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**THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES**

BYLAWS

**As revised at General Conference XXI, Dallas, Texas (USA)
Effective July 2, 2003**

ARTICLE I -- NAME

- 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.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The objectives of the UFMCC shall be:

- 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.

ARTICLE III -- DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

- 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.

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.

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

1 We believe:

- 2 1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons:
3 God, our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the
4 Holy Spirit, God as our Sustainer.
5
- 6 2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the
7 law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.
8
- 9 3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God
10 incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has
11 demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in
12 God's image.
13
- 14 4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is
15 God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.
16
- 17 5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.
18
- 19 6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared
20 by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further
21 commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind,
22 thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.
23
- 24 7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular
25 services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and
26 preaching of the Word.
27

28 B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

- 29 1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of
30 each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is
31 identified as God's own Child.
32
- 33 2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the
34 words of Jesus, our Sovereign: This is my body...this is my blood. (Matthew 26:26-28). All who
35 believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences,
36 may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into community
37 with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection,
38 and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.
39

40 C. RITES: The Rites of the Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the
41 following:

- 42 1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional
43 ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy or
44 UFMCC Elders, pursuant to these Bylaws.
45
- 46 2. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall be conducted by the Pastor
47 or Interim Pastoral Leader before a local congregation at any regular worship service. In accordance
48 with criteria established by the local church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good
49 standing of the local church group through a letter of transfer from a recognized Christian body or
50 through affirmation of faith.
51

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

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

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

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

1. **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.
2. **DEACONS:** As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

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.
 - a. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** In accordance with their call, clergy shall administer the Rites and Sacraments of the UFMCC and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped, and strengthened in its ministry.
 - b. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Board of Elders.
 - c. **CREDENTIALS:** Persons who have met the academic standards, completed at least one year of Candidacy with a Teaching Church, and have been approved by the Teaching Church and the Regional Clergy Interview Team may then be ordained. A person who is ordained cannot function as a UFMCC clergy person until he/she is licensed. A License to Practice shall be immediately issued upon notification to the Elder serving the Region that the person is entering an active, authorized, and accountable ministry. The License to Practice must be renewed annually.

- 1
2 d. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of
3 duty. Procedures for discipline shall be developed by the Board of Elders. These procedures
4 shall be included as an addendum to the UFMCC Bylaws.
5

6 **ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS**
7

8 A. GOVERNMENT:

- 9 1. The UFMCC acknowledges the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Holy Spirit in conscience and
10 faith as its guide in faith, discipline and government.
11
12 2. The government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference and its Regional Conferences,
13 subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation and its Bylaws, or documents of
14 legal organization. The officials elected by the General and Regional Conferences are subject to the
15 direction and discipline of General Conference and are responsible to carry out its policies.
16
17 3. When a Region desires more flexibility with respect to Articles IV through IX of these Bylaws, it can
18 apply to the Board of Elders which may grant that flexibility.
19
20 4. This Fellowship is accountable to no outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but accepts the obligation of
21 mutual consent and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of other churches, and does pledge
22 itself to share in their common aims and endeavors subject to the expressed approval of its
23 membership.
24
25 5. Local Churches, Regions, Regional Conferences, and the General Conference/World Jubilee as
26 defined by these Bylaws, are set forth for the purposes of Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and
27 service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of their Bylaws,
28 Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.
29
30 6. A local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is that church
31 which subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, and has been authorized by the
32 same.
33

34 B. LOCAL CHURCHES:

- 35 1. INTRODUCTION: The government of each local church is vested in its Congregational Meeting
36 which exerts the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of
37 Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, and the General Conference. The Pastor
38 and the local church administrative body are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative
39 leadership in the local church. The officials elected by the Congregational Meeting are subject to the
40 direction and discipline of the local church and are responsible to carry out the local church policies.
41
42 2. AFFILIATION: Within the UFMCC, all churches that meet the criteria as established by the Board
43 of Elders and approved by General Conference qualify for affiliation and recognition as “church.”
44 The Elder serving the Region has the authority to approve requests for affiliation. If a church ceases
45 to meet the criteria for affiliation, the Elder serving the Region may take appropriate actions of
46 intervention, which may include removal of the church’s affiliation status. The decision of the
47 Regional Elder may be appealed to the Board of Elders.
48

1 3. PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS: A local church or Region shall have the authority to
2 establish, authorize, and hold accountable para-church organizations (special-purpose groups or
3 ministries). When the mission of the UFMCC would be best served by a para-church organization
4 being accountable to the denomination, the Board of Elders shall have the authority to establish,
5 authorize, and hold accountable the para-church organization(s).
6

7 4. PASTOR: The Pastor is a duly ordained clergy person who has been licensed to practice. Though
8 there are a variety of pastoral roles, in a local congregation the Pastor is elected to be responsible for
9 the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader. If no duly credentialed UFMCC clergy person is
10 available, an Interim Pastoral Leader may be appointed annually by the Elder serving the Region. All
11 UFMCC churches are led by Pastors or Interim Pastoral Leaders.

12 a. QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES: Pastors must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC. The
13 Pastor of the church shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the church. The
14 Pastor is a voting member of the local church administrative body.
15

16 Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s) and other personnel, uncompensated or compensated, shall
17 be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the local church administrative body. The
18 Pastor shall act as personnel director of the local church staff, shall have the authority to delegate
19 such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the local church
20 administrative body, determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the staff.
21

22 b. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: When there are conflicts or difficulty within a local church,
23 including apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and congregation, the Elder
24 serving the Region shall have the authority to interface with that church, to take appropriate
25 measures, to provide resources and support, and to attend and have voice at any meeting of the
26 local church administrative body or Congregational Meeting. The Elder serving the Region shall
27 be required to intervene when invited (1) by the Pastor/Interim Pastoral Leader, (2) by majority
28 vote of the local church administrative body, or (3) as a result of a petition signed by a minimum
29 of one-third (33%) of the members of the church.
30

31 Within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the request for intervention, the Elder serving the
32 Region must officially notify all parties mentioned above. Within ten (10) days of the request,
33 the Elder serving the Region or the person appointed by the Elder serving the Region will
34 establish the time-lines and process for the Ministry of Reconciliation, which must be
35 implemented within thirty (30) days of the initial request.
36

37 c. REMOVING THE PASTOR FROM OFFICE: When irreconcilable differences exist between
38 the Pastor and congregation, the Pastor and congregation may choose to terminate their
39 relationship through mutual agreement. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on
40 irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as
41 contained within the UFMCC Bylaws Article V.B.4.b. Unilateral failure to renew a pastoral
42 contract does not constitute removal of the Pastor from office.
43

44 The process of removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction
45 of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between Pastor and congregation may be
46 initiated by a petition submitted to the duly authorized church officer as designated by the local
47 Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, or documents of legal organization, and signed by at
48 least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing; or by a vote of three-fourths
49 (3/4) of the full Board of Directors /local church administrative body. Within three (3) days, the
50 Pastor and the Elder serving the Region must be sent a copy of the completed petition or
51 motion of the local church administrative body by the designated church officer. After the Elder
52 serving the Region and designated local church officer have validated the number of members

1 who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition or validated the votes of the members
2 of the local church administrative body and the clarity of the motion, the Elder serving the
3 Region may place the Pastor on inactive status, but the Pastor remains fully compensated until
4 the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition, the Elder serving the Region
5 and the local church administrative body will set the time and place of a special congregational
6 meeting to determine whether the Pastor shall remain in office. The date of the meeting shall
7 occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the designated church officer
8 or the date the motion of the local church administrative body is received by the Elder serving
9 the Region.

10
11 The Pastor has the right to appear on his/her own behalf before the congregational meeting and
12 may have an advocate of his/her own choice present. The action of the congregation is final. If a
13 special meeting is called to remove a Pastor, the Elder serving the Region must be given notice
14 that such action is being taken. The Elder serving the Region shall attend or send a
15 representative as an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the Pastor is removed,
16 the local church administrative body will meet immediately after the meeting with the Elder
17 serving the Region or the representative to arrange for pastoral leadership until the pulpit is
18 filled. The local church administrative body may confer with the Elder serving the Region as to
19 available candidates for the office of Pastor.

20
21 5. LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE

22 a. The local church, in consultation with the Elder serving the Region, shall determine an
23 appropriate structure and systems for local church governance that is appropriate for the size of
24 church and cultural context. The local church structure and systems shall include provision for
25 (1) selection and discipline of the local church administrative body, (2) a pastoral search process,
26 and (3) congregational meetings. It is incumbent upon the local church administrative body of
27 each local church to provide that church with a set of Bylaws or standard operating procedures,
28 subject to approval by the Elder serving the Region.

29
30 b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The local church administrative body shall be subject to these Bylaws,
31 local Articles of Incorporation, local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, any other
32 documents of legal organization, and to the approval or disapproval by action of their local
33 congregation as provided for in any of the above.

34
35 6. LAY DELEGATE: Each affiliated church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100)
36 members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) Lay Delegate for each vote.
37 Each Lay Delegate shall carry one (1) vote. Each Lay Delegate shall be a member in good standing of
38 the congregation that he/she represents, should be elected at the first congregational meeting
39 following each General Conference and shall serve a term of two (2) years. The duties of the Lay
40 Delegate shall include, but not be limited to, representation of the congregation at General and
41 Regional Conferences and to be informed of the UFMCC concerns and policies.

42
43 Each voting church may, in accordance with that local church's Bylaws or Standard Operating
44 Procedures, elect at least one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The Alternate
45 Delegate(s) so elected shall, in accordance with procedures set forth in the local church Bylaws or
46 Standard Operating Procedures, be empowered to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is
47 unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representation
48 of the congregation at General and Regional Conferences.

49
50 7. DISCIPLINE OF CHURCHES: If any affiliated church shall fail to abide by the Articles of
51 Incorporation of the UFMCC, these Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, the Board of Elders

1 shall take appropriate action to require compliance. The Board of Elders shall report any such action
2 to the church involved. The action will also be reported to the next General Conference.
3

- 4 8. CHURCH PROPERTY: The local church administrative body will name the fiduciary body for any
5 property acquired by that church. The local church administrative body and the members of each
6 local congregation will have sole control of said property except under the following circumstances:
7 (1) if the property is abandoned; (2) if the local church is disbanded; or (3) if the local church
8 disaffiliates from UFMCC.
9

10 In every nation where UFMCC comes to exist and where permitted by local or national laws, the
11 local church's documents of legal organization must name the UFMCC as the successor 501(c)(3)
12 corporation designated to receive the church's property in the event of (1) the dissolution or
13 abandonment of the church, or (2) failure to abide by the process for disaffiliation from the UFMCC
14 by the local church as contained in the UFMCC Bylaws.
15

- 16 9. DISAFFILIATION: Should a local church desire to disaffiliate from the UFMCC, the local church
17 shall notify the Elder serving the Region. A denomination representative must be allowed to meet
18 with the congregation. The decision to disaffiliate must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the
19 Members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating.
20 After existing financial obligations to the UFMCC are met, the disaffiliating members of the church
21 have the right to net assets equivalent to the percentage of votes received. The remaining balance of
22 assets shall stay with the members of the church who choose to remain with the Fellowship. If a
23 church attempts to disaffiliate but does not follow the procedure as stated above, the net assets of
24 the church will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Board of Elders
25 will decide the disposition of said property. Disaffiliated congregations may not continue to use the
26 name Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).
27

- 28 10. CLOSURE: When a church disbands or closes, the net assets of the church will revert to the use of
29 the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Board of Elders will decide the disposition of said
30 property.
31

- 32 11. RESERVATION OF POWERS: Any specific matters of congregational approval not covered herein
33 are left to local church option.
34

- 35 C. REGIONS: Regions are those defined bodies which are created by the Board of Elders in accordance
36 with these Bylaws. Regions are called into existence to enable and empower Christian ministry within
37 their jurisdiction through their member congregations and bodies and to support church leaders through
38 leadership development efforts, networking opportunities, celebration of common values, building shared
39 vision, and creating unity in mission.
40

- 41 1. CRITERIA: The following are criteria for establishing Regional boundaries.

- 42 a. The boundaries of each Region must take into account the needs of the whole Fellowship
43 throughout the world.
44 b. Each Region should have a balance of strengths (e.g., personnel, resources, etc.) and challenges.
45 There should be ample opportunity in each Region for significant growth to occur in terms of
46 numbers, strength, and health of churches.
47 c. Consideration shall be given to "common sense coherence," geographically, culturally, and
48 historically.
49 d. Each Region should be intentionally diverse and have cross-cultural and often international
50 challenges.

- 51 2. GEOGRAPHIC REVIEW BOARD: The Geographic Review Board will be comprised of three
52 members appointed by the Board of Elders.

- 1
2 3. CHANGES TO REGIONAL BOUNDARIES: The Board of Elders shall review Regional
3 boundaries every six (6) years. The following process shall be followed to affect any change in
4 Regional boundaries:
5 a. Requests for Regional boundary changes may be initiated and reviewed by a Region, two or more
6 Regions, or the Board of Elders at any time.
7 b. The Geographic Review Board will facilitate and service the process regarding any Regional
8 boundary change.
9 c. The Geographic Review Board may recommend additional criteria by which Regional
10 boundaries are set and criteria by which Regional boundaries are re-evaluated.
11 d. The Geographic Review Board shall facilitate a process to receive input from and consultation
12 with churches and Regions affected by any proposed boundary change.
13 e. Recommendations of the Geographic Review Board for changes in Regional boundaries will be
14 submitted to the Board of Elders for approval without amendment.
15

16 D. FELLOWSHIP:

- 17 1. INTRODUCTION: Internationally, the government of the UFMCC is vested in the General
18 Conference, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, or
19 documents of legal organization. Between General Conferences, the Board of Elders is authorized to
20 provide spiritual and pastoral leadership and to appoint a Board of Administration to provide
21 administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.
22
23 2. BOARD OF ELDERS: The Board of Elders of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the General
24 Conference to serve in a pastoral role and direct the spiritual life of the Fellowship. This Board shall
25 consist of a Moderator, a Vice-Moderator and one Elder to serve each Region. All UFMCC Elders
26 are deemed professional ministers and are authorized to perform all of the Rites and Sacraments
27 of the church.
28 a. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Board of Elders shall be six (6)
29 years. For the purpose of transition, the term of office of the Moderator shall expire at the end
30 of General Conference to be held in 2005.
31
32 b. QUALIFICATIONS: Elders must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality and
33 leadership who are mature, have sound judgment, have a proven record of accomplishment as
34 lay or clergy members within the Fellowship, and have successful experience in envisioning and
35 strategic planning for the future. Elders must be excellent communicators, skilled motivators
36 and teachers, self-motivated and devoted to continuous learning. Further, Elders must be
37 capable of understanding and working within sound fiscal guidelines, be sensitive to cultural
38 differences, and be able and willing to embrace diversity. It is desirable that the Regions and
39 General Conference elect members of the Board of Elders so that this Board is representative of
40 the diversity of the Fellowship.
41
42 c. SELECTION
43 (1) MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR: The Board of Elders shall appoint a
44 Moderators Nominating Committee of five (5) persons, including a human resources expert,
45 a psychologist/therapist, and an experienced pastor. Incumbent Elders are not eligible to
46 serve on the Moderators Nominating Committee. The Moderators Nominating Committee
47 shall solicit up to five (5) candidates for each vacant position. Individuals and/or Regions
48 shall have the right to submit names to the Moderators Nominating Committee for
49 consideration.
50
51 The Moderators Nominating Committee shall review any and all candidates and shall then
52 present to each Regional Conference the list of qualified candidates for nomination. At the

1 Regional Conference in the year preceding the General Conference when election is to be
2 held, each Regional Conference shall vote on the list of qualified candidates in order to select
3 up to two (2) names to be nominated by the Region. To qualify as a nominee, a candidate
4 must be selected by at least two (2) Regions.
5

6 The Moderators Nominating Committee will then present to the General Conference
7 qualified nominees for the purpose of election by General Conference. Nominations from
8 the floor of General Conference will not be accepted. The term of office of the Moderator
9 and Vice-Moderator shall be staggered.
10

- 11 (2) ELDERS SERVING REGIONS: The Board of Elders shall appoint an Elders Nominating
12 Committee of five (5) persons for each Region. The members of each Elders Nominating
13 Committee shall include two (2) members from the Moderators Nominating Committee and
14 three (3) persons elected by the Region. Incumbent Elders are not eligible to serve on the
15 Elders Nominating Committee. The Elders Nominating Committee shall actively solicit
16 candidates for Elder to serve the Region. Individuals shall have the right to submit names to
17 the Elders Nominating Committee for consideration.
18

19 The Elders Nominating Committee shall review any and all candidates and then present one
20 (1) nominee to the Regional Conference for election. If the Regional Conference fails to
21 elect the nominee, the Elders Nominating Committee may present another nominee to the
22 Regional Conference for election. If the Regional Conference is unable to achieve election,
23 the Board of Elders shall appoint someone to serve until the next Regional Conference.
24

- 25 (3) VACANCIES: In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Elders shall appoint someone who
26 meets the qualifications to fill the vacancy until the next General or Regional Conference, as
27 appropriate. An election shall be conducted at the next General or Regional Conference, as
28 appropriate. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall
29 serve as Interim Moderator until the next General Conference, when an election shall be
30 held to fill the vacancy.
31

- 32 d. DUTIES: The primary responsibility of the Board of Elders shall be to give pastoral leadership
33 and care to enable the Fellowship in our spiritual journey. The Board of Elders shall exercise
34 spiritual and pastoral authority to build a shared vision for the UFMCC, prepare UFMCC for the
35 future, and set UFMCC's strategic direction. The Elders serve as official representatives of the
36 Fellowship in the areas of public and community relations. It is the responsibility of the Board of
37 Elders, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws, to make appointments to the
38 various Fellowship boards, commissions, committees and institutions.
39

40 The Board of Elders is charged to carry out all directives of the General Conference. All actions
41 of the Board of Elders must be reported to and approved by the General Conference, except
42 where specifically provided for in these Bylaws. When church bodies or members of the
43 Fellowship raise a question of interpretation of the Bylaws by official action, the Board of Elders
44 is authorized to issue an advisory interpretation of the Bylaws for that situation.
45

46 A member of the Board of Elders shall not serve simultaneously as the Pastor, staff member, or
47 Lay Delegate of a local church; as a member of the Board of Administration; or fulfill any other
48 compensated position within UFMCC.
49

- 50 (1) MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR: The Moderator and Vice-Moderator serve
51 as the primary visionaries and futurists in order to advance the mission and vision of
52 UFMCC worldwide through the exercise of prophetic challenge, creativity, spiritual and

1 pastoral authority, and leadership. The Moderator is the primary UFMCC spokesperson and
2 shall moderate meetings of the Board of Elders. The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall
3 be responsible for leading the visioning process for the Fellowship, having a presence at
4 global events, teaching and training, engaging in continuous learning, community relations,
5 visitation and assistance in Regions, ecumenical relations, and global social justice.
6

7 (2) ELDER SERVING A REGION: It shall be the responsibility of the Elder serving a Region
8 to facilitate affirmation of Regional ministry goals; facilitate cooperation between churches;
9 deliver resourcing materials and services to local churches; assure provision of pastoral care,
10 guidance, and mentoring for pastoral leaders; assure systems of delivery for conflict
11 management and mediation; resource local churches for recruitment and selection of
12 pastoral leadership; assure opportunities for leadership development and training for clergy
13 and lay leaders; facilitate strategic efforts, in cooperation with local churches; manage
14 processes for church affiliation and accountability; oversee the planning of Regional
15 conferences; and moderate Regional Conferences. The Elder serving a Region shall take
16 residence within the Region.
17

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

21 (1) ACCOUNTABILITY: All Elders, including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, shall be
22 accountable to their respective Regions, the Board of Elders, the UFMCC Bylaws, the
23 UFMCC Elder's Code of Conduct, and General Conference. The Board of Elders shall
24 conduct biennial evaluations of the effectiveness of each Elder's ministry. The evaluation
25 shall include input from the Region being served.
26

27 (2) DISCIPLINE: All charges against an Elder must be submitted to the Board of Elders in
28 written form signed by a minimum of one (1) member of the clergy from each of ten (10)
29 different churches and by the Lay Delegates representing the majority of the Lay Delegate
30 votes from each of ten (10) different churches, and may be initiated by either the clergy or
31 Lay Delegates. The Elder must be given written notice of the charges, and at that time
32 becomes inactive and remains fully compensated until final disposition of these charges. The
33 Elder has the right to appear and present his/her own defense before the Board of Elders
34 on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then review the charges, and, upon
35 majority vote of the full Board, may remove the Elder or take other such action as it may
36 deem appropriate. The only appeal from the decision of the Board of Elders will be to the
37 General Conference of the Fellowship, and written notice of such appeal must be filed with
38 the Moderator of the Board of Elders within thirty (30) days.
39

40 (3) REMOVAL: If the Board of Elders determines that an Elder is unable or unwilling to fulfill
41 the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Elders may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of
42 the full Board of Elders, remove that Elder from the position.
43

44 3. BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION: The Board of Administration is that body authorized by the
45 General Conference to carry on the administrative affairs of the UFMCC between General
46 Conferences in an orderly manner. The Board of Administration is composed of seven (7) persons
47 appointed by the Board of Elders to be responsible for management of UFMCC finances and
48 operations and to serve as the corporation's Board of Directors, having charge of all matters
49 pertaining to Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, property, and finances of
50 the UFMCC.

51 a. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Board of Administration shall be
52 two years, staggered.

1
2 b. DUTIES: It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Administration to assure that all policies,
3 programs, and practices of the UFMCC Headquarters support the ministry priorities established
4 by the General Conference and the Board of Elders, to be accountable to the ministry priorities,
5 and to reflect the ideals, values, and vision of the UFMCC. The Board of Administration shall
6 approve, monitor, and review the UFMCC budget and operational budgets; determine salaries
7 for members of the Board of Elders; select, guide, support, and evaluate the Executive Director,
8 with selection being subject to ratification by the Board of Elders; translate the UFMCC ideals,
9 values, and vision into policies to guide the Executive and senior staff in their activities; work
10 with the Executive Director to develop and monitor long-range plans, goals, and objectives for
11 the UFMCC Headquarters; ensure that the UFMCC Headquarters and Regions have the
12 financial resources needed to carry out the mission and goals; ensure that all of its decisions and
13 actions meet the requirements of ethics and law, both civil and UFMCC Bylaws and mandates;
14 ensure that the UFMCC Headquarters uses all of its resources, including people and money, as
15 efficiently and effectively as possible; and elect UFMCC's corporate officers from among the
16 members of the Board of Administration.

17
18 c. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of
19 duty on the part of any member of the Board of Administration and, therefore, makes the
20 following provisions for discipline or removal:

21
22 If the Board of Administration determines that one of its members is unable or unwilling to
23 fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Administration may, by a vote of two-
24 thirds (2/3) of the full Board of Administration, recommend that the Board of Elders remove
25 that member from position. The member must be given written notice of the charges and, at
26 that time, becomes inactive. The member has the right to appear and present his/her own
27 defense before the Board of Elders on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then
28 review the charges, and, upon majority vote of the full Board of Elders, may remove the member
29 of the Board of Administration or take such other action as it may deem appropriate. The
30 decision of the Board of Elders shall be final.

31
32 4. LAY MINISTRY COUNCIL: The Lay Ministry Council is authorized by the General Conference to
33 foster excellence in lay ministry through collaboration in the assessment of needs and development
34 of resources. The Lay Ministry Council is composed of seven (7) persons; a Chair and Vice-Chair
35 elected by the Lay House at General Conference, four (4) lay members appointed by the Board of
36 Elders and a staff person responsible for resource development appointed by the Executive Director.
37 For the purpose of transition only, the staff person to be appointed by the Executive Director shall
38 be appointed by the Director of Leadership Development.

39 a. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Lay Ministry
40 Council shall be four (4) years, staggered. The term of office for appointed members shall be
41 two (2) years.

42
43 b. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of the Lay Ministry Council must be members in good standing
44 within the Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the UFMCC, have spiritual quality and
45 leadership, are mature, have sound judgment and a proven record of accomplishment.
46 Consideration will be given to appoint members with diverse perspectives and complementary
47 skills.

48
49 c. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR: The Board of Elders shall appoint a Lay
50 Ministry Council Nominating Committee of four (4) laypersons and one (1) clergy person who
51 are members in good standing within the Fellowship. The Lay Ministry Council Nominating
52 Committee shall solicit candidates for each vacant position. Individuals shall have the right to

1 submit names to the Lay Ministry Council Nominating Committee for consideration. The Lay
2 Ministry Council Nominating Committee shall review any and all candidates and shall then
3 present to the Lay House of the General Conference two (2) qualified lay candidates as nominees
4 for each vacant office. Nominations from the floor of General Conference will not be accepted.
5

6 d. TRANSITION: For the purpose of transition, the Chair of the Commission on the Laity elected
7 at General Conference in 2003 shall serve as the first Chair of the Lay Ministry Council; the term
8 of office shall expire at General Conference in 2007. The Vice-Chair of the Commission on the
9 Laity elected at General Conference 2003 shall serve as the first Vice-Chair of the Lay Ministry
10 Council; the term of office shall expire at General Conference 2005, when the Lay House shall
11 elect a qualified candidate to serve as Vice-Chair until 2009.
12

13 e. DUTIES: It shall be the responsibility of the Lay Ministry Council to support the ministry
14 priorities established by the General Conference and the Board of Elders, to be accountable to
15 the ministry priorities, and to reflect the ideals, values, and vision of the UFMCC. The Lay
16 Ministry Council shall assist with and participate in periodic assessments to ascertain the
17 educational and spiritual needs of the laity in supporting the ministry priorities of the UFMCC.
18 The Lay Ministry Council, in collaboration with the Board of Elders and UFMCC staff, shall
19 consider the results of the needs assessment in order to recommend priorities for the
20 development of specific resources. The Lay Ministry Council, with the Elders and UFMCC
21 staff, shall work to inform, support, and recognize the laity in accomplishing the ministry
22 priorities of the UFMCC.
23

24 f. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone conduct which is, in its sole discretion, disloyal or
25 unbecoming or a dereliction of duty on the part of members of Lay Ministry Council and,
26 therefore, makes the following provisions for discipline or removal: If the Lay Ministry Council
27 determines that one of its members is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the
28 position, the Lay Ministry Council may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the remaining members,
29 remove that member from the Lay Ministry Council.
30

31 g. VACANCIES:

32 i. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair or Vice-Chair, the Board of Elders shall
33 appoint someone who meets the qualification to fill the vacancy until the next General
34 Conference.
35

36 ii. In the event of a vacancy in an appointed position, the Board of Elders shall appoint
37 someone who meets the qualifications to serve the unexpired term.
38

39 **ARTICLE VI -- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

40
41 A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: Any baptized Christian may become a member in good standing
42 of the local church. A local church has the authority to determine any additional criteria for gaining and
43 retaining membership in that local church. Any additional criteria shall be in accordance with UFMCC
44 Bylaws and be compatible with UFMCC core values.
45

46 B. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: A local church body may, if it desires, accept into the Church person(s)
47 who, for one reason or another, feel that they cannot become regular members of the Church but who
48 support the goals of the Church and want to be part of the work of the church. Such people shall be
49 designated as "Friends of the Church." Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate
50 in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the local church administrative body
51 and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered in determining the

1 number of Lay Delegates that a local church body may send to meetings of the General Conference or
2 Regional Conferences.

- 3
4 C. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its
5 members and friends; therefore, the local church administrative body shall develop and implement a
6 procedure for taking appropriate disciplinary action, as it deems necessary.

7
8 **ARTICLE VII – CHURCH SERVICES**

9
10 Each local church body shall hold services of public worship every week. Other worship services may be held
11 as determined by the Pastor with the approval of the local church administrative body. In regard to the
12 worship services of local church bodies, the Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered at weekly
13 worship, as well as at other worship services at the discretion of the Pastor. Holy Baptism may be
14 administered at any appropriate service of the local church body or at any other time, at the Pastor's
15 discretion.

16
17 **ARTICLE VIII -- CHURCH MEETINGS**

- 18
19 A. GENERAL CONFERENCE AND WORLD JUBILEE: For the purpose of the transaction of business
20 the UFMCC will hold a Biennial General Conference in each odd-numbered year. A World Jubilee will
21 be held in conjunction with General Conference for the purpose of worship, celebration, education and
22 training. Meetings of regional/country groups will be held as part of the Jubilee.

23
24 The time and place of the World Jubilee/General Conference will be announced at the previous World
25 Jubilee/General Conference. Notice must be given in writing to all church bodies ninety (90) days prior
26 to the upcoming General Conference.

27
28 The General Conference of the UFMCC is that body consisting of active and retired credentialed clergy,
29 Elders, the Chair of the Lay Ministry Council, Lay Delegates, the Interim Pastoral Leader of each
30 affiliated church when that Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of UFMCC, and the members of the
31 Board of Administration who are not clergy or Lay Delegates. The transaction of all business except
32 procedural matters must be approved by a separate majority vote of the votes carried by Lay Delegates,
33 Interim Pastoral Leaders, lay Elders, the Chair of the Lay Ministry Council, and the members of the
34 Board of Administration who are not clergy or Lay Delegates; and a separate majority vote of the
35 credentialed clergy. A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the number of lay people eligible
36 to vote at General Conference from at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Regions and twenty percent (20%) of
37 the number of credentialed clergy eligible to vote at General Conference from at least two-thirds (2/3) of
38 the Regions.

39
40 All special General Conferences of the UFMCC can be called by a petition submitted to the Board of
41 Elders by fifty percent (50%) of all those persons eligible to vote at General Conference. Initiation of this
42 petition may be by either clergy or laity. Such special conferences shall be governed by the same rules as
43 those pertaining to the General Conference with the exception that written notice must be sent to all
44 credentialed clergy and to all voting church bodies at least thirty (30) days prior to the special conference.
45 The nature and purpose of special conferences must be stated in the petition and notices and must be
46 written into the agenda of the special conference.

- 47
48 B. REGIONS: Regional Conferences must be held at least once a biennium in even-numbered years for the
49 purpose of electing members to serve on the Elders Nominating Committee; electing an Elder to serve
50 the Region; selecting nominees for the positions of Moderator and Vice-Moderator; and proposing
51 amendments to the UFMCC Bylaws. Participation in Regional Conferences shall be open to Lay and
52 Clergy Delegates from all affiliated churches within the boundaries of the Region. Thirty (30) days

1 written notice of the Regional Conference must be sent to all church bodies and clergy persons within
2 the Region. Voting rights at Regional Conference shall be the same as for the General Conference. A
3 Regional Conference quorum shall consist of the Regional Elder (or a representative), twenty percent
4 (20%) of the number of lay people eligible to vote at Regional Conference, and twenty percent (20%) of
5 the number of credentialed clergy eligible to vote at Regional Conference.
6

7 Special conferences of the various Regions of the UFMCC can be called by petition submitted to the
8 Elder serving the Region by fifty percent (50%) of the credentialed clergy within the Region eligible to
9 vote at a Regional Conference and by fifty percent (50%) of the lay people within the Region eligible to
10 vote at a Regional Conference. The process may be initiated by either the clergy or the laity. Such special
11 conferences shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the regularly scheduled Regional
12 Conferences. The nature and purpose of special conferences must be stated in the petition and notices
13 and the agenda must be limited to the purpose. Special conferences may also be called at the Regional
14 level or by other means as provided for in the Region's Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures.
15

- 16 C. LOCAL: Each local church shall establish the percentage of members required for the transaction of
17 business, the process for notifying members of the meeting, and the process for calling special meetings,
18 unless otherwise indicated in UFMCC Bylaws.
19
- 20 D. PROXY VOTING: No proxy and/or absentee ballots shall be allowed in any business meeting of this
21 Fellowship, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws.
22

23 **ARTICLE IX – CHURCH FINANCES**

- 24
- 25 A. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed
26 means of supporting the church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time,
27 skills, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the
28 clergy and the lay leadership of local churches to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to
29 help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the church's ministries. An offering shall be received
30 at each service of public worship in the local church, Regional Conference, and World Jubilee.
31
- 32 B. REPORTING: As of January 1, 2003, the local church administrative body shall report all Church
33 receipts each month to the UFMCC and with that report shall remit fifteen percent (15%) of the funds
34 reported. As of January 1, 2004, the amount to be remitted shall be fourteen and one-half percent (14-
35 1/2%). Beginning in 2005, the amount to be remitted shall be fourteen percent (14%) and then decrease
36 by one percent (1%) per biennium until the amount to be remitted is reduced to ten percent (10%),
37 unless the reduction is delayed or accelerated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the General Conference.
38

39 Funds bequeathed and money collected for the following purposes must be reported, but may be
40 deducted from the total receipts before calculating the percentages due the UFMCC:

- 41 (1) FUNDS TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF PERSONS IN DISTRESS: This money may
42 only be used to cover direct services without which the recipient would be destitute or in personal
43 danger.
44
- 45 (2) BUILDING FUND: This is money set aside to construct or purchase a church facility which may
46 include worship space, meeting space, office space, kitchen facilities, classroom space, non-revenue
47 parking facilities, furniture and major equipment for these facilities. It may also be used for major
48 renovation costs and the payment of the principle on a building loan. Funds raised specifically to
49 reduce the principle on a building loan are tithable as part of the building fund. Rent, mortgage
50 interest payments, utilities, minor equipment, and routine maintenance are not exempt.
51

1 (3) DELEGATES FUND: Expenses of sending the church's delegate(s) and clergy to General
2 Conference and Regional Conference.
3

4 Any money transferred permanently or for a long term from any of the above exempt funds into the
5 General Fund must be added to the income figures for that month, and tithes paid on them. Report and
6 remittance are due to the UFMCC on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the month
7 being reported.
8

9 Wherever possible and desirable as determined by the Board of Administration, churches shall send their
10 tithe directly to the UFMCC Headquarters. However, the Board of Administration may choose, in certain
11 circumstances, to authorize special accounts in nations other than the United States to hold in trust the
12 ten percent (10%) UFMCC tithe within that nation. The Board of Administration, upon the
13 recommendation of the Board of Elders, will name the signatories on said accounts and will approve a
14 budget for use of those monies for UFMCC purposes and programs within the respective nation. The
15 Board of Administration shall establish appropriate policies and procedures concerning the care of funds
16 held in trust for UFMCC. Whenever funds are transmitted internationally to UFMCC, Fellowship
17 Offices shall provide documentation satisfactory to national/regional government authorities in the
18 sending countries.
19

20 1. FIDUCIARY BODIES: Whenever the Board of Administration chooses to authorize special
21 accounts to hold UFMCC funds in trust, the Board of Administration may appoint a fiduciary body
22 to have charge of all matters pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal
23 organization, real property, and finances held in trust, as legally permitted and appropriate. The
24 Board of Administration, in its discretion, shall determine the number of members of any fiduciary
25 body. All actions of the fiduciary bodies must be reported to and approved by the Board of
26 Administration, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws. The Board of Administration
27 shall determine the number of members to serve on a fiduciary body.

28 a. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of a fiduciary body must be members in good standing within
29 the Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the Board of Administration, have spiritual quality
30 and leadership, are mature, have sound judgment and a proven record of accomplishment. The
31 term of office shall be two years.
32

33 b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The fiduciary body shall be subject to these Bylaws, the fiduciary body's
34 Articles of Incorporation, the fiduciary body's Bylaws, and the policies and procedures of the
35 Board of Administration.
36

37 c. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone conduct which is, in its sole discretion, disloyal
38 or unbecoming or a dereliction of duty on the part of members of a regional fiduciary body.
39 Therefore, the Board of Administration shall develop and implement a procedure for taking
40 appropriate disciplinary action, as it deems necessary.
41

42 C BOARD OF PENSION ASSESSMENTS: Each local church administrative body in the USA shall
43 report quarterly the number of members in good standing for each month within every quarter and shall
44 remit the Board of Pensions assessment as set by General Conference. Report and remittance are due to
45 the Board of Pensions on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.
46

47 D. SIGNATURES: Any bank or financial account in the name of any church body, Region, the UFMCC, or
48 of any subordinate group or body, must require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be
49 that of an officer elected or a person appointed under UFMCC Bylaws, the authorizing documents of the
50 Region, or the authorizing documents of the local church.
51

1 E. FORGIVENESS OF TITHES: The Board of Elders may grant forgiveness of late tithes and
2 assessments.
3

4 **ARTICLE X -- RESERVATION OF POWERS**
5

6 All powers not delegated by these Bylaws are reserved to the local church bodies.
7

8 **ARTICLE XI – ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**
9

10 A. ADOPTION: These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General
11 Conference of the UFMCC and shall become binding upon all members and church bodies within the
12 Fellowship.
13

14 B. AMENDMENTS: These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened meeting of the
15 General Conference according to the procedures adopted by the General Conference. Such amendments
16 or repeals can only be effective if two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized Lay Delegates and two-thirds
17 (2/3) of the duly authorized clergy attending vote in favor of such amendments or repeals.
18

19 C. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL LAWS: If UFMCC Bylaws are inconsistent with laws of any
20 nation or other jurisdiction in which a local church body or a Region is organized, the Board of Elders
21 may allow the Bylaws or other organizational documents to contain variances with these Bylaws to
22 facilitate compliance of the local church body with such laws.
23

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING BYLAW PROPOSALS

Criteria:

In order for a Bylaw proposal to be considered by the General Conference, the identical proposal must be sponsored by:

1. A majority vote of the Board of Elders; or
2. A two-third (2/3) vote of one-third (1/3) or more of the Regional Conferences.

Procedure for the Board of Elders:

- A. Whenever a majority of the Board of Elders votes to propose a Bylaw amendment, the Board of Elders shall submit the full text of the proposal to the UFMCC staff member responsible for managing governance processes.
- B. Bylaw proposals from the Board of Elders are due to the UFMCC staff member responsible for managing governance processes no later than 60 days preceding General Conference.
- C. Any Bylaw proposal submitted by the Board of Elders, accompanied by an impact statement from the Board of Administration, will be placed on the agenda of the next General Conference.

Procedure for Regions:

- A. Whenever a Regional Conference votes on a Bylaw amendment proposal, regardless of the outcome of the vote, the Region shall submit to the UFMCC staff member responsible for governance processes:
 - (1) The full text of the proposal that was voted upon by the Region; and
 - (2) The outcome and date of the vote.
- B. When a Bylaw proposal from a Region is submitted to the UFMCC staff member responsible for managing governance processes, that staff member will take no action unless the identical proposal is received from a minimum of one-third (1/3) of the Regional Conferences within a three-year time span.
- C. In order to be eligible to be placed on the agenda for a particular General Conference, all Bylaw proposals from Regions are due to the UFMCC staff member responsible for managing governance processes no later than 31 December of the year preceding that General Conference.
- D. When it is determined by the UFMCC staff member responsible for managing governance processes that a proposal submitted during the preceding three (3) years meets the criteria stated above, the Bylaw proposal, accompanied by an impact statement from the Board of Administration, will be placed on the agenda of the next General Conference.

UFMCC CLERGY JUDICIARY PROCESS

(as of 1 January 2003)

The judicial process begins when charges are brought as defined in the Bylaws (Article IV, paragraph B.1.d.). A distinction is made between a “complaint” and “charges.”

A. THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The Board of Elders will appoint lay and clergy members of UFMCC to serve in an international judicial pool to service the entire Fellowship. These persons must be members in good standing of UFMCC. The term of office for the judicial pool shall be three (3) years. The UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management will provide training for the judicial pool.

Judiciary Committee members will be selected by the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management from among members of the international judicial pool.

B. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The clergy person, the complainant(s), the Moderator, the Regional Elder(s) of the complainants(s) and of the clergy person, and the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall be kept fully informed throughout the judiciary process.

If the investigation of a complaint does not result in charges against the clergy person, the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall provide a written summary of the investigation’s findings to the clergy person, the complainant(s), the Regional Elder(s) of the complainants(s) and of the clergy person.

If the investigation of a complaint does result in charges against the clergy person, the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall provide the following to the clergy person, the complainant(s), the Regional Elder(s) of the complainant(s) and of the clergy person:

1. A copy of the complaint.
2. A copy of the investigator’s report, including all documentation or other evidence submitted to the investigator, and determination of the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management.
3. A copy of the formal statement of charges.
4. Date and location of the hearing.
5. Names of personnel administering the process (investigator(s), Judiciary Committee members, and those hearing the appeal).
6. Decision of the Judiciary Committee and any penalty.
7. Outcome of the appeal.

C. COMPLAINTS

1. Any church official (including but not limited to Clergy, Lay Delegate, member of a local church administrative body, member of a fiduciary body, etc.) who receives a complaint of alleged misconduct by a UFMCC clergy person shall report the complaint to the Regional Elder or the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management within two (2) business days. When a complaint is reported to the Regional Elder, the Regional Elder shall notify the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management within two (2) business days.
2. The clergy person may be placed on inactive status by the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management and she/he shall cease to function as a clergy person until a final judgment is reached.
 - a. The clergy person charged must be placed on inactive status immediately if the allegations indicate the possibility of injury to persons or property.
 - b. The clergy person shall continue to receive all compensation, insurance, and other financial benefits until a final judgment is reached.

- c. Should secular criminal charges be laid against the clergy person, resulting in the judiciary process being delayed, the clergy person will be entitled to up to three (3) months compensation only, as determined by the employer.
 3. Upon receiving the complaint, the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management may choose to initiate a process of conflict intervention rather than conducting an investigation. The UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall specify the process for conflict intervention in writing and shall send written notification to all parties having access to information as specified in Section 2b above within three (3) business days following receipt of the complaint. Within three (3) business days of completion of the conflict intervention process, the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall determine whether (a) the matter has been satisfactorily resolved or (b) an investigation will be conducted in continuance of the judiciary process. All parties will be sent written notification. A summary of the outcome of the conflict intervention process shall be prepared by the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management and be placed in the clergy person's file and provided to all parties.
 4. If the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management determines that an investigation should be conducted, he/she shall, within three (3) business days of receiving a complaint or conclusion of a conflict intervention process, select an investigator from within the judicial pool to conduct a preliminary investigation.
 - a. The investigation will be conducted within a time period to be determined by the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management and may be extended, if necessary. All parties will be immediately sent written notification of the appointment of the investigator and the period of the investigation. This notification will include a copy of the written complaint.
 - b. If an appropriate person from the judicial pool is not available or if, in the judgment of the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management, particular skills and/or expertise are needed to appropriately conduct the preliminary investigation, such other person, with no vested interest in the proceedings, may be appointed. Members of the Board of Elders may not serve as the investigator in a judicial inquiry.
 - c. The investigator's report will be forwarded to the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management.
 - d. If the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management determines that the complaint is not substantiated, a record of the finding will be placed in the clergy person's file to identify possible patterns of misconduct.
 5. In the event the clergy person admits to the allegations in writing, the UFMCC staff person responsible for risk management will appoint a judiciary committee to convene a meeting with the clergy person to determine resolution of the matter. The meeting will occur within thirty (30) days following receipt of the clergy person's acknowledgement.

D. CHARGES

1. If the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management determines that the complaint has been substantiated, within two (2) business days of receiving the report of the investigator, she/he shall select three persons from the judicial pool to form the Judiciary Committee and provide them with a copy of the charges on behalf of the complainant and a complete record of her/his findings.
2. The clergy person charged and the affected church/agency will be immediately notified by the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management by sending them a copy of the charges.

E. THE HEARING

The Judiciary Committee will convene a hearing within 45 days from the date of receiving the charges. The UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management is not required to be present at the judiciary hearing. Further investigation may be conducted during this interval. Professional investigators may be used if deemed necessary by the Judiciary Committee and the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management. The hearing shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- 1 1. The location of the hearing shall be in the Region in which the charges are brought against a clergy
2 person or in another venue deemed more appropriate by the Judiciary Committee and the UFMCC
3 staff member responsible for risk management.
- 4 2. Both the complainant and the person being charged shall be permitted to have an advocate present at
5 the hearing. Advocates are not legal counsel but are present to provide support and may speak on
6 behalf of the person they represent.
- 7 3. Any audio, video, or written material that is to be considered at the hearing must be submitted to the
8 Judiciary Committee, the clergy person charged, the complainant, and the UFMCC staff member
9 responsible for risk management no later than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing.
- 10 4. Both parties may present and have an opportunity to question witnesses. Only first-hand information
11 is acceptable.
- 12 5. If the clergy person who has been charged with a violation of the Code of Conduct does not attend
13 the Judiciary hearing, the evidence shall be considered by the Judiciary Committee and a decision
14 rendered.
- 15 6. A complete and accurate record of the hearing, including a complete audio record of the
16 proceedings, shall be prepared by the Judiciary Committee and retained by the UFMCC staff member
17 responsible for risk management.
- 18 7. A copy of the Judiciary Committee's written decision shall be sent to the complainant and the clergy
19 person by certified mail within five (5) business days.
- 20 8. A unanimous decision is required in order to determine that the charges are valid.

21 **F. RESOLUTION**

22 Following a unanimous decision of the Judiciary Committee, the following actions shall be taken.

- 23 1. The UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall be informed of the Judiciary
24 Committee's decision. In the event that the charges have been substantiated, the Judiciary
25 Committee shall determine the resolution, which may include removal of credentials or other
26 measures, and shall inform the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management and the
27 Board of Elders. Any penalty shall be invoked immediately.
- 28 2. The UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management shall appropriately publicize the results
29 of the hearing. Upon conclusion of the hearing and appeals process, the administrative body of the
30 affected local church(es) or agency/agencies should be immediately provided with a brief written
31 statement approved by legal counsel which can be read only to members of the congregation(s) and
32 with a more detailed confidential summary of the decision pursuant to the provisions of the
33 confidentiality agreement which would be available only to the members of the local church's or
34 agency's administrative body.
- 35 3. Audio and written records of the hearing and all evidence will be retained by the UFMCC staff
36 member responsible for risk management and a copy of the charges and final decision will be placed
37 in the clergy person's file.
- 38 4. The Regional Elder(s) may recommend appropriate sources of pastoral care for the complainant(s),
39 the clergy person charged, and the impacted congregation(s) or agency/agencies.

40 **G. APPEAL PROCESS**

- 41 1. Either the complainant or the person charged may appeal the decision of the Judiciary Committee.
- 42 2. Appeals must be made to the UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management within seven
43 (7) business days from the date that the clergy person/complainant receives a copy of the final
44 decision.
- 45 3. Three impartial members of the judicial pool shall be selected by the UFMCC staff member
46 responsible for risk management to serve on the Appeals Panel. Their decision must be determined
47 within seven (7) business days. Except in the event that the judiciary process results in revocation of
48 clergy credentials, the judgment of the Appeals Panel shall be final.
- 49
- 50

- 1 4. In the event that the judiciary process results in revocation of clergy credentials, an automatic review
2 of the proceedings and appeals process will be conducted by the Board of Elders within seven (7)
3 business days. The determination of the Board of Elders is final.
- 4 5. Copies of the decision of the Appeal Panel and of any review by the Board of Elders will be sent
5 to the complainant and his/her Regional Elder, the person charged and his/her Regional Elder, the
6 UFMCC staff member responsible for risk management, and the Moderator. A copy shall also be
7 placed in the file of the person charged.
8

9 **H. COSTS OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS**

- 10 1. The costs of the judicial process shall be the responsibility of the UFMCC. However, the UFMCC
11 reserves the right to seek restitution for expenses should the charges be found frivolous or malicious.
- 12 2. The costs of bringing charges shall be borne by the complainant.
- 13 3. The costs for defense shall be the responsibility of the person against whom the charges were
14 brought.

15 If either party is financially unable to bear the costs of the process, a request for assistance may be made to
16 the Moderator, who will make a decision.
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UFMCC CORE VALUES

(As affirmed by General Conference XVIII, Sydney 1997)

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7 **1.** Based upon 1 Peter 2:5-10 (**Priesthood of All Believers**), UFMCC is committed to mutual collaboration
8 between laity and clergy in ministry.
9
- 10 **2.** Based upon Luke 15 (**Parables of the Lost Coin, Sheep and Child**), UFMCC recognizes the inherent
11 value and dignity of each person.
12
- 13 **3.** Based upon John 13:34-35 (**Love One Another**), UFMCC is committed to expressing love for one
14 another by encouraging each individual to develop high self-esteem, being a servant to one another, and
15 showing respect to each person.
16
- 17 **4.** Based upon Romans 1:16 (**Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**), UFMCC is committed to
18 boldness in proclamation and excellence in ministry.
19
- 20 **5.** Based upon Matthew 28:19-20 (**Go Into All the World**), UFMCC is passionately committed to reaching
21 all people with the Good News.
22
- 23 **6.** Based upon Hebrews 12:1-2 (**Run the Race**), UFMCC ministers with persistent and enduring faith.
24
- 25 **7.** Based upon Isaiah 56:7 (**House of Prayer for All People**), UFMCC ministry in every arena reflects a
26 commitment to justice and inclusivity, nondiscrimination, and equal access by and opportunity for all.
27
- 28 **8.** Based upon 1 Peter 4:10 (**Being Good Stewards**), UFMCC wisely utilizes the gifts God has given to us.
29
- 30 **9.** Based upon Genesis 1:27 (**Created in God's Image**), UFMCC is committed to each person's growth
31 toward wholeness in body, mind, and spirit, and full integration of spirituality and sexuality.
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CRITERIA FOR AFFILIATION OF LOCAL CHURCHES

(As approved by General Conference XX, Toronto 2001)

In order to gain recognition as a member congregation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the following criteria must be met:

1. Demonstration of willingness to ascribe to the UFMCC core values, vision, and mission.
2. Demonstration of willingness to embrace UFMCC Bylaws as a covenantal relationship.
3. Pastoral leadership that meets the standards established by the UFMCC Bylaws.
4. Sustain a sufficient average worship attendance to make the church viable in:
 - a. meeting all other criteria, and
 - b. Demonstrating a process of outreach and growth appropriate to the unique demographic and cultural context of the area where the church would be located, as determined by the Regional Elder.
5. Be able to compensate a pastor, consistent with equitable local standards.
6. Achieve incorporation/registration status, as applicable by national and/or local law.
7. Governance structure that assures accountability to the congregation and to the UFMCC Bylaws.
8. Submission of an annual report to UFMCC.
9. Submission of local church Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures to the UFMCC, following their approval by the Regional Elder.
10. Maintain minimum standards for risk management, as established by the Regional Elder.

“Within the UFMCC, all churches that meet the criteria, as established by the Board of Elders and approved by General Conference, qualify for affiliation and recognition as “church.” The Elder serving the Region has the authority to approve requests for affiliation. If a church ceases to meet the criteria for affiliation, the Elder serving the Region may take appropriate actions of intervention, which may include removal of the church’s affiliation status. The decision of the Regional Elder may be appealed to the Board of Elders.”

Quoted from UFMCC Bylaws, Article V.B.2