

# East Shore Unitarian Church Bylaws June 2023

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## ARTICLE I. PURPOSE

The purpose of East Shore Unitarian Church is to establish and maintain a Unitarian Universalist church and to provide a place of public worship for the same in Bellevue, Washington; to establish, maintain, and conduct a program of religious instruction for all ages; to promote educational and cultural programs; and to further other religious and charitable work.

## ARTICLE II. MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The congregation shall adopt statements of mission and vision. These statements shall be appended to these Bylaws. These statements shall be reviewed and updated as needed.

## ARTICLE III. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The church shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Pacific Western Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is the intention of this church to make annual financial contributions to the Association and to the District equal to its full fair share, as determined by the Association and the District. (2016) (2021)

## ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP (Revised June 2023)

### SECTION A. QUALIFICATIONS

Membership is open to any person who is in general agreement with the purpose and ministry of this church, who is at least 14 years of age and:

- (1) who has completed a membership program as described in written board policy;
- (2) who indicates they will commit to fulfill member responsibilities as described in written board policy.

### SECTION B. MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) A member shall accept responsibility for the well-being of the church community through contributions of time, energy, and financial resources as able.
- (2) A member is expected to support the principles, values and covenants of Unitarian Universalism as well as the mission & vision of this congregation; embrace diversity in all its complexity; to oppose oppression of all kinds; and promote genuine collective care.

### SECTION C. MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

- (1) Persons who have been members for at least 30 days shall enjoy the following privileges:
  - (a) the right to vote at all Congregational Business Meetings;
  - (b) qualification to serve as a Trustee, if 16 or older, and as an Officer of the church, if 18 or older;
  - (c) qualification to serve as chair of any ministry team, committee, or task force.
- (2) Records of the church are available to members according to requirements found in RCW 24.03A.215, or its successor, and as written in board policies;
- (3) Members may attend meetings of the Board of Trustees, all ministry teams, committees, task forces, and groups conducting church business except for the following:
  - (a) the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee (see Article XI, Section F), meeting in executive session, or
  - (b) meetings of certain Board committees that are closed as provided in committee charters approved by the Board of Trustees.

### SECTION D. MEMBERSHIP LIST

Administrative offices of the church shall maintain a list of current members. The list shall be updated annually in accord with Unitarian Universalist Association requirements. The list will also be updated and available in the church office 30 days before each Congregational Business Meeting.

### SECTION E. RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL

- (1) A person will be removed from membership:
  - (a) upon their oral or written request to the administrative offices of the church,
  - (b) upon death, or
  - (c) when they have ceased to fulfill the qualifications or responsibilities of membership;
  - (d) if they do not respond within 30 days to a written request, mailed to the person's last known address, to clarify membership status and inform them of applicable procedures for reinstatement.
- (2) A person who has been removed from membership status under sub-sections E(1)(c) or E(2) shall be sent notice of such removal at the person's last known address. This notice shall include information about how membership status may be restored.
- (3) When a member's conduct becomes so destructive as to seriously impair the functioning of the church, the Board of Trustees may initiate a restorative practice process with the goal of bringing the member into right relationship with the congregation, up to and including a Board hearing to consider removing the member from membership as described in written policy.

Members may be removed for cause by a vote of the board per written Policy.

If a person's membership is revoked under this sub-section, that person may, after one year, apply for readmission to membership. The Board shall hold a closed hearing to consider reinstatement of the member. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board shall vote in executive session on whether or not to reinstate the person to membership. Reinstatement of membership will require a two-thirds majority vote. The Board's decision is final with no appeal.

## SECTION F. LIFE MEMBERS

Legacy Member status may be granted to members who do not meet membership responsibilities because of health or disability. Such members retain all rights of membership and shall have full voting privileges. Granting of this status shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## ARTICLE V. ORGANIZATION

### SECTION A. CONGREGATIONAL AUTHORITY

The church is congregational in polity or governance structure with a right to self-government. The right to self-government may be exercised by the membership at Congregational Business Meetings for: (2021)

- (1) the election of Officers, Trustees, and members of the Nominating Committee;
- (2) the adoption and amendment of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;
- (3) the call or dismissal of called ministers;
- (4) the approval of an annual budget;
- (5) the purchase, sale, or transfer of real property or authorization of a security interest therein in excess of \$75,000; and (2021)
- (6) the authorization of unsecured indebtedness in excess of \$75,000. (2021)

### SECTION B. BOARD OF TRUSTEES' AUTHORITY

The Board of Trustees shall be the governing body of the church, subject to the powers reserved to the membership or otherwise specifically delegated.

### SECTION C. SENIOR MINISTER

The Lead Minister is the religious and spiritual leader of the church. (2021)

## ARTICLE VI. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1 through December 31. If the fiscal year is changed, a transition period will be established and terms of office may be extended. (2022)

## ARTICLE VII. CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

### SECTION A. ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

There shall be an Annual Congregational Business Meeting held in the month of May or June for elections. The first order of business at this meeting shall be the election of Officers, Trustees, and members of the Nominating Committee. There shall be an annual Congregational Business Meeting held in the month of November or December to vote on the proposed budget. Other business that is deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees may also be conducted at Annual Congregational Business Meetings. (2022)

### SECTION B. SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special Congregational Business Meetings may be called by the Board of Trustees for any purpose it deems necessary. The Board shall call a Special Congregational Business Meeting upon written request of at least ten percent (10%) of the members of the church. Such meetings shall be called as soon as practical, but not later than 60 days from receipt of the request by the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

### SECTION C. NOTICE

- (1) Content: The notice of all meetings shall state the date, time, and location of the meeting and the business to be transacted. Unless the Board of Trustees determines that participation by remote communication shall not be permitted (in which case the notice shall so specify), the notice shall provide or be followed by instructions for how to participate in the meeting remotely. (2022)
  - (a) The Notice of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting to elect Officers, Trustees, and members of the Nominating Committee shall specify the names, positions, and terms of each of the continuing and nominated positions. Notice of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting to vote on the proposed budget shall also include a summary of the proposed budget and shall state that copies of the detailed budget proposal can be obtained from the church office one week before the meeting. (2022)
  - (b) Notice of other business shall include the text or summary statement of proposed resolutions and shall state that copies of the full text, where appropriate, and any supporting materials can be obtained from the church office one week before the meeting.
- (2) Method and Timing: Notice of any business meeting shall be sent at least 14 days prior to the meeting in the form of a record as defined by RCW 24.03A.010 and under the methods given in RCW 24.03A.015 and RCW 24.03A.410 or successor statutes, which generally means electronic or U.S. mail notice. When church members share the same physical or electronic address for notice, one notice mailed to their common address shall constitute notice to each. (2016) (2021)(2022)

- (3) Pulpit Announcement: The date, time, place, and subject of an upcoming meeting shall be announced during the Sunday services on the two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

#### SECTION D. QUORUM

- (1) For most business, ten percent (10%) of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum.
- (2) For votes on the purchase, sale, or transfer of real property, or votes on authorization of a security interest in real property valued in excess of \$100,000, or votes on authorization of an unsecured indebtedness in excess of \$100,000, twenty-five percent (25%) of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum.
- (3) For votes to call or dismiss a called minister, twenty-five percent (25%) of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum. (2021)
- (4) Members participating by remote participation or voting by proxy shall count as present for purposes of a quorum. (2022)

#### SECTION E. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- (1) The agenda for congregational business meetings shall be the agenda published in the notice. No unrelated new business may be conducted. (2022)
- (2) The most recent revision of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used, where applicable, to guide the conduct of business.
- (3) Actions will be taken by simple majority vote, unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

#### SECTION F. REMOTE PARTICIPATION (2022)

Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees, members may participate in a meeting through one or more means of remote communication through which members not physically present may participate in the meeting substantially concurrently, vote on matters submitted to the members, pose questions, and make comments. In the event of technical or other unintended problems preventing remote participation, a meeting may nevertheless continue unless it becomes known that a quorum is no longer present.

#### SECTION G. ABSENTEE VOTING BY LIMITED PROXY (2022)

Absentee voting only in the form of a limited proxy is permitted in accordance with RCW 24.03A.430 but is discouraged. A member who will not be able to participate in a meeting may request a proxy two weeks before the meeting from the church office. Such a request should state the reason for being unable to participate in the meeting. The request to participate by proxy shall be granted unless the Board of Trustees determines otherwise.



## ARTICLE VIII. PUBLIC WITNESS ACTIVITIES

Public witness activities may be approved by a vote of the congregation in meeting and shall require an eighty percent favorable vote. Alternatively, the Staff Leadership Team may approve public witness activities after consultation with the Board when there is agreement that the activity substantially aligns with the mission and vision of the church. (2016)

## ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS

### SECTION A. OFFICERS, TRUSTEES-AT-LARGE, AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

At each Annual Congregational Business Meeting for elections, there shall be elected a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, two Trustees-at-Large, and two members of the Nominating Committee. Trustees-at-Large or Nominating Committee members to fill the remainder of unexpired terms will also be elected at this time.

### SECTION B. QUALIFICATIONS

Only members at least 18 years old (or older if Washington State law requires) may serve as Officers and Trustees-at-Large.

### SECTION C. NOMINATIONS

- (1) Nominating Committee Slate: The slate from the Nominating Committee for Officers, Trustees-at-Large, and Nominating Committee shall be automatically placed in nomination upon receipt of the report of the Nominating Committee.
- (2) Nominations by Petition: Additional nominations may be made on the signature of at least fifteen members of the congregation presented to the church office at least 21 days in advance of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting along with a signed statement from each prospective nominee of willingness to serve if elected. No additional nominations will be received after the stated period.

### SECTION D. CONTESTED ELECTIONS

- (1) Where there are two or more candidates for a position, the person receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected.
- (2) Where two or more similar positions are available, such as Trustees-at-Large or Nominating Committee members, and there are more people running than positions available, each voter may cast as many votes as there are positions available and the candidates with the greatest number of votes shall be elected.

### SECTION E. TERMS

Terms shall begin at the close of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

- (1) The President and Vice President shall each be elected for one-year terms and may serve for no more than two consecutive terms.
- (2) The Secretary and Treasurer shall each be elected for one-year terms and may serve for no more than four consecutive terms.

- (1) Trustees-at-Large shall be elected for three-year terms.
- (2) No Trustee-at-Large who has completed a three-year term may be eligible for re-election as Trustee-at-Large until one year has elapsed following the completion of the Trustee-at-Large's term.
- (3) A Trustee who has completed a three-year term is eligible for election as an Officer.
- (4) Elected Nominating Committee members shall be elected for two-year terms.

#### SECTION F. VACANCIES

The Board of Trustees may fill vacancies in all elected offices. Members so appointed shall serve until the next annual election.

### ARTICLE X. OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall have general charge of the property of the church, the conduct of all its business affairs and the control of its administration.

#### SECTION A. COMPOSITION

The Board of Trustees shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, a minimum of three Trustees-at-Large, and non-voting members ex officio.

#### SECTION B. RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) President: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board and of the congregation; shall be a non-voting member ex officio of all committees except the Nominating Committee, the Committee(s) on Ministry, the Committee on Children and Youth Ministry, and any Ministerial Search Committee; and shall represent the church on all appropriate occasions. (2016)
- (2) Vice President: The Vice President shall act in place of the President in the latter's absence and perform other duties as determined by the Board or delegated by the President.
- (3) Secretary:
  - (a) The Secretary shall be responsible for and timely in providing the minutes and correspondence of the Board and the minutes of Congregational Business Meetings.
  - (b) The Secretary shall inform the congregation of Board action and business.
  - (c) The Secretary shall be responsible for the membership roll and shall verify the quorum at Congregational Business Meetings.

- (4) Treasurer:
- (a) The Treasurer shall, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, be responsible for the funds of the church and shall make regular reports to the Board.
  - (b) The Treasurer shall be Board liaison to the Financial Stewardship Committee. (2017)
  - (c) The Treasurer shall be bonded.
- (5) Members Ex Officio: The Staff Leadership Team, consisting of the Minister(s), and other staff leaders as determined by the Board. (2016) (2021)

#### SECTION C. RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL

- (1) Resignation: An Officer or Trustee may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the President or, in the case of the President, to the Secretary.
- (2) Removal: By a vote of two-thirds of the Trustees present at a Board meeting, the Board of Trustees may vacate the office of any Officer or Trustee who shall have been absent from three of six consecutive meetings. The congregation may remove an Officer or Trustee-at-Large by a majority vote at a Congregational Business Meeting called in accordance with Article VIII.

#### SECTION D. MEETINGS

The Board of Trustees shall meet not less than once a month. When the Board of Trustees meets in executive session, the non-voting members ex officio shall be excluded unless their presence is specifically requested.

#### SECTION E. QUORUM

A number over 50% of the voting members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

#### SECTION F. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Board and the Staff Leadership Team who are non-voting members ex officio. The Executive Committee shall set the Board agenda and perform other duties delegated by the Board of Trustees. (2016) (2021)

#### SECTION G: BUDGET AND FINANCES

The Board of Trustees shall have general charge of the finances of the church and shall maintain accountability for the expenditure of all funds. The Board shall authorize and submit for approval at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting a budget for the ensuing year. The Board of Trustees may, in its administration, vary the amounts to be expended under individual headings of the budget, but may not exceed the total amount of the approved expense budget or the anticipated income, whichever is greater, without approval of the congregation. The Board shall establish and enforce a policy to assure

regular periodic review of financial transactions and contributions to be sure that all such transactions are proper and documented appropriately and that adequate internal control procedures are in place. (2016)

#### SECTION H. OPEN MEETINGS

Meetings of all committees, task forces, and ministry teams shall be open except those listed in Article V, Section C(3).

#### SECTION I. RESTRICTED AND IN-KIND GIFTS

No restricted gifts to the church shall be accepted without approval of the Board of Trustees. The Board shall establish a policy on the acceptance of in-kind gifts.

### ARTICLE XI. COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

#### SECTION A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- (1) **Membership:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members. Four members shall be elected to two-year terms with two elected each year. The fifth member shall be appointed to a one-year term by the Board of Trustees. Elected members who have served a full two-year term are not eligible for re-election until one year has elapsed following the completion of their terms. Currently serving members of the Board may not serve on the Nominating Committee.
- (2) **Responsibilities:** The Nominating Committee shall provide a slate of nominees for the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. This slate shall be publicized, together with the scheduled date of the meeting and the deadline for receipt of nominations by petition, five weeks before the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. Additional responsibilities may be set out in the Nominating Committee charter, which shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.

#### SECTION B. MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEES

- (1) **Membership and Selection:** A Ministerial Search Committee shall be composed of seven to ten members of the congregation. The Board of Trustees shall appoint a five-person Ministerial Search Nominating Committee to develop a list of candidates for the Search Committee. It may nominate more candidates than there are seats on the Search Committee. The Search Committee shall be elected by the congregation in a manner established by the Board of Trustees, and shall serve until the Minister is called or the congregation votes to dissolve the committee. In the event of a vacancy on a Search Committee, the Board of Trustees may appoint a replacement.
- (2) **Responsibilities:** The Ministerial Search Committee shall:
  - (a) search for and select a ministerial candidate to present to the congregation,
  - (b) be guided by the Unitarian Universalist Association candidating process guidelines,
  - (c) consider the advice of the called Lead Minister in its search for an Associate Minister, and (2021)

(d) elect its own Chair.

#### SECTION C. APPOINTED STANDING COMMITTEES

The Board shall appoint committees that are charged with assisting the Board in its work. These committees may be charged with oversight responsibilities and will provide accountability measures in alignment with policy based governance. These committees shall have charters, which shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. (2016)

#### SECTION D. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

The Board of Trustees may establish such other standing committees as it sees fit. Such committees shall have charters, which shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. Chairs of these committees shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

#### SECTION E. TASK FORCES

The Board of Trustees may establish task forces as it sees fit. The Board of Trustees shall provide each task force with a charge and appoint its chair. A task force shall cease to exist once its task has been completed.

#### SECTION F. MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry teams are active and engaged teams of people united by a common vision that is in alignment with the Church's vision and mission. The Staff Leadership Team authorizes ministry teams. Ministry Teams have a purpose, and an articulated written way of accomplishing that purpose that is in alignment with the goals of church governance. Ministry teams are a primary path for personal participation in the work of the Church. Ministry teams act and do; they do not control, nor do they hold bylaw-level authority or delegate responsibility. (2016) (2021)

#### SECTION G. OPEN MEETINGS

Meetings of all committees, task forces, and ministry teams shall be open except those listed in Article V, Section C(3).

## ARTICLE XII. MINISTERS

#### SECTION A. THE MINISTERIAL CALL

A called Lead or Associate Minister shall be called by the congregation. A call shall require a ninety-percent (90%) affirmative vote of those voting at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting. Voting shall be by written ballot. (2021)

#### SECTION B. QUALIFICATIONS

The congregation shall consider only Ministers in fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association who abide by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice.

### SECTION C. LEAD MINISTER

The Lead Minister is responsible for the religious leadership and pastoral care of the congregation, the conduct of all religious services, and other duties and tasks as are customary to the office of ordained Ministry. The congregation may call two people to share the responsibilities of Lead Minister. (2021)

### SECTION D. ASSOCIATE MINISTER

An Associate Minister reports to the Lead Minister and shares responsibility for the religious leadership and pastoral care of the congregation. The duties of an Associate Minister shall be determined by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Lead Minister. (2021)

### SECTION E. ASSISTANT MINISTER

An Assistant Minister is hired by the Board of Trustees and reports to the Lead Minister, who shall determine their responsibilities in consultation with the Board of Trustees. (2021)

### SECTION F. MINISTERIAL AGREEMENTS

The Board of Trustees shall negotiate letters of agreement and compensation with the Ministers. It shall recommend compensation to the congregation for its approval. The distribution of compensation shall be set by the Board of Trustees in a manner agreeable to the Ministers and in keeping with the tax laws.

### SECTION G. RELATION TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND COMMITTEES

It shall be the duty of the Minister(s) to bring to the attention of the Board of Trustees any matters which seem pertinent to the general interests of the congregation, and to make such recommendations as seem proper, but the final decisions in matters of policy shall remain with the Board of Trustees or with the congregation. Called Ministers shall be non-voting members ex officio of the Board of Trustees and all committees of the church, except the Nominating Committee and Ministerial Search Committee.

### SECTION H. FREEDOM OF THE PULPIT AND OF ASSOCIATION

The Board of Trustees and the congregation shall not abridge a Minister's rights of freedom of the pulpit and of association.

### SECTION I. TENURE

The tenure of called ministers is determined by their Letter of Agreement or contract. The tenure of an Assistant Minister is determined by the contract under which they were hired. (2021)

### SECTION J. RESIGNATION OF A MINISTER

In the event a Minister resigns, a minimum of three months' notice must be given. The Board of Trustees may permit a shorter period.

## SECTION K. REMOVAL OF A MINISTER

A Called Minister may be removed from office by a majority vote of the congregation. Voting shall be by written ballot. In the event of removal, the Minister's compensation shall be continued for three months, or as negotiated. An Assistant Minister may be released as provided for in the contract under which they were hired.

## SECTION L. INTERIM MINISTER

In the event of a vacancy in the Ministry, the Board of Trustees may hire an Interim Minister whose tenure and service shall conform to the Unitarian Universalist Association guidelines for interim ministry.

## SECTION M. MINISTER EMERITUS

The Board of Trustees may recommend to the congregation the title of Minister Emeritus/a to a Minister ending his or her service to the congregation. This designation is honorific and implies no particular rights, privileges, or duties within the congregation.

## ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at any Congregational Business Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote. Notice of any proposed amendments shall be given in the notice of the meeting.

## APPENDIX I Mission-Vision

Approved at Congregational Meeting, June 4, 2017

### EAST SHORE MISSION (2017)

We practice love, explore spirituality, build community, and promote justice.

### EAST SHORE VISION (2017)

#### **Practice Love**

Offer a loving, welcoming environment for children and adults, inspired by appreciation and acceptance of all people.

Practice and expand our capacity to love, nourish, and inspire as we encourage each other to explore and grow through worship, group activities, education, and deep conversation.

Heal and connect as we share life's transitions, celebrating our joys and mourning our losses, embracing the rhythms of life and of the Earth we have mutually inherited.

#### **Explore Spirituality**

Explore spirituality through worship, classes, and activities that integrate diverse spiritual traditions and build connection to something larger than one's self, grounding the free expression of our values and faith in the outer world.

Inspire spiritual depth through worship services that incorporate thought-provoking messages of hope from the pulpit, music and other arts, and diverse sources of creative inspiration.

Dedicate space, time, and energy to providing spiritual sanctuary – places and events that offer opportunities for reflection, centering, emotional nurturing, and shared experience.

### **Build Community**

Provide opportunities to grow our capacity for loving community through connection with each other, including covenant circles, topical/interest groups, connections teams, church governance and committee work, and through the covenanted practice of spiritual and loving ways of addressing our conflicts and differences.

Engage congregation-wide participation in exploration of personal, societal, and institutional expressions of racism and oppression through deep listening, compassionate communication, and understanding of systems of oppression, promoting multicultural, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive competencies that expand our communal culture and leadership.

Collaborate to extend our compassion and love into the larger community by providing sanctuary and support for those in need.

### **Promote Justice**

Listen to the voices of those in our communities who are in need, in distress, or in other challenging circumstances, and engage in active outreach to partner with and empower them, visibly demonstrating that “service is our prayer.”

Partner with earth and social justice-related organizations to promote racial, economic and environmental justice through education, direct action, and advocacy.

Voice and live our UU values through sponsorship of educational and artistic earth and social justice events at East Shore for the larger community, serving as a beacon of moral awareness and action.

NOTE: Previous editions of the Bylaws are available.