

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM



By The Bylaws

LauraSue Schlatter, Trustee

As I write in early August, thoughts turn from the playfulness of summer to the more serious tones of fall and winter. Time to can, freeze, store the harvest, energy, and light of summer for the winter to come. This summer, the board has been preparing a small offering of proposed bylaw changes for you to consider. We'll have four listening sessions in September

to hear your feedback. We anticipate presenting them for a vote at the annual meeting in November.

Why changes to Unity's Bylaws? Most of these proposed changes come from suggestions you made following the May 2022 congregational meeting. In response to your comments, and a concern raised by the executive team, we are proposing the following four changes (bit.ly/ucubylaws):

- Changing the 75% minimum percentage of voting members in attendance at a congregational meeting for the selection of a called minister required to vote yes for the call to succeed to 85%. The reason for this change is 85% would bring the congregational vote requirement much closer to the 90-95% minimum virtually all Unitarian Universalist ministers require. The feeling among ministers is that, if 90% or more of the quorum assembled for the vote cannot agree on the call, the ministry is unlikely to succeed. We chose 85% because it allows room for something less than 90% (for example, Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs received 89%, but were convinced to accept the call).
- Making "Roberts Rules Simplified" (RRS) (bit.ly/robsrulesimple) the official rules governing congregational meetings. The purpose of procedural rules is to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak, and all voices are fairly heard. Many people find that Roberts Rules of Order are complex, inaccessible, and have been used to silence already-oppressed voices. RRS are much easier to understand and use. They are explained on a two-page, easy to read handout that can be distributed with every meeting packet. We hope they will help ensure that everyone who wants to be heard at a meeting is heard!
- Allowing voting by proxy at congregational meetings to call or remove a called minister. A number of people were unable to stay until the vote occurred in May 2022. Others may not be able to attend in person or have access to online participation. The proxy voting mechanism, which has several strict conditions attached to it, will enable people in those circumstances to have their votes counted.
- Adding a 60-day waiting period after a person signs the membership book and makes a pledge before they are eligible to vote in any congregational meeting. In May 2022, a number of people joined the church just days before the meeting, and, unhappy with the result, immediately quit after the meeting. The waiting requirement is not uncommon with other churches and ensures that important decisions of all sorts are made by people with a true commitment to the church and the church community.

We invite you to join us at one of the upcoming listening sessions where we will discuss these bylaw changes:

- Wednesday, September 13 • 7:10 p.m. • Robbins Parlor
- Wednesday, September 20 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Robbins Parlor
- Sunday, September 24 • 10:15 a.m. • Center Room
- Tuesday, September 26 • 7:00 p.m. • Online via Zoom (watch for the link)

Greetings from the Ministerial Search Team

Your Ministerial Search Team (MST) looks forward to providing updates about the search process as well as information about how you can share your feedback. Please stay connected to the search process by visiting our webpage (unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html), checking out the bulletin board (near the kitchen), and watching for church emails as well as weekly updates in our Sunday insert, *This Week at Unity*.

Our Work-to-Date

- The MST held a retreat on July 29, and we are meeting weekly this fall
- Angela Wilcox will serve as Chair of the MST (see transitions webpage for additional MST roles)
- The MST is planning cottage meetings for September and October as opportunities for the congregation to voice their ideas and listen to others. We will gather to share about our needs and wants for the future of our church community. There will be ample opportunity to participate: in-person, online, in the evening, and during the day. Child care will be provided. There are cottage meetings planned for Wellspring Wednesday, September 20 and 27, with more to be scheduled — watch for dates and times!

We're excited for our charge and thankful for your support!

Rebecca Flood
Richard Lau
Tara Romanov Messana
Kat Sherman-Hoehn
Jennie Smith
Ray Wiedmeyer
Angela Wilcox, Chair