



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH BRISBANE INC.

BYLAWS

Approved by Special Congregational Meeting 29 July 2017

Article I - Name

The name of this church shall be Metropolitan Community Church Brisbane Inc., also known as MCC Brisbane.

Article II - Affiliation

A. MCC Brisbane 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 organisation 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 Procedures, Rules of Incorporation and Policies.

Article IV - Members

A. Criteria for Membership - A baptised Christian who, for a period of six months or more:

1. attends worship regularly
2. provides financial support
3. makes a service contribution
4. demonstrates interest and loyalty

and who obtains the recommendation of a Member, a majority vote of the Board of Directors and completes a membership program, may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership.

A Member in good standing is a Member who (1) continues to attend worship regularly, (2) provides financial support, (3) makes a service contribution, and (4) demonstrates interest and loyalty.

B. Sponsorship - The Member who made the recommendation for membership may serve as the person's Sponsor to provide spiritual support and assist with assimilation into the life of the church.

C. Affirming and Celebrating Membership - Each year on Fellowship Sunday, all Members will have the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to membership.

D. Membership List - The Clerk shall maintain a list of Members and shall report changes monthly to the Board of Directors.

E. Membership Review -

1. The Board of Directors shall review the membership list annually.
2. A Member who has not demonstrated a commitment to membership during the previous year may be placed on a list of inactive Members.
3. The Board of Directors shall notify the inactive Member in writing that the Member has been placed on a list of inactive Members and is not eligible to vote at any Congregational Meeting.
4. If the inactive Member has not reaffirmed a commitment to membership within thirty (30) days of receiving such a notice, the Board of Directors may remove the Member from the membership list, and the Member shall be considered to be a former Member.
5. A former Member may be restored to the list of Members by following the same procedure as a non-member.
6. Right to Appeal - An inactive Member who was removed from the membership list may appeal the action to the congregation at the next Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting that may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the former Member is not eligible to vote at any Congregational Meeting of the church, including the Congregational Meeting at which the appeal is considered.
7. Appeal Process -
 - a) The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within sixty (60) days following the date when the inactive Member was removed from the membership list.
 - b) The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without the appeal proceeding to a Congregational Meeting.
 - c) Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the former Member wishes the appeal to proceed to a Congregational Meeting, the appeal shall be included as an agenda item for this Meeting.

F. Discipline of Members -

1. The church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any Member. Therefore, the Board of Directors may remove the offending Member from the membership list, by majority vote, or take other appropriate disciplinary action.

2. Right to Appeal - A disciplined Member may appeal the action to the congregation at the next Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting that may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the disciplined Member shall remain under discipline and shall retain the right to vote at Congregational Meetings, including the Congregational Meeting at which the appeal is considered except in the matter of the appeal. However, if the disciplinary action included removing the Member from the membership list, then the former Member shall not be eligible to vote at any Congregational Meeting, including the Congregational Meeting at which the appeal is considered

3. Appeal Process -

a) The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within sixty (60) days following the date when the disciplinary action was taken.

b) The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without the appeal proceeding to a Congregational Meeting.

c) Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the disciplined Member wishes the appeal to proceed to a Congregational Meeting, the appeal shall be included as an agenda item for this Meeting.

Article V - Congregational Meetings

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

B. Time and Place - A Congregational Meeting shall normally be held annually after the close of the church financial year and before the end of the current calendar year. The Board of Directors shall determine the time and place of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

C. Notification - The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least fourteen (14) days in advance. Such notice shall include an agenda.

D. Quorum - In order to transact business, at least one-third (1/3) of the Members must be present.

E. Voting Rights - Each Member has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of absentee voting shall not be allowed.

F. Votes Required for Approval - Decisions, including elections, require 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 or the Rules of Incorporation

G. Agenda -

1. The Moderator and Clerk shall determine the agenda for Congregational Meetings.
2. Content - The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board of Directors in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of the budget, and receiving reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor(s).
3. Additions to Agenda - Members shall be invited to add agenda items by submitting them to the Clerk no later than three (3) weeks prior to the meeting.

H. Special Congregational Meetings -

1. 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.
2. A Special Congregational Meeting may be called by
 - a) the Board of Directors by a majority vote, or
 - b) the Pastor, or
 - c) a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members and submitted to the Clerk.
3. The nature and purpose of the Special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and in notices, and be written into the agenda.

Article VI - Local Church Administrative Body

A. Name - The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Directors, which is authorised to provide administrative leadership for MCC Brisbane.

B. Responsibilities - The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with Bylaws, which are subject to approval by a Congregational Meeting and the UFMCC Office of Emerging Ministries. The Board of Directors shall submit the approved Bylaws to the Office of Emerging Ministries for approval. The Board of Directors shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organisation and incorporation or registration, 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 -

1. Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of MCC Brisbane.

2. Conflict of Interest - More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship; or someone who is a Clergy candidate shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.

D. Composition - There shall be at least 5 members of the Board of Directors, including the Pastor, Lay Delegate, Clerk, Treasurer and at least one other Member.

E. Election.

1. Election of the Board of Directors takes place at a Congregational Meeting.

2. Any Member of MCC Brisbane is eligible for election to the Board of Directors. Members may be nominated by another Member or may self-nominate. A sponsor must support all nominations.

3. Members standing for election shall nominate for a vacant office as listed in Article VI.H.2, or as a member of the Board if applicable. Nominations may only be made for the office of Moderator where the Moderator is not the Pastor.

4. Members standing for election shall indicate their qualifications or experience for the vacant office.

5. Nominations shall be made on the form provided for that purpose and include the:

- a) name and signature of the person nominating
- b) office for which the person is nominating
- c) name and signature of the sponsor
- d) qualifications or experience for the office.

6. The Clerk shall receive nominations before the advertised starting time for the Congregational Meeting.

7. All votes for elected positions shall be by secret ballot. If there is only one candidate for a position, the vote may be by a show of hands.

8. A simple majority shall determine election.

F. Term of Office –

1. The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except for the Lay Delegate and the Pastor, shall be two-years.

2. Half of the Board members shall be elected at each Annual Congregational Meeting.

3. The term of office for the Lay Delegate is three years, in accordance with the time between each General Conference.

G. Meetings -

1. The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the congregation and to the public to attend as Observers with voice but no vote.

2. Voting Rights - Each member has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of absentee voting shall not be allowed.

3. Votes Required for Approval - Decisions require 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.

4. Quorum - No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors must be present in order to transact business.

5. 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. Official Officers -

1. The official officers of the church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and Lay Delegate.

2. Duties of Officers

a) **Moderator** - The Moderator shall be responsible for the administration of the business of the church.

b) **Vice-Moderator** - The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator in the absence or upon the request of the Moderator.

c) **Clerk** - The Clerk shall be responsible for convening all meetings of the congregation and the Board of Directors, 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 authorised 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.

e) **Lay Delegate** - In addition to the duties laid out in Article IX.D of these Bylaws, the Lay Delegate shall act as a steward for the congregation representing their individual or collective concerns, issues and ideas to the Board of Directors.

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

J. Discipline of Board Members -

1. 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 at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members of MCC Brisbane may also initiate such a procedure.

2. Right to Appeal - A disciplined member of the Board of Directors may appeal the action to the congregation at the next Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting that may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the position held by the disciplined member of the Board of Directors shall be considered vacant.

K. Limitation of Liability –

1. No member of the Board of Directors shall be liable for any act or failure to act by any other member of the Board of Directors or by any employee of the Church.

2. No member of the Board of Directors shall be liable for any loss arising from any fault in the title to any property acquired by the Church.

3. No member of the Board of Directors 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.

4. No member of the Board of Directors 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 member's own wilful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

L. Indemnity - The church shall protect every member of the Board of Directors against all costs arising in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by his/her own wilful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

Article VII - Pastor

A. Role -

1. The Pastor is the UFMCC clergy person with a licence 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 fulfil such other roles and responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws and the policies of the church.

2 Interim Pastoral Leader - In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as Pastor, the Board of Directors may request the UFMCC Office of Church Life and Health to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader, who shall be subject to a Police Criminal History Report.

a) The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader shall be one (1) year or as negotiated.

b) If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of MCC Brisbane, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfil all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of MCC Brisbane, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfil all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor, except that the Interim Pastoral Leader shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors and Congregational Meetings, with voice but no vote.

B. Responsibilities –

1. The Pastor shall have authority for ordering all worship services of the church; 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.

2. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Board of Directors, normally as Moderator of the Board of Directors and Congregational Meetings, personnel director, and as the primary spokesperson for the church to the community.

3. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise.

C. Pastoral Covenant -

1. 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.

2. Conference Expenses - To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Pastor's transportation, registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.

D. Pastoral Vacancy -

1. 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 UFMCC Office of Church Life and Health.

2 Composition of Pastoral Search Committee - The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of at least three (3) Members of MCC Brisbane, including two (2) members of the Board of Directors and one (1) additional member elected at a Congregational Meeting.

3 Election of Pastor - To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee must receive at least seventy percent (70%) of the votes cast during a Congregational Meeting. Upon election the Pastor becomes a Member of MCC Brisbane.

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 of these Bylaws.

Article VIII - Conflict Resolution

A. Where there is conflict or difficulty within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved - including conflict between the Pastor and congregation - the Board of Directors, the Pastor, a Lay Delegate, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members may invite intervention by the UFMCC Office of Church Life and Health to resolve the conflict or difficulty, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

B. Removing the Pastor from Office -

1. In the event of the Pastor's disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty, or when irreconcilable differences arise that cannot be resolved through mutual agreement, the church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC Bylaws for removing the Pastor from office.

2. 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.

3. The Board of Directors may initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office by a vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the full Board of Directors.

4. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to the UFMCC Office of Church Life and Health within three (3) days.

5. The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the process of removal is complete.

Article IX - Lay Delegate

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

B. Election - The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next Annual Congregational Meeting following each General Conference. A simple majority is sufficient to elect.

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

D. Duties - In addition to the duties laid out in Article VI.H.2.e of these Bylaws, the Lay Delegate shall represent the congregation at General and Regional Conferences, subject to funding being available, and to communicate with the congregation regarding UFMCC concerns and policies.

E. Funding - To the best of its ability, the congregation shall fund the Lay Delegate's transportation, registration, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.

F. Alternate Lay Delegate -

1. The church shall elect one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate. The election, term of office, and funding shall be the same as for Lay Delegate.

2. Notification to Alternate Lay Delegate - When the Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, the Lay Delegate shall immediately inform the Alternate Lay Delegate and the Clerk of the Board of Directors. If the Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to serve, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Member to serve in the absence of the Alternate Lay Delegate.

3. 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 the 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.

G. Discipline of Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate -

1. 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 submitted to the Clerk and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

2. Right to Appeal - A disciplined Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate may appeal the action to the congregation at the next Congregational Meeting or at a Special Congregational Meeting that may be called for this purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the position held by a disciplined Lay Delegate shall be filled by the Alternate Lay Delegate.

Article X - Church Finances

A. Authorised Signatures - Any bank accounts or other financial accounts of the church shall require two signatures for withdrawals. Signatories must be members of the Board of Directors.

B. Limit on Expenditures - The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget.

C. Fiscal Year - For the purpose of reporting to UFMCC, the fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year.

D. Church Budget -

1. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the presentation of an annual operating budget reflecting anticipated receipts and disbursements to the Annual Congregational Meeting for approval.

2. Budget Year - The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from 1st August through to 31st July.

E. Church Reports - The Treasurer, on behalf of 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 a Congregational Meeting and approval by the UFMCC Office of Emerging Ministries.

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 where the proposals are to be considered. Adoption of an amendment or a repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote and is subject to approval by UFMCC Office of Emerging Ministries. Amendments necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.

Voted: 29 July 2017