

Frequently Asked Questions
about
the Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

Why does the Board of Trustees want to revise the bylaws?

Some revisions to the bylaws had to be made to accommodate the move to co-ministry. When the Board took a good look at the bylaws, we realized that the language of the current bylaws, parts of which are decades old, is confusing in many sections. In addition, the bylaws need updating in several important ways, such as to allow Trustees to participate remotely and to vote by e-mail or other electronic means on matters that fall between regularly-scheduled Board meetings.

Is there a redline comparison of the existing and revised bylaws?

So much of the language is being changed from the existing bylaws that a redline would be very difficult to read, which is why this document is being provided to the congregation.

How were the revised bylaws developed?

A Board subcommittee looked at the bylaws of several other churches. The bylaws of Unity Unitarian in St. Paul had been revised within the past few years with the help of outside counsel. Because there are so many similarities between our church and Unity, the subcommittee used Unity's bylaws as a template. The subcommittee met several times and the Board went through the revisions at two Board meetings.

What is the most significant change to the bylaws?

The most significant change is that the bylaws create an "Executive Leadership" structure that allows the Church to accommodate different configurations of ministerial leadership. This includes the current senior minister structure, the co-ministry structure to which we are transitioning, or even a leadership team that includes non-ministers, as has been the practice at Unity for quite some time.

The congregation retains the right and responsibility to call ministers or release them from their call. But the new structure recognizes the reality that when a called minister leaves the church through resignation, illness, or death, the Board must act in the interim to determine (in consultation with remaining called or hired ministers, if any), whether to engage temporary or interim ministers, consider changes to the ministerial leadership structure, or take other actions to facilitate the smooth functioning of the church. The bylaws provisions are designed to provide a structure for handling transitions while still providing the Board with enough flexibility to accommodate unanticipated events.

Are there any changes to the Nominating Committee?

The only substantive change to the Nominating Committee language is to require the Nominating Committee to provide its recommendations for open Board of Trustees, Foundation, and Nominating Committee seats to the Board 30 days before the annual meeting; the Board will then recommend the Nominating Committee slate to the congregation. As part of

policy governance, those recommendations should be routed through the Board, which sets the agenda for the annual meeting. In addition, there should be a formal mechanism for communication between the Board and the Nominating Committee regarding the incoming slate of candidates.

What other changes are being recommended?

Some of the additional changes are:

- Removing membership categories or requirements that are no longer used.
- Providing uniformity in the language regarding consecutive terms for Trustees, Foundation Directors, and Nominating Committee members.
- Allowing Trustees to participate in Board meetings remotely.
- Allowing voting on Board issues by e-mail or other electronic means.