



## Bylaws

### Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be, Church of the Trinity, Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), of Sarasota Florida.

### Article II – Affiliation

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

- A. **Successor Corporation** – The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is the not-for-profit organization designated to receive the church's property in the event of dissolution or abandonment of the church or disaffiliation from the UFMCC, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.
- B. **Disaffiliation** – A decision to disaffiliate from the UFMCC shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating and shall be decided in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

### Article III – Purpose

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

### Article IV – 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, makes a definite service contribution, and demonstrates interest and loyalty.
  - 1. **Membership Review** – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list in June each year.
    - a. A Member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of 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, and 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 drop any such Member from



#### Article IV, Section A, continued

the local church active membership roll, and they will then be considered a former member.

- d. Inactive or former Members 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.

**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. 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 any other elected position. 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 (50% +1) any Member or take other appropriate disciplinary action.

- 1. **Right to Appeal** – The action of the Board may be appealed to the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal of discipline, the disciplined Member shall 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 Members status changed to inactive.
- 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 appeal.

#### Article V – Congregational Meetings

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

- A. Time and Place** – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year during the month of November.
- B. Notification** – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least four (4) weeks in advance.
- C. Voting Rights** – Each Member in good standing has the right to vote.



## Article V continued

- D. Votes Required for Approval** – Decisions, including elections, require approval by a majority vote (50%+1) of those Members voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC Bylaws or otherwise stated in these local church Bylaws.
- E. Quorum** – In order to transact business, no less than twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing must be present.
- F. Agenda** – The Board of Directors shall determine the agenda for Congregational Meetings.
- 1. Content** – The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of proposed budget for following year, 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 two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.
- G. Elections** – The Board of Directors shall present to the congregation a slate of candidates for election or re-election to the Board of Directors of Church of the Trinity MCC. The number of nominated candidates shall meet the number of seats being vacated. The Board of Directors will appoint a nominating committee whose task is to identify, recruit and recommend candidates to the Board for inclusion on the slate presented to the congregation. Votes for positions on the Board of Directors may be by secret and absentee ballot. Nominations from the floor are not permitted.
- H. Special Congregational Meetings** – In addition to the annual Congregational Meeting, Special Congregational Meetings may also be held. Special Congregational Meetings are governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- 1. Calling a Special Congregational Meeting** – A special Congregational Meeting may be called either by (a) majority vote of the Board, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members and submitted to the Clerk.
  - 2.** The nature and purpose of the Special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and in notices and written into the agenda.

## Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body

- A. Name** – The local church administrative body is the Board of Directors, which is authorized to provide administrative leadership for Church of the Trinity MCC.
- Responsibilities** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of Bylaws, which are subject to approval by the Congregation and the appropriate member of UFMCC leadership. The Board of Directors shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation and/or registration, 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. The Board may form whatever Committees, involving members and friends, necessary to do its business.



## Article VI continued

- B. Qualification** – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of Church of the Trinity MCC for at least one (1) year and should have experience in the areas relevant to the business of the Church, such as financial and institutional planning, administrative, and policy development.
- 1. Background Check** – Anyone applying for a position on the Board of Directors must agree to a background check as part of the application process and receive a satisfactory report. Background checks will consist of both criminal and credit reports.
  - 2. Leadership Covenant** – All candidates for members of the Board of Directors positions must sign and agree to uphold the leadership covenant of the church in order to be a candidate or serve as an appointed leader in the church.
- C. Composition** – There shall be eight (8) members, including the Pastor who may serve as Moderator. Any vacancy will be filled as expediently as possible by the Board.
- D. Term of Office** – Newly elected members of the Board will take office the January following the November meeting of the congregation. The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall be two-year staggered terms. Members of the Board can hold office for two consecutive two-year terms. A member leaving the Board after two consecutive terms may be nominated to run again after a one year waiting period. There will be three (3) vacancies in even numbered years and four (4) vacancies in odd numbered years.
- E. Meetings** – The Board of Directors shall meet monthly no fewer than ten (10) times a year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public. Observers may not vote.
- 1.** Minutes and financial reports shall be maintained by the Board of Directors and available to Members of the church.
  - 2.** Board Members are required to attend all Board of Directors meetings. If attendance is not possible, the Board member should give proper notification to the Moderator and delegate any function for which the member is responsible. Any member of the Board of Directors who misses three (3) consecutive board meetings or four (4) meetings within a twelve (12) month period may be subject to removal by the remaining members of the Board of Directors.
- F. Quorum** – No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, including the Moderator, must be present in order to transact business. If the Moderator is unable to attend, a meeting of the Board of Directors may be conducted with the consent of the Moderator; in such instance, no less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors must be present. If the Moderator is incapacitated or otherwise unable to consider granting consent, no less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, including the Vice-Moderator must be present.
- G. Tie Votes** – In the unlikely event that the Board should be evenly split on an issue, the Board will continue to discuss the issue and a vote will be taken. If the tie remains the issue fails.



## Article VI continued

- H. Official Officers** – The official officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer.
- 1. Election of Officers** – During the first meeting of the fiscal year the Board of Directors shall elect officers from among its members. The Church Treasurer may or may not be a member of the Board of Directors and will be approved and appointed by the Board. The term of office for officers shall be one (1) year.
    - a. Moderator** – The Pastor may serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.
    - b. Vice-Moderator** – The Vice-Moderator may serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Moderator or 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 responsible for preparing and disseminating the agenda for all meetings of the Board of Directors one week in advance of meetings and one month in advance of Congregational meeting. 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. The church fiscal year and the church budget shall run from January 1 through December 31. Financial records of the church will be kept for ten years. The Church Treasurer is authorized and instructed to arrange for an annual audit of the Church’s financial records. The financial audit report must be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Any designated monetary contributions whose purpose cannot be fulfilled will be reallocated.
  - I. Vacancies** – In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board may appoint a qualified Member to fill the unexpired term. Depending on the vacancy, this appointment could range from a few months up to two years.
  - 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.
  - K. Right to Appeal** – A disciplined member of the Board of Directors may appeal the action to the congregation a Special Congregational meeting that will be called for this purpose.



## Article VI, section K, continued

This process will be held within a 45-day period and the decision of the Congregational Meeting is final.

- L. 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 directors' or officers' own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.
- M. 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, 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 or designees under the Pastor's supervision will do all spiritual guidance. The Pastor shall also fulfill such other roles and responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws and the policies of the Church.
- B. Responsibilities** – The Pastor shall have authority for ordering all worship services of the Church; determining when other worship services will be held, subject to approval of the Board of Directors; appointing compensated and uncompensated Church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors; and determining compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office and Church staff, subject to approval of the Board of Directors. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Board of Directors, Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings, personnel director, and as the primary spokesperson of the Church to the community. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise, including but not limited to the duty of serving as Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings.
- C. Pastoral Covenant** – The Board of Directors and Pastor shall develop a covenant between the Pastor and the Church. The covenant shall include a job description and address such matters as compensation that is consistent with equitable local standards, benefits, allowances, and leave. All provisions of the covenant shall be subordinate to the Bylaws of the UFMCC.
  - 1. Conference Expenses** – To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Pastor's transportation, registration, housing and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.



## Article VII, continued

- 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 denomination.
- 1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee** – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of at least three (3) appointed members of the Board of Directors and five (5) additional members of the Church elected at a Congregational Meeting.
  - 2. Election of Pastor** – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee and approved by the Board of Directors must receive more than seventy percent (70%) of the votes cast, at the Congregational Meeting.
- E. Termination of Relationship** – The Pastor and congregation may choose at anytime to terminate their relationship through mutual agreement. Unilateral failure to renew the Pastor’s contract shall not constitute removal of the Pastor from office. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as referred to in Article VIII.

## Article VIII – Conflict Resolution

When there are conflicts or difficulty within the Church that cannot be resolved in accordance with the Conflict Management Policy Manual of the Church of the Trinity the denomination may be invited to intervene to mediate the resolution of the conflict in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws. Examples of these conflicts may be conflicts between the Pastor and congregation, the Board of Directors, the Pastor, any Lay Delegate, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members in good standing.

- A. Removing the Pastor from Office** – The Church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC Bylaws for removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty, or when irreconcilable differences arise that cannot be resolved through mutual agreement.
- 1.** Any petition to initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office must be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors and be signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing.
  - 2.** The Board of Directors may initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors.
  - 3.** The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to the denomination within three (3) days.
  - 4.** The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the congregation.

## Article IX – Lay Delegate

The church shall elect one (1) lay person for every one hundred (100) Members in good standing, or part thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate. The Lay Delegate shall be a Member in good standing of this church for at least one (1) year.

- A. Election** – The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each General Conference. A majority of the votes cast shall be required to elect.



## Article IX, section A, continued

All candidates for Lay Delegate must sign and agree to uphold the leadership covenant of the church in order to be a candidate or serve as an appointed leader in the church.

- B. Term of Office** – The term of office of Lay Delegate shall be three (3) years. Lay Delegates may serve no more than (2) consecutive terms. The Board may appoint replacement Lay Delegates as the need arises.
- C. Duties** – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General and Regional Conferences, attend business meetings, plenary sessions and workshops, and to communicate with the Board of Directors at the monthly meetings and the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies, as they arise. After General and Regional Conferences, the Lay Delegates will present written reports to the Board in a timely manner.
- D. Funding** – To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Lay Delegate’s transportation, registration, housing and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.
- E. 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 of the Board of Directors to the congregation at a Special Congregational Meeting, which will be called for this purpose. This process will be held within a 45-day period. The decision of the Congregational Meeting will be final.

## Article X – Church Finances

- A. Authorized Signatures** – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures for withdrawals, all members of the Board of Directors and designated staff members shall have signature authority, as determined by the Board of Directors.
- B. Limit on Expenditures** – The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in any amount not to exceed \$2,500; any expenditure that is greater than \$2,500, or which is not included in the annual budget requires the approval of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that amount requires congregational approval.
- C. Gifts** – All gifts to the church are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Designated gifts may be accepted with a maximum of 20% used for administrative costs.
- D. Fiscal Year** – For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year.
- E. Church Budget** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for presenting to the Congregational meeting for approval, an annual operating budget that reflects anticipated receipts and disbursements. The approved budget may be amended, as needed, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, which shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment has been made.





## Article X, section E, continued

1. **Budget Year** – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through December.
- F. **Assessments** – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly to the UFMCC the number of members in good standing for each month within the quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessments as set by General Conference. The report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the quarter reported.
- G. **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 denomination.
- 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 majority (50% +1) affirmative vote of the members present at a congregational meeting and is subject to approval by the denomination. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.

Approved by the Congregation: November 3, 2019  
Approved by the Congregation: January 13, 2018  
Approved by the Congregation: January 12, 2013  
Approved by the Congregation: October 27, 2012  
Approved by the Congregation: October 29, 2011  
Revised by Board of Directors in compliance with UFMCC Bylaws: Nov. 16, 2010  
Approved by the Congregation at Special Meeting: May 12, 2010  
Approved by the Congregation: October 25, 2008  
Approved by the Congregation: October 14, 2006  
Approved by the Congregation: October 25, 2003