

Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Saint Louis Bylaws

Article I Name

The name of this church shall be **Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Saint Louis**, also known as **MCCGSL**.

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

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 Policies and Procedures.

Article IV Members and Associates

- A. **Associate 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 an “Associate of the Church.”
 - 1. List of Associate of the Church – The list of Associate of the Church shall be maintained by church staff.
 - 2. Limitations on Associate of the Church – Associate may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the church. Associate may not vote at Congregational Meetings or serve in elected positions. Associate shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates.
- B. **Requirements for Membership** – In order to become a member in good standing, one must complete the following:
 - 1. Attend a Membership Class covering MCC beliefs, ministries, and history.
 - a. If a person cannot attend the regularly scheduled Membership Class, the responsible Church Staff member may set up a one-on-one session.
 - 2. Participate in the Rite of Membership in worship.
 - a. Should a person fail to attend their scheduled Rite of Membership, they may, within one (1) year of the date which they completed the membership class, participate in a later Rite of Membership.
 - b. Should any person be incapable of participating in the Rite of Membership they

must meet with the responsible Pastoral Staff, who may waive the participation requirement.

C. **Criteria for Maintaining Member Status** – A Member in good standing is a Member who:

1. Registers his/her attendance regularly;
2. Provides identifiable financial support;
3. Offers service to the church with time, talent, and care, and
4. Commits to the ongoing process of spiritual growth.

D. **Membership List** – The list of Members in good standing shall be maintained by the church staff, who shall report changes every six months to the Board of Directors.

Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list in July of each year.

1. A member, who does not meet the criteria for maintaining Member Status 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.
2. 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.
3. Once moved to inactive Member status, if a person fails to return to good standing 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 the local church membership roll.
4. 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.
5. The inactive Member who is not restored during the period of two (2) months immediately following notification shall be considered a former Member.
6. A former Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing after completing the membership series and participating in the Rite of Membership, as defined in Article IV.B.

E. **Right to Appeal**- A decision by the Board of Directors to drop an inactive Member from the local church membership roll 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.

1. Appeal process. The request for an appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive Member was dropped from the local church membership roll.
2. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
3. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the inactive Member wish 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.

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

1. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify the Member, via certified mail, that they are being disciplined and the manner of discipline being imposed.

2. Right to Appeal – The action of the Board may be appealed to the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal of discipline, the disciplined Member shall remain under discipline and, if a Member, he/she 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 in writing to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the postmark date of the notification.
 - 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 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, or documents of legal organization, and the General Conference.
- B. **Time and Place** – An annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the fourth quarter. The time and place of the annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Directors. Congregational Meetings may be held in physical or virtual space.
- C. **Notification** – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least two 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.
- 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, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of budget, and receiving reports from the Board of Directors and the Senior 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, (b) the Senior 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 - Board of Directors

- A. **Name** – The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Directors, which is authorized to provide administrative leadership for MCGSL, subject to approval of the Congregational Meeting.
- B. **Responsibilities** – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of Bylaws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and by UFMCC, and for submitting the approved Bylaws to UFMCC. The Board of Directors shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation, church property, risk management, and physical and financial affairs of the church. The Board of Directors shall also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC.
- C. **Qualifications** - In order to serve on the Board of Directors, a person must have been an active member of the church for no less than one year at the time of elections and have demonstrated leadership, and will have attended at least one (1) meeting of the Board of Directors in the 18 months prior to the election.
 1. Other than the Moderator, members of the Board of Directors may not hold salaried positions within the church.
 2. Spouses/partners in an ongoing relationship shall not simultaneously serve on the Board of Directors.
 3. Members of the Board of Directors may not have spouses or other immediate family members holding paid positions within the church. Members of the Board of Directors with spouses or other immediate family members holding other volunteer leadership positions shall abstain from voting on any motions directly affecting those positions.
 4. Members of the Board of Directors shall not hold any other elected positions within the church.
- D. **Composition** – There shall be nine (9) members, including the Senior Pastor who will serve as Moderator or may designate another board member to do so.
- E. **Term of Office** - Length of term shall be three (3) years. Any individual serving on the Board will be limited to two (2) consecutive elected terms. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, the Board of Directors may appoint a qualified Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting. At that point an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.
- F. **Nomination Process** - To be elected to the Board of Directors a candidate must make application to the Nominations Panel for the Board of Directors, in accordance with the Board Nominations Process as published in the MCGSL Standard Operating Policies and Procedures (SOPPs).
 1. In July of each year, the Board must appoint a Nominations Panel. This panel shall be comprised of the Moderator of the Board, a member of the Board not up for reelection, and three members-at-large from the congregation
- G. **Meetings** – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend as Observers without 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.

- H. **Quorum** - A quorum of the Board shall be required for any official Board action. A quorum of the Board shall consist of a simple majority of the currently seated members of the Board of Directors.
- I. **Official Officers** – The official officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer.
- J. **Election of Officers** – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of Directors shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer. The term of office for officers shall be one (1) year.
1. Moderator – The Senior Pastor may serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.
 2. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Senior Pastor.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
- K. **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 remaining Board of Directors any of its members guilty of the above, with the exception of the Senior 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. Notification – After the Board of Directors makes a decision to discipline a member of the Board, the Board of Directors shall notify the Board Member, via certified mail, that they are being disciplined and the manner of discipline being imposed.
 2. 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 position held by the disciplined member of the Board of Directors shall be considered vacant.
 - a. Appeal Process – The request for an appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the postmark date of the notification.
 - b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
 - c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the disciplined Board Member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of considering the appeal.
- 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

director's or officer's 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 or fraudulent or criminal actions.

Article VII Senior Pastor

- A. **Role** – The Senior Pastor is a 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 Senior Pastor shall also fulfill such other roles and responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws, MCGSL Bylaws, and the MCGSL Standard Policies and Procedures of the church.
1. **Interim Pastoral Leader** – In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as Senior Pastor, the Board of Directors may request UFMCC to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader, who shall be subject to a background check. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader shall be as needed. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of MCGSL, then the Interim Pastoral Leader may have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of MCGSL, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Senior Pastor, except that the Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and Congregational Meetings, with voice but no vote.
- B. **Responsibilities** – The Senior Pastor shall have authority for ordering all worship services of the church; determining when other worship services will be held, subject to approval of the Board of Directors; appointing compensated and uncompensated church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors; and determining compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the church staff, subject to approval of the Board of Directors. The Senior 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 Senior 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 Senior Pastor shall develop a covenant between the Senior 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 Senior Pastor's transportation, registration, and per diem at UFMCC Conferences.
- D. **Pastoral Vacancy** – In the event of a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor, a Pastoral Search Team shall be responsible for presenting a qualified candidate for election at a Congregational Meeting. The Pastoral Search Team shall develop and implement the pastoral search process, in consultation with UFMCC, in accordance with the Pastoral Search Team Nominating Process as published in the MCGSL Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.
1. **Composition of Pastoral Search Team** – The Pastoral Search Team shall consist of three members of the Board of Directors and six members-at-large from the congregation elected at a Congregational Meeting.
 2. **Election of Senior Pastor** – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Team must receive at least eighty percent (80%) of the votes cast.
- B. **Termination of Relationship** – The Senior Pastor and congregation may choose at any time to terminate

their relationship through mutual agreement. Unilateral failure to renew the Senior Pastor's contract shall not constitute removal of the Pastor from office. No petition for removal of the Senior Pastor based on irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by the process of conflict resolution, as referred to in Article VIII.

Article VIII Conflict Resolution

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

- A. **Removing the Senior Pastor from Office** – The church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC Bylaws for removing the Senior 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 Senior 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 Senior Pastor from office by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Board of Directors, excluding the Senior Pastor who has no vote.
 3. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to UFMCC within three (3) days.
 4. The Senior Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the congregation.

Article IX Lay Delegate

- A. MCGSL shall elect one (1) lay person for every one hundred Members in good standing, or part thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate. The Lay Delegate shall be a Member in good standing of the church.
- B. **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.
- C. **Qualifications** – In order to serve as a Lay Delegate, a person must have been an active member of the church for no less than one year at the time of elections.
1. A Lay Delegate may not hold salaried positions within the church.
 2. Spouses/partners in an ongoing relationship shall not simultaneously serve as Lay Delegate.
 3. A Lay Delegate may not have a spouse/partner holding a position as a pastor within the church.
 4. A Lay Delegate shall not hold any other elected positions within the church.
 5. The Lay Delegate shall demonstrate regular attendance to Sunday services. The Lay Delegate shall register his/her attendance and demonstrate interest and loyalty.
 6. A Lay Delegate shall have a clear understanding of MCGSL concerns and policies.
- D. **Term of Office** – The term of office of the Lay Delegate shall be three (3) years.
- E. **Nomination Process** - To be elected as a Lay Delegate a candidate must make application to the same Nominations Panel that screens nominations for the Board of Directors. The timeline of the nomination process shall be the same as the timeline of the nomination process for the Board of Directors, as contained in the SOPPs.
- F. **Duties** – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General Conference,

to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies, and to report to the Board of Directors on activities and findings from the conferences.

G. **Funding** – To the best of its ability, as determined by the Board of Directors, the congregation shall fund the Lay Delegate’s transportation, registration, and per diem at UFMCC Conferences.

H. **Alternate Lay Delegate** – The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The election and term of office shall be the same as for the Lay Delegate.

1. Notification – When a Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate; the Lay Delegate shall immediately inform the Clerk of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall select which of the Alternate Lay Delegates shall serve in the absence of the Lay Delegate. If no Alternate Lay Delegate is able to serve, the Board of Directors shall appoint another person to serve in the absence of the Lay Delegate.

2. 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 Conferences.

I. **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 majority vote of the 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. Notification - After the Board of Directors makes a decision to discipline a Lay Delegate, the Board of Directors shall notify the Lay Delegate, via certified mail, that they are being disciplined and the manner of discipline being imposed.

2. 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. Until the Congregational Meeting to consider the appeal, the position held by the disciplined Lay Delegate shall be filled by an Alternate Lay Delegate.

a. Appeal Process - The request for an appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the postmark date of the notification.

b. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.

c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the disciplined Lay Delegate/Alternate Lay Delegate 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

J. In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Directors may appoint a qualified Member to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting. At that point an election shall be held to fill the unexpired term.

Article X Church Finances

A. **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.

1. 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.

2. Budget Year - The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from

January 1 through December 31.

- B. **Board of Pensions 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.
 - 1. 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.
- C. **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.
- D. **Limit on Expenditures** - The Senior Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the budget; any expenditure that is greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.
 - 1. 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.
- E. **Authorized Signatures** - Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which shall be that of a board member; all members of the Board of Directors and designated staff members shall have signature authority, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article XI Adoptions and Amendments

- A. **Adoption** – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational Meeting and approval by UFMCC.
- B. **Amendments** – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later than 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 UFMCC. Amendments to MCGSL By-Laws, that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation but shall require notification to the congregation.