

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE PALM BEACHES

BYLAWS

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be Metropolitan Community Church of the Palm Beaches, also known as MCCPB.

Article II – Affiliation

This church is a member congregation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC); ascribes to the government, doctrine, vision, mission, and values of UFMCC; and agrees to abide by the UFMCC Bylaws and decisions made by General Conference.

A. Successor Corporation - The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is the not-for-profit organization designated to receive the church's property in the event of dissolution or abandonment of the church or disaffiliation from the UFMCC, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

B. Disaffiliation – A decision to disaffiliate from the UFMCC shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating and shall be decided in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

Article III – Purpose

The purpose of this church is Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of UFMCC and local church Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.

Article IV – Membership

A. Criteria for Membership – Any baptized Christian who has completed a membership class may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership. A Member in good standing is a Member who registers his/her attendance, provides identifiable financial support, makes a definite service contribution, and demonstrates interest and loyalty.

1. Membership List – The list of Members in good standing shall be maintained by Clerk, who shall report changes quarterly to the Board of Directors.
2. Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list at least once annually.
 - a. A Member, who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year, may be removed from the list of Members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive Members.
 - b. The Clerk of the Board of Directors shall notify this Member in writing that the Member has been placed on a list of inactive Members and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.
 - c. The inactive Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing by a majority vote of the Board of Directors without a public reception into membership.

B. Discipline of Members – The church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any Member. The Board of Directors is empowered to remove by majority vote any Member or take other appropriate disciplinary action.

1. Right to Appeal – The action of the Board may be appealed to the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal of discipline, the disciplined Member shall remain under discipline and shall retain the right to vote at regular and Special Congregational Meetings, including the Congregational Meeting held to consider the appeal.
 - a. Appeal Process - The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the date of notification of the action of the Board of Directors.
 - b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
 - c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the disciplined Member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of considering the appeal.

C. Resignation of Membership – Should a member, of their own volition withdraw from membership of the church, a fourteen (14) day grace period will be observed before the request is implemented.

D. Re-instatement of Former Members – Former members wishing to rejoin the church shall meet the following criteria before petitioning the Board of Directors.

1. Prove their commitment through regular attendance and financial support for a minimum of three months.
2. Have the recommendation of the pastor/pastoral leader.
3. Attend membership classes if they have been away from MCC of the Palm Beaches for more than three years.

E. On completion of the above, the Board of Directors is empowered to re-instate a former member by a majority vote.

Article V – Congregational Meetings

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

A. Time and Place – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the month of November. The time and place of the annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

B. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance. This notification may be hand delivered at church, or mailed, or sent electronically.

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

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

E. **Quorum** – In order to transact business, no less than twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing must be present.

F. **Agenda** – The agenda for Congregational Meetings shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, adoption of budget, and receiving reports from the Pastor, Board of Directors and Lay Delegate(s).

G. **Elections** – All votes for positions shall be taken by secret ballot. Votes of affirmation from the floor are not permitted. Vote tallies for elected positions shall be announced by the Moderator or the Vice-Moderator.

H. **Special Congregational Meetings** – In addition to the annual Congregational Meeting, special Congregational Meetings may also be held. Special Congregational Meetings are governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the Annual Congregational Meeting.

1. **Calling a Special Congregational Meeting** – A special Congregational Meeting may be called either by a (a) majority vote of the Board, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members and submitted to the Clerk. Signatures shall not be solicited in the church building. Only original signatures of members in good standing are valid.
2. The nature and purpose of the special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and in notices and written into the agenda.

Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body

A. **Name** – The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Directors, which is authorized to provide administrative leadership for MCCPB, subject to approval of the Congregational Meeting.

B. **Responsibilities** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of Bylaws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and UFMCC and for submitting the approved Bylaws to UFMCC. The Board of Directors shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation, church property, risk management, and physical and financial affairs of the church. The Board of Directors shall also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC.

C. **Qualifications** – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of MCCPB for a period of one (1) year and have experience in the areas of financial planning, administration, and policy development.

1. **Conflict of Interest** – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship; church employees; Deacons, Staff Clergy, or Clergy Candidates shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.

D. **Composition** – There shall be seven (7) members, including the Pastor who shall serve as Moderator.

E. **Term of Office** – The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall be two-year staggered terms, with half being elected at each annual Congregational Meeting. The two-year term of

office commences immediately upon election and terminates at the annual Congregational Meeting two years later.

1. Staggered Terms – In order to assure staggered terms of office, the persons receiving the most votes will fill the available two-year terms and the remaining candidates will fill the remaining year of the two-year terms. In the event of any tie votes, a coin toss will determine the outcome.
2. Members of the Board of Directors may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Once a member of the Board of Directors completes two (2) consecutive terms, they are not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors until the occurrence of the second annual Congregational Meeting after the end of their final term.

F. Meetings – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend as Observers without voice or vote. Congregants having business with the Board of Directors, which has been submitted to the Board one week prior to the meeting and approved as an agenda item, will be given voice at the meeting to discuss that specific agenda item for the allotted amount of time.

1. Minutes – Minutes and financial reports shall be available to Members of the church following their approval by the Board of Directors. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions made. A copy of the minutes shall become part of the permanent church records.
2. In the event of an emergency and/or the need to act prior to the next scheduled Board of Director's meeting, the Moderator, or in his/her/their absence, any elected officer of the Board may convene a specially called meeting to address that specific issue. All procedure and policy will be followed as if it were a regular schedule meeting. If an in-person meeting is not practical, and time is of essence, the meeting may be held via telecommunications or virtual media.

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

H. Officers – The officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer.

1. Election of Officers – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of Directors shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer. The term of office for officers, except for Moderator, shall be one (1) year.
 - a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.
 - b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Pastor.
 - c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of official correspondence and church records, and for ensuring that accurate records are kept of all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Congregation. The Clerk is the officer authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Directors.
 - d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the preparation and maintenance of all financial records. This shall include a monthly financial report to the Board and an annual financial report to the Congregation. The monthly and annual financial reports shall reflect receipts,

disbursements, and outstanding financial obligations.

2. The officers of the church shall not serve in any other elected position within the church.

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

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

1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Board of Directors may appeal the action to the congregation at its next regular Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting which may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Until the Congregational Meeting to consider the appeal, the position held by the disciplined member of the Board of Directors shall be considered vacant.
 - a. Appeal Process – The request for an appeal shall be submitted by the disciplined Board member to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within (30) days following the date of notification of the actions of the Board of Directors.
 - b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
 - c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the disciplined Board member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of considering the appeal.

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

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

M. Emergency Authorities: In the event of a declared emergency, such as, but not limited to, Acts of God, man-made or natural disasters, war, riots or civil disturbances that may put the safety and well-being of the membership at risk, the Pastor, or in his/her/their unavailability, any elected officer of the Board of Directors, and with the concurrence of the Board of Directors, shall be authorized to suspend all worship services, meetings, programs and activities until it is deemed safe to resume such activities or an alternate means can be established.

1. Board Meetings: During such periods of emergency the Board of Directors shall continue to exercise their fiduciary responsibilities as out lined in Paragraph B above. If in-person meetings are not feasible, the Board may conduct its business via telecommunications or virtual media. Should it become impossible to continue operations, the surviving Directors shall inform UFMCC of its situation.
2. Retention of the Board: Should the term of service for either an elected or appointed member of the Board mature during such a period, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to extend that member's term of service for up to one year or until the next congregational meeting, whichever comes first. If that member is not term limited, they may candidate for reelection to the Board without regard to the emergency extension.
3. Retention of Lay Delegate: Should the term of service expire for either the Lay Delegate or the Alternate Delegate during the period of declared emergency, the Board of Directors shall be authorized to extend the delegate's term of service for up to an additional one year term or until the next congregation meeting, whichever comes first, at which time the delegate may candidate for reelection

Article VII – Pastor

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

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

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

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

1. Conference Expenses – The congregation shall fund the Pastor's transportation, housing, registration and per diem at General and other Conferences.

D. Pastoral Vacancy – In the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be responsible for presenting a qualified candidate for election at a Congregational Meeting. The Pastoral Search

Committee shall develop and implement the pastoral search process, in consultation with UFMCC.

1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members, including the three (3) members of the Board of Directors and four (4) additional members elected at a Congregational Meeting.
2. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee must receive more than seventy percent (70%) of the votes cast.

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

Article VIII – Conflict Resolution

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

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

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

congregation. **Article IX – Lay Delegate**

The church shall elect one (1) lay person for every one hundred (100) Members in good standing, or part thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate.

A. Election – The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each General Conference or as needed.

B. Term of Office - The term of office of Lay Delegate shall be three (3) years.

C. Qualifications – Lay Delegates must be Members in good standing of MCCPB for at least one (1) year and have experience in the areas of parliamentary procedures, thorough knowledge of UFMCC and MCCPB polity and the ability to travel to all scheduled General Conferences.

D. Duties – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General Conferences and to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies.

E. Funding - The congregation shall fund the Lay Delegate's transportation, housing, registration and per diem at General Conferences.

F. Discipline – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Lay Delegate. Therefore, the Board of Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any Lay Delegate guilty of the above. A petition presented to the Board of Directors and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

1. Appeal of Discipline – A disciplined Lay Delegate may appeal the action to the congregation at its next regular Congregational Meeting or at a special Congregational Meeting which may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Until the Congregational Meeting to consider the appeal, the position held by the disciplined Lay Delegate shall be filled by an interim Lay Delegate, appointed by the Board of Directors.

G. Vacancy - In the event of a vacancy in the Lay Delegation, the Board of Directors shall appoint a qualified Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting, when an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.

Article X – Church Finances

A. Authorized Signatures – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which shall be that of a church officer; all members of the Board of Directors and designated staff members shall have signature authority, as determined by the Board of Directors.

B. Limit on Expenditures – The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget, any expenditure greater than that amount requires congregational approval.

C. Fiscal Year – The fiscal year of the church shall be from January first through December thirty-first.

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

1. Budget Year – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January first through December thirty-first.

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

F. Tithes – The Board of Directors shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC, and with that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported. The percentage of funds to be remitted shall be determined by General Conference. This church commits itself to tithing as the standard of giving within this

congregation and that our tithes to the UFMCC will be the first priority of all our monthly expenses.

Article XI – Adoption and Amendments

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

B. Amendments – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Congregational Meeting the proposal is to be considered. Adoption of the amendment or the repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote and is subject to approval by UFMCC. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.

As updated by vote of the congregational meeting in November, 2023.