BYLAWS OF
THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

As revised at General Conference XXVII, Orlando, Florida, USA
Effective 02 July 2019

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 – SACRAMENTS AND RITES

A. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God’s service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God’s own Child.

2. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: This is my body...this is my blood. (Matthew 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God’s love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received
into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

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

1. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy or UFMCC Elders, pursuant to these Bylaws.

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

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 equitable access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, age, physical or cognitive ability, medical diagnosis, HIV status, health status, nationality, or economic status in terms of: (1) Employment and personnel procedures and (2) Service delivery -- so that MCC will pursue justice through all 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 a 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 Council of Elders.
   c. ORDINATION: Persons who have met the academic standards and qualifications as established by the Council of Elders may then be ordained. A person who is ordained cannot function as a UFMCC clergy person until such person is licensed.
   d. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty. Procedures for discipline shall be developed by the Governing Board. These procedures shall be included as an addendum to the UFMCC Bylaws.

ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND OFFICERS

A. GOVERNMENT:

1. The UFMCC acknowledges the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Holy Spirit in conscience and faith as its guide in faith, discipline, and government.

2. The government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation and its Bylaws, or documents of legal organization. The officials elected by the General Conference are subject to the direction and discipline of General Conference and are responsible to carry out its policies.

3. When the Moderator desires more flexibility with respect to Articles IV through IX of these Bylaws, the Moderator can apply to the Governing Board, which may grant that flexibility.

4. This Fellowship is accountable to no outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but accepts the obligation of mutual consent and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of other churches, and does pledge itself to share in their common aims and endeavors subject to the expressed approval of its membership.
5. Local Churches and the General Conference as defined by these Bylaws are set forth for the purposes of Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of their Bylaws, Procedures, and Policies.

6. A local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is that church which subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, and has been authorized by the same.

B. LOCAL CHURCHES:

1. EMERGING CHURCHES: Within the UFMCC, all worshipping and/or ministry bodies that seek to enter into the process of meeting the criteria for affiliation as established by the Council of Elders and approved by the Governing Board may apply to UFMCC for authorization as an “emerging church.” Emerging churches include parish extensions, new church starts, and existing churches that seek to affiliate with UFMCC.

   a. AUTHORIZATION: The Council of Elders shall establish procedures for authorization of emerging churches, procedures for authorization of the leader for each emerging church, and processes for supporting each emerging church until it achieves affiliation.

   b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The emerging church shall be subject to these Bylaws and to the approval or disapproval of actions by a designee of the Council of Elders. When such come to exist, the emerging church shall then also be subject to its local Articles of Incorporation, local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, and any other document of legal organization.

   c. CLOSURE: If an emerging church other than a parish extension disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of the church will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Governing Board will decide the disposition of said property.

2. AFFILIATED CHURCHES: Within the UFMCC, all churches that meet the criteria as established by the Council of Elders and approved by the Governing Board qualify for affiliation and recognition as an affiliated church. The Council of Elders has the authority to approve requests for affiliation. If an affiliated church ceases to meet the criteria for affiliation, a designee of the Council of Elders may take appropriate actions of intervention, which may include removal of the church’s affiliation status. The decision of the designee may be appealed to the Council of Elders.

   a. ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS: A local church shall have the authority to establish, authorize, and hold accountable special-purpose groups, ministries, and organizations.

   b. AFFILIATED CHURCH GOVERNANCE: The government of each affiliated church is vested in its Congregational Meeting which exerts the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, and the General Conference. The Pastor and the local church administrative body are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership in the affiliated church. The officials elected by the Congregational Meeting are subject to the direction and discipline of the affiliated church and are responsible to carry out the local church policies.
i. **STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS**: The affiliated church, in consultation with UFMCC, shall determine an appropriate structure and systems for local church governance that is appropriate for the size of church and cultural context. The local church structure and systems shall include provision for (1) selection and discipline of the local church administrative body, (2) a pastoral search process, and (3) congregational meetings. It is incumbent upon the local church administrative body of each local church to provide that church with a set of Bylaws or standard operating procedures, subject to approval by UFMCC.

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

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

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

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

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

Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s) and other personnel, uncompensated or compensated, shall be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the local church administrative body. The Pastor shall act as personnel director of the local church staff, shall have the authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as seems wise, and shall, with the approval of the local church administrative body, determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the staff.
ii. REMOVING THE PASTOR FROM OFFICE: When irreconcilable differences exist between the Pastor and congregation, the Pastor and congregation may choose to terminate their relationship through mutual agreement. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as contained within the UFMCC Bylaws Article. V.B.2.c.ii. Unilateral failure to renew a pastoral contract does not constitute removal of the Pastor from office.

The process of removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between Pastor and congregation may be initiated by a petition submitted to the duly authorized church officer as designated by the local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, or documents of legal organization, and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing; or by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors/local church administrative body. Within three (3) days, the Pastor and UFMCC must be sent a copy of the completed petition or motion of the local church administrative body by the designated church officer. After UFMCC and the designated local church officer have validated the number of members who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition or validated the votes of the members of the local church administrative body and the clarity of the motion, UFMCC may place the Pastor on inactive status, but the Pastor remains fully compensated until the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition, a representative of UFMCC and the local church administrative body will set the time and place of a special congregational meeting to determine whether the Pastor shall remain in office. The date of the meeting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the designated church officer or the date the motion of the local church administrative body is received by UFMCC.

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

d. LAY DELEGATE: Each affiliated church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100) members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) Lay Delegate for each vote. Each Lay Delegate shall carry one (1) vote. Each Lay Delegate shall be a member in good standing of the congregation that such person represents and shall serve a term of three (3) years. The duties of the Lay Delegate shall include, but not be limited to, representation of the congregation at General Conferences and to be informed of the UFMCC concerns and policies.
Each voting church may, in accordance with that local church's Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures, elect at least one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The Alternate Delegate(s) so elected shall, in accordance with procedures set forth in the local church Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures, be empowered to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representation of the congregation at General Conferences.

e. DISAFFILIATION: Disaffiliated congregations may not continue to use the name Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) or in any manner hold themselves out as being associated with UFMCC or as being an MCC church.

i. DISAFFILIATION BY AN AFFILIATED CHURCH: Should a local church desire to disaffiliate from the UFMCC, a representative or representatives appointed by the Moderator must be allowed to meet with the congregation and shall have voice at the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating. The decision to disaffiliate must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating.

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

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

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

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

vi. DISPOSITION OF ASSETS: After existing financial obligations to the UFMCC are met, the disaffiliating local church has the right to net assets.
vii. NOTIFICATION TO AFFECTED THIRD PARTIES: In the event that a congregation votes to disaffiliate, the UFMCC shall notify affected third parties that the disaffiliated congregation is no longer associated with the UFMCC and that the disaffiliated congregation may not hold itself out as being an MCC church. Affected third parties include, but are not limited to, banks, creditors, and government agencies that issued corporation/registration status to the disaffiliated church.

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

4. CHURCH PROPERTY: In every nation where UFMCC comes to exist and where permitted by local or national laws, the local church’s documents of legal organization must name the UFMCC as the successor not-for-profit corporation/non-governmental organization designated to receive the church’s property in the event of (1) the dissolution or abandonment of the church, or (2) failure to abide by the process for disaffiliation from the UFMCC by the local church as contained in the UFMCC Bylaws.

5. CLOSURE: When a church disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of the church will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Governing Board will decide the disposition of said property.

6. RESERVATION OF POWERS: Any specific matters of congregational approval not covered herein are left to local church option

C. ASSOCIATED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: When the mission of the UFMCC would be best served by a special-purpose organization being accountable to the denomination, the Governing Board shall have the authority to establish, authorize, and hold accountable such special-purpose organization. Individuals from associated non-governmental organizations may participate in all activities of UFMCC.

a. OFFICIAL OBSERVER: Each associated non-governmental organization may designate a representative to serve as an Official Observer at General Conference, with voice but no vote.

b. CLOSURE: When an associated organization disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of the associated organization will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Governing Board will decide the disposition of said property.

D. ALIGNED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: Aligned non-governmental organizations are those organizations that support the goals of UFMCC and that are aligned with the work of UFMCC yet do not seek to become an affiliated church or associated organization. Individuals from aligned non-governmental organizations may participate in all activities of UFMCC.
a. RECOGNITION: The Council of Elders shall establish the process for granting recognition to Aligned Organizations.

b. OFFICIAL OBSERVER: Each aligned organization may designate a representative to serve as an Official Observer at General Conference, with voice but no vote.

E. FELLOWSHIP:

1. INTRODUCTION: Internationally, the government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, or documents of legal organization. Between General Conferences, the Council of Elders is authorized to provide spiritual and pastoral leadership and the Governing Board is authorized to provide administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.

2. MODERATOR: The Moderator is elected by General Conference to serve as the primary visionary and futurist in order to advance the mission and vision of UFMCC worldwide through the exercise of prophetic challenge, creativity, spiritual and pastoral authority, and leadership. As the primary UFMCC spokesperson, an Elder, and the Chief Executive Officer, the Moderator is a voting member and moderates meetings of the Governing Board and of the Council of Elders; moderates General Conference; appoints Elders; and supervises UFMCC senior staff. The Moderator shall be responsible for leading the visioning process for the Fellowship, having a presence at global events, teaching and training, engaging in continuous learning, community relations, visitation and assistance in churches, ecumenical relations, and global social justice. The term of office of the Moderator shall be six (6) years.

a. MODERATOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Governing Board shall appoint a Moderator Nominating Committee of five (5) persons. The responsibility of the Moderator Nominating Committee is to actively solicit candidates for the position, review any and all applications, and select up to five (5) qualified candidates. The qualified candidates shall be presented by the Governing Board to the General Conference for election.

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

c. REMOVAL OF THE MODERATOR: If the Governing Board determines that the Moderator is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Governing Board may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Governing Board, remove the Moderator from the position. Such action shall be reported to the General Conference within five (5) business days. The Governing Board may elect someone who meets the qualifications to serve as Interim Moderator until the next General Conference, when an election shall be conducted to fill the vacancy.
d. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF MODERATOR: In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Governing Board shall elect an Interim Moderator to fill the vacancy until the next General Conference, when an election shall be held to fill the vacancy. The term of office of the Moderator elected by General Conference to fill the vacancy shall be six (6) years.

3. COUNCIL OF ELDERS: The Council of Elders of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the General Conference to serve in a pastoral role and direct the spiritual life of the Fellowship. This Council shall consist of a Moderator and Elders appointed by the Moderator, subject to approval by the Governing Board and affirmation by General Conference. All UFMCC Elders are deemed professional ministers and are authorized to perform all of the Rites and Sacraments of the church.

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Elders must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality and leadership who are mature, have sound judgment, have a proven record of accomplishment as lay or clergy members within the Fellowship, and have successful experience in envisioning and strategic planning for the future. Elders must be excellent communicators, skilled motivators and teachers, self-motivated and devoted to continuous learning. Further, Elders must be capable of understanding and working within sound fiscal guidelines, be sensitive to cultural differences, and be able and willing to embrace diversity. It is desirable that the Council of Elders reflect the diversity of the Fellowship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) REMOVAL:
   (a) REMOVAL OF AN ELDER:
      (i) The Moderator may remove an Elder at any time, with or without cause.
      (ii) If the Council of Elders determines that an Elder is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Council of Elders may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Council of Elders, recommend that the Moderator remove that Elder from the position.
      (iii) Such action shall be reported to the Governing Board.

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

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

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

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

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

   d. GOVERNING BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Governing Board shall appoint a Governing Board Nominating Committee of three (3) persons. The Moderator shall serve as
a consultant to the Governing Board Nominating Committee. The responsibility of the Governing Board Nominating Committee is to actively solicit candidates for the position, review any and all applications, and select qualified candidates. The qualified candidates shall be presented to the General Conference for election.

e. VACANCIES: In the event of a vacancy on the Governing Board among membership elected at a duly convened General Conference, the Governing Board may appoint someone who meets the qualifications to fill the vacancy until the next General Conference, when an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term. Appointments may only be utilized for filling vacancies up to 40% (3 members) of the total membership of the Governing Board. When the number of appointed Governing Board members exceeds 40% (3 persons) of the total membership of the Governing Board, a special General Conference shall be called for the purpose of electing members to the Governing Board. The process for selecting candidates for election shall conform to the process outlined in Article V.E.4.d. - GOVERNING BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

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

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

(2) Governing Board members may be removed by a Special General Conference.

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP IN UFMCC

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

B. MEMBERS OF UFMCC

1. Members in good standing of each emerging and affiliated local church shall be considered to be Members of UFMCC.
2. All clergy persons ordained by UFMCC shall be considered to be Members of UFMCC.
3. All Members of UFMCC may serve on appointed committees, hold elected office, and participate in all activities of UFMCC.
C. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: A local church body may, if it desires, accept into the Church person(s) who, for one reason or another, feel that they cannot become regular members of the Church but who support the goals of the Church and want to be part of the work of the church. Such people shall be designated as “Friends of the Church.” Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the local church administrative body and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates that a local church body may send to meetings of the General Conference.

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

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH SERVICES

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

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH MEETINGS

A. GENERAL CONFERENCE: For the purpose of the transaction of business, the UFMCC will hold a General Conference every third year, commencing 2007.

1. TIME, PLACE, AND NATURE: The time and place of the General Conference will be announced at the previous General Conference. Notice of the time, place, and nature of the General Conference must be given in writing to all church bodies ninety (90) days prior to the upcoming General Conference.

a. NATURE: The Governing Board is authorized to determine the means by which members of the Lay House and of the Clergy House may participate virtually in a General Conference.

2. COMPOSITION: The General Conference of the UFMCC is that body consisting of a Clergy House and a Lay House.

a. CLERGY HOUSE: Members of the Clergy House are ordained clergy with a License to Practice and honorably retired clergy.

b. LAY HOUSE: Members of the Lay House are Lay Delegates; the Interim Pastoral Leader of each affiliated church when that Interim Pastoral Leader is a member of UFMCC; and the members of the Council of Elders and of the Governing Board who are not clergy or Lay Delegates and are members of UFMCC.
3. VOTING IN SEPARATE HOUSES: The transaction of all business except procedural matters must be approved by a separate majority vote of the votes carried by the Lay House and a separate majority vote of the votes carried by the Clergy House.

4. QUORUM: A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the number of lay people eligible to vote at General Conference and twenty percent (20%) of the number of licensed credentialed clergy eligible to vote at General Conference.

5. SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE: A special General Conference of the UFMCC can be called by the Governing Board or by a petition submitted to the Governing Board by fifty percent (50%) of all those persons eligible to vote at General Conference. Initiation of this petition may be by either clergy or laity. A special General Conference shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the General Conference except when the purpose of the special General Conference is to consider affirmation of the appointment of an Elder. When the purpose of a special General Conference is to affirm the appointment of an Elder, notice of the time, place, and nature of the special General Conference must be given in writing to all members of the Lay House and of the Clergy House at least thirty (30) days in advance of the special General Conference.

   a. PURPOSE: The purpose of a special General Conference must be stated in the petition. The nature and purpose of a special General Conference must be stated in the notices and written into the agenda of the special General Conference.

   b. NOTICE: The written notice must be sent to all credentialed clergy and to all voting church bodies at least thirty (30) days prior to the special General Conference.

B. LOCAL: Each local church shall establish the percentage of members required for the transaction of business, the process for notifying members of the meeting, and the process for calling special meetings, unless otherwise indicated in UFMCC Bylaws.

C. PROXY VOTING: No proxy and/or absentee ballots shall be allowed in any business meeting of this Fellowship, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX – CHURCH FINANCES

A. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed means of supporting the church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the clergy and the lay leadership of emerging and affiliated church to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the church’s ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship in the local church and at conferences sponsored by UFMCC.
B. REPORTING: Each emerging church and affiliated church shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC and with that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported, as determined by General Conference.

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

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

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

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

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

3. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone conduct which is, in its sole discretion, disloyal or 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.