

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

BYLAWS

Revised March 2017 to align with UFMCC Bylaws

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 3 months before the annual Congregational Meeting 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.
3. Right to Appeal. A decision by the Board of Directors to drop an inactive Member from the local church membership roll may be appealed by the inactive Member to the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The

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49 decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the inactive
50 Member is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.

- 51 a. Appeal process. The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of
52 Directors within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive Member was
53 dropped from the local church membership roll.
- 54 b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without
55 taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
- 56 c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the inactive Member wishes
57 the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular
58 Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of
59 considering the appeal.
60

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

- 64 1. List of Friends of the Church – The list of Friends of the Church shall be maintained by the
65 Board of Directors.
66
- 67 2. Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed committees and may
68 participate in all activities of the church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings or
69 serve on the Board of Directors. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of
70 Lay Delegates.
71

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

- 75 1. Right to Appeal – The action of the Board may be appealed to the next regular Congregational
76 Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The decision of the
77 Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal of discipline, the disciplined
78 Member or Friend shall remain under discipline and shall retain the right to vote at regular and
79 Special Congregational Meetings, including the Congregational Meeting held to consider the
80 appeal.
- 81 a. Appeal Process - The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of
82 Directors within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive Member was dropped
83 from the local church membership roll.
- 84 b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without
85 taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
- 86 c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the inactive Member wishes the
87 appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular
88 Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of
89 considering the appeal.
90

Article V – Congregational Meetings

91
92
93 Government of the church is vested in its Congregational Meeting, which exerts the right to control of its
94 affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal
95 organization, and the General Conference.
96

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97 **A. Time and Place** – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the 4th quarter. The
98 time and place of the annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Directors.
99

100 **B. Notification** – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least two (2) weeks in
101 advance.
102

103 **C. Voting Rights** – Each Member in good standing has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of
104 absentee voting shall not be allowed.
105

106 **D. Votes Required for Approval** – Decisions, including elections, requires approval by a vote of more
107 than fifty percent (50%) of those Members present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC
108 Bylaws or otherwise stated in these local church Bylaws.
109

110 **E. Quorum** – A quorum for meetings shall consist of twenty (20%) percent of the voting members of
111 this Church.
112

113 **F. Agenda** – The agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of
114 Directors.
115

- 116 1. **Content** – The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board,
117 election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of
118 budget, and receiving reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor.
119
- 120 2. **Additions to Agenda** – Members may request the Board of Directors to add agenda items by
121 submitting additional agenda items to the Clerk no later than three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.
122

123 **G. Elections** – All elected positions must come thru a nomination or application process as
124 established by the Board of Directors. There will be no nominations from the floor. All votes for
125 positions shall be taken by secret ballot. Votes of affirmation from the floor are not permitted.
126

127 **H. Special Congregational Meetings** – In addition to the annual Congregational Meeting, special
128 Congregational Meetings may also be held. Special Congregational Meetings are governed by the same
129 rules as those pertaining to the Annual Congregational Meeting (items B, C, D and E only of this Article).
130

- 131 1. **Calling a Special Congregational Meeting** – A special Congregational Meeting may be called
132 either by (a) majority vote of the Board, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition signed by at least twenty-
133 five percent (25%) of the Members and submitted to the Clerk.
134
- 135 2. **The nature and purpose of the special Congregational Meeting** shall be stated in the petition and
136 in notices and written into the agenda.
137

Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body

140 **A. Name** – The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Directors, which is authorized to
141 provide administrative leadership for Agape' MCC, subject to approval by the annual Congregational
142 Meeting.
143

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144 **B. Responsibilities** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of
145 Bylaws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and UFMCC. The Board of Directors
146 shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation,
147 strategic planning, church policy, church property, risk management, and physical and financial affairs of
148 the church. The Board of Directors shall also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping
149 adequate church records, and making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC. The Board of
150 Directors shall also put into place a nominations process for all elected positions.

151
152 **C. Qualifications** – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members of Agape' MCC, in good
153 standing, for at least one year or continuous active membership in another MCC Church for at least two
154 years with a minimum of six months active membership at Agape' MCC.

155
156 **Conflict of Interest** – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship;
157 someone who is a church employee; or someone who is a Clergy Candidate shall not be eligible to serve
158 on the Board of Directors.

159
160 **D. Composition** – There shall be eight (8) members, including the Pastor who shall serve as Moderator.

161
162 **E. Term of Office** – The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall
163 be three years, staggered so that about one-third (1/3rd) of the positions are elected at each annual
164 Congregational Meeting.

165
166 **F. Meetings** – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a
167 year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend
168 as Observers without voice or vote.

169 1. **Minutes** – Minutes and financial reports shall be available to Members of the church within two
170 (2) weeks after each meeting. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions
171 made. A copy of the minutes shall become part of the permanent church records.

172
173 **G. Quorum** – No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, including the
174 Moderator, must be present in order to transact business. If the Moderator is unable to attend, a meeting
175 of the Board of Directors may be conducted with the consent of the Moderator; in such instance, no less
176 than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors must be present. If the Moderator is
177 incapacitated or otherwise unable to consider granting consent, no less than a majority of the members of
178 the Board of Directors, including the Vice-Moderator, must be present.

179
180 **H. Official Officers** – The official officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and
181 Treasurer.

182
183 1. **Election of Officers** – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of
184 Directors shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator,
185 Clerk and Treasurer. The term of office for officers, except for Moderator, shall be one (1)
186 year.

187
188 a. **Moderator** – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.

189 b. **Vice-Moderator** – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the
190 absence or upon the request of the Pastor.

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- 191 c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of official
192 correspondence and church records, and for ensuring that accurate records are kept of all
193 meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Congregation. The Clerk shall assure
194 proper notice of all authorized meetings of the Church. The Clerk is the officer
195 authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Directors.
196 d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the preparation and
197 maintenance of all financial records. This shall include a monthly financial report to the
198 Board and an annual financial report to the Congregation. The monthly and annual
199 financial reports shall reflect receipts, disbursements, reconciliation of accounts and
200 outstanding financial obligations.
201

202 **I. Vacancies** – In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board shall appoint a qualified
203 Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting, when an election shall be held to fill
204 the unexpired term.
205

206 **J. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the
207 part of any member of the Board of Directors. After a thorough investigation, the Board of Directors may
208 remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any of its members guilty of the above, with the
209 exception of the Pastor who must be disciplined in accordance with the UFMCC Bylaws. A petition
210 submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing of the
211 congregation may also initiate such a procedure.
212

213 1. Right to appeal – The decision of the Board of Directors is not subject to appeal.
214

215 **K. Limitation of Liability** – No director or officer of the church shall be liable for any act or failure to
216 act by any other director or officer of the Church or by any employee of the Church. No director or
217 officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in the title to any property acquired
218 by the Church. No director or officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in
219 any security in which the Church might invest, or from bankruptcy, insolvency, or wrongful act by any
220 person to whom the Church might entrust any of its property. No director or officer of the church shall be
221 liable for any loss due to error of judgment or oversight on his/her part, or for any other loss whatsoever
222 occurring in the carrying out of the duties of his/her office, unless this loss arises from the director's or
223 officer's own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.
224

225 **L. Indemnity** – The church shall protect every director and officer of the church against all costs arising
226 in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by his/her own willful neglect
227 or fraudulent or criminal actions.
228

Article VII – Pastor

232 **A. Role** – The Pastor is the UFMCC clergy person with a license to practice who has been called by God
233 and elected by the church to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader until
234 such time that the relationship is terminated. The Pastor shall also fulfill such other roles and
235 responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws and the policies of the church.
236

237 1. Interim Pastoral Leader – In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as
238 Pastor, the Board of Directors may request the UFMCC to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader,

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239 who shall be subject to a background check. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader
240 shall be one (1) year. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of Agape' MCC, then the
241 Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of
242 Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of Agape' MCC, then the Interim Pastoral
243 Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor, except that
244 the Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and
245 Congregational Meetings, with voice but no vote.

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

256
257 **C. Pastoral Covenant** – The Board of Directors and Pastor shall develop a covenant between the Pastor
258 and the church. The covenant shall include a job description and address such matters as compensation
259 that is consistent with equitable local standards, benefits, allowances, and leave. All provisions of the
260 covenant shall be subordinate to the Bylaws of the UFMCC.

- 261 1. Conference Expenses – To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Pastor's
262 transportation, registration, and per diem at General Conferences.

263
264 **D. Pastoral Vacancy** – In the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, a Pastoral Search Committee
265 shall be responsible for presenting a qualified candidate for election at a special called Congregational
266 Meeting. The Pastoral Search Committee shall develop and implement the pastoral search process, in
267 consultation with UFMCC.

- 268
269 1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of 4
270 Board of Director and 4 appointed congregation members.
271
272 2. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee
273 must receive more than eighty-five percent (85%) of the votes cast.

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

Article VIII – Conflict Resolution

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281
282 When there are conflicts or difficulty within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts
283 between the Pastor and congregation, the Board of Directors, the Pastor, or a petition signed by a
284 minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members in good standing may invite intervention by the
285 UFMCC to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.
286

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

- 290
- 291 1. Any petition to initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office must be submitted to the
 - 292 Clerk of the Board of Directors and be signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the
 - 293 members in good standing.
 - 294 2. The Board of Directors may initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office by a vote of
 - 295 three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors.
 - 296 3. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to the
 - 297 UFMCC within three (3) days.
 - 298 4. The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the congregation.
- 299

Article IX – Lay Delegates and Alternate Lay Delegates

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301

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

306

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

309

310 **B. Term of Office** - The term of office of Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate shall be three (3)
311 years.

312

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

318

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

321

322 **E. Alternate Lay Delegate** - The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay
323 Delegate elected. The election, term of office, and funding shall be the same as for Lay Delegate.

- 324
- 325 1. Duties – The duties of the Alternate Lay Delegate shall be to stay informed of UFMCC concerns
 - 326 and policies and to be prepared to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or
 - 327 unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representing the
 - 328 congregation at General Conferences.
 - 329 2. Notification to Alternate Lay Delegate – When a Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform
 - 330 the duties of Lay Delegate, the Lay Delegate shall immediately inform his/her Alternate Lay
 - 331 Delegate and the Clerk of the Board of Directors. If the Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to
 - 332 serve, the Board of Directors shall appoint someone to serve in the absence of the Alternate Lay
 - 333 Delegate.

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334 **F. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the
335 part of any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate. After a thorough investigation, the Board of
336 Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any Lay Delegate or Alternate
337 Lay Delegate guilty of the above. A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent
338 (25%) of the Members in good standing of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

339
340 1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Lay Delegates/Alternate Lay Delegates may
341 appeal the action. The appeal would be heard by the Board of Directors. The decision of this
342 Appeal Hearing is final.
343

Article X – Church Finances

344
345
346 **A. Authorized Signatures** – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures
347 for withdrawals, one of which shall be that of a church officer. All members of the Board of Directors
348 shall have signature authority.
349

350 **B. Limit on Expenditures** – The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the
351 approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the annual budget; any expenditure
352 that is greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.
353

354 The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in
355 any amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that
356 amount requires congregational approval.
357

358 **C. Fiscal Year** – For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the
359 calendar year.
360

361 **D. Church Budget** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for presenting to the Congregational
362 Meeting for approval an annual operating budget that reflects anticipated receipts and disbursements. The
363 approved budget may be amended, as needed, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, which
364 shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment has been made.
365

366 1. Budget Year – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through
367 December.
368

369 **E. Assessments** – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly to the UFMCC the number of members
370 in good standing for each month within the quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessments as
371 set by General Conference. The report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the
372 tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.
373

374 **F. Tithes** – The Board of Directors shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC, and with
375 that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported. The percentage of funds to be remitted shall be
376 determined by General Conference.
377

Article XI – Adoption and Amendments

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381 **A. Adoption** – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational
382 Meeting and approval by the UFMCC.
383

384 **B. Amendments** – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational
385 Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later
386 than thirty (30) days prior to the Congregational Meeting the proposal is to be considered. Adoption of
387 the amendment or the repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote and is subject to
388 approval by the UFMCC. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC
389 Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.