

# WARRANT AND MATERIALS TO SUPPORT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF FRSUU TO BE HELD JUNE 9, 2024

## Warrant

The Proprietors of the Pleasant Street Church and the members of the First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist in Newburyport, MA are hereby notified to convene for a meeting in person in the Sanctuary and via Zoom on Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 10:30am. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Sunday Worship Service and, as indicated in the bylaws as amended, the congregation will there and then act upon the following articles.

- Article 1:** To act on the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting, the Special Congregational Meeting held on March 10, 2024, and the Special Congregational Meeting held on December 4, 2022.
- Article 2:** To act on the reports of the Staff, Officers, Committees, and Workgroups included in the Annual Report.
- Article 3:** To act on the recommendation of the Board to make an exception to the bylaws provision that Board Members must take a year off after serving three (3) full years, to allow Tina Benik to serve an additional year and to serve as Board Chair.
- Article 4:** To act on the recommendation of the Governance Committee for the election of Officers, Chairpersons, and Trustees of the Endowment.
- Article 5:** To act on the recommendation of the Anti-Racism Team and the Board to adopt the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle states:

*"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."*

- Article 6:** To act on the FY2025 budget as recommended by the Parish Board.
- Article 7:** To note and acknowledge that the year ahead will be the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of this congregation, to be celebrated during the calendar year January 1-December 31, 2025.

We the undersigned hereby certify that we have notified the Pleasant Street Church and the members of the First Religious Society, Unitarian Universalist in Newburyport, MA to meet at the time and place, and for the purpose set forth in the Warrant by posting the same in the church eight (8) days (including two Sundays) before the day of the meeting.

Tina Benik  
Lori Clark  
Caitlin Creps  
Kathy Desilets

Vern Ellis  
Laurie Evans-Daly  
Minnie Flanagan  
Bob Higgins

Tom Himmel  
Liss Larsen  
Annie Maurer  
Jim Supple

Renee Wolf Foster

A copy of the warrant attest:



Kathleen Desilets, Parish Clerk

## **Motions & Additional Information on the Articles**

**Article 1: To act on the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting, the Special Congregational Meeting held on March 10, 2024, and the Special Congregational Meeting held on December 4, 2022.**

*Motion: I move that the congregation approve the notes of the 2023 Annual Meeting of FRSUU, the Special Congregational Meeting held on March 10, 2024, and the Special Congregational Meeting held on December 4, 2022.*

**Explanation:** Meeting notes are approved by the group that held the meeting in which actions are taken to affirm that the actions were properly recorded. Usually, each year, the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting are approved at the Annual Meeting. This year, a special meeting of the congregation was held on March 10 to approve funding for repairs to the Meetinghouse roof, so these notes also need action at this year's meeting. Finally, the notes of the Special Congregational Meeting held on December 4, 2022 (at which the congregation voted to extend the stay of the Mirzayee Family in Parish Hall) were included in the 2023 Annual Report but were not brought forward for action. These notes were not brought forward for approval at last year's Annual Meeting, so they are presented now to officially affirm their contents. The notes of all these meetings are included in the Annual Report.

**Article 2: To act on the reports of the Staff, Officers, Committees, and Workgroups included in the Annual Report.**

*Motion: I move that the reports of Staff, Officers, Committees, and Workgroups, as presented in the Annual Report 2023-2024, be received and entered into the record.*

**Explanation:** These documents are included in the Annual Report and describe actions taken this year and initial plans for the coming year. Taken together the reports present a robust picture of the current operations, actions, and status of the church.

**Article 3: To act on the recommendation of the Board to make an exception to the bylaw provision that Board Members must take a year off after serving three (3) full years to allow Tina Benik to serve an additional year and to serve as Board Chair.**

*Motion: I move that Article VI: Section 3 of the bylaws be suspended for one year.*

**Explanation:**

This year and next year represent a time of change and dramatic action in the church. In addition to the celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church, significant changes in staff, actions being taken to resolve long term issues of building preservation and maintenance, and the ongoing work of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Workgroup to define future directions for the church, call for consistent and steady leadership. Tina Benik has been an active member of the Executive Committee over the past three years. Her skills, demonstrated in her prior term as Board Chair, are well suited to allow her to provide this leadership and she is willing to do so.

**Article 4: To act on the recommendation of the Governance Committee for the election of Officers, Chairpersons, and Trustees of the Endowment.**

*Motion: I move that the congregation elect the slate of Officers, Chairpersons, and Trustees of the Endowment presented in the Annual Report.*

**Explanation:** An annotated copy of the slate, as recommended, is included in the Annual Report, and was sent to members in advance of the meeting.

**Article 5: To act on the recommendation of the Anti-Racism Team and the Board to adopt the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism.**

*Motion: I move that the congregation adopt the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism as recommended by the Anti-Racism Initiative Team and the Board.*

**Explanation:** The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, which has been adopted by 283 UUA congregations in the United States, aims to complement our seven well-known Principles by explicitly addressing racism and other oppressions experienced by individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle states:

*“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”*

At the June 2023 Annual Meeting, the congregation voted unanimously to support continued exploration and discussion about ways in which adoption of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle could impact FRS. We believe that the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle closely aligns with our Vision, Mission & Ends by helping us to better articulate our individual and congregational UU identity: to welcome people in all their diversity, create belonging for one another, and to work in partnership as individuals and as a congregation to advance justice as we work to build a more diverse, Beloved Community.

We understand that systemic racism—which is not specifically addressed by the existing 7 Principles—intersects with other oppressions and justice issues, such as classism and poverty, LGBTQ+ rights, ableism, and environmental justice. The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, should we adopt it, will be incorporated into our existing 7 principles to help guide our actions and live in covenant with one another. These 8 principles will inform our decision-making and will help to carry out the mission and business of the church while upholding these principles—whether it’s through our practices in worship and Young Church, programs for spiritual development and education, our partnerships with other organizations committed to dismantling racism, or through hiring practices and vendor relationships.

It’s important to note that adopting the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is upholding love and justice. UUs of color—through Black Lives of UU (BLUU) and Diverse, Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM)—have asked us to adopt it. Doing so is an act of solidarity and respect. Adopting the 8 Principle will help us to grow spiritually towards wholeness both individually and collectively. We recognize that FRS adoption of the 8th Principle is really just the *beginning* of action, rather than the ultimate goal. Please join us in making our *actions* match our *values*.

**Article 6: To act on the FY2025 budget as recommended by the Parish Board.**

**Motion:** *I move that the congregation approve the Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) expenditure budget as presented in the Annual Report.*

**Explanation:** The budget documents, as approved, are included in the Annual Report and were sent to members in advance of the meeting.

**Article 7: To note and acknowledge that the year ahead will be the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of this congregation, to be celebrated during the calendar year January 1-December 31, 2025.**

**Motion:** *I move that we, the membership of the First Religious Society Unitarian Universalist, formally recognize the coming church year as the beginning of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishing of this congregation, to be celebrated January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025.*

**Explanation:** The purpose of this motion is to make formal recognition that we are about to embark on our 300<sup>th</sup> year since the establishment of this church in 1725 as “the Third Parish in Newbury” and will recognize and celebrate the anniversary during calendar year 2025.