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**BYLAWS OF
THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES**

As revised at General Conference XXV, Chicago, Illinois (USA)
Effective 02 July 2013

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ARTICLE I – NAME

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- A. The name of this Fellowship shall be the UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES (hereinafter referred to as UFMCC or Fellowship).
 - B. Each affiliated local church group will use the name METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH as part of its official title. The group may add either a prefix or suffix to distinguish it from other affiliated local church groups, such as: Grace Metropolitan Community Church, Metropolitan Community Church of Tallahassee, Metropolitan Community Church, Ashland, or Springfield Metropolitan Community Church.

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ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

23 The objectives of the UFMCC shall be:

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- A. To bind together churches for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God in the Christian tradition, and to make God's will dominant in the lives of all people, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.
 - B. To set up bodies for instruction in theology and in allied subjects for the propagation of the teachings of the Christian faith, as accepted by the General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.
 - C. To instruct and encourage those who offer themselves to the teaching and philosophy accepted by this body.
 - D. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a Christian Church.

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ARTICLE III – DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

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- A. **DOCTRINE:** Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

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Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

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Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

- 48 We believe:
- 49 1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three
- 50 persons: God, our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, God in flesh,
- 51 human; and the Holy Spirit, God as our Sustainer.
- 52
- 53 2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through
- 54 the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus
- 55 Christ.
- 56
- 57 3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is
- 58 God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus
- 59 has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually
- 60 made in God's image.
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- 62 4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is
- 63 God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's
- 64 keeping.
- 65
- 66 5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 67
- 68 6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was
- 69 declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We
- 70 further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness
- 71 for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.
- 72
- 73 7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for
- 74 regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the
- 75 teaching and preaching of the Word.
- 76
- 77 B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:
- 78 1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication
- 79 of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the
- 80 recipient is identified as God's own Child.
- 81
- 82 2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with
- 83 the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: This is my body...this is my blood. (Matthew 26:26-28). All
- 84 who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their
- 85 consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received
- 86 into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus
- 87 Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.
- 88
- 89 C. RITES: The Rites of the Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the
- 90 following:
- 91 1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional
- 92 ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy
- 93 or UFMCC Elders, pursuant to these Bylaws.

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2. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall be conducted by the Pastor or Interim Pastoral Leader before a local congregation at any regular worship service. In accordance with criteria established by the local church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good standing of the local church group through a letter of transfer from a recognized Christian body or through affirmation of faith.
 3. The RITE OF HOLY UNION/RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY is the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized clergy, Interim Pastoral Leader of the church, or UFMCC Elders. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one toward the other, this rite of conferring God’s blessing may be performed.
 4. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingly conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.
 5. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.
 6. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV – MINISTRY

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118 The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church
119 are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

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121 UFMCC decrees that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from
122 discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health
123 status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status in terms of: (1) Employment and personnel
124 procedures and (2) Service delivery -- all that we do.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

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- a. THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS: Lay people are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed. UFMCC affirms that this is the ministry of every lay person in the UFMCC.
 - b. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is a historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

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1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God, authorized and legally recognized by the UFMCC to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

- 139 a. RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call, clergy shall administer the Rites and
140 Sacraments of the UFMCC and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the
141 world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped, and strengthened in its
142 ministry.
143
- 144 b. QUALIFICATIONS: Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be
145 professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Council of
146 Elders.
147
- 148 c. ORDINATION: Persons who have met the academic standards and qualifications as
149 established by the Council of Elders may then be ordained. A person who is ordained
150 cannot function as a UFMCC clergy person until he/she is licensed.
151
- 152 d. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of
153 duty. Procedures for discipline shall be developed by the Governing Board. These
154 procedures shall be included as an addendum to the UFMCC Bylaws.
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156 **ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND OFFICERS**

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158 **A. GOVERNMENT:**

- 159 1. The UFMCC acknowledges the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Holy Spirit in conscience and
160 faith as its guide in faith, discipline, and government.
161
- 162 2. The government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to the provisions of
163 the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation and its Bylaws, or documents of legal organization. The
164 officials elected by the General Conference are subject to the direction and discipline of General
165 Conference and are responsible to carry out its policies.
166
- 167 3. When the Moderator desires more flexibility with respect to Articles IV through IX of these
168 Bylaws, the Moderator can apply to the Governing Board, which may grant that flexibility.
169
- 170 4. This Fellowship is accountable to no outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but accepts the obligation
171 of mutual consent and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of other churches, and does
172 pledge itself to share in their common aims and endeavors subject to the expressed approval of
173 its membership.
174
- 175 5. Local Churches and the General Conference as defined by these Bylaws are set forth for the
176 purposes of Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and service, borne in the cooperation,
177 program development, and implementation of their Bylaws, Procedures, and Policies.
178
- 179 6. A local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is that church
180 which subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, and has been authorized by
181 the same.
182

183 **B. LOCAL CHURCHES:**

- 184 1. EMERGING CHURCHES: Within the UFMCC, all worshipping and/or ministry bodies that seek to
185 enter into the process of meeting the criteria for affiliation as established by the Council of
186 Elders and approved by the Governing Board may apply to UFMCC for authorization as an
187 “emerging church.” Emerging churches include parish extensions, new church starts, and
188 existing churches that seek to affiliate with UFMCC.
189
- 190 a. AUTHORIZATION: The Council of Elders shall establish procedures for authorization of
191 emerging churches, procedures for authorization of the leader for each emerging church,
192 and processes for supporting each emerging church until it achieves affiliation.
193
- 194 b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The emerging church shall be subject to these Bylaws and to the approval
195 or disapproval of actions by a designee of the Council of Elders. When such come to exist,
196 the emerging church shall then also be subject to its local Articles of Incorporation, local
197 Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, and any other document of legal organization.
198
- 199 c. CLOSURE: If an emerging church other than a parish extension disbands or ceases to
200 operate, the net assets of the church will revert to the use of the General Conference of the
201 UFMCC. The Governing Board will decide the disposition of said property.
202
- 203 2. AFFILIATED CHURCHES: Within the UFMCC, all churches that meet the criteria as established by
204 the Council of Elders and approved by the Governing Board qualify for affiliation and recognition
205 as an affiliated church. The Council of Elders has the authority to approve requests for
206 affiliation. If an affiliated church ceases to meet the criteria for affiliation, a designee of the
207 Council of Elders may take appropriate actions of intervention, which may include removal of
208 the church’s affiliation status. The decision of the designee may be appealed to the Council of
209 Elders.
210
- 211 a. ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS: A local church shall have the authority to establish,
212 authorize, and hold accountable special-purpose groups, ministries, and organizations.
213
- 214 b. AFFILIATED CHURCH GOVERNANCE: The government of each affiliated church is vested in its
215 Congregational Meeting which exerts the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the
216 provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal
217 organization, and the General Conference. The Pastor and the local church administrative
218 body are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership in the affiliated
219 church. The officials elected by the Congregational Meeting are subject to the direction and
220 discipline of the affiliated church and are responsible to carry out the local church policies.
221
- 222 i. The affiliated church, in consultation with UFMCC, shall determine an appropriate
223 structure and systems for local church governance that is appropriate for the size of
224 church and cultural context. The local church structure and systems shall include
225 provision for (1) selection and discipline of the local church administrative body, (2) a
226 pastoral search process, and (3) congregational meetings. It is incumbent upon the local
227 church administrative body of each local church to provide that church with a set of
228 Bylaws or standard operating procedures, subject to approval by UFMCC.
229

230 c. PASTOR: The Pastor of an affiliated church is a duly ordained clergy person who has been
231 licensed to practice. Though there are a variety of pastoral roles, in a local congregation the
232 Pastor is elected to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader. If
233 no duly credentialed UFMCC clergy person is available, an Interim Pastoral Leader may be
234 appointed annually by UFMCC. All UFMCC churches are led by Pastors or Interim Pastoral
235 Leaders.

236 i. QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES: Pastors must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC. The
237 Pastor of the church shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the
238 church. The Pastor is a voting member of the local church administrative body.

239 Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s) and other personnel, uncompensated or
240 compensated, shall be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the local
241 church administrative body. The Pastor shall act as personnel director of the local
242 church staff, shall have the authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as
243 seems wise, and shall, with the approval of the local church administrative body,
244 determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the staff.

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247 ii. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: When there are conflicts or difficulty within a local church,
248 including apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and congregation,
249 UFMCC shall have the authority to interface with that church, to take appropriate
250 measures, to provide resources and support, and to attend and have voice at any
251 meeting of the local church administrative body or Congregational Meeting. UFMCC
252 shall be required to intervene when invited (1) by the Pastor/Interim Pastoral Leader, (2)
253 by majority vote of the local church administrative body, or (3) as a result of a petition
254 signed by a minimum of one-third (33%) of the members of the church.

255
256 Within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the request for intervention, UFMCC must
257 officially notify all parties mentioned above. Within ten (10) days of the request,
258 UFMCC will establish the time-lines and process for the Ministry of Reconciliation, which
259 must be implemented within thirty (30) days of the initial request.

260
261 iii. REMOVING THE PASTOR FROM OFFICE: When irreconcilable differences exist between
262 the Pastor and congregation, the Pastor and congregation may choose to terminate
263 their relationship through mutual agreement. No petition for removal of the Pastor
264 based on irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict
265 resolution, as contained within the UFMCC Bylaws Article. V.B.2.c.ii. Unilateral failure to
266 renew a pastoral contract does not constitute removal of the Pastor from office.

267
268 The process of removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct,
269 dereliction of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between Pastor and
270 congregation may be initiated by a petition submitted to the duly authorized church
271 officer as designated by the local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, or documents
272 of legal organization, and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members
273 in good standing; or by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors /local
274 church administrative body. Within three (3) days, the Pastor and UFMCC must be sent
275 a copy of the completed petition or motion of the local church administrative body by

276 the designated church officer. After UFMCC and the designated local church officer have
277 validated the number of members who have signed the petition and the clarity of the
278 petition or validated the votes of the members of the local church administrative body
279 and the clarity of the motion, UFMCC may place the Pastor on inactive status, but the
280 Pastor remains fully compensated until the final action of the congregation. Upon
281 validating the petition, a representative of UFMCC and the local church administrative
282 body will set the time and place of a special congregational meeting to determine
283 whether the Pastor shall remain in office. The date of the meeting shall occur within
284 thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the designated church officer or
285 the date the motion of the local church administrative body is received by UFMCC.
286

287 The Pastor has the right to appear on his/her own behalf before the congregational
288 meeting and may have an advocate of his/her own choice present. The action of the
289 congregation is final. If a special meeting is called to remove a Pastor, UFMCC must be
290 given notice that such action is being taken. A representative of UFMCC shall attend as
291 an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the Pastor is removed, the
292 local church administrative body will meet immediately after the meeting with the
293 representative of UFMCC to arrange for pastoral leadership until the pulpit is filled. The
294 local church administrative body may confer with UFMCC as to available candidates for
295 the office of Pastor.
296

- 297 d. LAY DELEGATE: Each affiliated church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100)
298 members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) Lay Delegate for each
299 vote. Each Lay Delegate shall carry one (1) vote. Each Lay Delegate shall be a member in
300 good standing of the congregation that he/she represents, should be elected at the first
301 congregational meeting following each General Conference and shall serve a term of three
302 (3) years. The duties of the Lay Delegate shall include, but not be limited to, representation
303 of the congregation at General Conferences and to be informed of the UFMCC concerns and
304 policies.
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306 Each voting church may, in accordance with that local church's Bylaws or Standard
307 Operating Procedures, elect at least one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate
308 elected. The Alternate Delegate(s) so elected shall, in accordance with procedures set forth
309 in the local church Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures, be empowered to assume the
310 duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate,
311 including but not limited to representation of the congregation at General Conferences.
312

- 313 e. DISAFFILIATION: Disaffiliated congregations may not continue to use the name
314 Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) or in any manner hold themselves out as being
315 associated with UFMCC or as being an MCC church.
316
- 317 i. DISAFFILIATION BY AN AFFILIATED CHURCH: Should a local church desire to disaffiliate
318 from the UFMCC, a representative or representatives appointed by the Moderator must
319 be allowed to meet with the congregation and shall have voice at the Congregational
320 Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating. The decision to disaffiliate must receive

321 a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting
322 called for the purpose of disaffiliating.

323
324 ii. NOTIFICATION TO UFMCC: At least sixty (60) calendar days prior to a Congregational
325 Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating, the local church shall notify the
326 Moderator in writing that such a Congregational Meeting will be held. The written
327 notification to the Moderator shall include: (a) the date, time, and place of the
328 Congregational Meeting; and (b) a copy of the local church membership list. Except in
329 the event of the death or resignation of a listed Member, no Members may thereafter
330 be removed from membership in the local church and no Members may be added to the
331 membership in the local church until after the Congregational Meeting called for the
332 purpose of disaffiliating.

333
334 iii. NOTIFICATION TO MEMBERS: At least thirty (30) calendar days prior to a
335 Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating, all Members of the local
336 church must be notified in writing at their last known address on the membership list of
337 the date, time, place, and purpose of the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose
338 of disaffiliating. A copy of the notification to members shall be simultaneously
339 submitted to the Moderator.

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341 iv. VOTING PROCESS: Voting at the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of
342 disaffiliating shall be done by secret ballot.

343
344 v. CONTINUING AFFILIATION: In the event that a congregation votes to disaffiliate, those
345 members of the congregation wishing to continue affiliation with UFMCC may be
346 designated by the Moderator as the continuing Metropolitan Community Church
347 affiliated with the UFMCC.

348
349 vi. DISPOSITION OF ASSETS: After existing financial obligations to the UFMCC are met, the
350 disaffiliating local church has the right to net assets.

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352 vii. NOTIFICATION TO AFFECTED THIRD PARTIES: In the event that a congregation votes to
353 disaffiliate, the UFMCC shall notify affected third parties that the disaffiliated
354 congregation is no longer associated with the UFMCC and that the disaffiliated
355 congregation may not hold itself out as being an MCC church. Affected third parties
356 include, but are not limited to, banks, creditors, and government agencies that issued
357 corporation/registration status to the disaffiliated church.

358
359 3. DISCIPLINE OF CHURCHES: If any emerging or affiliated church shall fail to abide by the Articles
360 of Incorporation of the UFMCC, these Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, the
361 Moderator or a representative of the Moderator shall take appropriate action to require
362 compliance. The Moderator shall report any such action to the church involved and to the
363 Governing Board.

- 365 4. CHURCH PROPERTY: In every nation where UFMCC comes to exist and where permitted by local
366 or national laws, the local church's documents of legal organization must name the UFMCC as
367 the successor not-for-profit corporation/non-governmental organization designated to receive
368 the church's property in the event of (1) the dissolution or abandonment of the church, or (2)
369 failure to abide by the process for disaffiliation from the UFMCC by the local church as
370 contained in the UFMCC Bylaws.
371
- 372 5. LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE
373 a. The local church, in consultation with an Elder, shall determine an appropriate structure and
374 systems for local church governance that is appropriate for the size of church and cultural
375 context. The local church structure and systems shall include provision for (1) selection and
376 discipline of the local church administrative body, (2) a pastoral search process, and (3)
377 congregational meetings. It is incumbent upon the local church administrative body of each
378 local church to provide that church with a set of Bylaws or standard operating procedures,
379 subject to approval by an Elder.
380
- 381 b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The local church administrative body shall be subject to these Bylaws,
382 local Articles of Incorporation, local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, any other
383 documents of legal organization, and to the approval or disapproval by action of their local
384 congregation as provided for in any of the above.
385
- 386 6. CLOSURE: When a church disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of the church will revert
387 to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Governing Board will decide the
388 disposition of said property.
389
- 390 7. RESERVATION OF POWERS: Any specific matters of congregational approval not covered herein
391 are left to local church option
392
- 393 C. ASSOCIATED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: When the mission of the UFMCC would be
394 best served by a special-purpose organization being accountable to the denomination, the
395 Governing Board shall have the authority to establish, authorize, and hold accountable such special-
396 purpose organization. Individuals from associated non-governmental organizations may participate
397 in all activities of UFMCC.
398
- 399 a. OFFICIAL OBSERVER: Each associated non-governmental organization may designate a
400 representative to serve as an Official Observer at General Conference, with voice but no
401 vote.
402
- 403 b. CLOSURE: When an associated organization disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of
404 the associated organization will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC.
405 The Governing Board will decide the disposition of said property.
406
- 407 D. ALIGNED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: Aligned non-governmental organizations are
408 those organizations that support the goals of UFMCC and that are aligned with the work of UFMCC
409 yet do not seek to become an affiliated church or associated organization. Individuals from aligned
410 non-governmental organizations may participate in all activities of UFMCC.

- 411 a. RECOGNITION: The Council of Elders shall establish the process for granting recognition to
412 Aligned Organizations.
- 413 b. OFFICIAL OBSERVER: Each aligned organization may designate a representative to serve as
414 an Official Observer at General Conference, with voice but no vote.
415
- 416 E. FELLOWSHIP:
- 417 1. INTRODUCTION: Internationally, the government of the UFMCC is vested in the General
418 Conference, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, or
419 documents of legal organization. Between General Conferences, the Council of Elders is
420 authorized to provide spiritual and pastoral leadership and the Governing Board is authorized to
421 provide administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.
422
- 423 2. MODERATOR: The Moderator is elected by General Conference to serve as the primary
424 visionary and futurist in order to advance the mission and vision of UFMCC worldwide through
425 the exercise of prophetic challenge, creativity, spiritual and pastoral authority, and leadership.
426 As the primary UFMCC spokesperson, an Elder, and the Chief Executive Officer, the Moderator is
427 a voting member and moderates meetings of the Governing Board and of the Council of Elders;
428 moderates General Conference; appoints Elders; and supervises UFMCC senior staff. The
429 Moderator shall be responsible for leading the visioning process for the Fellowship, having a
430 presence at global events, teaching and training, engaging in continuous learning, community
431 relations, visitation and assistance in churches, ecumenical relations, and global social justice.
432 The term of office of the Moderator shall be six (6) years.
- 433 a. MODERATOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Governing Board shall appoint a
434 Moderator Nominating Committee of three (3) persons. The responsibility of the
435 Moderator Nominating Committee is to actively solicit candidates for the position,
436 review any and all applications, and select up to five (5) qualified candidates. The
437 qualified candidates shall be presented by the Governing Board to the General
438 Conference for election.
- 439 b. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF MODERATOR: In the event of a vacancy in the office of
440 Moderator, the Governing Board shall elect an Interim Moderator to fill the vacancy
441 until the next General Conference, when an election shall be held to fill the vacancy.
442 The term of office of the Moderator elected by General Conference to fill the
443 vacancy shall be six (6) years.
444
- 445 3. COUNCIL OF ELDERS: The Council of Elders of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the General
446 Conference to serve in a pastoral role and direct the spiritual life of the Fellowship. This Council
447 shall consist of a Moderator and Elders appointed by the Moderator, subject to approval by the
448 Governing Board and affirmation by General Conference. All UFMCC Elders are deemed
449 professional ministers and are authorized to perform all of the Rites and Sacraments of the
450 church.
- 451 a. QUALIFICATIONS: Elders must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality and
452 leadership who are mature, have sound judgment, have a proven record of accomplishment
453 as lay or clergy members within the Fellowship, and have successful experience in
454 envisioning and strategic planning for the future. Elders must be excellent communicators,
455 skilled motivators and teachers, self-motivated and devoted to continuous learning.
456 Further, Elders must be capable of understanding and working within sound fiscal

457 guidelines, be sensitive to cultural differences, and be able and willing to embrace diversity.
458 It is desirable that the Council of Elders reflect the diversity of the Fellowship.

- 459
460 b. DUTIES: The primary responsibility of Elders shall be to give pastoral leadership and care to
461 enable the Fellowship in our spiritual journey. The Elders shall exercise spiritual and
462 pastoral authority to build a shared vision for the UFMCC, prepare UFMCC for the future,
463 and support UFMCC's strategic direction. The Elders serve as official representatives of the
464 Fellowship in the areas of public and community relations; provide oversight of and support
465 to congregations; consult with churches on issues related to church development; and fulfill
466 other ecclesial and ceremonial duties.

467
468 Other than the Moderator, a member of the Council of Elders shall not serve simultaneously
469 as a member of the Governing Board.

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471 c. ACCOUNTABILITY, DISCIPLINE, AND REMOVAL: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty,
472 unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of its Elders and, therefore, makes
473 the following provisions for accountability, discipline, or removal:

474 (1) ACCOUNTABILITY: All Elders shall be accountable to the Moderator, the Council of
475 Elders, the UFMCC Bylaws, the UFMCC Code of Conduct, personnel policies as
476 established by the Governing Board, and General Conference.

477
478 (2) DISCIPLINE: The Elder must be given written notice of a complaint and shall remain in
479 position until final disposition of the complaint.

480
481 (a) DISCIPLINE OF THE MODERATOR: Complaints about the Moderator must be
482 submitted to the Governing Board in written form and must be signed by a minimum
483 of one (1) member of the clergy from each of ten (10) different churches and by the
484 Lay Delegates representing the majority of the Lay Delegate votes from each of ten
485 (10) different churches, and may be initiated by either the clergy or Lay Delegates.
486 The Governing Board shall establish and publish its procedure for considering
487 complaints about the Moderator.

488
489 (b) DISCIPLINE OF AN ELDER: Complaints about an Elder other than the Moderator must
490 be submitted to the Moderator in written form and be signed by a member of
491 UFMCC. The Moderator shall determine whether to refer the complaint to the
492 Council of Elders for resolution or to seek resolution of the matter in another
493 appropriate way. The Council of Elders shall establish and publish its procedure for
494 considering complaints about an Elder.

495
496 (3) REMOVAL:

497 (a) REMOVAL OF THE MODERATOR: If the Governing Board determines that the
498 Moderator is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the
499 Governing Board may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Governing Board,
500 remove the Moderator from the position. Such action shall be reported to the
501 General Conference within five (5) business days. The Governing Board may elect

502 someone who meets the qualifications to serve as Interim Moderator until the next
503 General Conference, when an election shall be conducted to fill the vacancy.

504
505 (b) REMOVAL OF AN ELDER:
506 (i) The Moderator may remove an Elder at any time, with or without cause.

507
508 (ii) If the Council of Elders determines that an Elder is unable or unwilling to fulfill
509 the responsibilities of the position, the Council of Elders may, by a vote of two-
510 thirds (2/3) of the full Council of Elders, recommend that the Moderator remove
511 that Elder from the position.

512
513 (iii) Such action shall be reported to the Governing Board.

514
515 d. VACANCIES: In the event of a vacancy, the Moderator may appoint someone who meets the
516 qualifications to fill the vacancy, subject to the approval of the Governing Board.

517
518 4. GOVERNING BOARD: The Governing Board is that body authorized by the General Conference to
519 carry on the governance of the UFMCC between General Conferences in an orderly manner. The
520 Governing Board is composed of nine (9) persons, four (4) of whom shall be lay persons and four
521 (4) of whom shall be clergypersons plus the Moderator, elected by the General Conference to be
522 responsible for the governance of UFMCC finances and operations and to serve as the
523 corporation's Board of Directors, having charge of all matters pertaining to Articles of
524 Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, property, and finances of the UFMCC. The
525 Governing Board shall exercise all corporate powers subject to the provisions and limitations of
526 these bylaws and any other applicable laws.

527
528 a. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of the Governing Board must be members in good standing
529 within the Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the UFMCC, have spiritual quality and
530 leadership, are mature, have sound judgment, and have a proven record of
531 accomplishment. Consideration will be given to elect members with diverse perspectives,
532 core competencies, and complementary skills consistent with the required functions and
533 responsibilities of the Governing Board.

534
535 b. GOVERNING BOARD CHARTER: A Charter of the Governing Board shall define the functions,
536 responsibilities and structures of the Governing Board. The Charter shall be affirmed by a
537 majority vote of the General Conference and included as an addendum to UFMCC Bylaws.

538
539 c. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Governing Board shall be six years,
540 with the exception that General Conference XXIV shall elect two (2) lay persons and two (2)
541 clergy persons to three-year terms until the next General Conference, when two (2) lay
542 persons and two (2) clergy persons shall be elected to six-year terms.

543
544 d. GOVERNING BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Governing Board shall appoint a
545 Governing Board Nominating Committee of three (3) persons. The Moderator shall serve as
546 a consultant to the Governing Board Nominating Committee. The responsibility of the
547 Governing Board Nominating Committee is to actively solicit candidates for the position,

548 review any and all applications, and select qualified candidates. The qualified candidates
549 shall be presented to the General Conference for election.

550
551 e. VACANCIES: In the event of a vacancy on the Governing Board, the Governing Board may
552 appoint someone who meets the qualifications to fill the vacancy until the next General
553 Conference, when an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.

554
555 f. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of
556 duty on the part of any member of the Governing Board and, therefore, makes the following
557 provisions for discipline or removal:

558
559 (1) If the Governing Board determines that one of its members is unable or unwilling to
560 fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Governing Board may, by a majority vote of
561 the full Board, remove that member from the Board. The member must be given written
562 notice of the charges and, at that time, becomes inactive. The member has the right to
563 appear and present his/her own defense before the Governing Board on his/her own
564 behalf. The Governing Board will then review the charges and, upon majority vote of the
565 members of the Governing Board not including the member charged, may remove the
566 member of the of the Governing Board or take such other action as it may deem
567 appropriate. The decision of the Governing Board shall be final.

568

569 **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP IN UFMCC**

570
571 A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING OF A LOCAL CHURCH: Any baptized Christian may become a member
572 in good standing of an emerging or affiliated local church. A local church has the authority to
573 determine any additional criteria for gaining and retaining membership in that local church. Any
574 additional criteria shall be in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws and be compatible with UFMCC core
575 values.

576
577 B. MEMBERS OF UFMCC
578 1. Members in good standing of each emerging and affiliated local church shall be considered
579 to be Members of UFMCC.
580 2. All clergy persons ordained by UFMCC shall be considered to be Members of UFMCC.
581 3. All Members of UFMCC may serve on appointed committees, hold elected office, and
582 participate in all activities of UFMCC.

583
584 C. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: A local church body may, if it desires, accept into the Church person(s)
585 who, for one reason or another, feel that they cannot become regular members of the Church but
586 who support the goals of the Church and want to be part of the work of the church. Such people
587 shall be designated as “Friends of the Church.” Friends may serve on appointed committees and
588 may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the local church
589 administrative body and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered
590 in determining the number of Lay Delegates that a local church body may send to meetings of the
591 General Conference.

592

- 593 D. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its
594 members and friends; therefore, the local church administrative body shall develop and implement
595 a procedure for taking appropriate disciplinary action, as it deems necessary.
596

597 **ARTICLE VII – CHURCH SERVICES**

598
599 Each local church body shall hold services of public worship every week. Other worship services may be
600 held as determined by the Pastor with the approval of the local church administrative body. In regard to
601 the worship services of local church bodies, the Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered at
602 weekly worship, as well as at other worship services at the discretion of the Pastor. Holy Baptism may be
603 administered at any appropriate service of the local church body or at any other time, at the Pastor's
604 discretion.
605

606 **ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH MEETINGS**

- 607
608 A. GENERAL CONFERENCE: For the purpose of the transaction of business, the UFMCC will hold a
609 General Conference every third year, commencing 2007.
610
- 611 1. TIME, PLACE, AND NATURE: The time and place of the General Conference will be announced at
612 the previous General Conference. Notice of the time, place, and nature of the General
613 Conference must be given in writing to all church bodies ninety (90) days prior to the upcoming
614 General Conference.
615
 - 616 a. NATURE: The Governing Board is authorized to determine the means by which members of
617 the Lay House and of the Clergy House may participate virtually in a General Conference.
618
 - 619 2. COMPOSITION: The General Conference of the UFMCC is that body consisting of a Clergy House
620 and a Lay House.
621
 - 622 a. CLERGY HOUSE: Members of the Clergy House are ordained clergy with a License to Practice
623 and honorably retired clergy.
624
 - 625 b. LAY HOUSE: Members of the Lay House are Lay Delegates; the Interim Pastoral Leader of
626 each affiliated church when that Interim Pastoral Leader is a member of UFMCC; and the
627 members of the Council of Elders and of the Governing Board who are not clergy or Lay
628 Delegates and are members of UFMCC.
629
 - 630 3. VOTING IN SEPARATE HOUSES: The transaction of all business except procedural matters must
631 be approved by a separate majority vote of the votes carried by the Lay House and a separate
632 majority vote of the votes carried by the Clergy House.
633
 - 634 4. QUORUM: A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the number of lay people eligible
635 to vote at General Conference and twenty percent (20%) of the number of licensed credentialed
636 clergy eligible to vote at General Conference.
637

- 638 5. SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE: A special General Conference of the UFMCC can be called by
639 the Governing Board or by a petition submitted to the Governing Board by fifty percent (50%) of
640 all those persons eligible to vote at General Conference. Initiation of this petition may be by
641 either clergy or laity. A special General Conference shall be governed by the same rules as those
642 pertaining to the General Conference except when the purpose of the special General
643 Conference is to consider affirmation of the appointment of an Elder. When the purpose of a
644 special General Conference is to affirm the appointment of an Elder, notice of the time, place,
645 and nature of the special General Conference must be given in writing to all members of the Lay
646 House and of the Clergy House at least thirty (30) days in advance of the special General
647 Conference.
648
- 649 a. PURPOSE: The purpose of a special General Conference must be stated in the petition. The
650 nature and purpose of a special General Conference must be stated in the notices and
651 written into the agenda of the special General Conference.
652
- 653 b. NOTICE: The written notice must be sent to all credentialed clergy and to all voting church
654 bodies at least thirty (30) days prior to the special General Conference.
655
- 656 B. LOCAL: Each local church shall establish the percentage of members required for the transaction of
657 business, the process for notifying members of the meeting, and the process for calling special
658 meetings, unless otherwise indicated in UFMCC Bylaws.
659
- 660 C. PROXY VOTING: No proxy and/or absentee ballots shall be allowed in any business meeting of this
661 Fellowship, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws.
662

663 **ARTICLE IX – CHURCH FINANCES**

- 664
- 665 A. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed means
666 of supporting the church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills,
667 and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the
668 clergy and the lay leadership of emerging and affiliated church to plan and implement programs of
669 stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the church's ministries. An
670 offering shall be received at each service of public worship in the local church and at conferences
671 sponsored by UFMCC.
672
- 673 B. REPORTING: Each emerging church and affiliated shall report all church receipts each month to the
674 UFMCC and with that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported, as determined by
675 General Conference.
676
- 677 1. EXEMPT FUNDS: Funds bequeathed and money collected for the following purposes must be
678 reported, but may be deducted from the total receipts before calculating the amount due the
679 UFMCC:
- 680 a. FUNDS TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF PERSONS IN DISTRESS: This money may only be
681 used to cover direct services without which the recipient would be destitute or in personal
682 danger.
683

684 b. BUILDING FUND: This is money set aside to construct or purchase a church facility which
685 may include worship space, meeting space, office space, kitchen facilities, classroom space,
686 non-revenue parking facilities, furniture and major equipment for these facilities. It may
687 also be used for major renovation costs of purchased or leased/rented facilities and the
688 payment of the principle on a building loan. Funds raised specifically to reduce the principle
689 on a building loan are assessment exempt as part of the building fund. Rent, mortgage
690 interest payments, utilities, minor equipment, and routine maintenance are not exempt.
691

692 c. DELEGATES FUND: Expenses of sending the church's delegate(s) and clergy to General
693 Conference.
694

695 Any money transferred permanently or for a long term from any exempt fund into the General
696 Fund must be added to the income figures for that month, and assessments paid on them.
697 Report and remittance are due to the UFMCC on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month
698 following the month being reported.
699

700 2. SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT PAYMENT: Wherever possible and desirable as determined by the
701 Governing Board, churches shall send their assessment directly to the UFMCC Headquarters.
702 However, the Governing Board may choose, in certain circumstances, to authorize special
703 accounts in nations other than the United States to hold in trust the UFMCC assessment
704 payments within that nation. The Governing Board, upon the recommendation of the
705 Moderator, will name the signatories on said accounts and will approve a budget for use of
706 those monies for UFMCC purposes and programs within the respective nation. The Governing
707 Board shall establish appropriate policies and procedures concerning the care of funds held in
708 trust for UFMCC. Whenever funds are transmitted internationally to UFMCC, Fellowship Offices
709 shall provide documentation satisfactory to national/regional government authorities in the
710 sending countries.
711

712 C. FIDUCIARY BODIES: Whenever the Governing Board chooses to authorize special accounts to hold
713 UFMCC funds in trust, the Governing Board may appoint a fiduciary body to have charge of all
714 matters pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, real
715 property, and finances held in trust, as legally permitted and appropriate. The Governing Board, in
716 its discretion, shall determine the number of members of any fiduciary body. All actions of the
717 fiduciary bodies must be reported to and approved by the Governing Board, except where
718 specifically provided for in these Bylaws.
719

720 1. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of a fiduciary body must be members in good standing within the
721 Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the Governing Board, have spiritual quality and
722 leadership, are mature, have sound judgment and a proven record of accomplishment. The
723 term of office shall be two years.

724 2. ACCOUNTABILITY: The fiduciary body shall be subject to these Bylaws, the fiduciary body's
725 Articles of Incorporation, the fiduciary body's Bylaws, and the policies and procedures of the
726 Governing Board.

727 3. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone conduct which is, in its sole discretion, disloyal or
728 unbecoming or a dereliction of duty on the part of members of a fiduciary body. Therefore, the

Governing Board shall develop and implement a procedure for taking appropriate disciplinary action, as it deems necessary.

- D. BOARD OF PENSIONS ASSESSMENTS: Each local church administrative body in the USA shall report quarterly the number of members in good standing for each month within every quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessment as set by General Conference. Report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.
- E.. SIGNATURES: Any bank or financial account in the name of any church body, the UFMCC, or of any subordinate group or body, must require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be that of an officer elected or a person appointed under UFMCC Bylaws, the authorizing documents of the subordinate group or body, or the authorizing documents of the local church.
- F. FORGIVENESS OF ASSESSMENTS: The Governing Board may grant forgiveness of late assessments.

ARTICLE X – RESERVATION OF POWERS

All powers not delegated by these Bylaws are reserved to the local church bodies.

ARTICLE XI – ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

- A. ADOPTION: These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General Conference of the UFMCC and shall become binding upon all members and church bodies within the Fellowship.
- B. AMENDMENTS: These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened meeting of the General Conference according to the procedures adopted by the General Conference. Such amendments or repeals can only be effective if two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized Lay Delegates and two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized clergy attending vote in favor of such amendments or repeals.
- C. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL LAWS: If UFMCC Bylaws are inconsistent with laws of any nation or other jurisdiction in which a local church body is organized, the Governing Board may allow the Bylaws or other organizational documents to contain variances with these Bylaws to facilitate compliance of the local church body with such laws.