managing Church funds, including endowment funds; establishing the Church's fiscal year; presenting an annual budget to the congregation for approval; and appointing one (1) or more auditors to conduct an annual review of the Church's finances.
- e. making available to all members, no later than four (4) months after the close of the fiscal year, a written annual financial report as required by law, including a statement by the auditors summarizing their findings.
- f. acting as an agent of the Church with regard to the purchase, maintenance, encumbrance and disposal of Church property; employment of ministers and all other full- or part-time employees of the Church; and any other matters pertaining to the administrative or business operations of the Church.
- g. making interim appointments to fill unexpired elected Board and Nominating Committee positions until the end of the fiscal year.
- h. engaging in regular, two-way communication with the congregation.
- i. authorizing public statements that shall be made in the name of the Church, after consultation with the Senior Minister. Such statements shall indicate whether they have been approved by the Board or the congregation, or both.

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j. performing such other duties and responsibilities as may be established by the policies of the Church or by other sections of these bylaws.

Section 3. Delegation of Authority. The Board may delegate the implementation of Board policies and any Board duties as it deems appropriate and is consistent with these bylaws and Church policies. The Board may appoint committees or task forces to assist the Board in the fulfillment of its duties, as it deems appropriate.

Section 4. Composition and Term Lengths.

a. The Board shall consist of seven (7) elected members or, in the special situation of the President serving a two (2) year term that commences in the third (3rd) year of their term, resulting in eight (8) members.

b. Board members will serve staggered three (3) year terms, with vacant positions elected at each annual meeting. Terms of newly elected members of the Board shall take effect upon the first (1st) day of the fiscal year following the election.

c. Any member of the Board who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular Board meetings or any five (5) regular Board meetings in a Church fiscal year shall, after written notification, be considered as having resigned from the Board, unless the Board votes otherwise.

d. Vacancies occurring on the Board may be filled for the uncompleted year by appointment by the remaining members of the Board. Any remaining unexpired terms of office shall be filled by election at the next annual meeting.

e. A Board member who has served three (3) continuous years shall not be eligible for re-election until after an interval of three (3) years. A member who fills an unexpired term may, if nominated, subsequently be elected to a full term so long as the total continuous term of service does not exceed four and one half (4 1/2) years.

Section 5. Officers.

a. The Board shall elect, for a one (1) or two (2) year term, from among its members a President and Vice President.

b. The Board shall appoint each year a Secretary, a Treasurer and such other officers, as it may deem necessary, who may be selected from among the trustees, the membership at large, or the Church staff provided that Church staff shall not be eligible for the office of Treasurer.

c. The President's Board term, if required, can be extended one (1) year to serve a two (2) year term as President. In no event shall the President's Board term exceed four and one half (4 1/2) years. Terms of newly elected or appointed officers shall take effect upon election or appointment or the first (1st) day of the fiscal year for which the officer has been elected or appointed, whichever is later.

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d. The authority and duties of officers shall be as prescribed by the Board and as consistent with state law.

e. All notices required by these bylaws to be given to an officer shall be delivered to the Church office during regular business hours.

Section 6. Board Meetings.

a. The Board shall hold a minimum of ten (10) regularly scheduled meetings during each fiscal year.

b. A majority of the Board members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Board shall make decisions by consensus or majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The president chooses the consensus or majority vote method based on circumstances. Roberts' Rules of Order will be used as required or appropriate.

c. The agenda for each regularly scheduled Board meeting shall be posted at least four (4) days, including a Sunday morning, prior to the meeting. The agenda for any other Board meeting, other than those in Section 6(f) below, shall be posted on as timely a basis as is practical. Each Board member shall be given prior written notice of a Board meeting. Any member of the Church may attend any Board meeting at which Church business is being conducted, except when the Board meets in executive session. Minutes of all such Board meetings (except those held in executive session) shall be posted or otherwise made available to the congregation as promptly as practical after each meeting.

d. When necessary in his or her judgment, the President shall, with the approval of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the Board members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present, convene the Board in executive session to discuss confidential issues. Keeping in mind the desire of the congregation for open board meetings, executive sessions shall be used sparingly and only for confidential issues such as personnel matters, a negotiating position in pending litigation, or real estate transactions; when the need for confidentiality is no longer applicable, executive session shall no longer be used. Subject to Section 6(e), notice to the congregation will be given in advance of such executive session and will note the justification for confidential discussion. The Board may invite ministers, staff, or others to attend such meetings at its sole discretion as necessary to facilitate discussion. No other business of the Church shall be discussed at such meetings except that for which notice was given.

e. The President may call an emergency meeting or convene an unanticipated executive session of the Board during a Board meeting without prior notification to the congregation. Notice of the emergency meeting or unanticipated executive session and its purpose shall be provided to the congregation within twenty-four (24) hours after its conclusion.

f. The President may convene Board members without notice to the congregation for the purpose of Board development, covenant review, internal goal setting, or agenda

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planning. No Church business may be acted upon in such gatherings.

Section 7. Personal Liability of Board Members.

a. Board members shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken or any failure to take any action, unless the Board member has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office under 15 Pa.C.S. Chapter 57, Subchapter B, and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Board member pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Board member for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state, or federal law. The Church shall indemnify Board members and shall carry liability insurance to cover indemnification for any such monetary damages.

ARTICLE 6 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Section 1. Nominating Committee Members. The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven (7) members, six (6) of whom shall be elected and one (1) of whom shall be designated by the Board. Two (2) individuals shall be elected at each annual meeting, replacing two (2) members who cycle off the committee. Those elected will serve a term of three (3) years. The Board designee shall serve a term of one (1) year and shall not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms. All terms shall begin the first (1st) day of the new fiscal year following the election. Each year, before the annual meeting, the Nominating Committee shall select one (1) of its elected members, whose term does not expire that year, to serve as the chair for the coming year.

Section 2. General Duties. The Nominating Committee shall secure qualified nominees for all offices to be elected by the congregation, presenting at least one (1) nominee for each office to be filled. The Nominating Committee shall solicit suggestions from the Board, the minister(s), lay leaders and the congregation at large. The Nominating Committee shall post nominating petition(s) placing in nomination its candidates for all elective positions of the Church.

Section 3. Restriction. Members of the Nominating Committee elected by the congregation may not stand for any other elective office while serving on the Nominating Committee.

Section 4. Meetings. The Nominating Committee shall conduct its business independently according to procedures it may adopt; however, all meetings shall be held in closed session. A quorum shall be five (5) Nominating Committee members.

Section 5. Vacancies. The Board may fill any vacancy in the elected membership of the Nominating Committee, after consultation with the Nominating Committee. Anyone so appointed shall hold office until the next annual meeting, when the unexpired term shall be filled by election.

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Section 6. Re-election. There shall be at least three (3) years between Nominating Committee members' terms of office.

ARTICLE 7 Petitions for election or removal of persons from elected positions

Section 1. Petitions for Election. All nominations shall be by petition bearing signatures of the nominee and no less than twenty (20) members. A petition may bear more than one (1) nomination. Nominating petitions must be received by the President or the Secretary no less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting in which the election is to occur and shall be announced in the notice of the meeting. Nominating petitions from the Nominating Committee to fill vacancies which have occurred in a previous petition by withdrawal shall be received by the President or the Secretary no later than the Sunday preceding the date of the meeting in which the election is to occur and shall be announced from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding and at the meeting in which the election is to occur. All nominating petitions shall be posted promptly on the Church bulletin Board. If there is no legal nominee for a position at the time of the election, the office may be filled by appointment of the Board.

Section 2. Removal. Petition for removal of a person from an elected position shall require either a petition signed by sixty (60) members or five percent (5%) of the membership, whichever is greater, or certification by an officer that at least seven (7) members of the Board voted to submit a petition to the congregation. The petition must be voted upon at a meeting of the congregation.

ARTICLE 8 THE MINISTERS

Section 1. Ministerial Positions.

a. There shall be a called Senior Minister and such other called ministerial positions as the congregation shall decide.

b. The Board may hire a senior minister (i.e. non-called minister) in the absence of a called senior minister. The Senior Minister may hire other ministers with consent of the board.

Section 2. Calling Ministers. When a minister is to be called the following selection process shall be used:

a. A Search Committee of members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation in the same manner as other elected positions for the purpose of carrying out the process to solicit, evaluate, and recommend candidates to fill the position.

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b. The Search Committee shall establish the criteria for selecting the person who can best carry out the mission, purposes, and policies of the Church as informed by the congregation, the Board and the Senior Minister (if applicable).

c. The recommendation for a new minister to the Church shall be made by the Board acting on the findings of the duly elected Search Committee. The congregation shall have the opportunity to meet and hear the candidate preach. Written data on the candidate's experience and qualifications shall be furnished to each member of the Church.

d. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the congregation shall, at an annual or special meeting called for the purpose of voting to call a minister, vote on whether to call the candidate to ministry in the Church.

e. Subsections (a) through (c) of this Section shall be inapplicable in the case of a hired minister who wishes to be called pursuant to Section 1(b) above.

Section 3. Responsibilities of the Ministers.

a. The Senior Minister shall be responsible for the conduct of the religious activities of the Church, ministering to the congregation, and other functions associated with Church programs, finances, personnel, and administration as prescribed in writing by the Board and in ways that will foster and advance the mission and purposes of the Church.

b. The Senior Minister may, in turn, delegate responsibilities to other ministers, staff, and volunteers. The Senior Minister shall be responsible for establishing the duties of other ministers and staff and for their supervision.

c. All called ministers shall be *ex-officio*, non-voting members of the Board and any special committees elected by the congregation, except the Nominating Committee. Any called minister may attend any meeting of the Board not held in executive session. Upon assignment by the Senior Minister, any other minister shall also be an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Board and elected committees, excepting the Nominating Committee, and may attend all meetings of the Board not held in executive session.

Section 4. Termination of Service of Called Ministers. A called minister may terminate her or his service upon written notice to the Board pursuant to the terms of her or his Letter of Agreement. The congregation may terminate the service of a called minister at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 5. Termination of Service of Other Ministers. A minister who has been hired but not called by the congregation may be dismissed by the Senior Minister, with the prior approval of the Board.

ARTICLE 9 TAX EXEMPT LIMITATIONS

The Church shall not engage in, nor allow on its behalf engagement in, any political

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campaign or other activity that would be in violation of the laws governing the Church's tax exempt status.

ARTICLE 10 DISSOLUTION CLAUSES

To propose dissolution of the Church, a resolution recommending that the Church be dissolved voluntarily pursuant to state law must be adopted either by the Board or pursuant to a petition, directed to the Board, filed with the Secretary, and signed by members entitled to cast at least ten percent (10%) of the votes that all members are entitled to cast. Upon such adoption of a resolution of dissolution, action to dissolve the Church must be undertaken at a special meeting called by the Board upon at least thirty (30) days' written notice, stating the purpose of the meeting. Upon an affirmative vote to dissolve, all property, real or personal, of the Church, after paying all just claims upon it, shall be conveyed to and vested in the Unitarian Universalist Association, or its legal successor, except as otherwise required by law.

ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Procedures for Amending. These bylaws may be altered or amended at an annual or special meeting of the congregation, provided that said alteration or amendment shall have been proposed in writing with copies posted on the Church bulletin board. Notice of the meeting shall include a copy of the proposed amendments or alterations or a summary of the proposed changes to be voted on at the meeting.

Section 2. Adoption and Effective Date. These bylaws, adopted and effective at the close of business at the annual meeting of the congregation on May 2, 2010, shall be and remain effective immediately and thereafter until altered or amended as prescribed in this article.

AMENDMENTS HISTORY

1. 2010 May 05 Adopted and Effective.

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2. 2015 April 19 Amendment.

a) Section: Article 4, Section 6, Quorum and Conduct of Meeting.

Action: Changed membership quorum requirement from 40% to 20% for exception items b, c, d and e.

3. 2023 June 11 Amendments

a) Article 4, Section 1 - Changed He to The to correct spelling mistake

b) Article 4, Section 4 - added email

c) Article 5, Section 4a - change to seven or eight member board. Took the sentence out about Minister being ex-officio member of the board - redundant since already covered in a later section

d) Article 5, section 4b changed from three (3) members elected to vacant positions elected