

# By-Laws of the First Spiritual Temple Founded by Marcellus Seth Ayer June 28, 1883

## ARTICLE I – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the First Spiritual Temple (aka the Temple; aka the Temple Society; aka the Society) is the establishment of a religious, spiritual, and educational community devoted to:

1. The vision of the founder of the Temple, Marcellus Seth Ayer (1839-1921), as laid out in the Charter of the First Spiritual Temple, originally the Working Union of Progressive Spiritualists, recorded with the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on June 28, 1883, and his “Declaration of Principles” and “Constitution” to the Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust, recorded under Deed of Trust, dated April 30, 1884, at Suffolk, Massachusetts, Registry of Deeds, Book 1675, Pages 401-403.
2. The promulgation of the Soul’s recognition of its immortality and the progressive development of its Divine attributes, powers, and potentials.
3. The advancement, expansion, and awareness of the Soul and Spirit through Ancient and Modern Wisdom, Spiritualism, and the Healing Arts.
4. The promulgation of the unity and sanctity of all life; human, animal, plant, and mineral.

Said purpose shall be conducted through lectures, classes, seminars, Sunday meetings, development groups, meditation, Spirit communication, research, book clubs and other like-minded events, all for the practical work of self-culture; mentally, morally, physically, and spiritually.

## ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Any person wishing to join the First Spiritual Temple, who is 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 and Guiding Principles” of this Temple, may become a member as stated in the following two paragraphs.

**ONE:** It shall be incumbent on any person seeking membership in this Temple Society to be involved with and participate in, on a regular basis, either the Society’s Sunday Meetings or weekday classes and study courses for a period no less than four months, thus giving the prospective member an opportunity to be cognizant of the Society’s operations and spiritual/religious beliefs and principles.

**TWO:** Any person seeking membership in this Temple Society shall, after fulfilling the requirement set forth in Paragraph One, noted above, submit a request for membership to the

Society, either digitally or in writing. Upon receipt of said request for membership, the Secretary of this Society shall send a “Membership Application Package” to the person seeking membership. Said “Membership Application Package” shall consist of the following:

- The Temple’s “Articles of Faith and Guiding Principles”.
- The Temple’s current “By-Laws”.
- Formal “Application for Temple Membership”.

Said “Membership Application Package” may be sent either digitally or via surface mail.

Upon receipt of the “Membership Application Package”, the person seeking membership shall have 45 days to submit the formal “Application for Temple Membership,” affirming that he or she has reviewed all the material submitted in the “Membership Application Package” and embraces the Temple’s “Articles of Faith and Guiding Principles”.

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 of acceptance shall be sent to the applicant. Any person whose application is rejected may, after four months from such rejection, file a new application for membership.

### **ARTICLE III – TEMPLE FUNDING**

Funding for the First Spiritual Temple shall be met by contributions, donations, subscriptions, bequeaths, the sale of physical and digital teaching material, and financial assistance from the First Spiritual Temple Trust, said Trust referenced in ARTICLE I of these By-Laws.

### **ARTICLE IV – ELIGIBILITY OF OFFICERS**

All members of the First Spiritual Temple shall be eligible for the Board of Directors of this Temple Society, provided they are members in good standing for a minimum of six months.

### **ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The officers of this Society shall consist of no more than five persons, members of the Society, 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.

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

Nominations for positions on the Society’s Board of Directors must be made, in writing, to the Secretary of the Temple by no later than two weeks prior to the Temple’s Annual Meeting. Said nominations shall be presented to the Church membership for a vote at said Annual Meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII – ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by ballot at the Annual Meeting of the Temple Society by vote of its members, virtually or physically present and voting, to serve for one year from the date of said Annual Meeting or until their successors are chosen, and they shall perform the duties usually incumbent on officers so designated and as noted in ARTICLE VIII of these By-Laws. Vacancies on the Board created between Annual 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 Meeting.

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

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

The Board of Directors shall direct the general operations of the Temple Society and assure that funds donated for specific purposes or objects are duly secured and applied to the purposes as designated by the donors.

The Board of Directors shall have power to appoint “Ministers”, in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of New York, 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 and the State of New York.

No person shall administer any gift of the Spirit, under the auspices of the First Spiritual Temple, without authorization by either its Board of Directors or its presiding minister.

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

A) President:

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

B) 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.

C) 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 Temple members.
- The Secretary shall help create and prepare all promotional postings originating from the Temple.
- The Secretary shall maintain and update the Temple's website as needed, with or without the assistance of any other Temple member or designated web designer.
- The Secretary shall fill all orders coming in through the Temple's Online Bookstore.
- The Secretary shall file all necessary paperwork, manually and/or digitally, to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State of New York, and the United States Federal Government.

D) Treasurer:

- The Treasurer shall receive all funds coming into the Temple; keep a detailed accounting of said funds; and present said accounting at appropriate meetings.
- The Treasurer shall ensure all donations made for specific purposes are used solely for said purposes.
- The Treasurer shall deposit all funds into the Temple's operating bank account.
- The Treasurer shall ensure all bills are paid promptly.
- The Treasurer shall issue a formal "Request for Funds" to the Trustees of the First Spiritual Temple Trust, noting the current cash balance of the Temple's operating account, along with the amount requested.

- The Treasurer shall submit, if and when necessary, to the United States Internal Revenue Service, to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, and to the State of New York Department of Revenue all required payroll and withholding forms, along with necessary deposits to said government agencies.

## ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Committees, designated to deal with specific issues and/or needs of the Temple, may be created by majority vote of the Temple’s Board of Directors. A committee shall consist of one or more Board members and, if approved by the Board, may include non-Board members of the Temple. Each committee is responsible for the duties to which it has been assigned. Each committee may designate one of its members to be the spokesperson for the respective committee and who shall submit to the Temple’s Board of Directors a report of its doings.

## ARTICLE X – TEMPLE MINISTRIES

Operating within and under the auspices of the First Spiritual Temple shall be the following “Temple Ministries”:

**Ministry of Education:** All education – religious, spiritual, metaphysical, and secular – shall be under the general direction of the Temple’s Pastor/Minister. Said Pastor/Minister shall have full authority in the presentation of all educational programs conducted by the First Spiritual Temple, provided said program(s) is/are not in conflict with the basic tenets and principles set forth by Marcellus Seth Ayer or the Temple’s Guiding Principles. At the discretion of said Pastor/Minister, he or she may approach the Temple’s Board of Directors for its blessing on any specific educational program.

**Ministry of Healing:** All aspects of non-allopathic healing – Spiritual, Spiritualist, or any other non-allopathic healing – shall be under the general implementation of a member of this Temple Society, specifically chosen by a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors. Any educational program dealing with such healing shall be done in cooperation with the current Pastor/Minister of said Society. Said Pastor/Minister shall give final approval for all such educational programming dealing with the above-referenced healing techniques.

**Ministry of Animal Welfare:** In accordance with Marcellus Ayer’s deep commitment to the welfare of members of the Animal Kingdom, the Society’s Board of Directors shall, by unanimous vote, appoint one member of the Temple under whose direction it will be to organize and implement classes, lectures, online and in-person events, all dealing exclusively with Animal Welfare. Such events will be non-dogmatic, will not involve any political or legal issues, and will be presented with the understanding that each person must decide for himself or herself how he or she perceives and/or practices “animal welfare”.

## **ARTICLE XI – ACCOUNTING YEAR**

The accounting year for all Temple financial transactions shall be January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. A financial report for each accounting year shall be prepared by the Temple's Treasurer and presented to each member of this Temple Society at the following scheduled Annual Meeting.

## **ARTICLE XII – ORDINATION**

Any member of the First Spiritual Temple seeking ordination as a "Minister" shall enroll in the Temple's "Minister Ordination Program". Prior to enrollment, said member shall present two copies of a "Letter of Intent" to the Pastor/Minister and meet with him or her to discuss the aforementioned program. The Pastor/Minister shall then present one copy of said "Letter of Intent", countersigned by him or her, to the Secretary of the Board to be entered into the formal Temple records.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Pastor/Minister to educate and train the enrolled member in all aspects of the Temple's mission, ministry, and beliefs, along with all legalities to which designated members of the clergy are subjected under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of New York. If, at any time during the training and educational process, the Pastor/Minister feels the enrolled member does not exhibit the standards of excellence established by the Temple's founder, Marcellus Seth Ayer, notification thereof shall be submitted to the Board of Directors for further discussion with the enrolled member. It shall be the responsibility of the Pastor/Minister 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 Temple's Board of Directors, be conferred upon the enrolled member.

## **ARTICLE XIII – CORPORATE SEAL**

The Corporate Seal of the First Spiritual Temple 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 XIV – MEETINGS

**Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting of the Temple shall be held on the second Monday in January of each year, to hear and act upon the reports presented by the Temple's President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

The President of the Temple Society shall determine whether the second Monday in January of any particular year is convenient to hold the Temple's Annual 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 second Monday of January of said year, for that year's Annual Meeting, but no later than the Fifteenth Day of March of that year.

**Special Meeting:** A special meeting of the Temple's Board of Directors or of the Temple's membership may be called at any time by the President. Notice of such meetings shall be sent to all Board and/or Temple members, either electronically or via surface mail, by the Temple's Secretary at least seven days prior thereto.

**Quorum:** Five members of the Temple Society shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business at any called meeting by 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. Said quorum shall apply only to Membership meetings; not to Board meetings.

## ARTICLE XV – GRIEVANCES

All grievances arising from within the Temple shall first be brought before the Pastor/Minister 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 Temple's Board of Directors shall a membership meeting be called to address any grievance unresolved by either of the aforementioned methods of resolution.

## ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Amendments to these By-Laws not conflicting with the Spirit and Principles of this Temple Society, 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 meeting of the Temple Society and shall be acted upon, by majority vote of its members, electronically or otherwise 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.