

**AGAPE' METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
FORT WORTH, TEXAS INC.**

BYLAWS

Approved at Congregational Meeting November 16, 2003

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be Agape' Metropolitan Community Church, also known as Agape' MCC.

Article II – Affiliation

This church is a member congregation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC); ascribes to the government, doctrine, vision, mission, and values of UFMCC; and agrees to abide by the UFMCC Bylaws and decisions made by General Conference.

A. Successor Corporation - The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is the not-for-profit organization designated to receive the church's property in the event of dissolution or abandonment of the church or disaffiliation from the UFMCC, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

B. Disaffiliation – A decision to disaffiliate from the UFMCC shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating and shall be decided in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

Article III – Purpose

The purpose of this church is Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of UFMCC and local church Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.

Article IV – Members and Friends

A. Criteria for Membership – Any baptized Christian who has completed a membership class may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership. A Member in good standing is a Member who registers his/her attendance, provides identifiable financial support, makes a definite service contribution, and demonstrates interest and loyalty.

1. Membership List – The list of Members in good standing shall be maintained by the Clerk or church staff, who shall report changes every six months to the Board of Directors.
2. Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list in the first and third quarters of each year.
 - a. A Member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the list of Members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive Members.
 - b. The Board of Directors shall notify this Member in writing that the Member has been placed on a list of inactive Members and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.
 - c. A former Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing after completing a membership class and participating in the Rite of Membership.

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47 **B. Friends of the Church** – A person who, for one reason or another, feels unable to become a Member
48 but who supports the goals of the church and wants to be a part of the work of the church may be
49 designated as a “Friend of the Church.”

50
51 Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate
52 in all activities of the church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings or serve on the Board of
53 Directors. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates.

54
55 **C. Discipline of Members and Friends** – The church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct
56 on the part of any Member or Friend. The Board of Directors is empowered to remove by majority vote
57 any Member or Friend or take other appropriate disciplinary action.

58
59 **Article V – Congregational Meetings**

60
61 Government of the church is vested in its Congregational Meeting, which exerts the right to control of its
62 affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal
63 organization, and the General Conference.

64
65 **A. Time and Place** – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the 4th quarter. The
66 time and place of the annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

67
68 **B. Notification** – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least two (2) weeks in
69 advance.

70
71 **C. Voting Rights** – Each Member in good standing has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of
72 absentee voting shall not be allowed.

73
74 **D. Votes Required for Approval** – Decisions, including elections, requires approval by a vote of more
75 than fifty percent (50%) of those Members present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC
76 Bylaws or otherwise stated in these local church Bylaws.

77
78 **E. Quorum** – A quorum for meetings shall consist of twenty (20%) percent of the voting members of
79 this Church if the Church has less than 250 members in good standing. If the Church has 250 or more
80 members in good standing, a quorum shall consist of ten (10%) percent of the voting members of the
81 Church. A majority of the votes cast shall decide all questions, unless otherwise provided for in these By-
82 Laws.

83
84 **F. Agenda** – The agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of
85 Directors.

86
87 **Content** – The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board, election of
88 Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of budget, and receiving
89 reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor.

90
91 **G. Elections** – All votes for positions shall be taken by secret ballot.

92

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93 **H. Special Congregational Meetings** – In addition to the annual Congregational Meeting, special
94 Congregational Meetings may also be held. Special Congregational Meetings are governed by the same
95 rules as those pertaining to the Annual Congregational Meeting (items B,C,D and E only of this Article).
96

- 97 1. Calling a Special Congregational Meeting – A special Congregational Meeting may be called
98 either by (a) majority vote of the Board, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition signed by at least twenty-
99 five percent (25%) of the Members and submitted to the Clerk.
100
101 2. The nature and purpose of the special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and
102 in notices and written into the agenda.
103

Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body and Personnel Committee

104 **A. Name** – The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Directors, which is authorized to
105 provide administrative leadership for Agape' MCC, subject to approval of the Congregational Meeting.
106

107 **B. Responsibilities** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of
108 Bylaws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and the Elder serving the Region and
109 for submitting the approved Bylaws to the Elder serving the Region. The Board of Directors shall also
110 have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation, church
111 property, risk management, and physical and financial affairs of the church. The Board of Directors shall
112 also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making
113 timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC.
114

115 **C. Qualifications** – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of Agape'
116 MCC for at least one year or continuous active membership in an MCC for two years with a minimum of
117 six months active membership at Agape' MCC.
118

119 **Conflict of Interest** – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship;
120 someone who is a church employee; or someone who is a Clergy Candidate shall not be eligible to serve
121 on the Board of Directors.
122

123 **D. Composition** – There shall be eight (8) members, including the Pastor who shall serve as Moderator.
124

125 **E. Term of Office** – The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall
126 be three years, staggered so that about 1/3rd of the positions are for election each year.
127

128 **F. Meetings** – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a
129 year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend
130 as Observers without voice or vote.
131

132 **Minutes** – Minutes and financial reports shall be available to Members of the church and regularly posted
133 for public view. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions made. A copy of the
134 minutes shall become part of the permanent church records.
135

136 **G. Quorum** – No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors must be present in order
137 to transact business.
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141 **H. Official Officers** – The official officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and
142 Treasurer.

143
144 1. Election of Officers – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of
145 Directors shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator,
146 Clerk, and Treasurer. The term of office for officers, except for Moderator, shall be one (1)
147 year.

- 148
149 a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.
150 b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the
151 absence or upon the request of the Pastor.
152 c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of official
153 correspondence and church records, and for ensuring that accurate records are kept of all
154 meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Congregation. The Clerk shall assure
155 proper notice of all authorized meetings of the Church. The Clerk is the officer
156 authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Directors.
157 d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the preparation and
158 maintenance of all financial records. This shall include a monthly financial report to the
159 Board and an annual financial report to the Congregation. The monthly and annual
160 financial reports shall reflect receipts, disbursements, and outstanding financial
161 obligations.

162
163 **I. Vacancies** – In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board may appoint a qualified
164 Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting, when an election shall be held to fill
165 the unexpired term.

166
167 **J. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the
168 part of any member of the Board of Directors. After a thorough investigation, the Board of Directors may
169 remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any of its members guilty of the above, with the
170 exception of the Pastor who must be disciplined in accordance with the UFMCC Bylaws. A petition
171 submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing of the
172 congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

- 173
174 1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Board of Directors may appeal the action. The
175 appeal would be heard by the Board of Directors and the elected members of the Personnel
176 Committee. The decision of this Appeal Hearing is final.

177
178 **K. Limitation of Liability** – No director or officer of the church shall be liable for any act or failure to
179 act by any other director or officer of the Church or by any employee of the Church. No director or
180 officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in the title to any property acquired
181 by the Church. No director or officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in
182 any security in which the Church might invest, or from bankruptcy, insolvency, or wrongful act by any
183 person to whom the Church might entrust any of its property. No director or officer of the church shall be
184 liable for any loss due to error of judgment or oversight on his/her part, or for any other loss whatsoever
185 occurring in the carrying out of the duties of his/her office, unless this loss arises from the director's or
186 officer's own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

187

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188 **L. Indemnity** – The church shall protect every director and officer of the church against all costs arising
189 in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by his/her own willful neglect
190 or fraudulent or criminal actions.

191
192 **M. Personnel Committee**- The Personnel Committee shall consist of the Director of Personnel (Senior
193 Pastor), a Board Representative elected from and by the Board of Directors, and two members of the
194 congregation elected at a congregational meeting.

195
196 For recruitment and selection of compensated personnel, up to two additional members may be seated in
197 the committee with full voice and vote. Temporary members will be selected from ministry areas or
198 programs most directly impacted by the position. The temporary members will be determined by the
199 standing committee members.

200
201 The terms of office for elected members shall be three years. Terms shall be staggered. Vacancies may
202 be filled according to Board Policy and Procedures. The Personnel Committee is chaired by the Director
203 of Personnel.

204
205 The responsibilities of the Committee are to:

- 206
- 207 1. establish specific personnel needs
 - 208 a. develop and publish job descriptions
 - 209 b. develop interview questions and exercises
 - 210 c. develop selection criteria
 - 211 2. publish personnel needs and recruit applicants
 - 212 3. conduct screening interviews
 - 213
 - 214 4. present recommendations to the Board of Directors
 - 215
 - 216 5. develop policies and procedures for promotion and evaluation of compensated staff
 - 217
 - 218 6. serve on the Pastoral Search Committee (elected members only)
 - 219
 - 220 7. participate in discipline appeal hearings for elected positions (elected members only)
 - 221
 - 222
 - 223

Article VII – Pastor

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225
226 **A. Role** – The Pastor is the UFMCC clergy person with a license to practice who has been called by God
227 and elected by the church to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader until
228 such time that the relationship is terminated. The Pastor shall also fulfill such other roles and
229 responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws and the policies of the church.

- 230
- 231 1. Interim Pastoral Leader – In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as
232 Pastor, the Board of Directors may request the Regional Elder to appoint an Interim Pastoral
233 Leader, who shall be subject to a background check. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral
234 Leader shall be one (1) year. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of Agape' MCC, then
235 the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of

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236 Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of Agape' MCC, then the Interim Pastoral
237 Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor, except that
238 the Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and
239 Congregational Meetings, with voice but no vote.
240

241 **B. Responsibilities** – The Pastor shall have authority for ordering all worship services of the church;
242 determining when other worship services will be held, subject to approval of the Board of Directors;
243 appointing compensated and uncompensated church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of
244 Directors; and determining compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the church staff, subject
245 to approval of the Board of Directors. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Board of
246 Directors, Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings, personnel director, and
247 as the primary spokesperson of the church to the community. The Pastor may delegate such duties as
248 seem wise, including but not limited to the duty of serving as Moderator of the Board of Directors and of
249 Congregational Meetings.
250

251 **C. Pastoral Covenant** – The Board of Directors and Pastor shall develop a covenant between the Pastor
252 and the church. The covenant shall include a job description and address such matters as compensation
253 that is consistent with equitable local standards, benefits, allowances, and leave. All provisions of the
254 covenant shall be subordinate to the Bylaws of the UFMCC.
255

256 1. Conference Expenses – To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Pastor's
257 transportation, registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.
258

259 **D. Pastoral Vacancy** – In the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, a Pastoral Search Committee
260 shall be responsible for presenting a qualified candidate for election at a Congregational Meeting. The
261 Pastoral Search Committee shall develop and implement the pastoral search process, in consultation with
262 the Regional Elder.
263

264 1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of the
265 Board of Directors and the elected members of the Personnel Committee.
266

267 2. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee
268 must receive more than seventy percent (70%) of the votes cast.
269

270 **E. Termination of Relationship** – The Pastor and congregation may choose at any time to terminate
271 their relationship through mutual agreement. Unilateral failure to renew the Pastor's contract shall not
272 constitute removal of the Pastor from office. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on irreconcilable
273 differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as referred to in Article VIII.
274

Article VIII – Conflict Resolution

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277 The Board of Directors, the Pastor, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the
278 Members in good standing may invite intervention by the Regional Elder to resolve conflicts or difficulty
279 within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts between the Pastor and congregation, in
280 accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.
281

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282 **A. Removing the Pastor from Office** – The church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC
283 Bylaws for removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty, or
284 when irreconcilable differences arise that cannot be resolved through mutual agreement.
285

- 286 1. Any petition to initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office must be submitted to the
287 Clerk of the Board of Directors and be signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the
288 members in good standing.
289
- 290 2. The Board of Directors may initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office by a vote of
291 three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors.
292
- 293 3. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to the
294 Regional Elder within three (3) days.
295
- 296 4. The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the congregation.
297

Article IX – Lay Delegates and Alternate Lay Delegates

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300 The church shall elect one (1) lay person for every one hundred (100) Members in good standing, or part
301 thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate. The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay
302 Delegate elected. The Lay Delegates and Alternate Lay Delegates shall be a Member in good standing of
303 this church.
304

305 **A. Election** – The Delegates shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each
306 General Conference. A majority of the votes cast shall be required to elect.
307

308 **B. Term of Office** - The term of office of Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate shall be two (2)
309 years. Delegates shall be elected at the first congregational meeting following each General Conference.
310

311 **C. Duties** – The duties of the Delegates shall be to represent the congregation at General and Regional
312 Conferences, to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies. In the
313 event the elected delegate or alternate is unable to attend a particular conference, the Board may appoint a
314 substitute for that conference. No person may be elected to the Board of Directors and elected to a
315 position of Lay Delegate concurrently.
316

317 **D. Funding** - To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Lay Delegate's transportation,
318 registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.
319

320 **F. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the
321 part of any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate. After a thorough investigation, the Board of
322 Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any Lay Delegate or Alternate
323 Lay Delegate guilty of the above. A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent
324 (25%) of the Members in good standing of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.
325

- 326 1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Lay Delegates/Alternate Lay Delegates may
327 appeal the action. The appeal would be heard by the Board of Directors and the elected
328 members of the Personnel Committee. The decision of this Appeal Hearing is final.
329

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Article X – Church Finances

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332 **A. Authorized Signatures** – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures
333 for withdrawals, one of which shall be that of a church officer. All members of the Board of Directors
334 shall have signature authority.

335
336 **B. Limit on Expenditures** – The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the
337 approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the annual budget; any expenditure
338 that is greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.

339
340 The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in
341 any amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that
342 amount requires congregational approval.

343
344 **C. Fiscal Year** – For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the
345 calendar year.

346
347 **D. Church Budget** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for presenting to the Congregational
348 Meeting for approval an annual operating budget that reflects anticipated receipts and disbursements. As
349 long as the approved budget is not exceeded, it may be amended as needed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of
350 the Board of Directors, which shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment
351 has been made.

- 352
353 1. **Budget Year** – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through
354 December.

355
356 **E. Assessments** – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly to the UFMCC the number of members
357 in good standing for each month within the quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessments as
358 set by General Conference. The report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the
359 tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.

360
361 **F. Tithes** – The Board of Directors shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC, and with
362 that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported. The percentage of funds to be remitted shall be
363 determined by General Conference.

Article XI – Adoption and Amendments

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365
366
367 **A. Adoption** – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational
368 Meeting and approval by the Regional Elder.

369
370 **B. Amendments** – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational
371 Meeting. The amended or repealed Bylaws are subject to approval by the Regional Elder. Amendments
372 that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the
373 congregation.