

New Light

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

(Revised: October 2007)

Article I. Name and Status

A. Name

The name of the congregation shall be *New Light Metropolitan Community Church* or in abbreviated form, *New Light MCC*, hereinafter referred to as “The Church”.

B. Status

The Church is a Christian congregation and is a Commissioned church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (hereinafter referred to as UFMCC) under the jurisdiction of the Region 3.

C. Government

The Church recognizes it’s responsibility to govern itself in accordance with the Bylaws of the UFMCC.

D. Member

Any baptized person who subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, who has completed membership classes and has pledged time, talent and finances to the ministry of the Church and has been received by the congregation at a worship service may become a member of the congregation of the Church. As members we do affirm the scriptural principle of tithing.

Article II. Adoption and Power

A. Approval

The Standard Operating Procedures, hereafter referred to as the ‘SOP’, shall become effective upon approval by a two-thirds majority of those Members of the Church present and voting at a Congregational Meeting. The SOP must be approved by Region 3 prior to implementation.

B. Binding Nature

Upon adoption and approval, the SOP shall be fully binding on the Church and its Members, officers, committees, and staff.

C. Amendment

The SOP may be amended at any Congregational Meeting for which Members of the congregation are notified in accordance with Article III. D. of the SOP. Amendments shall be effective only upon approval by two-thirds of those Members of the Church present and voting at a Congregational Meeting and approved by Region 3 Committee.

D. Suspension

Should the necessity arise, a Congregational Meeting may suspend a specific section or sections of the SOP upon approval by three-quarters of those members present and voting: suspension shall terminate when the Congregational Meeting adjourns. Suspended sections may not violate UFMCC Bylaws or SOP.

E. Precedence

This SOP shall in no way conflict with the UFMCC Bylaws, in all areas of apparent conflict, the UFMCC Bylaws shall take precedence over this SOP.

Article III. Congregation

A. Congregational Meeting

The authority of and responsibility of the Church ultimately rests with the congregation and is exercised within the Congregational Meeting. The decisions of the Congregational Meeting are binding on the Church, its members, Friends, officers, ministries, committees, and staff.

B. Regularly Scheduled Meetings

One Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the Fall. The exact date shall be set by the Pastor and Board of Directors.

1. Business to be Conducted

The Fall Congregational Meeting shall include, but is in no way limited to, conduct of the following business: receiving of the Pastor's Annual Report; elections of Board of Directors, Lay Delegate(s), and Alternate Lay Delegate(s), when required; and adoption of the budget.

2. Reports

At each regularly scheduled Congregational Meeting there shall be reports from the Pastor, the Treasurer, the Lay Delegate(s), and the Clerk of the Board of Directors. The Pastors Report shall include the activities, spiritual growth, and development of the Church during the period being reported, and it shall articulate the vision for the future. The Treasurers Report shall include presentation of the actual financial position of the Church during the period being reported. The Clerks Report shall include the minutes of the previous Congregational Meeting.

C. Specially Scheduled Meetings

A Special Congregational Meeting may be called by (1) the Pastor, (2) the Board of Directors, or (3) by petition signed by at least 25% of the Members as outlined by UFMCC Bylaws. All Special Congregational Meetings shall be governed by the rules pertaining to regularly scheduled Congregational Meetings, with the exception of Section B of this article.

D. Notification

At least two weeks prior to a Congregational Meeting, the Board of Directors shall mail or otherwise give to all Members of the Church written notification of the date and purpose of the meeting. The meeting shall also be announced at public worship.

E. Agenda

The agenda for a Congregational Meeting shall be drafted by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors. The Clerk shall make it available to the congregation two weeks prior to the Congregational meeting along with any additional reports that are to be presented.

1. Agenda Items

An item must be placed on the agenda by (1) the Pastor, (2) the Board of Directors, or by (3) written request of at least 25% of the Members of the Church.

2. Agenda Item Deadline

An item may be submitted to the Pastor for inclusion on the agenda three weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting.

F. Transaction of Business

1. Quorum

At least 20% of the Members of the Church must be present at the Congregational meeting in order for business to be transacted.

2. Majority Vote

A majority vote shall be required to carry any motion or to decide any election except as specified on other Articles and Sections of the SOP or in the UFMCC Bylaws. A majority is defined as more than one-half, or 50% plus 1 of those Members present and voting.

3. Proxy

There shall be no vote by proxy or by any other form of substitute voting.

4. Elections

Election shall be by secret and written ballot.

5. Counting Ballots

Two persons chosen by the Clerk will collect and count the ballots and will report the outcome to the Clerk and Moderator. The Moderator will report the totals for each candidate.

6. Voided Ballots

Illegible ballots, ballots with more names than positions, and ballots where names are repeated for the same person shall not be counted.

G. Congregational Forum

A Congregational Forum may be called by the Pastor, Board of Directors, or by a petition signed by 20% of the Members of the Church for the purpose of discussing matters of concern to the congregation. No binding votes may be conducted at a Congregational Forum.

1. Forum Agenda

The agenda will be set by the Pastor based on the reason for which the meeting was called.

2. Scheduling

The date of a Congregational Forum shall be set by the Pastor and Board of Directors.

3. Notification

At least two weeks prior to the Congregational Forum, the Board of Directors shall notify the Members and Friends of the Church by notice in the worship bulletins and verbal announcements at worship services.

Article IV. Lay Delegates

A. Lay Delegates

1. Election

Lay delegates and Alternates shall be elected in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws and the Church SOP governing elections. Refer to Article III.F. The term of office is two years.

2. Eligibility

Any lay Member who has been a member of the Church for a minimum of one year shall be eligible for nominations. Nominations shall not be taken from the floor.

3. Replacement

If a Delegate for any reason does not fulfill a term, an elected Alternate will assume the position of Delegate for the remainder of the term, and a new Alternate shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. Any appointed Delegate or Alternate Delegate shall serve until the next Congregational Meeting when an election shall be held for the vacant position(s).

4. Expenses

The Church shall provide room accommodations and pay the registration fees and expenses for travel, by the least expensive means reasonably available, for the Delegate(s) to attend the UFMCC General Conference and the UFMCC Region 3 Conference(s) if finances allow it.

5. Reports

Following each conference, it shall be the responsibility of the Lay Delegate(s) to present (1) a written report within 14 days to the Board of Directors and (2) a written report to the congregation at the next Congregational Meeting or within 30 days, whichever comes first.

6. Duties

In addition to attendance at General and Regional Conferences business meeting, the Delegate(s) and Alternate(s) must attend Board of Directors Meetings, Congregational Meetings and Forums, Region and General Conferences. They are also encouraged to attend as many seminars, workshops, and other activities as possible, as well as regularly attend worship services.

7. Training

Each newly elected Delegate or Alternate shall receive training from the Pastor and the previous delegate when possible.

8. Discipline

The Church shall not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate. Therefore, the Congregation may remove, by majority vote of those present and voting at a duly called Congregational Meeting, any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate guilty of the above. The Board of Directors, on a petition presented to the Board of Directors and signed by 25% of the Members in good standing of the Congregation, may initiate such a procedure. The Board of Directors must notify the person being charged of the allegations and the Board of Director's intent to call a Congregational Meeting to consider the charges. The person being charged shall have the opportunity to hear all the charges and to respond to those charges at the meeting of the Congregation. The vote of the Congregation is final.

Article V. Board of Directors

A. Authority

The congregation, in which resides the authority of and responsibility for the Church, has empowered the Board of Directors to act as its representatives in conducting the business of the Church.

B. Responsibilities

The Board of Directors shall have, with the Pastors knowledge and/or approval, charge of all matters pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation or documents of legal organization, church property, and physical and financial affairs of the church, and participate in long range strategic planning. The Board of Directors shall have the responsibility of raising, collecting, and disbursing funds, preparing the annual budget, keeping adequate church records, and making reports to the congregation, Region and UFMCC. The Board of Directors shall ensure sound risk management, support the Pastor with a written review at least once a year and advise and consent with the Pastor on personnel appointments. In the event of a Pastoral vacancy the Board of Directors will serve as the Pastoral Search Committee and will be in contact with the Region Elder. Each Board Member will attend worship and Board meetings regularly.

C. Board Membership

The Board of Directors shall consist of four members and the Pastor, who shall act as Moderator. The members of the Board of Directors shall be elected by the Congregation at the Fall Congregational Meeting. The terms of office shall be for two years, effective with the first meeting of the Board of Directors held in the January following the election, and shall be staggered.

1. Church Officers

The officers of the Board shall be the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, the Clerk, and the Treasurer. With the exception of the Moderator, who shall be the Pastor, the officers shall be elected by and from the Members of the Board itself during its January meeting

2. Election

a. Notification of Vacancy

Three weeks prior to the Fall Congregational Meeting, the Board shall notify the membership of the date of the meeting, the terms of Board positions to be filled, and the procedures for nomination.

b. Nominations

Any Member in good standing of the church for at least one year is eligible for nomination. The nominating committee, appointed by the Board, shall endeavor to have at least one candidate for each term by actively soliciting Members of the Congregation to be candidates for the vacant terms on the Board. The committee shall seek to have multiple candidates in nomination for each term.

3. Mid-term Vacancy

In the event a Member of the Board is unable to complete the term of office, or if member misses more than 2 scheduled meetings per calendar year without prior notification to board, the Board shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next Congregational Meeting, when the Congregation shall elect a Board Member to complete the vacant term, in accordance with the standard election procedure.

D. Meetings

The Board of Directors shall hold at least 10 regularly scheduled meetings each year. The Board of Directors may transact business at a non-regularly scheduled meeting. Insofar as possible, the congregation shall be given advance notice of all Board meetings. All Members of the Board of Directors must be given advance notice of every meeting called.

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held in open session. The Board of Directors, upon majority vote of its members, may conduct business in closed session only for the purpose of work sessions, personnel issues, consideration of disciplinary action, and reviewing the membership rolls. Decisions arising out of business conducted in closed session must be reflected in the minutes of that meeting.

1. Quorum

The quorum required to conduct business shall be a majority of the Board of Directors, with either the Moderator or the Vice Moderator present.

2. Agenda

The agenda for each meeting of the Board of Directors shall be prepared by the Moderator, in consultation with the Vice Moderator. The first item of business on each agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda, with or without revisions.

Any Member or Friend of the Church may submit an item for the agenda, in writing, ten days prior to the meeting.

The Board of Directors shall determine when agenda items not completed during the course of the meeting shall be considered.

3. Reports

At each regular meeting, written reports shall be submitted by the Treasurer, Clerk, and Pastor. All reports shall be distributed, if possible, to each of the Board Members the Sunday prior to the Board of Directors Meeting.

The Treasurers Report shall consist of a written report of the financial assets (balance sheet), income, expenditures, and liabilities of the Church. The Treasurer shall report as soon as possible any significant changes in income or expenditures that might have an effect on the administration of the budget or the financial status of the church.

The Clerks Report shall consist of the minutes of the previous Board meeting; the minutes of all special Board meetings conducted since the previous regular meeting, and shall reflect any change in the roll of Active Members since the previous regular meeting.

The Pastors report shall consist of an informational review of the Church's activities conducted during the preceding month and announcements of upcoming plans.

4. Polling

Should Board decisions need to be made outside of the Board meetings, the Board of Directors may conduct business by telephone, mail, or e-mail. Such polling shall be initiated by the Moderator or Vice Moderator. A good faith effort shall be made to contact all members of the Board of Directors. A majority of the full Board of Directors is necessary for a motion to carry. Any action shall be reported in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.

5. Discipline

The Church shall not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Member of the Board of Directors. Should the Board of Directors decide to consider disciplinary action, the Board must notify the person being charged of the allegations and of the Boards intent to hold a meeting to consider the charges. The person being charged shall have the opportunity to hear all of the charges and to respond to those charges at the meeting of the Board of Directors. Any disciplinary action shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the UFMCC Bylaws.

E. Membership

a. Review

Once each year, in the Spring, the Board of Directors shall review the membership roll. Any Member, who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, a definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty towards the Church within the preceding period of six months to one year shall be considered for removal from the roll of Members in good standing and may be placed on a list of inactive Members. At that time, the Board shall notify the Member in writing that the Member has been placed on such a list and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the Church. If the inactive member does not demonstrate interest and loyalty during the two months following notification, the Board shall have the authority to drop such Member from the membership roll, and that person shall be considered to be a former member. An inactive Member may be restored to the roll of Members in good standing by sending a letter to the Board requesting active status and making a pledge of time, talent, and finances. Reactivating membership does not require a public reception into membership. A former member who has been dropped from the list of active Members may be restored to the roll of Members in good standing after completion of a membership class and a completed pledge card.

b. Discipline

The church shall not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Members of the Church.

F. Church Records

All official Church records shall be maintained at the Church office.

Article VI. Pastor

A. Pastor

1. Duties

The Pastor is that person elected by the Members of the Church to perform the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader. Therefore, the Pastor is accountable to the congregation.

2. Worship

The Pastor of the Church shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the Church.

3. Moderator

The Pastor is a voting Member and Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings. The Pastor is an ex-officio member in the activities of any or all boards, committees, and organizations within the Church, except for the pastoral search committee. The Pastor shall also serve as the Chair/Moderator of the Council of Ministries.

4. Personnel Director

The Pastor shall act as personnel director of the Church staff, shall have the authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as the Pastor deems wise, and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of Office of the Church staff.

Chairs of all ministry areas and other personnel, uncompensated and compensated, shall be appointed by the pastor subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Once approved, the Pastor shall have the authority to hire, appoint, and, if need be, dismiss or fire. The Pastor shall do annual evaluations on paid staff.

5. Discipline

Disciplinary procedures as prescribed in the UFMCC Bylaws.

B. Pastoral Vacancy

1. Interim Pastor

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, after consulting with the Regional Elder and the congregation, the Board of Directors may appoint an Interim Pastor. The candidate must be approved by the Regional Elder before being formally appointed. The Interim may be lay or clergy and may or may not be a member of UFMCC. An Interim Pastor shall not have voting rights at meetings of the Board of Directors, Region or General Conferences of UFMCC by virtue of this office. The Interim Pastor will be responsible for the order of worship, programming, and personnel (along with the Board of Directors). The Interim Pastor is accountable to the Board of Directors and shall be a Advisor at the Board meetings. The focus of the Interim Pastor position is to assist the congregation through a time of healing, transition, and preparation for a new Pastor. The usual length of office is three months to one and one half years.

2. Pastoral Search Committee

The members of the Pastoral Search Committee shall be the members of the Board of Directors plus two additional Members of the Church selected by the Board of Directors. If the term of the Pastoral Search Committee is interrupted by the Fall elections, the current members of the Board of Directors who have not been re-elected may serve as ex-officio members of the Pastoral Search Committee until a candidate is brought forth.

3. Notification

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors to notify each member of the congregation by mail of the pastoral vacancy within ten days of the Pastors notice of resignation or removal.

4. Reports

The Pastoral Search Committee is ultimately responsible to the congregation, and must, on a regular basis, apprise the congregation of its progress and deliberations insofar as this does not jeopardize the anonymity of individual candidates.

5. Consultation

The Pastoral Search Committee shall consult with the Region Elder and may consult with individuals and organizations outside of its membership concerning individual candidates. Individual members of the Pastoral Search Committee may not undertake such consultations without authorization of the Committee.

6. Selection

Upon conclusion of its deliberations, the Pastoral Search Committee shall present to the congregation the candidate it has deemed most highly qualified. Non-UFMCC clergy must be approved by the Regional Elder before being presented to the congregation.

The candidate shall visit the church for a period of candidateing to preach, conduct worship services, and be available to meet members of the congregation prior to the election. During this visit, the candidate shall meet with the Board of Directors to negotiate a possible contract.

7. Calling a Pastor

The Pastoral Search Committee shall request that the Board of Directors convene a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of extending a call to the candidate.

A call shall be extended should the candidate receive a minimum of 85% of the vote of those Members present and voting at the Congregational Meeting. If the candidate is not elected or declines the call, the matter shall be referred to the Pastoral Search Committee for presentation of another candidate.

8. Dissolution of the Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee shall be dissolved when the called candidate assumes the duties of Pastor.

Article VII. Finances

A. Financial Report

Responsibility for the financial well-being of the Church rests upon the Members and Friends individually, through regular and generous tithes and gifts, and collectively, through responsible budgeting. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors to coordinate regular Stewardship and fund raising efforts and the budgetary process as a way of offering support to the congregation.

B. Budget

Disbursement of funds of the Church shall be governed by a budget adopted by majority vote of the congregation at a Congregational Meeting. The budget shall reflect estimated income and establish categories of expenditures. The proposed budget shall be a balanced budget.

1. Budget Recommendation

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to prepare a budget to be recommended to the congregation.

a. Request for Funds

Prior to recommending a budget, the Board must solicit budget requests for funds in such a way as to ensure departments of the Church have a fair opportunity to submit a request. All requests must be submitted to the Board prior to the announced deadline date along with written rationale in order to be considered.

b. Budget Basis

The following shall be considered in preparing the budget: 1) the record of income and expenditures of the Church; 2) the Mission (goals and objectives) of the Church; 3) anticipated Church growth; and 4) requests for funds that have been submitted.

2. Budget Proposal

The Board of Directors shall present its final budget proposal to the Congregation at the Fall congregational Meeting or any other Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The Board of Directors may elect to offer a forum for the purpose of discussing the budget prior to the Congregational Meeting.

a. Format of a Budget

The proposed budget shall be reported to the congregation, insofar as it is feasible, in monthly and annual figures.

b. Notification

Notification to the congregation of the Congregational Meeting shall be accompanied by a copy of the proposed budget, a copy of the previous years budget, the amounts of the previous years income and expenditures, and other supporting documents as the Board deems necessary.

c. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for the Church will be from January first through December thirty-first.

d. Failure to Adopt

Failure to adopt a new budget at the Fall Congregational Meeting or special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of adopting a budget shall cause the current budget (monthly amounts) to be extended until a budget is approved at a subsequent Congregational Meeting.

3. Amendment

The budget and its categories of income and expenditures may be amended by the Board of Directors, reflected in the minutes, and reported at the next Congregational meeting.

C. Special Funds

Special funds, for purposes, ministries, or projects may be authorized any time by the Board of Directors. There shall be regular accounting to the Board of Directors and to Congregational meetings. Receipts are required for all approved reimbursements and expenditures, or an approved purchase order with receipts to follow.

D. Special Offerings

Special offerings to be collected during worship services must be approved by the Board of Directors. Any special offering must be used for the approved purpose and reported in the Treasurers Report. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for directing the use of Special Offerings should the offering not be required for its originally intended purpose.

E. Designated Gifts

Designated gifts (other than bequests) are items, property, or money which have a restriction stipulated by

the donor on their use by the Church. Acceptance of a designated gift shall be determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with the donor. If the Board of Directors cannot agree to accept the gift as designated, the donor shall retain the option to withdraw the gift or change its destination.

F. Bequests

Bequests are gifts of money or property donated by an individual following their death. Designated bequests have restrictions as stipulated by the donor. Undesignated bequests have no restrictions. When appropriate, suitable engravings or markings will be affixed in the donors name to memorialize the benefactor.

1. Notification

The Board of Directors shall be informed at the next scheduled meeting that the Church has received notification of a bequest. The Board of Directors shall determine how best to carry out any provisions of a designated bequest. The Board of Directors has the authority to accept or reject an intended bequest.

2. Dispensation of Bequests

The Board of Directors determines the dispensation of bequests.

G. Church Property

1. Board of Trustees

The Board of Directors will name a Board of Trustees for any real property acquired by the Church. The Board of Trustees will recommend a property use and upkeep policy to the Board of Directors. The Board of Trustees will oversee the upkeep, repair, and maintenance of the property as well as other duties determined by the Board of Directors. The Board of Trustees is reportable and accountable to the Board of Directors.

2. Record of Property

The Board of Directors shall maintain a permanent record of all non-expendable items of physical property of the Church, the manner of their acquisition, the names of the donors of donated items, and the manner of their disposal. This record shall be maintained by the Clerk and kept on file at the Church office.

3. Beneficiary of Church Property

In accordance with UFMCC Bylaws, the Church hereby names UFMCC as the successor 501c (3) corporation designated to receive the Churches property in the event of dissolution or abandonment of the New Light Metropolitan Community Church, or its disaffiliation from the UFMCC.

Signature of Clerk: _____

Approved by the Congregation (Date:) October 28th 2007