



Bylaws

**The Unitarian Universalist
Church in Meriden**

REVISED June 10, 2016

THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IN MERIDEN

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REVISION HISTORY

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| Amendments adopted: | December 16, 1962 April 30, 1968 November 24, 1968 April 16, 1978 April 30, 1989 |
| Major revision adopted: | January 27, 1991 |
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| Article I, Section 3 added: | March 11, 2001 |
| Article IV, Section 2 amended: | June 22, 2008 |
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| Article VI, Section 10 added: | June 22, 2008 |
| Office of Moderator replaced with “President” throughout. | June 14, 2014 |
| Office of “Moderator-Elect” replaced with “Vice President” | June 14, 2014 |
| Article V, Section 3 amended: | June 14, 2014 |
| Article III, Section 2 amended: | June 10, 2016 |
| Article X, Section 1 amended: | June 10, 2016 |
| <i>(Removed references to the defunct “Clara Barton District”)</i> | |

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME AND DEFINITION

§1. The name of this organization, formerly known as the First Universalist Society of Meriden, Connecticut, and subsequently as the First Universalist Church of Meriden, shall be the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden.

§2. Whenever the word “Church” is used in these Bylaws it shall signify the legal organization of the religious society organized May 30, 1854, and named above. The phrase “A vote of the Church” shall mean a vote of the members comprising said organization present at any legal meeting. The term “Annual Meeting” shall mean the regular annual meeting of the Church as defined by these Bylaws. The term “Board” shall signify the Board of Trustees as established herein. The phrase “A vote of the Board”, shall mean a vote of the members of said Board present at any legal meeting.

§3. As a Welcoming Congregation, we affirm and promote 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, gender expression, physical or mental challenge, affectional or sexual orientation, age, class, or national origin.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

§1. The purpose of this Church shall be to provide for its members and their children the opportunity for study and growth in personal religion; to sponsor and provide social and educational activities for its members; to express its religious faith in service to the community and to all humankind; and to advance the cause of liberal religion and Unitarian Universalism.

ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT AND AFFILIATION

§1. The government of this Church shall be vested in its members, who shall exercise the right of control in all of its affairs, subject to local, state and Federal law.

§2. This Church shall be affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association and pledge itself to cooperate with the Association in fostering and extending the work of Unitarian Universalism.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

§1. Any person who is in harmony with the purpose of this Church as stated in Article II and is willing to cooperate in supporting the work of this Church may become a member by signing the membership register of the Church. The effective date of membership shall be the date on which the register is signed. The membership register shall remain in the custody of the Clerk.

§2. The right to vote at any meeting shall be limited to active members eighteen years of age and older, but any member may speak at any meeting. New members shall not have the right to vote until thirty days after their effective date of membership. In matters involving the sale of Real Estate or a purchase requiring a withdrawal of invested funds in excess of 10 percent of the value of the total invested funds of the church, the right to vote shall be limited to those individuals who have been members for a minimum of two years. Approval of such transactions shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present qualified to vote.

§3. A member may voluntarily terminate membership by filing a letter of resignation with the Clerk.

§4. Three months prior to the end of each fiscal year, the membership committee or another committee appointed by the Board shall compile a list of those members who have failed to demonstrate interest in the Church through participation in the work of the Church, attendance at Church services, or financial support for a period of one year or more, unless there are extenuating circumstances such as age, illness or duty in government service. The committee shall present that list to the Board for approval, upon approval, those members shall be transferred from active to inactive status.

ARTICLE V – ADMINISTRATION

§1. The administration of the affairs of the Church shall be vested in the Board of Trustees which shall consist of the following officers: the President, the Vice President, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Chairpersons of the Finance and Property Committees, and three (3) Trustees-at-Large. In the case of co-chairpersons of Finance or Property, one co-chair shall be designated to serve on the Board of Trustees. Between meetings of the Church, the Board shall have the powers of the Church itself except such as are specifically reserved by law or by these bylaws, provided, however, that the Board shall not authorize the conveyance or mortgaging of the real estate belonging to the Church without a vote of the Church approving the same, and that the Board shall not make withdrawals from the principal account of any funds invested in the name of the Church without a vote of the Church approving same, except for such regular disbursements of income as authorized in the annual budget approved by the congregation. The title of all property owned by the Church shall be in the name of the Church and shall be under the control of the Board. The Board shall have the control of and shall invest the principal comprising the permanent and trust funds of the Church unless the Church shall vote otherwise. The Board shall keep, or cause to be kept, a true record of all funds in its custody, stating from whom they were received, the conditions imposed, if any, and shall make annual reports of the same to the Church.

§2. Other officers of the Church who are not members of the Board of Trustees shall be the Minister, the Collector and the Assistant Treasurer.

§3. All officers other than the Minister shall be elected for a term of two years at the Annual Meeting of the Church and shall hold office until their successors have been elected and qualified.

§4. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, Property Trustee, Collector and one Trustee at Large shall be elected at the annual meeting on even-numbered years. The Clerk, Finance Chair, Assistant Treasurer, and two Trustees at Large shall be elected at the annual meeting on odd-numbered years.

§5. Any person who has served as a member of the Board for six consecutive years shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year, except that a member of the Board who has served for more than four, but less than six years may be elected to serve another full two-year term.

§6. No person other than a member may hold any office except the Minister.

§7. Vacancies in any office, except for the Minister or the Vice President, shall be filled until the expiration of the term by the Board. Should the office of the President become vacant, the office shall be assumed by the Vice President. The office of the Vice President shall be filled by a vote of the congregation at a regular or special meeting to be called within two months of vacancy.

§8. The Board shall hold regularly stated meetings at such time and place as it may decide, but shall not hold less than four meetings per year. Five members of the Board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board. Special meetings may be called by the President, and must be called by the President or the Clerk on request of any three members of the Board. Notice of special meetings shall be sent to each member of the Board at least three days prior to the time of the meeting.

§9. Any member of the Board who is absent from three consecutive regular meetings shall automatically be removed from the Board and that position shall be filled by the Board as provided in Section 7 of this article.

§10. The fiscal year of the Church for all business and reporting purposes shall be the twelve months ending June 30th.

ARTICLE VI – DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

§1. The President shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and of the Board. The President shall appoint all committees whose appointment is not otherwise provided for, subject to the approval of the Board. The President and Vice President shall be members ex-officio of all committees, with the exception of the Committee on Ministry. They shall have the right to vote on all committees on which they sit ex-officio except the Personnel Committee and the Search Committee for the Minister or Director of Religious Education. The President shall not vote at Board meetings except to break a tie. The Vice President shall act in the place of the President whenever the President is absent, or otherwise unable to serve.

§2. The Clerk shall give notice of all meetings of the Church and of the Board and shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of said meetings, shall have custody of all books, papers and records pertaining to the administration of the Church except such as properly belong in the custody of other officers, shall keep a register especially provided for the purpose of recording the names of members of the Church, their dates of membership, dates of death or withdrawal together with a record of baptisms and such other records as the Church or Board may require, and shall maintain a record of all members who have previously served as members of the board.

§3. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the Church except those that have been placed in the custody of special trustees or agents of the Board, shall keep an accurate record of all receipts, disbursements and bills payable, and shall make such payments as are authorized by the Board or such other officers and committees as the Board may designate, shall make an annual report to the Church and such other reports as the Church or the Board may require, shall deposit money in the name of the Church in such banks as the Board may designate, shall have custody of all insurance policies and evidences of property owned by the Church and shall give bond with surety or sureties as may be required by the Board (the cost of such bond shall be paid by the Church). The Treasurer's accounts shall be audited at least once a year.

§4. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in such ways as the Treasurer or the Board may direct.

§5. The Collector shall receive and pay over to the Treasurer all contributions in the form of payments on pledges, general offerings and special offerings, and shall record the same in books provided for that purpose, giving credit to each individual contributor whenever the name of the individual is known. These

accounts shall be audited at least once a year. The Collector shall make an annual report to the Church and such other reports as the Church or the Board may require, and shall give bond with surety or sureties as may be required by the Board (the cost of which shall be paid by the Church).

§6. The Finance Chair shall preside over the Finance Committee, consisting of no fewer than three (3) members of the Church, which shall be responsible for overseeing the invested funds of the Church and inform the Board of the investment of these funds, shall participate in the annual canvass for funds, shall prepare the annual budget and shall recommend the form of appropriations and the manner in which the financial records are maintained.

v 7. The Property Trustee shall preside over the Property Committee consisting of no less than three (3) members of the Church which shall have general charge of the maintenance and use of all buildings and property owned and used by the Church.

§8. The At-Large Members of the Board shall serve as liaison to the various committees as directed by the Board and serve in other capacities as required by the Board.

§9. The Minister shall be responsible for the conduct of the religious services of the Church, shall Attend meetings of the Board except when the Minister is the subject of discussion, in which case the Board may require the Minister to be absent, shall be a member, ex-officio and without vote, of all committees, shall be called by a vote of the Church, and a vote of the Church shall be necessary for dismissal. When the Minister is engaged for an indefinite period of time, the relationship shall continue until at least three months after either of the contracting parties has given notice, in writing, of the desire to discontinue the relationship, unless both parties shall agree otherwise. No person shall continue as Minister of this Church unless that person is in fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association, or unless that person shall be accepted into said fellowship within six months after the beginning of that person's ministry in this Church, or unless the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association shall recommend otherwise.

§10. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Finance Chair shall have the authority to execute contracts and other legal documents approved by the Board of Trustees or by a vote of the Church pursuant to the provisions of these Bylaws. Any contract involving the sale of Real Estate or a financial transaction in excess of \$10,000 shall require two signatures, or be authorized in writing by two other members of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VII – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

§1. The Church will carry out its purposes as defined in these Bylaws, and shall adopt a set of Standard Operating Procedures by which the Board will carry out its duties as defined in these Bylaws. The Standard Operating Procedures shall be reviewed by the Board no less often than every five years.

§2. The Standard Operating Procedures shall include the functions of all standing committees appointed by the Board, with the exception of the Finance Committee, how the members of such committees shall be chosen, and provide for the annual appointment of the Auditing Committee and Nominating Committee.

§3. The Standard Operating Procedures shall include the job description of all paid staff.

ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

§1. The Annual Meeting shall be held prior to the end of each fiscal year at such time and place as the Board shall designate for the purpose of hearing reports from the Board, the officers, committees and affiliated organizations, for the election of officers, and the transaction of other business.

§2. Special meetings may be called by the Board and must be called by the Clerk upon written request of ten or more members eligible to vote. At any special meeting only such business as has been announced in the notice calling the meeting may be acted upon.

§3. Notice of all meetings shall be mailed to all members at their last known addresses at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting.

§4. Fifteen active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Church.

ARTICLE IX – AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

§1. Organizations whose purposes are in harmony with the purpose of Church may be formed with the consent of the Church or the Board and those now in existence may continue. They may use the facilities of the Church and shall be regarded as part of the Church. They shall report their activities at each annual meeting. If, at any time, their activities are deemed detrimental to the best interests of the Church, they may be suspended or dissolved by a two-thirds vote of the Church.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION

§1. In case of dissolution of this Church all its property, both real and personal, subject to all just and legal claims upon it, shall vest in the Unitarian Universalist Association.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENT

§1. These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote, except that Articles II, III, X, and XI may be amended only by a four-fifths vote, and provided that the proposed amendment has been stated in the notice calling the meeting.