

OPERATIONAL DRAFT – Approved for 1 year (Winter 2018 – Winter 2019)

Unitarian Church of Lincoln Congregational Model Governance

Pre-Meeting Preparation: Announcement and Town Halls

At least four weeks before the Congregational Meeting, the Board of Trustees shall announce the date and agenda. The agenda shall include any proposals, nominees and their written statements, or multi-slate issues to be decided.

The Board of Trustees shall decide to conduct one or two Town Halls and several Cottage Meetings in the weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting to allow for deeper exploration. A summary of these discussions will be presented at the Congregational Meeting, in writing or verbally. If further exploration of the agenda items during Town Halls and Cottage Meetings result in changes to the originally presented proposals, nominees or multi-slate issues. All modifications will be documented and presented during the Congregational Meeting.

An Open Meeting: All are called

All are invited to attend, but only members are provided voting cards and ballots.

Shortened Worship: Blending Service with Congregational Meeting

The Sunday service for the day of the Congregational Meeting will be shortened to 30 minutes.

Between Service and Congregational Meeting

The church will provide coffee and light refreshment for the 20 minute period after the service ends and before the congregational meeting begins.

Blending worship elements with Congregational Meeting

The Congregational Meeting will include elements that may typically be experienced during the worship service, such as hymns, readings, and meditation. See Agenda section.

In Person and Absentee Accounting

In Person: Members will be checked in prior to entering the Sanctuary for the meeting. They will be provided a packet containing the agenda, proposals to be discussed, descriptions of nominees and multi-slate issues, and written reports. In addition, they will be provided three colored cards (Green, Yellow, and Red) and ballot sheets for nominations and multi-slate issues. The colored cards will also include the name of the color (i.e. “Green”, “Yellow”, and “Red”).

Absentee: Members will be notified that they have the option to participate by absentee. Given the consensus process utilized for proposals, absentee members may only vote by ballot for nominees and multi-slate issues. All absentee ballots must be received one week prior to the Congregational Meeting and, after that time, may only be modified in person at the Congregational Meeting.

Agenda

The Congregational Meeting Agenda shall be included in meeting packets and displayed on the screen. Each item on the agenda will include a title, purpose, and expected time limit.

Sample (high level; ideally each proposal, issue, and report will be detailed with time limits)

- Opening (14-16 minutes)
 - Hymn
 - Welcome by Board President – (thanks will be offered to all those assisting with conducting and preparing the meeting)
 - Chalice Lighting
 - Reading
 - Meditation or Music
- Overview and Old Business (5 minutes)
 - Congregational Meeting Business Overview
 - Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
- Issues and Elections (30 – 40 minutes)
 - Proposals
 - Nominations
 - Multi-Slate Issues
- Hymn (or Music) and Reading (5 minutes)
- Standard Reports (30 – 40 minutes)
- Closing (5 – 7 minutes)
 - Closing Words
 - Postlude

Room Design: Concentric for Consensus

The Sanctuary chairs will be set up in a concentric circle with the intent of participants engaging with each other in discussion. Microphone runners will be stationed at each of the four aisles. The President of the Board of Trustees will present from the middle of the circle with members of the Board of Trustees, nominees, and other presenters in proximity.

General Guidelines for A/V and Presentations

The following Presenter Guidelines are adopted from the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA):

- Be Seen – Use PowerPoint instead of handouts. If handouts are absolutely necessary, use large print. Elevate yourself if possible.

- Be Heard – Every speaker use a microphone. Don't cover your mouth when speaking.
- Scent Sensitivities – Do not use scented candles, incense, or perfumes.
- Be Mindful of Cultural Appropriation – Credit your source & explain why you chose the material. Respect that which is sacred to a culture. Include contemporary as well as historic references.
- Say "Rise in body or in spirit." Do not block aisles or exits.
- Use Inclusive Language
- Respect Copyrights. Obtain permission when necessary, credit sources, use PowerPoint.
- Honor Diversity – Age, race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, sexual identify, affectional identity, cultural, physical ability
- Speak from your own experience
- Don't make assumptions about others

Voting on Issues: Modified Consensus process

Step 1: Introduce and clarify the proposal(s) to be decided

- A) Facilitator (or designee) presents the proposal in five minutes or less
- B) At the conclusion of the presentation, the floor will be open to clarifying questions

Step 2: Explore the proposal and look for initial consensus

- A) Commence with a straw poll of those leaning to agree (green cards) and those leaning to block (red cards)
- B) Floor will be open to comments from those leaning to dissent. Request those with fundamental disagreements with the proposal to start with identifying issues and concerns. The scribe documents these comments on a paperboard easel for all to see.
- C) Floor is open to ideas for resolving issues and concerns raised. Scribe collects ideas for solving the issues and concerns noted.
- D) Identify any emerging modifications that address key concerns.

Step 3: Test for agreement

- A) Three options:
 - Agreement: I support the proposal and am willing to implement it. <Raise a Green Card>
 - Reservations: I have some reservations, but I am willing to let the proposal pass and will abide by the group's decision. <Raise a Yellow Card>
 - Blocks: I have a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal that has not been resolved. We need to look for a new proposal. <Raise a Red Card>
- B) If any Blocks, return to Step 2: B). If blocked, one round of return will be allowed for an issue. If unresolved, congregation shall move to vote by majority.

Voting on Nominees or Multi-slate Issues: Selection Process

Step 1: Introduce the elected position(s) and/or multi-slate option

- A) Facilitator (or designee) describes the elected position to be filled or the multi-slate option in five minutes or less.
- B) For elected positions, nominees will have the opportunity to introduce themselves and describe their interest in the position. For nominees that are not able to attend, a written or recorded presentation will be shared.
- C) At the end of this recognition, the facilitator shall thank the nominees for their willingness to serve.

Step 2: Voting by Sheet

- A) For elected positions, each member will receive a ballot sheet listing the names of the nominees and clearly state the number of positions to be filled (i.e. "Select ONE")
- B) For multi-slate options, each member will receive a ballot sheet listing the options and clearly state the number of options allowed (i.e. "Select TEN")
- C) Absentee ballots shall be allowed for elected positions or multi-slate options unless revoked by the Board of Trustees before the meeting announcement. In the case that an absentee ballot is submitted and a nominee or multi-slate option is removed prior to the meeting, any votes for the removed nominee or multi-slate option may only be modified at least a week prior or in person.

Step 3: Delivering Results

- A) Ballot sheets shall be collected and counted during the meeting.
- B) The counts shall be delivered to the Facilitator. The Facilitator shall select the appropriate time for reading the results.
- C) Upon announcing the results, the Facilitator shall offer gratitude to all nominees.

For reaching conclusion on topics not deemed a proposal, nomination, or multi-slate issue, the Board of Trustees shall adopt and advertise the decision-making process with the announcement of the meeting.

Roles

- President of the Board: Convenes and facilitates the Congregational Meeting. Develops agenda with the Executive Team. Leads the agenda and consensus process.
- Co-Facilitator: Member of the Board responsible for recording comments from members on an paper pad easel.
- Secretary: Summarize notes from the previous congregational meeting, highlighting key decisions made. Calls for edits to previous meeting minutes. Completes meeting minutes for meeting.
- Time keeper: Member of the Board responsible for tracking time associated with agenda items and with any comments. All comments and their

respective responses are offered a total of three minutes each. At two minutes, a yellow card is raised. At one minute, an orange card is raised. At time, a red card is raised. The President of the Board is allowed to offer an additional three minutes to any member speaking.

Post-Meeting Sharing of Fellowship

After the meeting, members, friends, and visitors will be invited to share in fellowship with either coffee/small plates provided by the church or a potluck.