

**FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF TORONTO
ANNUAL SPRING MEETING - May 26, 2024 @ 1:30pm**

Join us online on Sunday, May 26 at 1:30 pm. Registration opens at 1:00 pm.

FirstUnitarianToronto.org/zoomGM

MEETING DOCUMENTS AND READING MATERIAL

The files are located on [a google drive](#):

- Agenda (*below in this document*)
- Rules of Order for the Meeting (*below in this document*)
- [Minutes of November Congregational Meeting](#)
- [Proposed new Governance By-Law](#) and [Summary of Changes](#)
- [Proposed Provisional Six-month Budget for July-December 2024](#)
- [Update on 473 Renovation](#)
- [Candidates for Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, and Settled Minister Search Committee](#)

MEETING DOCUMENTS AND READING MATERIAL

- A. Agenda
- B. Rules of Order for the Meeting

A. AGENDA

1. Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
2. Welcome from the Chair
3. Territorial Acknowledgement
4. Guidance for using Rules of Order to support clarity and participation
5. Guidance for how to vote online and in-person
6. Confirmation of Quorum
7. Motion to approve Agenda for the meeting
8. Motion to approve Minutes of last Congregational Meeting
9. Presentation of By-Law Changes and Motion to approve revised Governance By-Law
10. Update from Interim Minister Search Committee
11. Motion to approve Preliminary Budget for July-December 2024
12. Update on 473 Renovation
13. Presentation on CUC AGM
14. Election of Trustees, Nominating Committee members, and Settled Minister Search Committee
15. Pledge of Accountability for all Leaders
16. Recognition of Service
17. President's Closing Remarks and Motion to Adjourn after closing words
18. Closing Words

B. Rules of Order

Thank you for taking time to participate in this meeting! First Unitarian comes alive when we communicate and make decisions together about issues that matter to the congregation. Communication between dozens of people can get complicated, so we use “rules of order” to make sure our discussions are clear and that everyone can follow along and participate if they wish. Here is a summary of the rules and how they are intended to support communication and decision-making.

MAKING SURE ATTENDEES CAN PARTICIPATE

The Chairperson is responsible to conduct meetings in an organized way that covers the business at hand and allows reasonable time for diverse opinions to be heard before motions are voted upon.

The Parliamentarian advises the Chairperson when there is a need to interpret the rules of order.

If something is preventing your participation in the meeting, such as the sound system is not working, you can interrupt and explain your concern. This is only to deal with matters not related to a topic being discussed. The Chairperson must listen to your concern and decide how to proceed. No one else needs to discuss or agree with your concern. (This is formally called a “point of privilege” because you won’t be able to exercise your privilege of voting if something is preventing your full participation.)

If you are confused about something or if you feel a previous comment of yours is being misconstrued, you may interrupt the meeting to explain what is confusing you and ask for clarification. The Chairperson must listen to your concern and decide how to proceed. No one else needs to discuss or agree with your concern. (This is formally called a “point of information.”)

If you notice a procedural error, such as discussion has begun on a motion before it has been seconded or it continues after the vote is over, you may interrupt the meeting respectfully to explain your observation or concern. The Chairperson must listen to your point and make a determination. There's no seconder, discussion or vote. (This is formally called a “point of order” because something is being done out of order.)

MAKING DECISIONS TOGETHER

Decisions are made by using “motions”, which are proposals for an agreement that certain actions be taken. One person must “move” a motion and another person must “second” it before the Chairperson can invite everyone else to discuss it. The Chairperson will invite one person at a time to speak.

Discussion is complete when everyone who wants to speak has done so, or when the Chairperson decides that enough conversation has taken place for everyone to be informed of the different points of view. At that time, the Chairperson reads out the words of the motion and asks people to vote. (Note: if the motion is “amended”, it is not voted on until the amendment itself is voted on; see below.)

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Sometimes, discussing can lead to a suggestion that the words of the motion be changed to clarify what is intended while staying true to the main idea. Any participant can “move an amendment.” Another person must “second” or support the amendment before it can be discussed by everyone else.

Participants must then vote to accept or reject the amendment before the vote on the actual motion can take place (amended or not, depending on this vote).

During the discussion of an amendment, it is possible that someone else will move another amendment to the first amendment (a further clarification, without negating the meaning of the first amendment). It needs a mover and seconder, followed by discussion before the vote on the sub-amendment is called by the Chair. There can only be one amendment and one sub-amendment.

All of this process can feel quite tedious – reaching absolute clarity on what is intended can be hard work and needs to be done step by step. It is the Chairperson’s job to keep the conversation moving in a useful direction and to make sure there is a clear statement of what is being proposed before votes are taken. Participants are asked to listen respectfully while each step is being taken and to ask questions if needed.

HOW MUCH DISCUSSION IS ENOUGH?

Normally the Chairperson will end the discussion of a motion. They either detect that everyone that wants to speak has done so, or they determine the discussion is no longer adding to everyone’s understanding of points of view (e.g., people are repeating points already made or straying into different topics.)

If you feel the discussion has already gone on long enough and is becoming frivolous, you can make a respectful motion to end the debate. You can do this by raising your hand and saying “I move that the question be now put.” This motion needs a seconder, cannot be amended, and needs two-thirds agreement. If this vote does not pass, the Chairperson will continue the discussion until they decide to call the vote.