

The Constitution of The Metropolitan Community Church of Manchester

Article 1: Name

The name of this Association shall be The Metropolitan Community Church of Manchester (hereinafter called "the Church").

Article 2: Object and Powers

The Church is established to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Manchester and elsewhere.

In furtherance of the said object, but not otherwise, the Church shall be a constituent church body within the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), and may:

i: employ and pay any person or persons to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the Church and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation to or on behalf of employees;

ii: arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars and training courses;

iii: collect and disseminate information on all matters affecting the said objects and powers and exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects whether in this country or overseas;

iv: undertake, execute, manage, or assist any charitable trusts which may lawfully be undertaken, executed, managed or assisted by the Church;

v: cause to be written and printed or otherwise reproduced and circulated, gratuitously or otherwise, such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets, or other documents, films or recorded tapes (whether audio or visual or both) as shall further the said objects;

vi: purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of said objects and construct, maintain and alter any building or erections necessary for the Church;

vii: make regulations for any property which may be so acquired;

viii: subject to such consents as may be required by law, borrow or raise money for the said objects and accept gifts on such terms and on such

security as shall be deemed to be necessary;

ix: subject to such consents as may be required by law sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the Church;

x: raise funds and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscriptions and otherwise PROVIDED THAT the Church shall not undertake permanent trading activities in raising funds for the said object;

xi: invest the monies of the Church not immediately required for the said objects in or upon such investments, securities, or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions, if any, as may for time being be imposed or required by law. Such investments, securities or property shall be made after due consideration of the ethics involved;

xii: do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said objects;

Article 3: Members & Friends

a: Active membership of the church shall be open to any baptised Christian who:

i: has completed classes for instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, under the direction of the Pastor and in accordance with UFMCC By Laws;

ii: subscribes to the Christian faith as defined by the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and as contained in the Statement of Faith of the UFMCC;

iii: has been accepted into membership by the existing church members in the Rite of Membership;

and who pledges to strive to

iv: protect the unity of the Church;

v: share responsibility for the work of the Church;

vi: support the objects of the Church;

vii: attend services of worship regularly; and

viii: financially support the work of the Church.

b: The status of Friend of the Church may be conferred by the Board on those people who support the aims and values of the Church but do not feel able to assume the full responsibilities of membership.

Article 4: The Pastor

a: At a General Meeting of the Church, hereinafter mentioned, the Church shall elect a pastor to hold office until

i: she/he resigns; or

ii: the relationship is terminated in accordance with the UFMCC By Laws.

b: The Pastor shall be a member of the Board of Directors and shall serve as the Chairperson of Congregational Meetings and of the Board of Directors.

c: At any General Meeting of the Church or Board of Directors where the stipend and/or the expenses of the Pastor or any other employee are discussed and voted upon, the said person shall neither take any part in the discussion nor vote and shall withdraw from the meeting during such discussion and voting.

d: The Pastor shall be an ordained cleric within the UFMCC who has also been licensed to practise by the UFMCC.

e: The Pastor is elected to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader.

f: The Pastor shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the church.

g: Any Associate and/or Assistant Pastors and other personnel, uncompensated or compensated, shall be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the Board of Directors

h: The Pastor shall act as personnel director of the church staff, shall have the authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, determine remuneration, holiday entitlement, and titles of office of the staff.

i: The Regional Elder of the UFMCC shall have authority to help resolve apparently irreconcilable differences between the pastor and the congregation should she/he be invited to do so by a: the Pastor, b: a majority vote of the Board of Directors, or c: a petition signed by at least one third of the membership of the Church.

- j: Following an intervention by the Regional Elder, in order for the Pastor to be removed from office a petition is required. This petition must be signed by either a: one quarter of the members or b: three quarters of the members of the Board of Directors and must be received by the Lay Delegate or in her/his absence the Secretary, is required.
- k: The Board of Directors and Regional Elder will validate the signatories of the petition and clarify the terms of the motion to remove the Pastor from office. Once validated, the petition shall cause the Board of Directors to call a Special General Meeting to discuss whether the Pastor shall remain in office and the resulting vote shall be binding.
- l: The Regional Elder or his/her designate shall moderate such a Special General Meeting but shall not have any power to vote at such a meeting.
- m: If no cleric is available to serve as pastor, the Regional Elder shall appoint a member of the Church to serve as an Interim Pastoral Leader who shall be appointed annually and shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Pastor.
- n: Any petition to remove the Pastor must be received by the Secretary of the Board or, in their absence, by the Lay Delegate of the Church.
- o: The Pastor shall be the only member of the Board who is remunerated.

Article 5 Board of Directors

- a: Subject to as hereinafter mentioned, the general management and enactment of policy of the church shall be directed by the Board of Directors (hereinafter called "the Board"), which shall meet no fewer than four times a year and when complete shall consist of five members in addition to the pastor.
- b: Each member of the Board shall be aged over 18 years old and shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Church in accordance with Article 7 herein.
- c: Elections to the Board shall be for a term of two years. The terms shall be staggered so that one half of the membership shall retire annually, the members so to retire being those who have completed the longest term of office since their last election. If a member has been co-opted to the Board to fill a vacancy, that member shall retire at the next AGM.
- d: Any vacancy in the Board, or in other elected roles, may be filled by an appointment of the Board to serve until the next Annual General Meeting of the Church, and shall be eligible for election at that meeting for the remainder of the original term.
- e: The proceedings of the Board shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect or

defect in the election, appointment or co-option or qualification of any member.

- f: The Board shall appoint all paid staff and fix their remuneration, subject to the approval of the Church in a General Meeting.
- g: The Board shall have power to use Church funds to purchase insurance to indemnify individual Board members against any legal claim upon them arising solely from their service as members of the Board.
- h: Board Officers shall be appointed from among their own number, and shall include a Secretary and Treasurer.
- i: The Board may appoint such special or standing committees as may be deemed necessary by the Board and shall determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition. All acts and proceedings of such special or standing committees shall be reported to the Board of Directors and no expenditure shall be authorised except in accordance with a budget which has been previously agreed by the Board of Directors.
- j: A Lay Delegate or Delegates shall be elected by the Church at the first Annual General Meeting after General Conference to serve a term of two years, and shall represent the church at District and General Conferences of the UFMCC in accordance with the UFMCC By Laws.
- k: Should the Lay Delegate(s) become unable or unwilling to perform his/her duties, the Board shall appoint Alternate Lay Delegate (s) to undertake these duties.
- l: Should the office of Pastor become vacant, the Board shall convene a Pastoral Search Committee which shall consist of the members of the Board and three other members of the Church. This Committee shall ascertain the needs and expectations the Church has of a pastor, shall solicit applications, shall shortlist applicants, shall interview those short listed and shall convene a Special General Meeting at which one name will be recommended to the members. Throughout the process, the Board shall liaise with the Regional Elder and shall ensure that all relevant references and background checks - including Criminal Record Disclosures are obtained.

Article 6: Annual General Meeting

- a: The first General Meeting of the Church, subsequent to the adoption of this Constitution, shall be no later than 31 October 1994 and once in each year thereafter, an Annual General Meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Board shall determine, but not more than 15 months after the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting.
- b: At least 14 clear days' notice shall be given in writing by the Secretary to each member. At such Annual General Meetings the business shall include, but not be

limited to, the election of members to serve on the Board; the appointment of an external examiner of accounts; the consideration of an annual report of all work done under the auspices of the Board, and of the examined accounts; the consideration of an annual report by the pastor, and other staff; the adoption of a budget for the year; and the transaction of such other matters as from time to time prove necessary.

- c: The Board and/or the Pastor may at any time at their discretion, and the Secretary shall within 21 days of receiving a request to do so signed by no fewer than 55% of the members together with their justification, call a Special General Meeting of the Church.

Article 7: Eligibility for the Board & Lay Delegate

- a: Active Members are eligible to serve as members of the Board and/or as a Lay Delegate if they are striving to:

- i: fulfil their membership vows;
- ii: accept corporate responsibility;
- iii: exemplify positive faith;
- iv: deal directly with those with whom they disagree;
- v: grow spiritually as disciples of Jesus;
- vi: pray for the Pastor, Board members and other leaders;
- vii: live morally mature lives;

agree to:

- viii: be mutually accountable to other Board members; and
- ix: maintain appropriate confidentiality as defined by the Board;

and pledge:

- x: to become aware of and respect appropriate boundaries.

- b: Nominations for members of the Board and for the post of Lay Delegate must be made by active members of the Church in writing and must be in the possession of the Secretary 24 hours before the commencement of the General Meeting. Nominations from the floor may only be accepted at the discretion of the Chairperson. Should nominations exceed vacancies, elections shall be held by means of a secret ballot. The results shall be published, and all voting figures shall be made available at the request of the members. Should nominations not exceed vacancies, election to the post will only be deemed to have occurred upon an affirmative vote for each candidate (each of whom must receive 50% + 1 of the votes cast).

Article 8 Discipline

a: *Members of the Board of Directors (except the Pastor) and Lay Delegate*

- i: The Church does not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any members of the Board of Directors or on the part of Lay Delegates.
- ii: Any of the charges listed under i above may be filed against a Board member or against a lay delegate by means of a petition submitted to the Board and signed by 55% of the active members of the congregation. Any such petition shall not be signed by any member of the Board. The Board shall validate the signatures on any such petition and shall have the authority to procure any further information that is required for a fair investigation of the complaint.
- iii: Any charge under i above shall be resolved by the votes of the Board of Directors, who shall also have power to consider a charge they themselves bring.
- iv: The Board shall have the power to reprimand or remove from office any member of the Board (except the pastor) and any Lay Delegate.
- v: Any person removed from elected office in this way shall have the right of appeal to a General Meeting of the Church, PROVIDED THAT any such appeal is received by the Secretary, or in his/her absence by the Lay Delegate, within 14 days of the removal from office.

b: *Pastor*

- i: Any charge of misconduct against the pastor must be dealt with in accordance with the UFMCC By Laws and Judiciary process.
- ii: Any process to remove the pastor from office due to irreconcilable differences must proceed in accordance with Article 4 of this Constitution.

c: *Appointed Leaders*

- i: The Church does not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any appointed leader.
- ii: Any of the charges listed under i above may be filed against an appointed leader by means of a petition submitted to the Board and signed by 55% of the active members of the congregation. Any such petition shall not be signed by any member of the Board. The Board shall validate the signatures on any such petition and shall have the authority to gain procure any further information that is required for a fair investigation of the complaint.

- iii: Any charge under i above shall be resolved by the votes of the Board of Directors, who shall have the power to consider a charge they themselves bring.
- iv: The Board shall have the power to reprimand or remove from office any appointed leader.

d: Church Members & Friends

- i: The Church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its members or friends.
- ii: The Board of Directors may remove, by majority vote, any member or friend who is guilty of disloyalty or unbecoming conduct, or take such appropriate disciplinary action against them as it deems necessary.
- iii: The action of the Board of Directors may be appealed to a General Meeting of the Church, PROVIDED THAT, such appeal is received by the Secretary within FOURTEEN days of the decision of the Board.

Article 9 - Review of Membership

At least once a year, the Board of Directors shall review the entire membership. Any member for whom there is no record of regular attendance, of financial support for the Church, of having contributed to or served the Church in some identifiable way or who has failed to demonstrate interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six months may be removed from the roll of active members and placed on a list of inactive members. At that time the Board of Directors shall notify this member in writing that she/he has been placed on such a list and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church. If the member continues to demonstrate a lack interest or loyalty during the two months immediately following notification, the Board of Directors shall have the authority, at their discretion, to drop any such member from the local church roll of active members. The member may be restored to the roll of active members in a vote of the Board of Directors without a public reception into membership.

Article 10: Rules and Proceedings at General Meetings

- a: The quorum at a meeting of the church or the Board, or any committee appointed under Article 6 (h) hereof, shall be 20% of the total active membership at the time in question.
- b: All questions arising at any Meeting shall be decided, should consensus not be reached, by a simple majority of those present and voting thereat. In the case of an equity of votes the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. Proxy voting

shall not be allowed.

- c: Minute books shall be kept by the Board and all other committees, and the appropriate secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.
- d: The Board shall have the power to propose to the Church in a General Meeting, such rules, standing orders, and policies as it shall from time to time determine. These rules, standing orders and policies, PROVIDED THAT they are not inconsistent with the Articles of this Constitution and the By Laws of the UFMCC, shall be binding upon the Church until such time that the Church, in a General Meeting, repeals them.

Article 11: Finances

- a: All monies raised by or on behalf of the Church shall be applied to further the objectives of the Church and for no other purpose, PROVIDED THAT nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any employee of the Church or to the Board or any Committee appointed under Article 6 i hereof in respect of reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- b: The treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Church.
- c: The accounts shall be externally examined at least once a year every year by the external examiner appointed by the Board.
- d: An examined statement of accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Board at the Annual General Meeting.
- e: A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Church with such banks as the Board shall from time to time decide. The Board shall authorise in writing the Pastor, the Treasurer, the Secretary and one other member of the Board to sign cheques on behalf of the Church which shall be signed by any two of the aforementioned persons..

Article 12: Trust Property

The title to any real or personal property which may be acquired by or on behalf of the Church shall be vested in a corporation lawfully entitled to act as Custodian Trustee or in at least two and no more than four individual persons.

Article 13: Alterations

Any alterations to this Constitution shall receive the assent of no fewer than two thirds of those members present and voting at a General Meeting, PROVIDED THAT notice of such alteration shall have been received by the Secretary in writing no fewer than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be proposed. At least 14 clear days' notice in writing of such a Meeting, setting forth the terms of the alteration, shall be issued by the

Secretary to each member of the Church, PROVIDED THAT no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Church to cease to be a charity at law (where this is appropriate) or would render the Church unable to uphold the By Laws of the UFMCC.

Article 14: Dissolution

- a: If the Board by a simple majority vote, decide at any time that it is necessary or advisable, on the ground of expense or otherwise, to dissolve the Church it shall call a meeting of members of the church, of which no less than 14 days' notice (stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat) shall be given. If such a decision is confirmed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting at such a meeting, the Board shall have the power to dispose of the assets of the Church in accordance with the provisions of clause c.
- b: If the Board of Elders dissolve the Church, then the Board of Directors shall dispose of the assets in accordance with the provisions of clause c:
- c: The Board, after having received instructions to do so according to the provisions of a: or b: above, shall dispose of the assets held by or on behalf of the Church. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to the charitable use of the UFMCC and, insofar as effect to this provision cannot be given, to some other charitable purpose whether outside or within the UFMCC

Article 15: Disaffiliation from the UFMCC

- a: Should the Board of Directors consider it is necessary or advisable to disaffiliate from the UFMCC, they shall call a General Meeting of the Church to discuss and vote upon this matter. A representative appointed by the Board of Elders shall be invited to attend and speak at such a meeting. A vote of at least 66% shall be sufficient to disaffiliate from the UFMCC, PROVIDED THAT the relevant clauses of this Constitution are also changed.
- b: After all financial obligations to the UFMCC are satisfied, the assets of the Church shall be divided between those who wish to disaffiliate and those who wish to remain part of the UFMCC, PROVIDED THAT all assets are used for charitable purposes. The assets shall be divided in direct proportion to the votes received by each party.

Article 16: Notices

Any notice may be served by the Secretary on any member personally or by sending it through the post in a pre-paid envelope to such members at their last known address, and any notice so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 10 days of posting.

Article 17: Interpretation

For the interpretation of this Constitution, The Interpretation Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom 1978, shall apply as it applies to an act of the aforementioned Parliament.
