

**Metropolitan Community Church of New Haven Bylaws
(Approved by the Congregational Meeting, June 22, 2003)**

Article I – Name

- A. The name of this church shall be Metropolitan Community Church of New Haven, also known as MCC New Haven or MCCNH.

Article II – Affiliation

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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

- A. 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 – Members and Friends

- 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, and/or demonstrates interest and loyalty. A Member in good standing should also consider the positive impact (on both themselves and our community) of a service contribution.
 - 1. Membership List – The list of Members in good standing shall be maintained by the Clerk or the Clerk's designate. The Clerk shall report changes monthly to the Board of Directors.
 - 2. Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list a minimum of once annually.
 - a. A Member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and/or 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 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. If the inactive Member has not attended, provided identifiable financial support, or demonstrated further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following notification, the Board of Directors shall have the authority, at its discretion, to remove any such Member from the local church membership roll.
 - d. The inactive Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing by a vote of the Board of Directors without a public reception into membership.
 - e. A former Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing after completing a membership class and participating in the Rite of Membership.
 - 3. Right to Appeal. A decision by the Board of Directors to remove an inactive Member from the local church membership list may be appealed by the inactive Member 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, the inactive Member is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.
 - 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 when the inactive Member was removed from the local church membership roll.
 - 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 inactive 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.
- B. Friends of the Church – A person who, for one reason or another, feels unable to become a Member but who supports the goals of the church and wants to be a part of the work of the church may be designated as a “Friend of the Church.”
- 1. Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings or serve on the Board of Directors or as a Lay Delegate. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates.
- C. 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. At its discretion, the Board of Directors may choose to form a Special Disciplinary Committee comprised of three (3) members of the Board of Directors and four (4) members of the Congregation to review charges and recommend appropriate action to the Board of Directors.
- 1. Right to Appeal – The action of the Board of Directors 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 when the Member was disciplined by 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 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.

Article V – Congregational Meetings

- A. 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, and the General Conference.
- B. Time and Place – The 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.
- C. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least three (3) weeks in advance.
- D. Voting Rights – Each Member in good standing has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of absentee voting shall not be allowed.
- E. 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.
- F. Quorum – In order to transact business, no less than twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing must be present.
 - 1. In the absence of a quorum at any Congregational Meeting, the meeting shall be postponed by one week.
- G. Agenda – The agenda for Congregational Meetings shall be determined by the Board of Directors.
 - 1. Content – The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board of Directors, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of the budget, and receiving reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor.
 - 2. Additions to Agenda – Members may request the Board of Directors to add agenda items by submitting additional agenda items to the Clerk no later than one (1) week prior to the meeting.
- H. Elections – All votes for positions shall be taken by secret ballot. Votes of affirmation from the floor are not permitted.
- I. 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) majority vote of the Board of Directors, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition

- signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing and submitted to the Clerk.
2. The nature and purpose of the Special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and in notices and be written into the agenda.
 3. The Special Congregational Meeting shall be held within forty-five (45) days of the action taken to call the Special Congregational Meeting.

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 MCC New Haven.
- 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 the Elder serving the Region and for submitting the approved Bylaws to the Elder serving the Region. 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. Membership – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of MCC New Haven.
 1. Conflict of Interest – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship; someone who is a church employee; or someone who is a Clergy Candidate shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.
- D. Composition – There shall be seven (7) members, including the Pastor.
- 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 of the members of the Board of Directors being elected at each annual Congregational Meeting.
- F. Meetings – The Board of Directors shall meet regularly at least ten (10) times per year. The time and place of each meeting shall be posted and/or announced by the Moderator and/or designate. Except for executive sessions, anyone may attend Board meetings, but only Board members can vote.
 1. Minutes – Minutes and financial reports shall be available to Members of the church within two (2) weeks after each meeting. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions made. A copy of the minutes shall become part of the permanent church records.
- 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.
 1. 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.
 2. 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.

3. The Board of Directors may convene without the consent of the Moderator by submitting to the Clerk a petition signed by a majority of the members of the Board of Directors and indicating the agenda of the meeting. The Clerk shall send copies of the completed petition to the Moderator, Vice Moderator, and the Regional Elder within three (3) days. Upon receipt of the completed petition, the Moderator shall, within three (3) days, schedule a meeting of the Board of Directors to be held within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the completed petition. If the Moderator is incapacitated or otherwise unable to consider scheduling the meeting, or if the Moderator fails to acknowledge the petition within three (3) days of receipt, the Vice Moderator shall immediately inform the Regional Elder and shall schedule and moderate the meeting.

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

1. Election and Appointment of Officers:

- a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator.
- b. Vice Moderator – The Vice Moderator shall be a member of the Board of Directors. The Vice Moderator shall be appointed by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors and shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Pastor. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Pastor, a Vice Moderator shall be elected by the Board of Directors and shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Board of Directors.
- c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be elected at the annual Congregational Meeting in even-numbered years. The term of office for the Clerk shall be two (2) years beginning the day following election.
- d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be elected at the annual Congregational Meeting in odd-numbered years. The term of office for the Treasurer shall be two (2) years, beginning the day following election.

2. Duties of Officers:

- a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings.
- b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings in the absence or upon the request of the Pastor or during a vacancy in the office of 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.

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. Such appeal must be filed with the Clerk or Interim Clerk of the Board of Directors within 15 days of the Board of Directors' disciplinary action. The congregation shall hear the appeal within sixty (60) days, either at its next regular Congregational Meeting if that Congregational Meeting is to take place within sixty (60) days of the date of appeal 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.
- 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.

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 shall request the Regional Elder 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. 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 not serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors or Congregational Meetings. The Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve on the Board of Directors 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 the 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 the 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, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

- 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, registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences. This subsection may be waived on an annual basis by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Congregation or three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- 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 the Regional Elder.
1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of nine (9) members, including the six (6) members of the Board of Directors and three (3) additional members elected at a Congregational Meeting.
 2. Interim Pastor – The Pastoral Search Committee, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, shall be authorized to appoint a UFMCC clergy person with a license to practice to serve as Interim Pastor until a Pastor is elected by the congregation.
 - a. The Interim Pastor shall seek to prepare the Congregation in every way for the election and installation of a new Pastor.
 - b. The Interim Pastor shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor, except that the Interim Pastor shall not serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors or Congregational Meetings and shall not participate in the pastoral search process except at the explicit invitation of the Pastoral Search Committee.
 - c. The Interim Pastor shall serve on the Board of Directors with voice but no vote.
 - d. The Interim Pastor shall not become the Pastor of the congregation unless a minimum of two (2) years has elapsed from the time that his/her appointment as Interim Pastor was terminated.
 - e. In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as Interim Pastor, the Pastoral Search Committee may ask the Board of Directors to request that the Regional Elder appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader as referred to in Section A, Sub-section 1 of this Article.
 1. 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 during a Congregational Meeting.
- 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

- A. When there are conflicts or difficulty within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts between the Pastor and congregation, the Regional Elder may be invited to intervene to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws. Such an invitation may be issued by the Pastor, any Lay Delegate, a majority vote of the Board of Directors, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members in good standing.
- B. 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 the Regional Elder within three (3) days.
 - 4. The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the congregation.

Article IX – Lay Delegate

- A. 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. The Lay Delegate shall be a Member in good standing of this church.
- B. Election – The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each General Conference. A simple majority of the votes cast shall be required to elect.
- C. Term of Office - The term of office of Lay Delegate shall be two (2) years.
- D. Duties – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General and Regional Conferences, and to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies.
- E. Funding - The congregation shall fund the Lay Delegates' transportation, registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences. This subsection may be waived on an annual basis by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Congregation or three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- F. Alternate Lay Delegate - The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The election, term of office, and funding shall be the same as for Lay Delegate.
 - 1. Duties – The duties of the Alternate Lay Delegate shall be to stay informed of UFMCC concerns and policies and to be prepared to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representing the congregation at General and Regional Conferences.
 - 2. Notification to Alternate Lay Delegate – When a Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, the Lay Delegate shall immediately inform his/her Alternate Lay Delegate and the Clerk of the Board of Directors.
 - 3. Vacancies – In the event that both the Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate are unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, the Board of Directors 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.

- G. Discipline – The church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate. Therefore, the Board of Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any Lay Delegate or Alternate 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. Right to appeal – A disciplined Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate may appeal the action to the congregation. Such appeal must be filed with the Clerk of the Board of Directors within fifteen (15) days of the Lay Delegate’s disciplinary action. The congregation shall hear the appeal within sixty (60) days, either at its next regular Congregational Meeting if that Congregational Meeting is to take place within sixty (60) days of the date of appeal 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 Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate shall be considered vacant.

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 shall have signature authority.
- B. Limit on Expenditures:
1. The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.
 2. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in any amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that amount requires congregational approval.
- C. Fiscal Year – For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year.
- D. Church Budget – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the presentation of an annual operating budget reflecting anticipated receipts and disbursements to the Congregational Meeting for approval. The approved budget may be amended, as needed, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, which shall notify the Members of the church in a timely manner that such amendment has been made.
1. Budget Year – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through December.
- E. Assessments – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly 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.

Article XI – Adoption and Amendments

- A. Adoption – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational Meeting and approval by the Regional Elder.
- 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 thirty (30) 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 the Regional Elder. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.