



**Bylaws of Wichita Falls Metropolitan Community Church
Wichita Falls, Texas
Approved via Congregational Meeting on October 25, 2015**

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be Wichita Falls Metropolitan Community Church, also known as Wichita Falls MCC and WFMCC.

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. Doctrine, Sacraments, and Rites – Wichita Falls MCC subscribes to the UFMCC Doctrine, Sacraments and Rites as stated in the UFMCC Bylaws.
- 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 Active 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.

- 1. Church Vision – Wichita Falls MCC is an exuberantly inclusive, loving, and serving community of faith offering God's promise, Christ's salvation, and the Holy Spirit's comfort to all.
- 2. Church Mission – Wichita Falls MCC seeks to
 - a. Gather in compassionate kinship with acceptance of all,
 - b. Encourage awakenings within the diverse paths of following Christ, and
 - c. Celebrate a common faith in a loving God, endless hope in the face of suffering and doubt, and the many gifts of the Spirit present in the Body of Christ.

Article IV – Members and Friends

A. Criteria for Membership – Any believer who has completed a membership class may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership. An Active Member is a Member who registers his/her attendance, provides identifiable financial support on a regular basis, makes a definite service contribution both to the health of the church and to the ministries the church offers into the community, and demonstrates interest and loyalty to the church body. These considerations shall be considered wholistic involvement in the church, and are to be considered together for the status of active membership.

- 1. Membership List – The list of Members shall be maintained by the Clerk, who shall report changes monthly to the Board of Trustees.

2. Membership Review – The Board of Trustees shall review the membership list in July of 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 six (6) months may be removed from the list of Active Members and placed on a list of Inactive Members.
 - b. The Board of Trustees 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 congregational 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 Trustees shall have the authority, at its discretion, to remove any such Member from the church membership roll.
 - d. The inactive Member may be restored to the list of Active Members by a vote of the Board of Trustees without a public reception into membership.
 - e. The inactive Member who is not restored during the period of two (2) months immediately following notification shall be considered a former Member.
 - f. A former Member may be restored to the list of Active Members after completing a membership class and participating in the Rite of Membership.
3. Right to Appeal. A decision by the Board of Trustees to remove an Inactive Member from the 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 congregational meeting of the church.
 - a. Appeal process. The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Trustees within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive Member was removed and/or notified of being removed from the church membership roll.

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. List of Friends of the Church – The list of Friends of the Church shall be maintained by the Board of Trustees.
2. Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed committees, lead ministry efforts, and may participate in all activities of the church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings or serve on the Board of Trustees.

C. Discipline of Members and Friends – The church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any Member or Friend. The Board of Trustees is empowered to remove by majority vote any Member or Friend 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 or Friend 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 Trustees within thirty (30) days following the date of the disciplinary action.
 - b. The Board of Trustees may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.
 - c. Should the Board of Trustees sustain its earlier decision and the Member or Friend 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

Government of the church is vested in its Congregational Meeting, which exerts the right of control of 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 in the month of October. The time and place of the annual Congregational Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Trustees.

B. Notification – The Board of Trustees shall notify Members in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance. Active Members who wish to vote are expected to reserve the date, and the congregational meeting shall not be moved to a date beyond the month stated in Article V, Item A.

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

D. Votes Required for Approval – Decisions of regular business requires approval by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of those Active Members present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC Bylaws or otherwise stated in these local church Bylaws. Elections require approval by a vote of more than sixty-five percent (65%) of those Active Members present and voting.

E. Quorum – In order to transact business, no less than thirty percent (30%) of the Active Members must be present.

F. Agenda – The agenda for Congregational Meetings shall be determined by the Board of Trustees.

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 Trustees and the Pastor.

2. Additions to Agenda – Members may request the Board of Trustees to add agenda items by submitting additional agenda items to the Clerk no later than three (3) weeks prior to the meeting. The Board of Trustees shall determine whether or not to add the requested agenda item.

G. Elections – All elected positions must come thru a nominations process as established by the Board of Trustees. There will be no nominations from the floor. All votes for positions shall be taken by secret ballot. Votes of affirmation 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 forty percent (40%) of the Active 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 be written into the agenda.

Article VI – Church Administrative Body

A. Name – The local church administrative body shall be the Board of Trustees, which is authorized to provide administrative leadership for Wichita Falls MCC, subject to the approval of the Congregational Meeting.

B. Responsibilities – The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of Bylaws, and for submitting the approved Bylaws to UFMCC. The Board of Trustees shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation, strategic planning, church

policy, church property, risk-management, and physical and financial affairs of the church. The Board of Trustees shall also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC. The Board of Trustees shall also put into place a nominations process for all elected positions.

C. Qualifications – Members of the Board of Trustees must be Active Members of Wichita Falls MCC.

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 Trustees.

D. Composition – There shall be six (6) members, including the Pastor, who shall serve as Moderator.

E. Term of Office – The term of office for members of the Board of Trustees, except the Pastor, shall be two-year staggered terms, elected at each annual Congregational Meeting.

F. Meetings – The Board of Trustees 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 voice or 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 Trustees, including the Moderator, must be present in order to transact business. If the Moderator is unable to attend, a meeting of the Board of Trustees may be conducted with the consent of the Moderator; in such instance, no less than a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees 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 Trustees, including the Vice-Moderator, must be present.

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

1. Election of Officers – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of Trustees shall elect from among its members persons to fill the positions of Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer. The term of office for officers, except for Moderator, shall be one (1) year.
 - a. Duties of Officers:
 - i. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Trustees.
 - ii. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Pastor.
 - iii. 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 Trustees and of the Congregation. The Clerk is the officer authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Trustees.
 - iv. 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 Trustees, the Board shall appoint within 30 days 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 Trustees. Therefore, the Board of Trustees may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Trustees 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 forty percent (40%) of the Active Members of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure for any member of the Board of Trustees.

1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Board of Trustees may appeal the action to the congregation at its next regular Congregational Meeting 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 Trustees 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.

M. Consecutive Term Limits – Members may serve up to three (3) consecutive elected terms on the Board of Trustees. In case of a vacancy in the subsequent election, they may be appointed for a 1-year term. They may run for re-election after 1 year from the end of their service, elected or appointed.

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.

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 Trustees; appointing compensated and uncompensated church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees; and determining compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the church staff, subject to approval of the Board of Trustees. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Board of Trustees in the case of a tied vote, Moderator of the Board of Trustees 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.

C. Pastoral Covenant/Contract – The Board of Trustees 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, and per diem at General Conferences and other activities of UFMCC.

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 UFMCC.

1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of nine (9) members, including four (4) members of the Board of Trustees and five (5) additional members elected at a Congregational Meeting.
2. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee must receive more than eighty-five percent (85%) 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

When there are conflicts or difficulty within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts between the Pastor and congregation, the Board of Trustees, the Pastor, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Active Members may invite intervention by the UFMCC to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws. The process for navigating conflict resolution shall be found in the Wichita Falls MCC Standard Operating Procedures and any other policies set in place by the Board of Trustees and adopted by the congregation.

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 Trustees and be signed by at least forty percent (40%) of the Active Members.
2. The Board of Trustees may initiate the process of removing the Pastor from office by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Trustees.
3. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Trustees and to the UFMCC within three (3) days.
4. The Board of Trustees shall then call a Special Congregational Meeting with at least two (2) weeks notice to the congregation. The announcement shall include the nature and purpose of the meeting.
5. Removal of the Pastor shall require a vote of eighty-five percent (80%) of the present Active Members.
6. 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, or part thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate. The Lay Delegate shall be an Active Member of this church.

A. Election – The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each General Conference.

B. Term of Office - The term of office of Lay Delegate shall be as required by General Conference.

C. Duties – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General Conference and to stay aware of the concerns and policies of UFMCC and of the activities of UFMCC in the world.

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

1. In the vent that the church is unable to fund the Lay Delegate’s attendance at General Conference in a General Conference year, the Lay Delegate may petition the Board of Trustees for reimbursement of expenses related to General Conference in following budget years. All expenses requested to be reimbursed must be accompanied by detailed receipts.

2. The Lay Delegate is authorized to engage in fundraising activities to raise money to attend General Conference or other UFMCC-sponsored events, with approval by the Board of Trustees.
3. Funding provided by the church shall apply solely to the expenses accrued by the Lay Delegate. Shared hotel, meals, and travel expenses (such as taxi rides, etc.) by friends or family of the Lay Delegate shall be reimbursed to the church no less than sixty (60) days following General Conference.

E. 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 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 Trustees. If the Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to serve, the Board of Trustees shall appoint someone to serve in the absence of the Alternate Lay Delegate.

F. Conflict of Interest – the Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate may not be from the same household. If the Lay Delegate is a member of the household of a member of the Board of Trustees, said Board of Trustees member shall abstain from all decisions pertaining to the duties, responsibilities, or expenses of the Lay Delegate.

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 Trustees may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Trustees any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate guilty of the above. A petition presented to the Board of Trustees and signed by forty-five percent (45%) of the Active Members of the congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

1. Appeal of Discipline – A disciplined Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate may appeal the action to the congregation at its next regular Congregational Meeting 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 Lay Delegate shall be filled by an Alternate Lay Delegate, or an Active Member appointed by the Board of Trustees.

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 Trustees shall have signature authority.

B. Limit on Expenditures – 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 Trustees.

The Board of Trustees 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 Trustees 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 two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Trustees, which shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment has been made.

1. Budget Year – The annual budget of the church shall cover the period from January through December.

E. Board of Pensions Assessments – The Board of Trustees shall report quarterly the number of Active Members 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. Denominational Assessments – The Board of Trustees 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 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 Trustees 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 UFMCC. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the congregation.