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We believe:

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

B. 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.

C. 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.

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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. **ORDINATION:** Persons who have met the academic standards and qualifications as established by the Board of Elders may then be ordained. A person who is ordained cannot function as a UFMCC clergy person until he/she is licensed.

- 148 d. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of  
149 duty. Procedures for discipline shall be developed by the Board of Elders. These procedures  
150 shall be included as an addendum to the UFMCC Bylaws.  
151

## 152 ARTICLE V – GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND OFFICERS

### 153 A. GOVERNMENT:

- 154 1. The UFMCC acknowledges the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Holy Spirit in conscience and  
155 faith as its guide in faith, discipline, and government.  
156  
157 2. The government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference and its Regional Conferences,  
158 subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation and its Bylaws, or documents of  
159 legal organization. The officials elected by the General and Regional Conferences are subject to the  
160 direction and discipline of General Conference and are responsible to carry out its policies.  
161  
162 3. When an Elder elected by a Region desires more flexibility with respect to Articles IV through IX of  
163 these Bylaws, the Elder can apply to the Board of Elders which may grant that flexibility.  
164  
165 4. This Fellowship is accountable to no outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but accepts the obligation of  
166 mutual consent and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of other churches, and does pledge  
167 itself to share in their common aims and endeavors subject to the expressed approval of its  
168 membership.  
169  
170 5. Local Churches, Regions, Regional Conferences, and the General Conference/World Jubilee as  
171 defined by these Bylaws, are set forth for the purposes of Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and  
172 service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of their Bylaws,  
173 Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.  
174  
175 6. A local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is that church  
176 which subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, and has been authorized by the  
177 same.  
178

### 179 B. LOCAL CHURCHES:

- 180 1. INTRODUCTION: The government of each local church is vested in its Congregational Meeting  
181 which exerts the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of  
182 Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, and the General Conference. The Pastor  
183 and the local church administrative body are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative  
184 leadership in the local church. The officials elected by the Congregational Meeting are subject to the  
185 direction and discipline of the local church and are responsible to carry out the local church policies.  
186  
187 2. AFFILIATION: Within the UFMCC, all churches that meet the criteria as established by the Board  
188 of Elders and approved by General Conference qualify for affiliation and recognition as “church.”  
189 The Elder elected by the Region has the authority to approve requests for affiliation. If a church  
190 ceases to meet the criteria for affiliation, the Elder elected by the Region may take appropriate  
191 actions of intervention, which may include removal of the church’s affiliation status. The decision of  
192 the Elder may be appealed to the Board of Elders.  
193  
194 3. PARA-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS: A local church or Region shall have the authority to  
195 establish, authorize, and hold accountable para-church organizations (special-purpose groups or  
196 ministries). When the mission of the UFMCC would be best served by a para-church organization  
197

198 being accountable to the denomination, the Board of Elders shall have the authority to establish,  
199 authorize, and hold accountable the para-church organization(s).  
200

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

- 206 a. QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES: Pastors must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC. The  
207 Pastor of the church shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the church. The  
208 Pastor is a voting member of the local church administrative body.  
209

210 Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s) and other personnel, uncompensated or compensated, shall  
211 be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the local church administrative body. The  
212 Pastor shall act as personnel director of the local church staff, shall have the authority to delegate  
213 such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the local church  
214 administrative body, determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the staff.  
215

- 216 b. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: When there are conflicts or difficulty within a local church,  
217 including apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and congregation, the Elder  
218 elected by the Region shall have the authority to interface with that church, to take appropriate  
219 measures, to provide resources and support, and to attend and have voice at any meeting of the  
220 local church administrative body or Congregational Meeting. The Elder elected by the Region  
221 shall be required to intervene when invited (1) by the Pastor/Interim Pastoral Leader, (2) by  
222 majority vote of the local church administrative body, or (3) as a result of a petition signed by a  
223 minimum of one-third (33%) of the members of the church.  
224

225 Within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the request for intervention, the Elder elected by the  
226 Region must officially notify all parties mentioned above. Within ten (10) days of the request,  
227 the Elder elected by the Region or the person appointed by the Elder elected by the Region will  
228 establish the time-lines and process for the Ministry of Reconciliation, which must be  
229 implemented within thirty (30) days of the initial request.  
230

- 231 c. REMOVING THE PASTOR FROM OFFICE: When irreconcilable differences exist between  
232 the Pastor and congregation, the Pastor and congregation may choose to terminate their  
233 relationship through mutual agreement. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on  
234 irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as  
235 contained within the UFMCC Bylaws Article V.B.4.b. Unilateral failure to renew a pastoral  
236 contract does not constitute removal of the Pastor from office.  
237

238 The process of removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction  
239 of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between Pastor and congregation may be  
240 initiated by a petition submitted to the duly authorized church officer as designated by the local  
241 Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, or documents of legal organization, and signed by at  
242 least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing; or by a vote of three-fourths  
243 (3/4) of the full Board of Directors /local church administrative body. Within three (3) days, the  
244 Pastor and the Elder elected by the Region must be sent a copy of the completed petition or  
245 motion of the local church administrative body by the designated church officer. After the Elder  
246 elected by the Region and designated local church officer have validated the number of members  
247 who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition or validated the votes of the members

248 of the local church administrative body and the clarity of the motion, the Elder elected by the  
249 Region may place the Pastor on inactive status, but the Pastor remains fully compensated until  
250 the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition, the Elder elected by the Region  
251 and the local church administrative body will set the time and place of a special congregational  
252 meeting to determine whether the Pastor shall remain in office. The date of the meeting shall  
253 occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the designated church officer  
254 or the date the motion of the local church administrative body is received by the Elder elected by  
255 the Region.

256  
257 The Pastor has the right to appear on his/her own behalf before the congregational meeting and  
258 may have an advocate of his/her own choice present. The action of the congregation is final. If a  
259 special meeting is called to remove a Pastor, the Elder elected by the Region must be given  
260 notice that such action is being taken. The Elder elected by the Region shall attend or send a  
261 representative as an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the Pastor is removed,  
262 the local church administrative body will meet immediately after the meeting with the Elder  
263 elected by the Region or the representative to arrange for pastoral leadership until the pulpit is  
264 filled. The local church administrative body may confer with the Elder elected by the Region as  
265 to available candidates for the office of Pastor.

266  
267 5. LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE

268 a. The local church, in consultation with the Elder elected by the Region, shall determine an  
269 appropriate structure and systems for local church governance that is appropriate for the size of  
270 church and cultural context. The local church structure and systems shall include provision for  
271 (1) selection and discipline of the local church administrative body, (2) a pastoral search process,  
272 and (3) congregational meetings. It is incumbent upon the local church administrative body of  
273 each local church to provide that church with a set of Bylaws or standard operating procedures,  
274 subject to approval by the Elder elected by the Region.

275  
276 b. ACCOUNTABILITY: The local church administrative body shall be subject to these Bylaws,  
277 local Articles of Incorporation, local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, any other  
278 documents of legal organization, and to the approval or disapproval by action of their local  
279 congregation as provided for in any of the above.

280  
281 6. LAY DELEGATE: Each affiliated church shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100)  
282 members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) Lay Delegate for each vote.  
283 Each Lay Delegate shall carry one (1) vote. Each Lay Delegate shall be a member in good standing of  
284 the congregation that he/she represents, should be elected at the first congregational meeting  
285 following each General Conference and shall serve a term of three (3) years. The duties of the Lay  
286 Delegate shall include, but not be limited to, representation of the congregation at General and  
287 Regional Conferences and to be informed of the UFMCC concerns and policies.

288  
289 Each voting church may, in accordance with that local church's Bylaws or Standard Operating  
290 Procedures, elect at least one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The Alternate  
291 Delegate(s) so elected shall, in accordance with procedures set forth in the local church Bylaws or  
292 Standard Operating Procedures, be empowered to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is  
293 unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representation  
294 of the congregation at General and Regional Conferences.

295  
296 7. DISCIPLINE OF CHURCHES: If any affiliated church shall fail to abide by the Articles of  
297 Incorporation of the UFMCC, these Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, the Board of Elders

298 shall take appropriate action to require compliance. The Board of Elders shall report any such action  
299 to the church involved. The action will also be reported to the next General Conference.  
300

- 301 8. CHURCH PROPERTY: The local church administrative body will name the fiduciary body for any  
302 property acquired by that church. The local church administrative body and the members of each  
303 local congregation will have sole control of said property except under the following circumstances:  
304 (1) if the property is abandoned; (2) if the local church is disbanded; or (3) if the local church  
305 disaffiliates from UFMCC.  
306

307 In every nation where UFMCC comes to exist and where permitted by local or national laws, the  
308 local church's documents of legal organization must name the UFMCC as the successor 501(c)(3)  
309 corporation designated to receive the church's property in the event of (1) the dissolution or  
310 abandonment of the church, or (2) failure to abide by the process for disaffiliation from the UFMCC  
311 by the local church as contained in the UFMCC Bylaws.  
312

- 313 9. DISAFFILIATION: Disaffiliated congregations may not continue to use the name Metropolitan  
314 Community Church (MCC) or in any manner hold themselves out as being associated with UFMCC  
315 or as being an MCC church. .  
316

317 a. DISAFFILIATION BY A LOCAL CHURCH: Should a local church desire to disaffiliate from  
318 the UFMCC, a representative or representatives appointed by the Board of Elders must be  
319 allowed to meet with the congregation and shall have voice at the Congregational Meeting called  
320 for the purpose of disaffiliating. The decision to disaffiliate must receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote  
321 of the Members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of  
322 disaffiliating.  
323

324 (1) NOTIFICATION TO UFMCC: At least sixty (60) calendar days prior to a Congregational  
325 Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating, the local church shall notify the Elder elected  
326 by the Region in writing that such a Congregational Meeting will be held. The written  
327 notification to the Elder elected by the Region shall include (a) the date, time, and place of  
328 the Congregational Meeting; and (b) a copy of the local church membership list. Except in  
329 the event of the death or resignation of a listed Member, no Members may thereafter be  
330 removed from membership in the local church and no Members may be added to the  
331 membership in the local church until after the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose  
332 of disaffiliating.  
333

334 (2) NOTIFICATION TO MEMBERS: At least thirty (30) calendar days prior to a  
335 Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating, all Members of the local  
336 church must be notified in writing at their last known address on the membership list of the  
337 date, time, place, and purpose of the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of  
338 disaffiliating. A copy of the notification to members shall be simultaneously submitted to  
339 the Elder elected by the Region.  
340

341 (3) VOTING PROCESS: Voting at the Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of  
342 disaffiliating shall be done by secret ballot.  
343

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

- 348 (5) DISPOSITION OF ASSETS: After existing financial obligations to the UFMCC are met,  
349 the disaffiliating local church has the right to net assets.  
350
- 351 (6) NOTIFICATION TO AFFECTED THIRD PARTIES: In the event that a congregation  
352 votes to disaffiliate, the UFMCC shall notify affected third parties that the disaffiliated  
353 congregation is no longer associated with the UFMCC and that the disaffiliated congregation  
354 may not hold itself out as being an MCC church. Affected third parties include, but are not  
355 limited to, banks, creditors, and government agencies that issued corporation/registration  
356 status to the disaffiliated church.
- 357
- 358 10. CLOSURE: When a church disbands or ceases to operate, the net assets of the church will revert to  
359 the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The Board of Administration will decide the  
360 disposition of said property.  
361
- 362 11. RESERVATION OF POWERS: Any specific matters of congregational approval not covered herein  
363 are left to local church option.  
364
- 365 C. REGIONS: Regions are those defined bodies which are created by the Board of Elders in accordance  
366 with these Bylaws. Regions are called into existence to enable and empower Christian ministry within  
367 their jurisdiction through their member congregations and bodies and to support church leaders through  
368 leadership development efforts, networking opportunities, celebration of common values, building shared  
369 vision, and creating unity in mission.  
370
- 371 1. CRITERIA: The following are criteria for establishing Regional boundaries.  
372 a. The boundaries of each Region must take into account the needs of the whole Fellowship  
373 throughout the world.  
374 b. Each Region should have a balance of strengths (e.g., personnel, resources, etc.) and challenges.  
375 There should be ample opportunity in each Region for significant growth to occur in terms of  
376 numbers, strength, and health of churches.  
377 c. Consideration shall be given to “common sense coherence,” geographically, culturally, and  
378 historically.  
379 d. Each Region should be intentionally diverse and have cross-cultural and often international  
380 challenges.  
381
- 382 2. GEOGRAPHIC REVIEW BOARD: The Geographic Review Board will be comprised of three  
383 members appointed by the Board of Elders.  
384
- 385 3. CHANGES TO REGIONAL BOUNDARIES: The Board of Elders shall review Regional  
386 boundaries every six (6) years. The following process shall be followed to affect any change in  
387 Regional boundaries:  
388 a. Requests for Regional boundary changes may be initiated by a Region, two or more Regions, the  
389 Board of Administration, or the Board of Elders at any time.  
390 b. The Geographic Review Board will facilitate and service the process regarding any Regional  
391 boundary change.  
392 c. The Geographic Review Board may recommend to the Board of Elders additional criteria by  
393 which Regional boundaries are set and criteria by which Regional boundaries are re-evaluated.  
394 d. The Geographic Review Board shall facilitate a process to receive input from and consultation  
395 with churches and Regions affected by any proposed boundary change and shall request a report  
396 from the Board of Administration on the impact of any proposed boundary change.

- 397 e. Recommendations of the Geographic Review Board for changes in Regional boundaries will be  
398 submitted to the Board of Elders and Board of Administration for joint approval without  
399 amendment.  
400

401 D. FELLOWSHIP:

402 1. INTRODUCTION: Internationally, the government of the UFMCC is vested in the General  
403 Conference, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, or  
404 documents of legal organization. Between General Conferences, the Board of Elders is authorized  
405 to provide spiritual and pastoral leadership and to appoint a Board of Administration to provide  
406 administrative leadership on the international Fellowship level.  
407

408 2. BOARD OF ELDERS: The Board of Elders of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the  
409 General Conference to serve in a pastoral role and direct the spiritual life of the Fellowship.  
410 This Board shall consist of a Moderator and one Elder elected by each Region. All UFMCC  
411 Elders are deemed professional ministers and are authorized to perform all of the Rites and  
412 Sacraments of the church.  
413

414 a. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Board of Elders shall be six (6)  
415 years. The term of office of newly-elected members of the Board of Elders shall begin sixty (60)  
416 days following being elected and qualified. A member of the Board of Elders shall remain in  
417 office until either sixty (60) days following the date that his or her successor is duly elected and  
418 qualified or until such time as the member resigns or is removed from office. For the purpose of  
419 transition, the term of office of the Moderator elected in 2005 shall expire in 2010.  
420

421 b. QUALIFICATIONS: Elders must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality and  
422 leadership who are mature, have sound judgment, have a proven record of accomplishment as  
423 lay or clergy members within the Fellowship, and have successful experience in envisioning and  
424 strategic planning for the future. Elders must be excellent communicators, skilled motivators  
425 and teachers, self-motivated and devoted to continuous learning. Further, Elders must be  
426 capable of understanding and working within sound fiscal guidelines, be sensitive to cultural  
427 differences, and be able and willing to embrace diversity. It is desirable that the Regions and  
428 General Conference elect members of the Board of Elders so that this Board is representative of  
429 the diversity of the Fellowship.  
430

431 c. ELDERS NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The Board of Elders shall appoint an Elders  
432 Nominating Committee of five (5) persons, including a human resources expert, a  
433 psychologist/therapist, someone with cross-cultural experience, and an experienced pastor.  
434 Incumbent Elders are not eligible to serve on the Elders Nominating Committee. The  
435 responsibility of the Elders Nominating Committee is to actively solicit candidates for each  
436 vacant position, review any and all applications, and select qualified candidates to the Regional or  
437 General Conferences, as appropriate. Individuals and/or Regions shall have the right to submit  
438 names to the Elders Nominating Committee.  
439

440 (1) TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Elders Nominating  
441 Committee shall be three (3) years.  
442

443 (2) NOMINATION PROCESS FOR MODERATOR: The Elders Nominating Committee  
444 shall review any and all candidates and shall then present to each Regional Conference the  
445 list of qualified candidates for nomination. At the Regional Conference in the year  
446 preceding the General Conference when election is to be held, each Regional Conference

447 shall vote on the list of qualified candidates in order to select up to two (2) names to be  
448 nominated by the Region. To qualify as a nominee, a candidate must be selected by at least  
449 two (2) Regions.  
450

451 The Elders Nominating Committee will then present to the General Conference qualified  
452 nominees for the purpose of election by General Conference. Nominations from the floor  
453 of General Conference will not be accepted.  
454

- 455 (3) **NOMINATION PROCESS FOR ELDERS ELECTED BY REGIONS:** The Elders  
456 Nominating Committee shall actively solicit candidates for Elder to be elected by the  
457 Region. Individuals shall have the right to submit names to the Elders Nominating  
458 Committee for consideration. In reviewing the applications, the Elders Nominating  
459 Committee shall consider the needs of the whole Fellowship and the particular needs,  
460 opportunities, and challenges within the specific geographic area. Each Region shall elect  
461 three (3) persons to serve as the Regional Nominating Facilitating Committee, which shall  
462 work cooperatively with the Elders Nominating Committee to facilitate the regional  
463 consultation and election processes.  
464

465 The Elders Nominating Committee shall review any and all candidates and then present one  
466 (1) nominee to the Regional Conference for election. If the Regional Conference fails to  
467 elect the nominee, the Elders Nominating Committee may present another nominee to the  
468 Regional Conference for election. If the Regional Conference is unable to achieve election,  
469 the Board of Elders shall appoint someone to serve until the next Regional Conference.  
470

- 471 (4) **VACANCIES:** In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Elders may appoint someone who  
472 meets the qualifications to fill the vacancy until the next General or Regional Conference, as  
473 appropriate, when an election shall be conducted to fill the vacancy.  
474

475 (a) **MODERATOR:** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Board of  
476 Elders shall elect an Interim Moderator. The Interim Moderator shall serve as Interim  
477 Moderator until the next General Conference, when an election shall be held to fill the  
478 vacancy in the office of Moderator. The term of office of the Moderator elected to fill  
479 the vacancy shall be the unexpired term. The Interim Moderator shall not be eligible to  
480 apply for the position of Moderator.  
481

482 (i) Within forty-five (45) days of the vacancy, the Elders Nominating Committee shall  
483 seek candidates for the position of Moderator for nomination by the next regular or  
484 special Regional Conferences called for the purpose of selecting nominees. The  
485 selected nominees shall be presented for election to the next regular or special  
486 General Conference called for the purpose of electing a Moderator.  
487

488 (ii) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator that occurs within twelve (12)  
489 months of a General Conference, the Interim Moderator shall serve until the  
490 General Conference. Should a vacancy in the office of Moderator occur more than  
491 twelve (12) months before a General Conference, within six (6) months of the  
492 vacancy the Board of Elders shall call a special General Conference for the purpose  
493 of electing a Moderator.  
494

495 (b) **VICE-MODERATOR:** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice-Moderator, the  
496 Moderator may appoint another member of the Board of Elders to fill the vacancy. The

497 term of office of the Vice-Moderator appointed to fill the vacancy shall be determined  
498 by the Moderator.  
499

500 (c) ELDER ELECTED BY A REGION: In the event of a vacancy in the office of an  
501 Elder elected by a Region, the term of office of the Elders elected to fill the vacancy  
502 shall be six (6) years. A person who has been appointed to fill a vacancy shall be allowed  
503 to submit an application for election to the position. The person who has been  
504 appointed to fill a vacancy shall not be required to take residency within the Region.  
505

506 d. DUTIES: The primary responsibility of the Board of Elders shall be to give pastoral leadership  
507 and care to enable the Fellowship in our spiritual journey. The Board of Elders shall exercise  
508 spiritual and pastoral authority to build a shared vision for the UFMCC, prepare UFMCC for the  
509 future, and set UFMCC's strategic direction. The Elders serve as official representatives of the  
510 Fellowship in the areas of public and community relations. It is the responsibility of the Board of  
511 Elders, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws, to make appointments to the  
512 various Fellowship boards, commissions, committees, and institutions.  
513

514 The Board of Elders is charged to carry out all directives of the General Conference. All actions  
515 of the Board of Elders must be reported to and approved by the General Conference, except  
516 where specifically provided for in these Bylaws.  
517

518 A member of the Board of Elders shall not serve simultaneously as the Pastor, staff member, or  
519 Lay Delegate of a local church; as a member of the Board of Administration; or fulfill any other  
520 compensated position within UFMCC.  
521

522 (1) MODERATOR: The Moderator serves as the primary visionary and futurist in order to  
523 advance the mission and vision of UFMCC worldwide through the exercise of prophetic  
524 challenge, creativity, spiritual and pastoral authority, and leadership. The Moderator is the  
525 primary UFMCC spokesperson and shall moderate meetings of the Board of Elders. The  
526 Moderator shall be responsible for leading the visioning process for the Fellowship, having a  
527 presence at global events, teaching and training, engaging in continuous learning, community  
528 relations, visitation and assistance in Regions, ecumenical relations, and global social justice.  
529 The Moderator shall appoint a Vice-Moderator from among the members of the Board of  
530 Elders. The Moderator shall keep the Vice-Moderator fully informed of important decisions  
531 and issues.  
532

533 (2) VICE-MODERATOR: The Vice-Moderator shall moderate meetings of the Board of  
534 Elders and of General Conference in the absence or at the request of the Moderator and  
535 shall serve as Interim Moderator during a short period of incapacity by the Moderator. The  
536 Vice-Moderator shall serve in the position for a period of one year and may be considered  
537 for reappointment, at the discretion of the Moderator.  
538

539 (3) ELDER ELECTED BY A REGION: It shall be the responsibility of the Elder elected by  
540 a Region to facilitate affirmation of Regional ministry goals; facilitate cooperation between  
541 churches; deliver resourcing materials and services to local churches; assure provision of  
542 pastoral care, guidance, and mentoring for pastoral leaders; assure systems of delivery for  
543 conflict management and mediation; resource local churches for recruitment and selection of  
544 pastoral leadership; assure opportunities for leadership development and training for clergy  
545 and lay leaders; facilitate strategic efforts, in cooperation with local churches; manage  
546 processes for church affiliation and accountability; oversee the planning of Regional

547 conferences; and moderate Regional Conferences. The Elder elected by a Region shall take  
548 residence within the Region.  
549

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

553 (1) ACCOUNTABILITY: All Elders, including the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, shall be  
554 accountable to their respective Regions, the Board of Elders, the UFMCC Bylaws, the  
555 UFMCC Elder's Code of Conduct, and General Conference. The Board of Elders shall  
556 conduct biennial evaluations of the effectiveness of each Elder's ministry. The evaluation  
557 shall include input from the Region being served.  
558

559 (2) DISCIPLINE: All charges against an Elder must be submitted to the Board of Elders in  
560 written form signed by a minimum of one (1) member of the clergy from each of ten (10)  
561 different churches and by the Lay Delegates representing the majority of the Lay Delegate  
562 votes from each of ten (10) different churches, and may be initiated by either the clergy or  
563 Lay Delegates. The Elder must be given written notice of the charges, and at that time  
564 becomes inactive and remains fully compensated until final disposition of these charges. The  
565 Elder has the right to appear and present his/her own defense before the Board of Elders  
566 on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then review the charges, and, upon  
567 majority vote of the full Board, may remove the Elder or take other such action as it may  
568 deem appropriate. The only appeal from the decision of the Board of Elders will be to the  
569 General Conference of the Fellowship, and written notice of such appeal must be filed with  
570 the Moderator of the Board of Elders within thirty (30) days.  
571

572 (3) REMOVAL: If the Board of Elders determines that an Elder is unable or unwilling to fulfill  
573 the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Elders may, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of  
574 the full Board of Elders, remove that Elder from the position.  
575

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

583 a. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of the Board of Administration must be members in good  
584 standing within the Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the UFMCC, have spiritual quality  
585 and leadership, are mature, have sound judgment, and have a proven record of accomplishment.  
586 Consideration will be given to appoint members with diverse perspectives and complementary  
587 skills.  
588

589 b. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for members of the Board of Administration shall be  
590 two years, staggered.  
591

592 c. DUTIES: It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Administration to assure that all policies,  
593 programs, and practices of the UFMCC Headquarters support the ministry priorities established  
594 by the General Conference and the Board of Elders, to be accountable to the ministry priorities,  
595 and to reflect the ideals, values, and vision of the UFMCC. The Board of Administration shall  
596 approve, monitor, and review the UFMCC budget and operational budgets; determine salaries

597 for members of the Board of Elders; select, guide, support, and evaluate the Executive Director,  
598 with selection being subject to ratification by the Board of Elders; translate the UFMCC ideals,  
599 values, and vision into policies to guide the Executive and senior staff in their activities; work  
600 with the Executive Director to develop and monitor long-range plans, goals, and objectives for  
601 the UFMCC Headquarters; ensure that the UFMCC Headquarters and Regions have the  
602 financial resources needed to carry out the mission and goals; ensure that all of its decisions and  
603 actions meet the requirements of ethics and law, both civil and UFMCC Bylaws and mandates;  
604 ensure that the UFMCC Headquarters uses all of its resources, including people and money, as  
605 efficiently and effectively as possible; and elect UFMCC's corporate officers from among the  
606 members of the Board of Administration. When church bodies or members of the Fellowship  
607 raise a question of interpretation of the Bylaws by official action, the Board of Administration is  
608 authorized to issue an advisory interpretation of the Bylaws for that situation.  
609

610 d. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of  
611 duty on the part of any member of the Board of Administration and, therefore, makes the  
612 following provisions for discipline or removal:  
613

614 (1) If the Board of Administration determines that one of its members is unable or unwilling to  
615 fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Administration may, by a majority  
616 vote of the full Board of Administration, recommend that the Board of Elders remove that  
617 member from position. The member must be given written notice of the charges and, at  
618 that time, becomes inactive. The member has the right to appear and present his/her own  
619 defense before the Board of Elders on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then  
620 review the charges and, upon majority vote of the full Board of Elders, may remove the  
621 member of the Board of Administration or take such other action as it may deem  
622 appropriate. The decision of the Board of Elders shall be final.  
623

624 (2) If the Board of Elders determines that a member of the Board of Administration is unable  
625 to unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Elders may withdraw  
626 the appointment of a member of the Board of Administration. All members of the Board of  
627 Administration must be given written notice of the pending action, at which time the  
628 particular member becomes inactive. The member has the right to appear and present  
629 his/her own defense before the Board of Elders on his/her own behalf. The Board of  
630 Elders will then review the concerns and, upon majority vote of the full Board of Elders,  
631 may remove the member of the Board of Administration or take such other action as it may  
632 deem appropriate. The decision of the Board of Elders shall be final.  
633

634 4. LAY MINISTRY COUNCIL: The Lay Ministry Council is authorized by the General Conference to  
635 foster excellence in lay ministry through collaboration in the assessment of needs and development  
636 of resources. The Lay Ministry Council is composed of seven (7) persons; a Chair and Vice-Chair  
637 elected by the Lay House at General Conference, four (4) lay members appointed by the Board of  
638 Elders and a staff person responsible for resource development appointed by the Executive Director.  
639 For the purpose of transition only, the staff person to be appointed by the Executive Director shall  
640 be appointed by the Director of Leadership Development.  
641

642 a. TERM OF OFFICE: The term of office for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Lay Ministry  
643 Council shall be six (6) years, staggered. The term of office for appointed members shall be  
644 three (3) years. The term of office for appointed and elected members shall commence on 1  
645 January of the year following appointment or election. For the purpose of transition, the term of  
646 office of the Vice-Chair elected in 2005 shall expire in 2010.

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- b. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of the Lay Ministry Council 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 a proven record of accomplishment. Consideration will be given to appoint members with diverse perspectives and complementary skills.
  - c. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR: The Board of Elders shall appoint a Lay Ministry Council Nominating Committee of four (4) laypersons and one (1) clergy person who are members in good standing within the Fellowship. The Lay Ministry Council Nominating Committee shall solicit candidates for each vacant position. Individuals shall have the right to submit names to the Lay Ministry Council Nominating Committee for consideration. The Lay Ministry Council Nominating Committee shall review any and all candidates and shall then present to the Lay House of the General Conference two (2) qualified lay candidates as nominees for each vacant office. Nominations from the floor of General Conference will not be accepted.
  - d. DUTIES: It shall be the responsibility of the Lay Ministry Council to support the ministry priorities established by the General Conference and the Board of Elders, to be accountable to the ministry priorities, and to reflect the ideals, values, and vision of the UFMCC. The Lay Ministry Council shall assist with and participate in periodic assessments to ascertain the educational and spiritual needs of the laity in supporting the ministry priorities of the UFMCC. The Lay Ministry Council, in collaboration with the Board of Elders and UFMCC staff, shall consider the results of the needs assessment in order to recommend priorities for the development of specific resources. The Lay Ministry Council, with the Elders and UFMCC staff, shall work to inform, support, and recognize the laity in accomplishing the ministry priorities of the UFMCC.
  - e. 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 Lay Ministry Council and, therefore, makes the following provisions for discipline or removal:
    - (1) If the Lay Ministry Council determines that one of its members is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Lay Ministry Council may, by a majority vote of the remaining members, recommend that the Board of Elders remove that person from the position. 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 Board of Elders on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then review the charges and, upon majority vote of the full Board of Elders, may remove the member of the Lay Ministry Council or take such other action as it may deem appropriate. The decision of the Board of Elders shall be final.
    - (2) If the Board of Elders determines that a member of the Lay Ministry Council is unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, the Board of Elders may withdraw the appointment of a member of the Lay Ministry Council. All members of the Lay Ministry Council must be given written notice of the pending action, at which time the particular member becomes inactive. The member has the right to appear and present his/her own defense before the Board of Elders on his/her own behalf. The Board of Elders will then review the concerns and, upon majority vote of the full Board of Elders, may remove the member of the Lay Ministry Council or take such other action as it may deem appropriate. The decision of the Board of Elders shall be final.

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f. VACANCIES:

- (1) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair or Vice-Chair, the Board of Elders shall appoint someone who meets the qualification to fill the vacancy until the next General Conference.
- (2) In the event of a vacancy in an appointed position, the Board of Elders shall appoint someone who meets the qualifications to serve the unexpired term.

**ARTICLE VI -- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

- A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: Any baptized Christian may become a member in good standing of the 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. 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 or Regional Conferences.
- C. 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 Board of Elders 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.

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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 Board of Elders, of the Board of Administration, and of the Lay Ministry Council 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. Under no circumstances shall a quorum exist unless (a) at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Regions are represented among the laity eligible to vote and (b) at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Regions are represented among the clergy eligible to vote.
  5. SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE: A special General Conference of the UFMCC can be called by the Board of Elders or by a petition submitted to the Board of Elders 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.
    - 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. REGIONAL CONFERENCE: Beginning in 2007, Regional Conferences must be held at least once every three (3) years, in accordance with the schedule determined by the Board of Elders for the purpose of electing members to serve on the Regional Nominating Facilitating Committee; electing an Elder; selecting nominees for the position of Moderator; and proposing amendments to the UFMCC Bylaws. Thirty (30) days written notice of the Regional Conference must be sent to all church bodies and clergy persons within the Region.
1. TIME, PLACE, AND NATURE: The Board of Elders is authorized to determine the means by which members of the Lay House and of the Clergy House may participate virtually in a Regional Conference.
  2. COMPOSITION: A Regional Conference is that body consisting of the Elder elected by the Region, a Lay House, and a Clergy House.

- 796 a. LAY HOUSE: Members of the Lay House are Lay Delegates from all affiliated churches within  
797 the geographical area of the Region; Interim Pastoral Leaders from all affiliated churches within  
798 the geographical area of the Region; lay members of the Lay Ministry Council and of the Board  
799 of Administration who live within the geographical area of the Region and are not Lay Delegates;  
800 and the Elder elected by the Region when the Elder is a lay person.  
801
- 802 b. CLERGY HOUSE: Members of the Clergy House are ordained clergy with a License to  
803 Practice whose ministry is authorized by a local church within the geographical area of the  
804 Region; ordained clergy with a License to Practice whose ministry is authorized by MCC and live  
805 within the geographical area of the Region; ordained clergy with a License to Practice whose  
806 authorized ministry is to serve the Region; ordained clergy with a License to Practice who are  
807 between authorized ministries and live within the geographical area of the Region; and retired  
808 clergy who live within the geographical area of the Region.  
809
- 810 3. QUORUM: A quorum shall consist of the Regional Elder (or a representative), twenty percent  
811 (20%) of the number of lay people eligible to vote at Regional Conference, and twenty percent (20%)  
812 of the number of credentialed clergy eligible to vote at a Regional Conference.  
813
- 814 4. SPECIAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE: Special conferences of the various Regions of the  
815 UFMCC can be called by the Board of Elders or by petition submitted to the Elder elected by the  
816 Region by fifty percent (50%) of the credentialed clergy who are eligible to vote at the Regional  
817 Conference and fifty percent (50%) of the lay people who are eligible to vote at the Regional  
818 Conference. The petition process may be initiated by either the clergy or the laity. Special  
819 conferences shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the regularly scheduled  
820 Regional Conferences.  
821
- 822 a. PURPOSE: The purpose of a special Regional Conference must be stated in the petition.  
823
- 824 b. NOTICE: Written notice must be provided to all credentialed clergy and to all voting church  
825 bodies at least thirty (30) days prior to the special Regional Conference. The purpose and nature  
826 of a special Regional Conference must be stated in the notices and written into the agenda of the  
827 special Regional Conference.  
828
- 829 C. LOCAL: Each local church shall establish the percentage of members required for the transaction of  
830 business, the process for notifying members of the meeting, and the process for calling special meetings,  
831 unless otherwise indicated in UFMCC Bylaws.  
832
- 833 D. PROXY VOTING: No proxy and/or absentee ballots shall be allowed in any business meeting of this  
834 Fellowship, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws.  
835

## 836 **ARTICLE IX – CHURCH FINANCES**

- 837
- 838 A. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed  
839 means of supporting the church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time,  
840 skills, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the  
841 clergy and the lay leadership of local churches to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to  
842 help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the church's ministries. An offering shall be received  
843 at each service of public worship in the local church, Regional Conference, and World Jubilee.  
844

845 B. REPORTING: As of January 1, 2003, the local church administrative body shall report all Church  
846 receipts each month to the UFMCC and with that report shall remit fifteen percent (15%) of the funds  
847 reported. As of January 1, 2004, the amount to be remitted shall be fourteen and one-half percent (14-  
848 1/2%). Beginning in 2005, the amount to be remitted shall be fourteen percent (14%) and then decrease  
849 by one percent (1%) per biennium until the amount to be remitted is reduced to ten percent (10%),  
850 unless the reduction is delayed or accelerated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the General Conference.

851  
852 Funds bequeathed and money collected for the following purposes must be reported, but may be  
853 deducted from the total receipts before calculating the percentages due the UFMCC:

854 1. FUNDS TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF PERSONS IN DISTRESS: This money may  
855 only be used to cover direct services without which the recipient would be destitute or in personal  
856 danger.

857  
858 2. BUILDING FUND: This is money set aside to construct or purchase a church facility which may  
859 include worship space, meeting space, office space, kitchen facilities, classroom space, non-revenue  
860 parking facilities, furniture and major equipment for these facilities. It may also be used for major  
861 renovation costs of purchased or leased/rented facilities and the payment of the principle on a  
862 building loan. Funds raised specifically to reduce the principle on a building loan are tithe exempt as  
863 part of the building fund. Rent, mortgage interest payments, utilities, minor equipment, and routine  
864 maintenance are not exempt.

865  
866 3. DELEGATES FUND: Expenses of sending the church's delegate(s) and clergy to General  
867 Conference and Regional Conference.

868  
869 Any money transferred permanently or for a long term from any of the above exempt funds into the  
870 General Fund must be added to the income figures for that month, and tithes paid on them. Report and  
871 remittance are due to the UFMCC on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the month  
872 being reported.

873  
874 Wherever possible and desirable as determined by the Board of Administration, churches shall send their  
875 tithe directly to the UFMCC Headquarters. However, the Board of Administration may choose, in certain  
876 circumstances, to authorize special accounts in nations other than the United States to hold in trust the  
877 ten percent (10%) UFMCC tithe within that nation. The Board of Administration, upon the  
878 recommendation of the Board of Elders, will name the signatories on said accounts and will approve a  
879 budget for use of those monies for UFMCC purposes and programs within the respective nation. The  
880 Board of Administration shall establish appropriate policies and procedures concerning the care of funds  
881 held in trust for UFMCC. Whenever funds are transmitted internationally to UFMCC, Fellowship  
882 Offices shall provide documentation satisfactory to national/regional government authorities in the  
883 sending countries.

884  
885 C. FIDUCIARY BODIES: Whenever the Board of Administration chooses to authorize special accounts  
886 to hold UFMCC funds in trust, the Board of Administration may appoint a fiduciary body to have charge  
887 of all matters pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, real  
888 property, and finances held in trust, as legally permitted and appropriate. The Board of Administration,  
889 in its discretion, shall determine the number of members of any fiduciary body. All actions of the  
890 fiduciary bodies must be reported to and approved by the Board of Administration, except where  
891 specifically provided for in these Bylaws. The Board of Administration shall determine the number of  
892 members to serve on a fiduciary body.

893

- 894 1. QUALIFICATIONS: Members of a fiduciary body must be members in good standing within the  
895 Fellowship who, in the sole discretion of the Board of Administration, have spiritual quality and  
896 leadership, are mature, have sound judgment and a proven record of accomplishment. The term of  
897 office shall be two years.
- 898 2. ACCOUNTABILITY: The fiduciary body shall be subject to these Bylaws, the fiduciary body's  
899 Articles of Incorporation, the fiduciary body's Bylaws, and the policies and procedures of the Board  
900 of Administration.
- 901 3. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone conduct which is, in its sole discretion, disloyal or  
902 unbecoming or a dereliction of duty on the part of members of a regional fiduciary body. Therefore,  
903 the Board of Administration shall develop and implement a procedure for taking appropriate  
904 disciplinary action, as it deems necessary.
- 905
- 906 D. BOARD OF PENSION ASSESSMENTS: Each local church administrative body in the USA shall  
907 report quarterly the number of members in good standing for each month within every quarter and shall  
908 remit the Board of Pensions assessment as set by General Conference. Report and remittance are due to  
909 the Board of Pensions on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.
- 910
- 911 E.. SIGNATURES: Any bank or financial account in the name of any church body, Region, the UFMCC, or  
912 of any subordinate group or body, must require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be  
913 that of an officer elected or a person appointed under UFMCC Bylaws, the authorizing documents of the  
914 Region, or the authorizing documents of the local church.
- 915
- 916 F. FORGIVENESS OF TITHES: The Board of Administration, in consultation with the Elder elected by  
917 the Region, may grant forgiveness of late tithes and assessments.
- 918

919 **ARTICLE X -- RESERVATION OF POWERS**

920

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

922

923 **ARTICLE XI – ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

924

- 925 A. ADOPTION: These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General  
926 Conference of the UFMCC and shall become binding upon all members and church bodies within the  
927 Fellowship.
- 928
- 929 B. AMENDMENTS: These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened meeting of the  
930 General Conference according to the procedures adopted by the General Conference. Such amendments  
931 or repeals can only be effective if two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized Lay Delegates and two-thirds  
932 (2/3) of the duly authorized clergy attending vote in favor of such amendments or repeals.
- 933
- 934 C. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL LAWS: If UFMCC Bylaws are inconsistent with laws of any  
935 nation or other jurisdiction in which a local church body or a Region is organized, the Board of Elders  
936 may allow the Bylaws or other organizational documents to contain variances with these Bylaws to  
937 facilitate compliance of the local church body with such laws.
- 938

**PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING BYLAW PROPOSALS**

**Criteria:**

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

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

**Procedure for the Board of Elders and Board of Administration:**

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

**UFMCC CLERGY JUDICIARY PROCESS**  
**Effective 8 June 2005**

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

**A. THE INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL POOL**

The Board of Elders will appoint lay and clergy members of UFMCC to serve in an international judicial pool to serve the entire Fellowship. These persons must be members in good standing of UFMCC. The term of office for the International Judicial Pool shall be three (3) years. The Judicial Officer will provide training for the International Judicial Pool.

**B. INVESTIGATORS, JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND APPEALS PANEL MEMBERS**

The Judicial Officer shall select investigators, Judiciary Committee members, and Appeals Panel members from among the members of the International Judicial Pool. If an appropriate person from the International Judicial Pool is not available or if, in the judgment of the Judicial Officer, particular skills and/or expertise are needed, the Judicial Officer may appoint another person who has no vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings to serve as an investigator, Judiciary Committee member, and/or Appeals Panel member in a temporary capacity. Professional investigators may be used, if deemed necessary by the Judicial Officer.

Members of the Board of Elders are not eligible to serve as members of the International Judicial Pool or to serve in a temporary capacity as an investigator, Judiciary Committee member, and/or Appeals Panel member. A member of the Board of Elders may serve as the Judicial Officer.

**C. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The clergy person, the complainant(s), the Moderator, the Executive Director, the Regional Elder(s) of the complainants(s) and of the clergy person, and the Judicial Officer shall be kept fully informed throughout the judiciary process.

**D. SUBMISSION OF COMPLAINTS**

1. An individual (complainant) who wishes to make a complaint of alleged misconduct by a clergy person shall either:
  - a. Submit a written complaint to the Regional Elder or to the Judicial Officer; or
  - b. Advise any church official (including but not limited to a clergy person, Lay Delegate, member of a local church administrative body, member of a fiduciary body, MCC Executive Director, etc.) of the complaint.
2. Any church official (including but not limited to a clergy person, Lay Delegate, member of a local church administrative body, member of a fiduciary body, MCC Executive Director, etc.) who receives a complaint shall immediately put the complaint in writing and shall forward the written complaint to the Regional Elder of the complainant, the Regional Elder of the clergy person, or the Judicial Officer within two (2) business days.
3. When a complaint is reported in writing to the Regional Elder, the Regional Elder shall notify the Judicial Officer within two (2) business days.

- 1030 4. The Regional Elder(s) may recommend appropriate sources of pastoral care for the complainant(s), the  
1031 clergy person, and the impacted congregation(s) or agency/agencies.  
1032

1033 **E. INACTIVE STATUS**

- 1034 1. At the discretion of the Judicial Officer, the Judicial Officer may place the clergy person on inactive  
1035 status. If placed on inactive status, the clergy person shall cease to function as a clergy person until a  
1036 final judgment is reached.  
1037 a. The above notwithstanding, the clergy person must be placed on inactive status immediately if  
1038 the allegations indicate the possibility of injury to persons or property.  
1039 b. The clergy person placed on inactive status shall continue to receive all compensation, insurance,  
1040 and other benefits until a final judgment is reached.  
1041
- 1042 2. Should secular criminal charges arise from substantially the same incident(s) giving rise to the  
1043 complaint referenced to in Section D above, then:  
1044 a. The judiciary process shall be suspended until the resolution of the secular criminal charges.  
1045 b. The Judicial Officer shall decide whether to place the clergy person on inactive status, pending  
1046 resolution of the secular criminal charges.  
1047 c. While on inactive status pending resolution of the secular criminal charges, continuation of any  
1048 compensation to a clergy person who is employed by UFMCC shall be in the sole discretion of  
1049 the Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Administration.  
1050 d. While on inactive status pending resolution of the secular criminal charges, any compensation to  
1051 a clergy person employed by a local church or other agency shall be in the sole discretion of the  
1052 administrative body of that local church or agency.  
1053

1054 **F. PROCESSING OF COMPLAINTS**

- 1055 1. **Determination of Purview** - Upon receiving a complaint, the Judicial Officer shall first determine if  
1056 the complaint falls within the purview of the MCC Judiciary Process. If the Judicial Officer  
1057 determines that the complaint falls outside of the purview of the MCC Judiciary Process, the Judicial  
1058 Officer shall notify the complainant(s) in writing within five (5) business days.  
1059

1060 If the Judicial Officer finds that the complaint falls within the purview of the MCC Judiciary Process,  
1061 then the Judicial Officer shall determine whether the allegations in the complaint are reasonably  
1062 reliable. Reasonably reliable complaints are those that are based (a) on first-hand information or (b)  
1063 on other information of such a nature as to indicate sufficient reliability to warrant further inquiry. If  
1064 the Judicial Officer finds that the allegations are not sufficiently reliable so as to warrant further  
1065 inquiry, the Judicial Officer shall notify the complainant(s) in writing within five (5) business days.  
1066

- 1067 a. **Notification to All Parties** – If the Judicial Officer finds that the complaint falls within the  
1068 purview of the MCC Judiciary Process and that the complaint is reasonably reliable, the Judicial  
1069 Officer shall notify all parties referred to in Section C within five (5) business days following  
1070 determination of purview. Such notification shall include a copy of the MCC Judiciary Process, a  
1071 copy of the written complaint, and the Judicial Officer’s determination of whether the complaint  
1072 will first be referred to a conflict intervention process or be immediately investigated.  
1073
- 1074 b. **Notification to the Affected Church/Agency** - In consultation with the Regional Elder(s) of  
1075 the complainant and of the clergy person, the Judicial Officer shall determine whether the  
1076 affected church/agency will be informed that a complaint has been received against the clergy  
1077 person serving that church/agency. This notification will not include a copy of the written  
1078 complaint.  
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2. **Conflict Intervention** - If the Judicial Officer finds that the complaint falls within the purview of the MCC Judiciary Process and that the complaint is reasonably reliable, the Judicial Officer may choose to initiate a process of conflict intervention rather than conducting an investigation.
    - a. **Conflict Intervention Process** - The Judicial Officer shall specify the process for conflict intervention in writing and shall send written notification, including a copy of the complaint, to all parties having access to information as specified in Section C above within five (5) business days following receipt of the complaint.
    - b. **Outcome of Conflict Intervention** - Within five (5) business days of completion of the conflict intervention process, the Judicial Officer shall determine whether (a) the matter has been satisfactorily resolved or (b) an investigation will be conducted in continuance of the judiciary process. The Judicial Officer shall advise all parties of the determination in writing. A summary of the outcome of the conflict intervention process shall be prepared by the Judicial Officer, placed in the clergy person's UFMCC file, and provided to all parties referred to in Section C above.
  3. **Investigation** - If the Judicial Officer finds that the complaint falls within the purview of the MCC Judiciary Process and that the complaint is reasonably reliable, the Judicial Officer may determine that an investigation should be conducted.
    - a. **Selection of Investigator** - Within five (5) business days of receiving a complaint or the conclusion of a conflict intervention process, the Judicial Officer shall select an investigator to conduct a preliminary investigation. The Judicial Officer shall provide the investigator with a copy of the written complaint.
    - b. **Time Period for the Investigation** - The investigation will be conducted within a time period to be determined by the Judicial Officer and may be extended, if necessary.
    - c. **Investigator's Report** - The investigator's written report will be submitted by the investigator to the Judicial Officer within five (5) business days of the conclusion of the investigation.
    - d. **Outcome of Investigation** - If the Judicial Officer determines that the complaint is not substantiated, the Judicial Officer prepare a written summary of the investigation's findings and provide the written summary to all parties referred to in Section C. The written summary of the findings will be placed in the clergy person's UFMCC file to identify possible patterns of misconduct.

If the Judicial Officer determines that the complaint has been substantiated and the clergy person does not admit to the allegations in the complaint in writing, the Judicial Officer shall bring charges against the clergy person.
  4. **Admission of the Allegations** - In the event the clergy person admits to the allegations in writing, within ten (10) business day of receipt of the written admission, the Judicial Officer may either:
    - a. Determine resolution of the matter with the clergy person and the complainant(s); or
    - b. 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) calendar days following receipt by the Judiciary Committee of the clergy person's written admission of the allegations.

A written copy of the determination will be provided to all parties referred to in Section C within five (5) business days following determination of the resolution and will be placed in the clergy person's UFMCC file.

1130 **G. CHARGES**

- 1131 1. If the Judicial Officer determines that the complaint has been substantiated and the clergy person  
1132 does not admit to the allegations contained in the complaint in writing, the Judicial Officer shall  
1133 bring charges against the clergy person.  
1134
- 1135 2. Within five (5) business days of receiving the report of the investigator the Judicial Officer shall  
1136 provide the following to all parties referred to in Section C:  
1137 a. A formal statement of charges, prepared by the Judicial Officer;  
1138 b. A complete copy of the investigation records, including all documentation or other information  
1139 that had been submitted to the investigator; and  
1140 c. A summary of the investigation, prepared by the Judicial Officer.  
1141

1142 The Judicial Officer shall simultaneously notify the affected church/agency by sending them a copy  
1143 of the formal statement of charges.  
1144

- 1145 3. Within five (5) business days of issuing the statement of charges, the Judicial Officer shall select three  
1146 (3) persons from the International Judicial Pool to form the Judiciary Committee.  
1147
- 1148 4. Within three (3) business days following the selection of the Judiciary Committee, the Judicial Officer  
1149 shall provide the Judiciary Committee with all materials referred to in Section G.2 above.  
1150

1151 **H. THE HEARING**

1152 The Judiciary Committee will convene a hearing within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of  
1153 receiving the formal statement of charges. The Judicial Officer is not required to be present at the judiciary  
1154 hearing. Further investigation may be conducted during this interval, if deemed necessary by the Judiciary  
1155 Committee and the Judicial Officer.  
1156

1157 The hearing shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- 1158 1. The location of the hearing shall be in the Region in which the charges are brought against a clergy  
1159 person or in another venue deemed more appropriate by the Judiciary Committee and the Judicial  
1160 Officer.  
1161
- 1162 2. Both the complainant and the person being charged shall be permitted to have an advocate present at  
1163 the hearing. Advocates are not legal counsel but are present to provide support and may speak on  
1164 behalf of the person they represent.  
1165
- 1166 3. Any audio, video, or written material that is to be considered at the hearing must be submitted to the  
1167 Judiciary Committee, the clergy person charged, the complainant, and the Judicial Officer no later  
1168 than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing.  
1169
- 1170 4. Both parties may present witnesses and have an opportunity to question witnesses.  
1171
- 1172 5. Aside from the statement of charges, a complete copy of the investigation records, and the Judicial  
1173 Officer's reports summarizing the charges and investigator's report, only first-hand information will  
1174 be considered by the Judiciary Committee.  
1175
- 1176 6. If the complainant and/or the clergy person who has been charged does not attend the hearing, the  
1177 Judiciary Committee shall hear the evidence of the complainant and/or clergy person who does  
1178 attend and of any witnesses for either party who do appear, and shall consider a copy of the charges,  
1179 the investigation records, and the Judicial Officer's reports summarizing the charges and

1180 investigator's report. Thereafter, the Judiciary Committee shall render a decision and determine  
1181 resolution.  
1182

- 1183 7. A unanimous decision is required in order to determine that the charges are valid.  
1184  
1185 8. The Judiciary Committee shall immediately inform the Judicial Officer of the outcome of the  
1186 hearing, including their decision and resolution. The Judiciary Committee shall submit its written  
1187 decision and resolution to the Judicial Officer within three (3) days following the conclusion of the  
1188 hearing.  
1189  
1190 9. A complete and accurate record of the hearing, including a complete audio record of the  
1191 proceedings, shall be prepared by the Judiciary Committee and retained by the Judicial Officer.  
1192  
1193 10. A copy of the Judiciary Committee's written decision shall be sent by the Judicial Officer to all parties  
1194 referred to in Section C within three (3) business days following receipt of the written decision by the  
1195 Judicial Officer.  
1196

1197 **I. RESOLUTION**

- 1198 1. In the event that the charges have been substantiated, the Judiciary Committee shall determine the  
1199 resolution, which may include removal of credentials or other measures, and shall inform the Judicial  
1200 Officer. The terms of the resolution shall be invoked immediately.  
1201  
1202 2. The Judicial Officer shall immediately notify the Board of Elders and shall appropriately publicize the  
1203 results of the hearing.  
1204 a. Upon conclusion of the hearing and appeals process, the Judicial Officer shall immediately  
1205 provide the administrative body of the affected local church(es) or agency/agencies with a brief  
1206 written statement approved by legal counsel which can be read only to members of the  
1207 congregation(s) and with a more detailed confidential summary of the decision pursuant to the  
1208 provisions of the confidentiality agreement which would be available only to the members of the  
1209 local church's or agency's administrative body.  
1210  
1211 3. Audio and written records of the hearing and all evidence will be retained by the Judicial Officer and  
1212 a copy of the charges and final decision will be placed in the clergy person's UFMCC file.  
1213  
1214 4. The Regional Elder(s) may recommend appropriate sources of pastoral care for the complainant(s),  
1215 the clergy person charged, and the impacted congregation(s) or agency/agencies.  
1216

1217 **J. APPEAL PROCESS**

- 1218 1. Either the complainant or the clergy person charged may appeal the decision of the Judiciary  
1219 Committee.  
1220  
1221 2. Appeals must be made in writing to the Judicial Officer within seven (7) business days from the date  
1222 that the clergy person/complainant receives a copy of the final decision.  
1223  
1224 3. Within three (3) business days of receiving the request for an appeal, the Judicial Officer shall select  
1225 three (3) impartial members of the International Judicial Pool to serve on the Appeals Panel. Their  
1226 decision must be determined within seven (7) business days and shall be made by no fewer than two  
1227 (2) of the three (3) members of the Appeal Panel. The Appeals Panel shall immediately send written  
1228 notification of their decision to the Judicial Officer. The Judicial Officer shall notify all parties  
1229 referred to in Section C of the decision of the Appeals Panel within three (3) business days.

- 1230 a. The Appeals Panel shall uphold the decision of the Judiciary Committee if the Appeals Panel  
1231 finds that the decision of the Judiciary Committee was based on any substantial evidence.  
1232 b. Should the Appeals Panel determine that the Judiciary Committee's decision is not based on any  
1233 substantial evidence, then the Appeals Panel shall issue its own decision and resolution.  
1234 c. Except in the event that the judiciary process results in revocation of clergy credentials, the  
1235 determination of the Appeals Panel shall be final.  
1236  
1237 4. In the event that the determination of the Appeals Panel results in revocation of clergy credentials,  
1238 an automatic review of the proceedings and appeals process will be conducted by the Board of  
1239 Elders within ten (10) business days of the determination of the Appeals Panel.  
1240 a. The Board of Elders shall uphold the decision of the Appeals Panel if the Board of Elders finds  
1241 that the decision of the Appeals Panel is based on any substantial evidence.  
1242 b. Should the Board of Elders determine that the Judiciary Committee's decision is not based on  
1243 any substantial evidence, then the Board of Elders shall issue its own decision and resolution.  
1244 c. The determination of the Board of Elders is final.  
1245  
1246 5. Copies of the decision of the Appeal Panel and of any review by the Board of Elders will be sent to  
1247 all parties referred to in Section C. A copy shall also be placed in the UFMCC file of the person  
1248 charged.  
1249

1250 **K. COSTS OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS**

- 1251 1. The costs of the judicial process shall be the responsibility of the UFMCC. However, the UFMCC  
1252 reserves the right to seek restitution from the complainant(s) for expenses if the complaint is found  
1253 to be frivolous or malicious.  
1254  
1255 2. The costs of bringing and defending a complaint shall be borne by the complainant.  
1256  
1257 3. The costs for defending against a complaint shall be the responsibility of the person against whom  
1258 the charges were brought.  
1259

1260 If either the complainant(s) or clergy person is financially unable to bear the costs of the process, a request  
1261 for assistance may be made to the Executive Director, who will make a decision.  
1262

## **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 **elected by** 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