

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

**BYLAWS**

Revised March 2023

**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.

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91 **Article V – Congregational Meetings**

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.

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97 **A. Time and Place** – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the 4<sup>th</sup> 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.  
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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 Minimum size shall be five (5) members, including the Pastor who shall serve  
161 as moderator, not to exceed a maximum of nine (9) members including the Moderator (Pastor). The size  
162 of the Board of Directors shall be determined by the following:

- 163  
164 1. The current size of the congregation  
165 2. The anticipated increase or decrease in the business administration needs and/or property  
166 administration needs of the church.

167  
168 The anticipated size requirement each year shall be determined by the Board of Directors and the  
169 Sr. Pastor. The Board of Directors shall provide notification to the congregation no less than three (3)  
170 months prior to the annual congregational meeting allowing ample time for applications to be submitted  
171 for any newly added positions if applicable.

172  
173 **E. Term of Office** – The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall  
174 be three years, staggered so that about one-third (1/3<sup>rd</sup>) of the positions are elected at each annual  
175 Congregational Meeting.

176  
177 **F. Meetings** – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a  
178 year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend  
179 as Observers without voice or vote.

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

183  
184 **G. Quorum** – No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, including the  
185 Moderator, must be present in order to transact business. If the Moderator is unable to attend, a meeting  
186 of the Board of Directors may be conducted with the consent of the Moderator; in such instance, no less  
187 than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors must be present. If the Moderator is  
188 incapacitated or otherwise unable to consider granting consent, no less than a majority of the members of  
189 the Board of Directors, including the Vice-Moderator, must be present.

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

193  
194 1. Election of Officers – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of  
195 Directors shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator,  
196 Clerk and Treasurer. The term of office for officers, except for Moderator, shall be one (1)  
197 year.

- 198  
199 a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.  
200 b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the  
201 absence or upon the request of the Pastor.  
202 c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of official  
203 correspondence and church records, and for ensuring that accurate records are kept of all  
204 meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Congregation. The Clerk shall assure  
205 proper notice of all authorized meetings of the Church. The Clerk is the officer  
206 authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Directors.  
207 d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the preparation and  
208 maintenance of all financial records. This shall include a monthly financial report to the  
209 Board and an annual financial report to the Congregation. The monthly and annual  
210 financial reports shall reflect receipts, disbursements, reconciliation of accounts and  
211 outstanding financial obligations.

212  
213 **I. Vacancies** – In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board shall appoint a qualified  
214 Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting, when an election shall be held to fill  
215 the unexpired term.

216  
217 **J. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the  
218 part of any member of the Board of Directors. After a thorough investigation, the Board of Directors may  
219 remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any of its members guilty of the above, with the  
220 exception of the Pastor, who must be disciplined in accordance with the UFMCC Bylaws. A petition  
221 submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing of the  
222 congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

223  
224 1. Right to appeal – The decision of the Board of Directors is not subject to appeal.

225  
226 **K. Limitation of Liability** – No director or officer of the church shall be liable for any act or failure to  
227 act by any other director or officer of the Church or by any employee of the Church. No director or  
228 officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in the title to any property acquired  
229 by the Church. No director or officer of the Church shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in  
230 any security in which the Church might invest, or from bankruptcy, insolvency, or wrongful act by any  
231 person to whom the Church might entrust any of its property. No director or officer of the church shall be  
232 liable for any loss due to error of judgment or oversight on his/her part, or for any other loss whatsoever  
233 occurring in the carrying out of the duties of his/her office, unless this loss arises from the director's or  
234 officer's own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

235  
236 **L. Indemnity** – The church shall protect every director and officer of the church against all costs arising  
237 in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by his/her own willful neglect  
238 or fraudulent or criminal actions.

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**Article VII – Pastor**

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

1. **Interim Pastoral Leader** – In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as Pastor, the Board of Directors may request the UFMCC to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader, who shall be subject to a background check. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader shall be one (1) year. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of Agape' MCC, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of Agape' MCC, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor, except that the Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and Congregational Meetings, with voice but no vote.

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

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

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

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

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

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286 **E. Termination of Relationship** – The Pastor and congregation may choose at any time to terminate  
287 their relationship through mutual agreement. Unilateral failure to renew the Pastor’s contract shall not  
288 constitute removal of the Pastor from office. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on irreconcilable  
289 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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293 When there are conflicts or difficulty within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts  
294 between the Pastor and congregation, the Board of Directors, the Pastor, or a petition signed by a  
295 minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members in good standing may invite intervention by the  
296 UFMCC to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

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

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

**Article IX – Lay Delegates and Alternate Lay Delegates**

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

317  
318 **A. Election** – The Delegates shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each  
319 General Conference. A majority of the votes cast shall be required to elect.

320  
321 **B. Term of Office** - The term of office of Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate shall be three (3)  
322 years.

323  
324 **C. Duties** – The duties of the Delegates shall be to represent the congregation at the General Conference,  
325 to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies. In the event the elected  
326 delegate or alternate is unable to attend a particular conference, the Board may appoint a substitute for  
327 that conference. No person may be elected to the Board of Directors and elected to a position of Lay  
328 Delegate concurrently.

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

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- 333 **E. Alternate Lay Delegate** - The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay  
334 Delegate elected. The election, term of office, and funding shall be the same as for Lay Delegate.  
335 1. Duties – The duties of the Alternate Lay Delegate shall be to stay informed of UFMCC concerns  
336 and policies and to be prepared to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or  
337 unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representing the  
338 congregation at General Conferences.  
339 2. Notification to Alternate Lay Delegate – When a Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform  
340 the duties of Lay Delegate, the Lay Delegate shall immediately inform his/her Alternate Lay  
341 Delegate and the Clerk of the Board of Directors. If the Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to  
342 serve, the Board of Directors shall appoint someone to serve in the absence of the Alternate Lay  
343 Delegate.  
344

- 345 **F. Discipline** – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the  
346 part of any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate. After a thorough investigation, the Board of  
347 Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any Lay Delegate or Alternate  
348 Lay Delegate guilty of the above. A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent  
349 (25%) of the Members in good standing of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.  
350  
351 1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Lay Delegates/Alternate Lay Delegates may  
352 appeal the action. The appeal would be heard by the Board of Directors. The decision of this  
353 Appeal Hearing is final.  
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**Article X – Church Finances**

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356 **A. Authorized Signatures** – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures  
357 for withdrawals, one of which shall be that of a church officer. All members of the Board of Directors  
358 shall have signature authority.  
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361 **B. Limit on Expenditures** – The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the  
362 approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the annual budget; any expenditure  
363 that is greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.  
364

365 The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in  
366 any amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that  
367 amount requires congregational approval.  
368

369 **C. Fiscal Year** – For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the  
370 calendar year.  
371

372 **D. Church Budget** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for presenting to the Congregational  
373 Meeting for approval an annual operating budget that reflects anticipated receipts and disbursements. The  
374 approved budget may be amended, as needed, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, which  
375 shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment has been made.  
376

- 377 1. Budget Year – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through  
378 December.  
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380 **E. Assessments** – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly to the UFMCC the number of members  
381 in good standing for each month within the quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessments as  
382 set by General Conference. The report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the  
383 tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the quarter reported.  
384

385 **F. Tithes** – The Board of Directors shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC, and with  
386 that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported. The percentage of funds to be remitted shall be  
387 determined by General Conference.  
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**Article XI – Adoption and Amendments**

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392 **A. Adoption** – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational  
393 Meeting and approval by the UFMCC.  
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395 **B. Amendments** – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational  
396 Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later  
397 than thirty (30) days prior to the Congregational Meeting the proposal is to be considered. Adoption of  
398 the amendment or the repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote and is subject to  
399 approval by the UFMCC. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC  
400 Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.