

**By-Laws of the First Spiritual Temple**  
**Founded by Marcellus Seth Ayer**  
**June 28, 1883**  
**(Ratified on January 19, 2022)**

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP**

All persons wishing to join the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE (aka Church; aka Church Society; aka Society) who are desirous of promulgating those basic principles: Liberty, Justice, and Charity, in their broadest sense, “but not such liberty as shall encroach in the least degree upon the rights and happiness of others”; having the good of Humanity at heart and being desirous of carrying out the “Articles of Faith” of this Church Society, may become members as stated in the following paragraphs.

It shall be incumbent on any person seeking membership in this Church Society to attend, on a regular basis, its Sunday worship services for a period of no less than three months and, prior to filing an application for membership, must attend the Society’s presentation of “Temple Teachings” so that the applicant shall have become conversant with those teachings.

Any person seeking membership in this Church Society shall make application to the Society in writing. Said application shall be presented to the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting of the Society or at any special meeting of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors, acting by a majority of its members, shall decide upon the application. If the application is accepted by the Board of Directors, written notice thereof shall be sent to the applicant, who shall be requested to appear at a pre-determined Sunday worship service to publicly subscribe to the “By-Laws” and “Articles of Faith” of the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE and be welcomed as part of the Church membership. Any person whose application is rejected may, after six months from such rejection, file a new application for membership.

**ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION**

The FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE is dependent, in part, on its members for financial support. Members’ contributions and donations are necessary for the maintenance of the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE and all functions of this Church Society. In order to meet partially these expenses, each member is encouraged to do his or her part in supporting the Church, either through financial donations, tithing, or volunteer work.

**ARTICLE III – ELIGIBILITY OF OFFICERS**

All members of the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE shall be eligible for the Board of Directors of this Church Society, provided they are members in good standing for a minimum of one year.

## **ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The officers of this Church Society shall consist of seven persons, members of the Society -- three of whom shall be the three persons known at the time as the “Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust” -- who shall constitute the Board of Directors, and they shall hold the several offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, to which they may be elected.

In the event of a diminution in the number of “Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust”, said position on the Board shall be filled by a member of the Church Society, in accordance with ARTICLE III of these by-laws.

## **ARTICLE V – NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD POSITIONS**

Nominations for positions on the Society’s Board of Directors (except for those currently holding the title “Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust”), must be made, in writing, to the Secretary of the Church by no later than two weeks prior to the Church’s Annual General Meeting. Said nominations shall be presented to the Church membership for a vote at said Annual General Meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI – ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by ballot at the Annual General Meeting of the Church Society by vote of its members, present and voting, to serve for one year from the date of said Annual General Meeting or until their successors are chosen, and they shall perform the duties usually incumbent on officers so designated and as noted in ARTICLE VII of these by-laws. Vacancies in all offices, created between Annual General Meetings, shall be filled by vote of a majority of the remaining members of the Board of Directors and shall remain in effect until the next scheduled Annual General Meeting.

Immediately upon the adjournment of the Annual General Meeting of the Church Society, the newly elected Board of Directors shall convene and elect amongst its members the President for the ensuing year.

## **ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors shall direct the general operations of the Church Society and assure that funds donated for any particular purpose or object are duly secured and applied to the purposes as designated by the donor(s).

The Board of Directors shall have power to appoint “Ministers”, in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and issue certificates to approved “Mediums”, “Spiritual Healing Channels” and “Teachers of Metaphysical Principles”, thus providing legal protection and enabling them to perform the functions of their duties in Spirit communication, teaching, lecturing, and in ministering to the sick by “laying-on-of-hands”, prayer, and such other methods as they are inspired to employ by their guides (ministering spirits) for the restoration of the sick, and such other functions as are legally accorded under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

No person, while attending any event hosted by the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, shall administer any gift of the Spirit without authorization by either its Board of Directors or its presiding minister.

Duties, specific to each office and to this Church Society, shall be as follows:

President:

- The President shall call and chair all Board and Membership meetings.
- The President shall work as a liaison between the Pastor(s) and the Board of Directors and between the Pastor(s) and the Church membership.
- The President shall present a report of the Church's past activities and future plans at the Church's Annual General Meeting.
- The President shall send, within seven days of receipt, acknowledgement letters for all charitable donations made to the Church, other than those given during events hosted by the Church or originating from any sale and/or service rendered by and/or on behalf of the Church.

Vice-President:

- The Vice-President shall assume all duties of the President in the event the President is unable or unwilling to carry out said duties.

Secretary:

- The Secretary shall keep careful, complete, and unbiased recordings of all Board and Membership meetings and present said recordings at appropriate meetings.
- The Secretary shall prepare and send, either electronically or via surface mail, notices of Membership Meetings to all Church members.
- The Secretary shall help create and prepare all promotional mailings originating from the Church, including the creation, printing, and posting of events on the Church Bulletin Board and the Church's Newsletter, *The Sower*.
- The Secretary shall maintain and update the Church website as needed, with or without the assistance of any designated web designer.
- The Secretary shall fill all orders coming in through the Church's Online Bookstore.
- The Secretary shall file all necessary paperwork, manually and/or digitally, to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Treasurer:

- The Treasurer shall receive all funds coming into the church; keep a detailed accounting of said funds; and present said accounting at appropriate meetings.
- The Treasurer shall assure all donations made for specific purposes be used solely for said purposes.
- The Treasurer shall deposit all funds into the Church's operating bank account.
- The Treasurer shall assure all bills are paid promptly.
- The Treasurer shall issue a formal "Request for Funds" to the Trustees of the Spiritual Temple Trust, noting the current cash balance of the Church's operating account, along with the amount requested.
- The Treasurer shall submit, when necessary, to the Internal Revenue Service monthly Social Security, Medicare and Withholding taxes and to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue annual State Withholding taxes.

- The Treasurer shall submit, when necessary, to the Internal Revenue Service quarterly Payroll Form 941 and Federal Form 1099; to the Social Security Administration annual W-2 and W-3 Forms; and to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue State annual Withholding Form M-941 or Form M-3.

### **ARTICLE VIII – ORDINATION**

Any member of the FIRST SPIRITUAL TEMPLE seeking ordination as a Minister shall enroll in the Church Society’s “Minister Ordination Program”. Prior to enrollment, said member shall present two copies of a “Letter of Intent” to the Pastor(s) and sit with the Pastor(s) to discuss the aforementioned program. The Pastor(s) shall then present one copy of said “Letter of Intent”, countersigned by him/her/them, to the Secretary of the Board to be entered into the formal Church records. The other copy of said “Letter of Intent”, countersigned by him/her/them, shall be presented to the “Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust” to be entered into the Trustees’ formal records.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Pastor(s) to educate and train the enrolled member in all aspects of the Church Society’s mission, ministry, and beliefs, along with all legalities to which all members of the clergy are subjected under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If, at any time during the training and educational process, the Pastor(s) feel the enrolled member does not exhibit the standards of excellence established by the Church Society’s founder, Marcellus Seth Ayer, notifications thereof shall be submitted to the Board of Directors and the Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust for further discussion with the enrolled member. It shall be the responsibility of the Pastor(s) to make final determination concerning further training or lack thereof.

Following one year of successful training and education, the designation of “Licentiate Minister” shall, by a majority vote of the Church Society’s Board of Directors, be conferred upon the enrolled member.

### **ARTICLE IX – CORPORATE SEAL**

The Corporate Seal of the Church Society shall be a circular die, with an inner ring of circles, bearing the following insignia and inscription: a dove, facing down, signifying the Holy Spirit. From the dove’s beak emerges a triangle, with two six-pointed stars at each of the base angles. The sides of the triangle shall have the words “Faith”, “Reason” and “Hope” inscribed thereupon.

### **ARTICLE X – MEETINGS**

**Annual General Meetings:** The Annual General Meeting of the Church Society shall be held on the first Monday evening in June of each year, to hear and act upon the reports of the officers of the Church, to elect officers for the ensuing year, except for the office of President, and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

The President of the Church Society shall determine whether the first Monday evening in June of any particular year is convenient to hold the Annual General Meeting. If the President determines that such a date is not convenient for the conducting of business, he or she may designate another date, following the first Monday evening of June of said

year, for that year's Annual General Meeting, but no later than the Fifteenth Day of August of that year.

**Special Meetings:** A special meeting of the Church Society may be called at any time by the President or the Board of Directors. Notice of such meeting shall be sent to all designated members, either electronically or via surface mail, by the Secretary at least seven days prior thereto.

**Quorum:** Five members of the Church Society shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business at any called meeting of the Society. If no quorum is present, the meeting shall adjourn to another time within two weeks, and in like manner, from time to time, until a quorum is obtained.

## **ARTICLE XI – GRIEVANCES**

All grievances arising from within the Church Society shall first be brought before the Pastor(s) for spiritual counsel and reconciliation. If any grievance cannot be resolved in this manner, then it shall be brought before the Board of Directors for further discussion and hopeful resolution. Only under the direction of the Church Board of Directors shall a membership meeting be called to address any grievance unresolved by either of the aforementioned methods of resolution.

## **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS**

Amendments to these By-Laws not conflicting with the Spirit and Principles of this Church Society or those set forth by the “Constitution” and “Declaration of Principles” to the Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust, and for the general good, are admissible and shall be presented in writing to the Board of Directors for its review and possible adjustment. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, said amendment(s) shall be presented at any regular meeting of the Church Society and shall be acted upon, by majority vote of its members, present and voting, for final approval. Following membership approval, the amended by-laws shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for final confirmation.