

Agenda – Congregational Meeting  
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin  
Sunday, December 20, 2020, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin>  
Passcode: 512452

1. Welcome and Call to Order, Elias Ponvert – 10 min 1:00
  - a. Unison Reading of Covenant and Lighting of Chalice Page 2
  - b. Introduction of Parliamentarian
  - c. Adopt Consent Agenda
    - Rules of Procedure Pages 3- 5
    - Minutes May 2020 congregational meeting (draft version) 6-8
  - d. Adopt Agenda
2. Update: State of the Church, Rev. Meg Barnhouse – 10 minutes 1:10
3. Call for return of ballots for 2021 Monthly Special Offerings,  
Carrie Holley-Hurt– 5 minutes 1:20
4. 2020 Proposed Budget – 20 minutes, Meg Barnhouse  
and Chris Jimmerson 9-10 1:25
5. Proposed Bylaws Change to Allow for the Congregation to  
Adopt Positions of Public Record – Elias Ponvert and Nesan  
Lawrence – 20 Minutes 12-14 1:45
6. Proposed Bylaws Change to Clarify Meetings through Remote Means 2:05  
Rob Hirschfeld and David Riehl – 10 Minutes Page 15
7. Joys and Concerns – 10 minutes 2:15
8. Closing Reading and Extinguish Chalice – 5 min 2:25
- Adjourn 2:30

## **A COVENANT OF HEALTHY RELATIONS**

**As a religious community, we promise:**

### **To Welcome and Serve**

- By being intentionally hospitable to all people of good will
- By being present with one another through life's transitions
- By encouraging the spiritual growth of people of all ages

### **To Nurture and Protect**

- By communicating with one another directly in a spirit of compassion and good will
- By speaking when silence would inhibit progress
- By disagreeing from a place of curiosity and respect
- By interrupting hurtful interactions when we witness them
- By expressing our appreciation to each other

### **To Sustain and Build**

- By affirming our gratitude with generous gifts of time, talent and money for our beloved community
- By honoring our commitments to ourselves and one another for the sake of our own integrity and that of our congregation
- By forgiving ourselves and others when we fall short of expectations, showing good humor and the optimism required for moving forward

**Thus do we covenant with one another**

Approved at congregation meeting May 5, 2013

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Congregational Meeting Rules of Procedure

## 1. Order of Business

The order of business will follow the meeting notice unless the order of business is changed by a majority vote.

## 2. Remote participant attendance and communication

To accommodate a wider range of technology access, members may join by remote in a number of ways including voice, chat/text or video. The meeting will be primarily conducted by voice.

To ensure individuals can be identified: the designated vote counters have discretion on how to recognize members. These methods include, but are not limited to, system identity, voice statements, typing/chat activity and video recognition.

If a typing/chat is not available to an attendee, they may submit statements and motions by voice using the chair or a designated assistant(s) to act as proxy. The chair or assistant(s) should also read relevant chat items to help voice-only attendees.

## 3. Means of Voting

As long as a quorum is present (ten percent of voting members of the congregation), voice votes, or a show of hands, including through digital means, will be used, unless the bylaws specify otherwise. Two or more people shall be designated as vote counters by the chair at the outset of the meeting in the event that a vote count is needed. All matters will be determined by the number of votes cast by members present and voting, as long as there is a quorum.

To streamline remote meetings, the vote counters may informally canvas the membership using one or several straw polling mechanisms, show of hands (virtual or video) or other method. Clear majority and uncontested items may be voted by acclamation.

#### 4. Presentation of Items

A Board Member or the appropriate Committee Chair will move the action items as printed in the meeting notice. If updated, items will be read aloud and displayed to accommodate voice only participants.

#### 5. Amendments

No one may offer an amendment until there has been at least ten minutes of debate on the main question as moved, unless no one else wants to speak to the main question or it is a clarifying amendment. Anyone making an amendment should give it to the chair via the chat function (or proxy as per #2).

#### 6. Time limits

These time limits will apply to all the business of the meeting. If no one objects, the Chair may grant minor extensions. Time limits may be extended by a two-thirds vote.

- a. No one may speak on any motion for more than two minutes or more than once as long as anyone else is waiting to speak, except that persons with special information may answer questions with the Chair's permission.
- b. No item will be discussed in the meeting for more than 30 minutes. Discussion time will be divided equally by alternating between speakers voicing pro and con positions. Speakers must state clearly if they are pro or con.
- c. No one may call the previous question if there are *both* pro and con persons waiting to speak and the time for discussion is not over. If the Chair sees no speakers for the con position, then the Chair may call for a vote.
- d. Every person must speak via voice or identify a reader for their chat/text comments.

#### 7. Budget Motions

Anyone making a motion concerning the budget should give it to the Chair via the chat function (or proxy as per #2) and must provide for reduction in specific

categories equal to any increase in spending in the motion. A simple majority vote is required to adopt motions concerning the budget.

#### 8. Items Not in the Meeting Notice

Items of a substantial nature which are not in the meeting notice shall not be considered. Committees with items of substantial importance must have the item prepared far enough in advance for inclusion in the meeting notice.

#### 9. Amending the Rules of Procedure

These rules of procedure will be adopted by a majority vote and may be changed during the meeting by a simple majority.

#### 10. Adjournment

The meeting will adjourn no later than two hours or at such time as a quorum is no longer present after the Chair has called the meeting to order. The meeting may be extended in 15-minute increments by a simple majority vote for as much as one additional hour.

Minutes – Congregational Meeting First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Sunday, May 31, 2020, 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin>

1. Welcome and Call to Order, Tomas Medina – 10 min

President Tomas Medina confirmed that we had a quorum.

a. Unison Reading of Covenant and Lighting of Chalice

b. Adopt Consent Agenda

- Rules of Procedure
- Minutes December 2019 congregational meeting

There were no questions about the rules of procedure or the consent agenda.

c. Adopt Agenda

No objections and thus the agenda is approved.

2. Update: State of the Church, Rev. Meg Barnhouse – 10 min

Building has been closed since mid-March as a result of the COVID pandemic. We aren't sure when we re-open, we hope to open in January 2021 but we are continuing to evaluate.

We changed bookkeepers and now have a company closer to home that is more responsive. We are working with them to bring our books back into line.

People appear to still be sending in their pledge payments. We are pulling together to help this church to make it through the pandemic. Pastoral care also continues.

We put our name on a list of churches that support reproductive rights.

Austin Sanctuary network is continuing to work hard to free Hilda and Alirio.

Church community projects – asking for volunteers for making a quilt: church during the pandemic. Michael Jones will be sewing the squares together into a quilt.

Thanks to Chris for being wonderful to work with. Thanks to Lee for her work. Thanks to Tomas for being a marvelous president.

We don't know yet whether the school that rents the church space will be on campus.

Wanted to also mention how amazing our teachers and RE leadership are keeping our education program going. Thank YOU!

Thanks from Tomas to Meg for keeping us going.

3. Congregational vote on Board of Trustee slate – 15 min

Toni Wegner (President Elect), Rob Hirschfield and Kristen Ray (three-year positions), David Riehl (one year position to replace Tomas)

Tom Johnson thanked the members of the nominating committee, Transformation through Service committee. Thanks to the leadership moment speakers: Nessian Lawrence, Leo Collas, Scott Butki, Vicky Almstrum.

Presented president elect: Toni Wegner

Nominees for Board of Trustees: three-year position: Rob Hirschfield, Kristen Ray; one-year position: David Reihl.

No additional names on the ballot. All elected by acclamation

4. Congregational Vote on Nominating Committee Member(s) – 5 min Phil Hewitt for three years.

No additional names on the ballot. Hewitt elected by acclamation

Two appointed to the nominations committee by the board: Valerie Stern; Tomas Medina (Valerie Sterne, replacing Ken Pfluger and Tomas Medina), both appointed by the board, which does not require a congregational vote)

5. Proposed Bylaws Amendment to Allow Congregational Public Statements – 15 minutes

Elias Ponvert presented the proposed amendment, first explaining the need for the change, discussing the process by which the board (policy committee) developed the proposed process, explaining what is meant by “a position of public record,” and finally, the proposed change to the bylaws.

The process involves two pathways: a standard pathway where the position is proposed and voted on by a 2/3rds vote of the congregation and a time-sensitive approach where the board must unanimously vote to adopt the position.

There was discussion to clarify how the process works and to consider concerns of congregant. One specific concern that was the focus of extended discussion was that adopting a position of record may create hard feelings and divisions within the church.

There was a motion to extend discussion. There was a motion to amend the motion to limit the discussion to 5 minutes. It was withdrawn. The original motion was withdrawn.

There was a motion to table the discussion and vote to another meeting. This motion passed.

6. Congregational Survey Report – 10 minutes

Sadie presented the results from the board survey.

7. Joys/Concerns/Intentions – 10 minutes

Many people expressed joys and concerns. We value our community, in good times and bad, but especially now.

8. Closing Reading and Extinguish Chalice – 5 minutes

9. Adjourn



## Draft 2021 Budget Narrative

The attached summary budget represents our best estimate for income and expenses next year, given the caveat that we are projecting a budget for an unprecedented situation and do not know when we and our renters might be able to be in the church building again.

We are projecting a budget with expenses higher than income because of the pandemic. The difference would be drawn from cash reserves the church currently holds.

We estimated that the building might reopen in July.

Of course, we are operating with limited information about what may actually happen, given the pandemic.

Our estimate for pledge income is based upon what has been pledged thus far plus a few pledges we expect will occur between now and the end of the year from letters that our stewardship team is planning to send to folks who have not yet pledged, as well as some phone calls we expect to make before the end of the year.

Our estimate for other gifts revenue is largely based upon a legacy gift a former church member left to the church (25% of her estate). It is worth noting that the amount we are estimating for this legacy gift is very conservative - the gift from her estate may well be much larger, which would reduce how much expenses might exceed income.

We reduced some expenses (such as utilities) based upon reduced use of the building. We continued to increase our giving to the U.U.A. based upon the expressed wishes of the congregation and brought staff salaries to the UUA recommend mid-point as per the approved interpretation of board policy regarding treatment of staff.

Sincerely,

Rev. Meg and Rev. Chris

**Draft 2020 Budget**  
**Pending the End of the Stewardship Drive**

Budget Year	2020	2021
INCOME	Budget	Proposed
<b>Contributions</b>		
Pledges		
Pledge	\$ 690,000	\$ 670,000
attrition	\$ (20,700)	\$ (23,450)
New Member Giving	\$ 42,300	\$ 35,000
Sunday Plate	\$ 41,000	\$ 35,000
Other Gifts	\$ 28,000	\$ 75,000
Rental	\$ 125,000	\$ 71,000
<b>Activities</b>		
Fundraiser	\$ 11,750	\$ 11,750
<b>Income from Committees</b>	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000
Camp UU (Hogwarts)	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Special Plate	\$ 15,622	\$ 10,000
Paradox Players	\$ 11,475	\$ 7,650
Interest & Dividends	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
Wake Now Our Vision	\$ 40,000	
Released from Restricted (Murr)	\$ -	\$ 1,500
Restricted Funds Offset	\$ 2,033	\$ 3,391
Annual Transfer	\$ 20,580	\$ 23,000
Released from CC		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,018,460</b>	<b>\$ 930,241</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Ministry</b>	\$ 392,288	\$ 364,088
<b>Religious Education</b>	\$ 278,055	\$ 266,876
<b>Music</b>	\$ 269,194	\$ 258,425
<b>Administration</b>	\$ 78,923	\$ 81,663
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,018,460</b>	<b>\$ 971,052</b>
<b>Net Revenue or expense</b>	\$ -	\$ (40,811)

## Resolution to amend the bylaws to establish positions of public record

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin

Authors:

Erin Gaines <[eatmorebeets@gmail.com](mailto:eatmorebeets@gmail.com)>,  
 Nesan Lawrence <[anandnesan@gmail.com](mailto:anandnesan@gmail.com)>,  
 Elias Ponvert <[eponvert@gmail.com](mailto:eponvert@gmail.com)>

Updated last: November 6, 2020

WHEREAS religious institutions, congregations and faith communities have unique organizational power and moral authority to lead for positive social change; and

WHEREAS we do not currently have a process by which we, as a congregation, adopt a public position of record on a matter of social, moral or ethical concern; and

WHEREAS as such, in our congregation our Minister cannot speak publicly on behalf of the congregation on such a matter; nor can members of the congregation say or know for sure that the congregation supports them in their own personal efforts for social justice, ecological justice or other social and ethical matters; and

WHEREAS matters of social and ethical concern arise in connection to all seven of our Unitarian Universalist principles, especially our 6th principle, "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all" and our 7th, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"; and

WHEREAS our 5th Unitarian Universalist principle guides us to use the democratic process in our congregation

BE IT RESOLVED the following amendments are made to the First UU Church of Austin Bylaws:

1. ARTICLE V: AUTHORITY, Section 1 be amended to include the following language:

F. Adopt, amend or retract a position of public record

with necessary minor changes for grammatical form.

2. ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF TRUSTEES, Section 6, the sentence

All actions of the Board of Trustees shall be by majority vote of those present.

be revised to state:

All actions of the Board of Trustees shall be by majority vote of those present, except when adopting a position of record on behalf of the congregation via a time-sensitive Board resolution, which requires a unanimous vote of those present, as outlined in ARTICLE XVI.

3. The addition of the following text, following other articles:

ARTICLE XVI: POSITIONS OF PUBLIC RECORD

A. A position of public record is a public statement adopted by the congregation of First UU Austin, which states a position of the church on an issue of moral or social concern.

B. A resolution proposing a position of public record may be adopted by the congregation through these means:

1. A resolution is initiated by the Board Trustees by a majority vote; or by a member of the congregation or a group of members. If not initiated by the Board, the resolution must be supported by signature by 10% or more of the congregation and be recognized by the Board of Trustees that the proposed position of record:
  - i. meets the definition of a position of public record in (A),
  - ii. advances the mission and ends of the church, and
  - iii. does not risk the church's legal status as a non-partisan religious institution.

Once initiated, a resolution proposing a position of public record must be presented to the congregation in the form of an open, public and accessible congregational forum at least a week before the congregational voting meeting at which the resolution is considered. A resolution proposing a position of public record may be adopted by the congregation by a 2/3 vote at a congregational meeting (either regularly scheduled, or a special meeting).

2. In circumstances where the position of public record concerns a time sensitive issue, such that the time necessary for congregational discussion and adoption would impede the church and ministry from supporting the position, and the Board of Trustees determines by unanimous consent the congregation would support the position, the Board may adopt a position of public record by a vote, requiring unanimous approval.

C. Once adopted, a position of public record will be posted publicly by the church in appropriate places, as determined by the Executive. When speaking or acting on positions of public record, the ministry may confirm they are doing so on behalf of and as representatives of the church.

D. To amend, revise or retract an existing position of public record, the same process outlined in (B.1) shall be used. For retraction of a position of public record, it is not required for the Board to approve the proposal.

# Adopting a Congregational Public Position: Potential Pathways and Options

## Summary of Options

1a



**Congregation Initiated Resolution**

Petition with at least 10% of support from congregation

Board review to ensure petition meets minimum criteria

Forum discussion to inform the congregation

Further edits & review/vote by Board (optional)

Resolution adopted with 2/3rds majority vote at a congregation meeting

1b



**Board/Executive Initiated Resolution**

Approved by Board with a majority

2



**Time Sensitive Board Resolution**

Resolution adopted with unanimous vote by the Board

**Note:** Upon adoption, details of the public position will be communicated to the congregation through appropriate forums (i.e. email newsletter, FUUCA website, Sunday service, etc.)

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin

## **Bylaws Requirement for Remote and Electronic Meetings**

The proposed bylaws change will require that “The Board Policies shall define the requirements and protocols for conducting meetings using remote or electronic technologies. All meetings that conform to approved Board Policies are acceptable as per these bylaws.”

The specific changes (highlighted in yellow) to the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Bylaws document, (**ARTICLE XIII**), are as follows:

### **ARTICLE XIII: POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Section 1: Authority of Bylaws**

These bylaws are supplemented by Board Policies; however, in no case shall any policy be established that contradicts or supersedes these bylaws and any policy found to do so shall be considered null and void.

#### **Section 2: Remote and Electronic Meetings**

The Board Policies shall define the requirements and protocols for conducting meetings using remote or electronic technologies. All meetings that conform to approved Board Policies are acceptable as per these bylaws.”