

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH LOS ANGELES

BY-LAWS

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles.

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 By-laws and decisions made by General Conference.

A. 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 By-laws.

B. 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 By-laws.

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 By-laws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.

Article IV – Members and Friends

A. Criteria for Membership – Any baptized Christian who has completed a membership class may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership. A Member in good standing is a Member who registers his/her attendance and, in addition, provides either identifiable financial support, makes a definite service contribution, or demonstrates interest and loyalty.

1. Membership List – The list of Members in good standing shall be maintained by the church staff, who shall report changes every six (6) months to the Board of Directors. Such report to be made in March and September, at least one week prior to the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

2. Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list in the months of March and September.

a. A Member who does not have registered attendance and, in addition, either identified financial support, definite service contribution, or demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the list of Members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive Members.

b. The Board of Directors shall notify this Member in writing that the Member has been placed on a list of inactive Members and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.

c. If the inactive Member has not attended, and provided identifiable financial support, and demonstrated further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately following notification, the Board of Directors shall have the authority, at its discretion, to drop any such Member from the local church membership roll.

d. The inactive Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing by a vote of the Board of Directors without a public reception into membership.

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 Members in good standing after completing a membership class, participating in the Rite of Membership and demonstrating behavior consistent with the definition of being a member in good standing (see section IV.A.) for a period of no less than 6 months.

3. Right to Appeal. A decision by the Board of Directors to drop an inactive Member from the local church membership roll may be appealed by the inactive Member to the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the inactive Member is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.

a. Appeal process. The request for an appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following the date when the inactive Member was dropped from the local church membership roll.

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

c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the inactive Member wish the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of considering the appeal.

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 church staff.

2. Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings or serve on the Board of Directors. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates.

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 Directors 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 Directors within thirty (30) days following the date when the Member was removed or otherwise disciplined.

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

c. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the appealing Member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting or a Special Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of considering the appeal.

Article V – Congregational Meetings

Government of the church is vested in its Congregational Meeting, which exerts the right to control of its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, 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 Directors.

B. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify Members in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance, by posting a notice of meetings on church premises, publishing in church bulletin, and posting on MCCLA website.

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

D. Votes Required for Approval – Decisions, including elections, requires approval by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%), a simple majority, of those Members present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC By-laws or otherwise stated in these local church By-laws.

E. Quorum – In order to transact business, no less than twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing must be present.

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

1. Content – The agenda shall include, but not be limited to, election of members to the Board, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of financial report, approval of budget, and receiving reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor.

2. Additions to Agenda – Members may request the Board to of Directors to add agenda items by submitting additional agenda items, in writing, to the Clerk no later than one (1) week prior to the meeting.

3. As part of the Notification process (Article V.B.), a tentative agenda and supporting documentation will be made available at the church or on-line at the same time the congregational meeting notice is posted.

G. Elections – 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 fifteen percent (15%) of the Members in good standing and submitted to the Clerk.

2. The nature and purpose of the special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition and in notices and written into the agenda.

Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body

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

B. Responsibilities – The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the church with a set of By-laws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and the Elder serving the Region and for submitting the approved By-laws to the Elder serving the Region. The Board of Directors shall also have charge of all matters pertaining to the documents of legal organization and incorporation, church property, risk management, and physical and financial affairs of the church. The Board of Directors shall also be responsible for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC. The Board of Directors shall also have oversight of the work of the Senior Pastor, conduct an annual pastoral evaluation and review of the Senior Pastor’s financial package.

C. Qualifications – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of MCC Los Angeles for at least twelve (12) consecutive months and have experience in one of the following areas - financial planning, administration, policy development, fundraising, or other training or experience demonstrating ability for leadership. A membership transferred in good standing from another MCC Congregation shall fulfill this twelve (12) month membership requirement.

1. Conflict of Interest – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship; someone who is a church employee, or a person from a household, family or committed relationship of or with a church employee; or someone who is Clergy, Clergy Candidate, Clergy in formation, or Deacon shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.

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D. Composition – There shall be nine (9) members, including the Pastor who shall serve as Moderator.

E. Term of Office – The term of office for members of the Board of Directors, except the Pastor, shall be two-year staggered terms, with half being elected at each annual Congregational Meeting. Members of the Board of Directors may not serve more than two (2) terms consecutively. Once a member of the Board of Directors completes two (2) consecutive terms he or she is not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors until the occurrence of the second annual

congregational meeting after the end of his or her final term. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a Member may not serve more than five (5) consecutive Congregational Years on the Board of Directors (elected or appointed) unless there is a minimum of two (2) consecutive Congregational Years between said Member's consecutive terms as a member of Board of Directors.

F. Meetings – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month no fewer than ten (10) times a year. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the Congregation and to the public to attend without vote.

1. Minutes – Minutes and financial reports are not official or subject to disclosure, until they have been reviewed, approved and accepted by majority vote of the Board. At that time they shall be available to Members of the church. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions made. A copy of the minutes shall become part of the permanent church records.

2. A ten (10)-minute public comment period shall be made available at the start of each meeting with a limit of two (2) minutes per person.

3. Agendas shall be posted 48 hours before each Board of Directors meeting.

G. Quorum – No less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors, including the Moderator, must be present in order to transact business. If the Moderator is unable to attend; a meeting of the Board of Directors may be conducted with the consent of the Moderator; in such instance, no less than a majority of the members of the Board of Directors 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 Directors, including the Vice-Moderator, must be present.

H. Officers – The 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 Directors 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. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors.

b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Pastor.

c. Clerk – The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of official correspondence and church records, and for ensuring that accurate records are kept of all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Congregation. The Clerk is the officer authorized to receive petitions submitted to the Board of Directors.

d. 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 Directors, the Board may appoint 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 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 By-laws. A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing of the Congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

1. Right to appeal – A disciplined member of the Board of Directors 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 Directors shall be considered vacant.

2. Prior Notice – No director shall be disciplined without prior notice of a motion to discipline and written notice inviting the director to address the issue with the Board. Notice shall be sent to the directors last known mailing and e-mail addresses not less than 2 weeks prior to meeting at which such notice shall be entertained. At the time the notice is provided, the moving party shall make a full disclosure of the reasons for the proposed discipline. A recording of the Board's full discussion shall be made of the discussion and vote regarding discipline and shall be made available to the Congregation in the event of an appeal. The decision to appeal shall constitute the permission of the affected member for the release of the Board's full discussion and vote of the disciplinary motion.

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, by adequate insurance, every director and officer of the church against all costs arising in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by his/her own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

Article VII – 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 By-laws and the policies of the church.

1. 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 Regional Elder to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader, who shall be subject to a background check. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader shall be one (1) year. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a Member of MCC Los Angeles, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill all of the roles and responsibilities of Pastor. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is not a Member of MCC Los Angeles, then the Interim Pastoral Leader shall have the authority to fulfill 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 – 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 Directors; appointing compensated and uncompensated church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors; and determining compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the church staff, subject to approval of the Board of Directors. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Board of Directors, Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings, personnel director, and as the primary spokesperson of the church to the community. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise, including but not limited to the duty of serving as Moderator of the Board of Directors and of Congregational Meetings.

C. Pastoral Covenant – The Board of Directors and 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 By-laws 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 and Regional Conferences.

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 Regional Elder.

E. Pastoral Search Committee

1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of nine (9) members in good standing elected at a Congregational Meeting.

2. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee at a Congregational Meeting must receive more than seventy percent (70%) of the votes cast.

F. 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 VII.

G. Removing the Pastor from Office – The church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC By-laws 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 Directors and be signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing.

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

3. The Clerk shall send a copy of the completed petition or motion of the Board of Directors to the Regional Elder within three (3) business days of its decision.

4. The Pastor shall remain fully compensated until the final action of the Congregation

Article VIII – Conflict Resolution

The Board of Directors, officers and Congregation of the Church shall be governed by a church relations policy a copy of which shall be maintained in the church office. When there are conflicts or difficulty within the church that cannot be resolved, including conflicts between the Pastor and Congregation, the Board of Directors, the Pastor, any Lay Delegate, or a petition signed by a minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the Members in good standing may invite intervention by the Regional Elder to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC By-laws.

Article IX – Lay Delegates

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

A. Election – The Lay Delegate shall be elected at the next regular Congregational Meeting following each General Conference. Decisions, including elections, requires approval by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%), a simple majority, of those Members present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC By-laws or otherwise stated in these local church By-laws.

B. Term of Office - The term of office of Lay Delegate shall be three (3) years. Lay Delegates may not serve more than two (2) terms consecutively.

C. Duties – The duties of the Lay Delegate shall be to represent the congregation at General and Regional Conferences, to communicate with the Congregation, Pastor, and Board of Directors regarding UFMCC concerns and policies. At least one (1) lay delegate must attend all scheduled Board of Director Meetings.

D. 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.

E. Alternate Lay Delegate – The church may elect two (2) Alternate Lay Delegates. The election, term of office, and funding shall be the same as for Lay Delegates.

1. 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 the Clerk of the Board of Directors in writing. The Board of Directors shall select which of the Alternate Lay Delegates shall serve in the absence of the Lay Delegate. If the an Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to serve, the Board of Directors shall appoint another person to serve in the absence of the Lay Delegate

2. Duties – The duties of the Alternate Lay Delegate shall be to stay informed of UFMCC concerns and policies and to be prepared to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, including but not limited to representing the Congregation at General and Regional Conferences.

F. 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 Congregation may remove any Lay Delegate or Alternate Lay Delegate by a majority vote at a regular or special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. A petition presented to the Board of Directors and signed by twenty-five percent (25%)

of the Members in good standing of the Congregation may also initiate such a procedure.

1. 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.

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 Directors and designated staff members shall have signature authority, as determined by the Board of Directors.

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 that is greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors. The acquisition or disposition of long-term assets, fixed or otherwise, in excess of \$250,000.00 requires Congregational approval, at a congregational meeting, by a simple majority vote of members in good standing present and voting.

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 Directors shall be responsible for presenting to the Congregational Meeting for approval an annual operating budget that reflects anticipated receipts and disbursements. The approved budget may be amended, as needed, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, which shall immediately notify the Members of the Church that such amendment has been made.

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

E. Assessments – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly to the UFMCC the number of members in good standing for each month within the quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessments as set by General Conference. 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. Tithes – The Board of Directors shall report all church receipts each month to the UFMCC, and with that report shall remit a percentage of the funds reported. The percentage of funds to be remitted shall be determined by General Conference.

Article XI – Adoption and Amendments

A. Adoption – These By-laws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational Meeting and approval by the Regional Elder.

B. Amendments – These By-laws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Congregational Meeting the proposal is to be considered. Adoption of the amendment or the repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote at a Congregational Meeting and is subject to approval by the Regional Elder. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC By-laws shall not require approval by the Congregation.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES
STANDARD OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES [SOPP's]

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SOPP 1 Mission Statement

Metropolitan Community Church, Los Angeles (MCCLA) is a prophetic, liberating and progressing Christian community of faith that honors, values and welcomes all people. We are rooted in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex communities. We preach a relevant, vibrant and scripture-based message that embodies and celebrates everyone's spirituality and sexuality. We challenge each other to make our lives count, as we invite everyone to be transformed in mind, body and spirit. From a place of trust, wholeness and holiness, we reach out as the hands, feet, and heart of Christ through acts of justice and compassion to make a difference in our world.

Our Mission is to Accept, Embody, & Declare God's Love for All.

SOPP 2 Vision Statement

Our Vision is the statement of what we are becoming.

Our Vision is to be a Radically Inclusive, Progressive, and Christ-Centered Community.

SOPP 3 Church Motto

We are a people of faith learning to be the hands, feet, hands and heart of Christ in the world today.

SOPP 4 Church Culture

MCCLA CORE VALUES

Inclusion

Love is our greatest moral value and **resisting exclusion** is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to continue to be the **conduits of a faith** where **everyone is included** in the **family of God**, and where all parts of our being are **welcomed at God's table**.

Community

Offering a safe and open community for people to worship, learn and grow in their faith is our deep desire. We are **committed** to equipping ourselves and each other to **do the work** that **God** has called us to do in the world.

Spiritual Transformation

Providing a message of liberation from the oppressive religious environment of our day or to those experiencing God for the first time is what guides our ministry. We believe that when people are invited to **experience God** through the life and ministry of **Christ**, lives will be **transformed**.

Social Action

Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with to those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being guided always by our commitment to Global Human Rights.

SOPP 4.1 Our Church's core assumptions are as follows:

- SOPP 4.1.1** We uphold and practice a stewardship of prayer, service, and giving.
- SOPP 4.1.2** We are open to the leading of the Spirit in all things, including forms and styles of worship, ministry programming and organizational structure and planning.
- SOPP 4.1.3** We are team-based church – We believe that our members are the ministries of our church and that by empowering people to discover and use their gifts in ministry to others through our teams, more people are involved in ministry and we are able to change more lives for the better.
- SOPP 4.1.4** We are participative – We are in this together and have a shared understanding of what we are doing. We value cooperation, not competition.
- SOPP 4.1.5** We value every person and their input in our decision-making process – Every member of the church carries a portion of the truth that our church is called to share with the world.
- SOPP 4.1.6** We trust each other – We trust our ministry team leaders and their members to creatively fulfill their ministry visions and to be responsible in solving the challenges that arise.
- SOPP 4.1.7** We appreciate each other – We make sure that people are thanked and appreciated for the gifts and talents they share with the church.
- SOPP 4.1.8** We treasure the closeness we feel in our relationships with one another – We know we are growing because of the love and care that we give one another.
- SOPP 4.1.9** We don't want to grow too fast – As we grow, we need to make sure that we balance our "doing" with our "spiritual being". People's health and spiritual growth needs to be our primary concern.
- SOPP 4.1.10** We are working on being a more inclusive church – We work hard to live by our values, but we recognize that we still need to be more intentional about caring for and including a more diverse group of people, including those of varying levels of spiritual development, the elderly, young adults, the poor, those who are transgendered, heterosexual, people of color, etc.
- SOPP 4.1.11** We are committed to being a ministry-centered church instead of a pastor or clergy-centered church.

SOPP 4.2 We believe our strengths are:

- SOPP 4.2.1** A firm belief in the congregation that with God nothing is impossible
- SOPP 4.2.2** A clear and strong shared understanding of the vision and mission of the church
- SOPP 4.2.3** The positive and life-giving nature of the values of the church
- SOPP 4.2.4** Team leaders and staff members who are spiritually gifted, skilled, talented and passionate about their callings to serve God's people
- SOPP 4.2.5** The members (not the pastor) are the ministers of the church and give of their time, talent, and financial resources to support the work of God through our church
- SOPP 4.2.6** Many people are involved in the decision-making processes of the church
- SOPP 4.2.7** "Loving one another" is a palpable reality in the relationships between the people in the church
- SOPP 4.2.8** Ministry to people is much more important than how many people attend church or the building the church is housed in
- SOPP 4.2.9** A tremendous number of generous financial givers that enables ministry to be offered in abundant and excellent ways to help meet the needs of the people
- SOPP 4.2.10** High quality worship services and ministry events

SOPP 5 Values Statement

Our Mission and Vision will be realized by living these values:

- SOPP 5.1** **Authenticity** – We strive to be authentic people who are genuinely open, direct and truthful, considerate, respectful and fair, pure in motivation, and honest in relating with others.
- SOPP 5.2** **Grace**- As believers who demonstrate grace, we gratefully receive God's love, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, and compassion and then seek to extend this same grace to all we meet.
- SOPP 5.3** **Generosity**- We endeavor to be generous people who look for involvement in opportunities to give of our time, talents, and financial resources while expecting nothing in return.

SOPP 5.4 Justice- We believe that all people are deserving of equally full and enriching lives. Living out justice means going beyond ourselves to work eagerly for the rightness and righteousness of God's will in our diverse society.

SOPP 5.5 Growth- We as individuals and as a church seek continued growth and as also endeavor to include, empower and develop others.

SOPP 5.6 Commitment – As a community of faith, we are committed to God and to one another. Therefore we covenant to be responsible and accountable for our actions and our inactions.

SOPP 6 Statement of Faith (Taken directly from the UFMCC By-laws)

SOPP 6.1 Our Beliefs:

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

SOPP 6.2 WE BELIEVE:

SOPP 6.2.1 In One Triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God, our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit God as our sustainer.

SOPP 6.2.2 That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

SOPP 6.2.3 That Jesus the Christ historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

SOPP 6.2.4 That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all those who are willing to place their welfare in Gods keeping.

SOPP 6.2.5 Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

SOPP 6.2.6 We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

SOPP 6.2.7 The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

SOPP 6.3 THIS CHURCH EMBRACES TWO HOLY SACRAMENTS:

SOPP 6.3.1 BAPTISM by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own child.

SOPP 6.3.2 **HOLY COMMUNION** is the partaking of the blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: This is my body, this is my blood. (Matthew 26.26-28) All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying to all their desire to be received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

SOPP 7 Membership

SOPP 7.1 Membership Process & Requirements

SOPP 7.1.1 Active membership in Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles is attained pursuant to the process and definition stated in the MCCLA By-Laws.

SOPP 7.1.2 Persons wishing to become members of MCCLA are required to complete a course of instruction on church beliefs and doctrines.

SOPP 7.1.3 Voting members of MCCLA must be at least eighteen years old. Only voting members can hold appointed or elected positions in the church. Persons under the age of eighteen may become members as long as they meet the requirements of completing an age appropriate membership class. Persons under eighteen wishing to become members will also require parental or caretaker's permission to become a church member.

SOPP 7.2 Transfer of Membership

SOPP 7.2.1 Persons holding active membership from another MCC may request that their membership be transferred to MCCLA.

SOPP 7.2.2 It is strongly recommended that transferring members meet with the Pastor or designated person and participate in the Spiritual Gifts and Ministry session of the Membership Class. They may be received into membership without formal reception at a worship service or may be included with the next class received.

SOPP 7.3 Reinstatement of Membership

SOPP 7.3.1 Inactive members who wish to return to Active status must complete the membership process as defined in Section I.

SOPP 7.4 Rights of Membership

SOPP 7.4.1 Active members may:

SOPP 7.4.1.1 Serve on the Board of Directors.

SOPP 7.4.1.2 Serve as a Lay Delegate.

SOPP 7.4.1.3 Vote at Congregational Meetings.

SOPP 8 Meetings

It is the policy of Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles to provide adequate mechanisms by which the congregation may obtain organizational information and provide input.

SOPP 8.1 Board of Directors' Meetings

SOPP 8.1.1 Board of Directors meetings shall be held monthly for the express purpose of managing the business of the church body, which pertains to finances, physical property and policies/strategic planning.

SOPP 8.1.2 All Board of Directors meetings are open to all.

SOPP 8.1.3 Executive Session is restricted to the Board of Directors and, possibly, the individuals concerned. Executive Sessions will be held to discuss matters of a sensitive nature. This includes, but does not limit the Board of Directors to matters of appointment, review, discipline, or conflict resolution. In order to maintain the dignity of those involved, Executive Session is restricted to the Board of Directors and, possibly, the individuals concerned.

SOPP 8.2 Congregational Meetings

SOPP 8.2.1 The annual Congregational meeting will be scheduled in the month of October each year.

SOPP 8.2.2 Members in good standing shall have voting rights at all congregational meetings.

SOPP 8.2.3 Written notification of the meeting to the membership shall be accomplished two weeks prior to the meeting via Email, website and notification in the church bulletin.

SOPP 8.2.4 The Board of Directors shall make the agenda available two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

SOPP 8.2.5 The Board of Directors shall utilize Robert's Rules of Order for the congregational meetings in order to allow business to be conducted effectively.

SOPP 8.3 Informational Forums

SOPP 8.3.1 Two Informational Forums will be called by the Board of Directors for the purpose of keeping the membership informed and provide input to the Board of Directors and Pastor. One is scheduled in May. The second one is in preparation for the Annual Congregational Meeting.

SOPP 8.3.2 Notification of an Informational Forum will be posted two weeks prior to the meeting. The notice of a Forum will be posted in the church bulletin and or other forms of church communication.

SOPP 8.3.3 Opinions of members and friends may be presented at these informational forums but no official voting may occur.

SOPP 8.4 Security and Emergencies During Meetings

SOPP 8.4.1 It is the policy of Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles to provide a safe and secure meeting environment.

SOPP 8.4.2 Physical Plant - It is the responsibility of the function facilitator to make the facility as safe as possible.

SOPP 8.4.3 Physical Threat - Whoever is facilitating the meeting should be discreetly notified of any immediate physical danger.

SOPP 8.4.4 Security of Building

SOPP 8.4.4.1 Key holders (identified by the Pastor or his/her designee) are responsible for securing the church and office building when they leave the premises, including setting alarms, if they are the last out.

SOPP 8.4.4.2 Groups meeting in the facilities are responsible for the members of the group, allowing only members of the group into the facility.

SOPP 9 Ministry Funding Plan/Budget

SOPP 9.1 The church's fiscal year shall run from January 1 through December 31.

SOPP 9.2 The church Treasurer shall be primarily responsible for developing and monitoring the Budget.

SOPP 9.2.1 Input for the coming year's Budget will be gathered from all ministry chairs, including the Pastor and other appropriate staff members, by August 10.

SOPP 9.2.2 The appropriate staff, Senior Pastor, Finance Committee and Treasurer shall develop a proposal incorporating the recommendations received from the various ministry areas. This proposed Budget will be presented to the Board of Directors no later than the September Board meeting.

SOPP 9.2.3 A final draft of the Budget will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at the October Board meeting and presented to the Congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

SOPP 9.3 The Treasurer shall provide monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors.

SOPP 9.4 The Treasurer shall make recommendations to amend the Budget as necessary, based upon actual financial activity throughout the year.

SOPP 10 Financial Documentation/Record Keeping

SOPP 10.1 Offering Counting Procedures: See separate policy and procedures

SOPP 10.2 Documenting Contributions/Bookkeeping

SOPP 10.2.1 As early in the week as possible (preferably on Monday), the offering count is verified by the office staff and identified contributions are recorded.

SOPP 10.2.2 A bank deposit is to be made by two staff members no later than the first business day of the week once all counts have been verified and contributions documented. All moneys collected are secured in the safe until the deposit is made.

SOPP 10.2.3 Preferably, all contributions are entered into the computer program on the next business day. All contributions entered will be double-checked before posting.

SOPP 10.2.4 Payroll services are provided by Wells Fargo and accounts payable checks are prepared by the Church Administrator, who prepares them weekly; all checks require two signatures, one of which must be that of a Board member, preferably the Treasurer.

SOPP 10.2.5 All expenses are to be recorded in the computer program at least once monthly and no later than the first week of the month following.

SOPP 10.2.6 The Treasurer shall provide a monthly financial report to the Board of Directors.

SOPP 10.2.6.1 The Treasurer shall have access to monthly bank and investment statements upon request. The Treasurer and a designated staff member shall have on-line access to the bank accounts.

SOPP 10.2.7 The Treasurer shall be provided monthly with an independent copy of the accounting software on a CD for a three-month rolling period (in addition to the copy kept by the office staff).

SOPP 10.2.8 The staff person responsible for the day-to-day accounting and book-keeping shall make a backup (on computer disk) of the year-end archive of the accounting software each January (for the previous year) and print out an archive copy of the transaction history for the entire year.

SOPP 10.2.8.1 One copy of both the year-end archive backup (computer file format and hard copy print-out) shall be given to the Treasurer and shall be

retained by the Treasurer for a minimum of seven years or until completion of the next satisfactory external audit.

SOPP 10.2.8.2 All financial and membership records shall be kept for a minimum of seven years.

SOPP 10.2.9 The staff person responsible for the accounting and bookkeeping shall reconcile all bank and brokerage statements in the accounting software on a monthly basis and print a detailed reconciliation summary which shall be submitted to the Treasurer.

SOPP 10.3 Computer Access to Accounting Systems

SOPP 10.3.1 The accounting software shall be set up with the Treasurer assigned with "owner ID" and given full access to all of the software capabilities.

SOPP 10.3.1.1 The staff person responsible for the day-to-day accounting and book keeping shall be assigned with an "employee ID " and shall be given appropriate access to make changes within the accounting software.

SOPP 10.3.2 Voided transactions shall be reviewed during internal and external audits.

SOPP 10.3.3 All ID's shall be given to the Vice Moderator and Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor and Vice Moderator will maintain control over all computer systems.

SOPP 10.4 Availability of Funds

SOPP 10.4.1 Ministry areas must submit a proposal of annual expenditures by July 30 for consideration of approval in the upcoming year's church budget.

SOPP 10.4.2 Once approved by the Board of Directors, all line items are available for access in a time sensitive manner respective to overall church cash flow.

SOPP 10.4.3 The Pastor or Board of Directors must approve proposed expenditures of funds in excess of approved budget as directed by church bylaws.

SOPP 10.5 Check Requests/Reimbursements

SOPP 10.5.1 The Pastor and/or his/her designated leader of the appropriate ministry team must approve all requests for reimbursement of money spent on behalf of the church.

SOPP 10.5.2 Reimbursements will not be made without a receipt.

SOPP 10.5.3 No blank checks will be given out; no checks will be made out to Cash. If a check is needed in order to make a purchase, the total cost must be figured prior to the purchase.

SOPP 10.5.4 Conference Expenses

SOPP 10.5.4.1 It is preferred that the church office make all necessary registrations, travel reservations, and hotel reservations for designated conference attendees. However, should an individual choose to make their own arrangements, they will be reimbursed at an amount equal to the best rate received by other attendees.

SOPP 10.5.4.2 The church is not responsible for paying for the transportation or hotel expenses of any guest of the designated conference attendee.

SOPP 10.6 Availability of Financial Records

SOPP 10.6.1 Individual contribution records are to be kept confidential; access is limited to authorized staff and volunteers, including the Board of Directors and the Pastor.

SOPP 10.6.2 Church financial records, other than contribution records, will be made available to church members by appointment.

SOPP 10.6.3 All church financial records, including but not limited to check books, savings account passbooks, invoice records, tithing records, deposit slips, tithing and offering reports, are to remain in the church office at all times.

SOPP 10.6.3.1 Records needed for the preparation of monthly financial statements may be removed for a period of no more than 48 hours.

SOPP 10.6.3.2 All church financial records are to be accessible to the Pastor and the Board of Directors at all times.

SOPP 11 Financial Reviews and Audits

SOPP 11.1 Financial Review: An financial review of the church financial records shall be conducted by an accounting professional on a biennial basis in even numbered years.

SOPP 11.2 Internal Audit: The Board of Directors shall appoint an independent financial review committee each year.

SOPP 11.2.1 No members of the staff, the treasurer, or any individuals associated with any bank or investment company where the church accounts are held nor the spouse/partner of any of the before mentioned individuals shall serve on the financial review committee.

SOPP 11.2.2 The financial review committee's charge shall be to complete a review of the financial records on an annual basis or on an un-announced, random basis at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

SOPP 11.2.3 The financial review committee shall conduct a general review of the financial records for accuracy and completeness including the following minimum activities:

SOPP 11.2.3.1 Check the beginning net asset balance on the current years Balance Sheet with the prior year ending balance on the prior year's Balance Sheet. They should be the same.

SOPP 11.2.3.2 Compare year-end account balances on monthly bank and investment account statements with those given on the financial reports. They should be the same.

SOPP 11.2.3.3 Review and compare random (or all if the committee so chooses) offering counting sheet totals with deposit amounts on the monthly bank statements and with the deposit entries in the financial accounting software. Deposit amounts on the bank statements and as recorded in the accounting software should agree with the offering counting sheets.

SOPP 11.2.3.4 Revenue and expenses should be compared to prior months and the prior year for reasonableness. Large variances should be investigated.

SOPP 11.2.3.5 Review and compare random (or all if the committee so chooses) reimbursement checks with the reimbursement request forms on file in the office. Both should agree. Review reimbursements for reasonableness and appropriateness.

SOPP 11.2.3.6 Information technology audit as necessary (i.e., control on financial computer systems).

SOPP 12 Offering Counting Procedures

SOPP 12.1 No partners/spouses of staff or board members may be permitted on the counting teams.

SOPP 12.2 All contribution information shall remain confidential. All persons who serve as counters must have previously signed a confidentiality agreement pertaining to the church financial information.

SOPP 12.3 No one person shall handle the Sunday collection. In other words, two or more people will be in control of the offering at all times with one of the two being a Board Member.

SOPP 12.4 A Board member and a volunteer will pick up the offering after worship. The offering should be removed during worship or immediately following worship.

SOPP 12.5 The door shall be closed at all times during counting of the offering. No individuals other than counters shall be permitted in the counting room during counting of the offering except clergy or other approved personnel.

SOPP 12.6 Separate cash, coins, and checks. Cash should be separated by denomination (ones, fives, tens, twenties, etc.) with all bills facing in the same direction.

SOPP 12.7 Offerings received in an envelope

SOPP 12.7.1 If a check is enclosed in an envelope, the envelope can be discarded unless there is other information that needs to be passed on to the office staff (e.g. change of address) at which time it should be noted on the envelope that there was a check enclosed.

SOPP 12.7.2 If a check is enclosed in an envelope and the envelope is marked for building fund or some other fund, be sure that information is included in the memo section of the check. Discard the envelope.

SOPP 12.7.3 If cash is enclosed in an envelope and the contributor's name is on the envelope, keep the envelope and note the amount given.

SOPP 12.7.4 If cash is enclosed in an envelope and there is no identification on the envelope, discard the envelope.

SOPP 12.8 Cash: All cash (change and dollar bills) should be counted together and recorded by two people independent of one another. The agreed upon total must be recorded on the Offering Report Form.

SOPP 12.9 Once there is agreement on the Offering Report two people, including the Board Member, must sign the Report.

SOPP 12.10 Offering Report Form, all cash, change, checks and saved envelopes are secured in a bank bag and locked in the safe.

SOPP 12.10.1 If staff members reconciling offering counting and making bank deposit identify an error in the offering counting summary sheet, the summary sheet shall be corrected in the presence of a minimum of two staff members and signed by both staff members.

SOPP 12.10.2 Checks: All checks must be endorsed. Tally checks on adding machine using the itemized feature that permits counting the checks as well as totaling the amount. Use the amount indicated on the written line of the check. Have a second person independently tally the checks. The agreed upon total must be recorded on the Offering Report Form.

SOPP 12.10.3 All offering counting summary sheets shall be kept on record by the office staff for a minimum of seven years.

SOPP 12.11 The scheduled pastoral leader shall secure the sanctuary and turn off air conditioning and lights. The Board Member shall secure the counting office. If the building is unoccupied, the scheduled pastoral leader shall then secure and set the alarm for the building.

SOPP 13 Fund Raisers

SOPP 13.1 Moneys collected by any ministry area of the church are to be turned in to the church office for deposit in a timely fashion. Any moneys raised by a particular ministry group will be credited to that ministry area.

SOPP 13.2 No accounts outside of the church, including certificates of deposit, checking accounts, saving accounts, etc., are to be maintained by any group within the church except the Board of Directors.

SOPP 13.3 A copy of the letter affirming our tax-exempt status can be made available to people making purchases on behalf of the church. A copy of the letter may be obtained from the church office.

SOPP 13.4 Reimbursements for expenses incurred can be made with the appropriate authorization from the ministry chair and with submission of a receipt for items (see Financial Documentation/ Record Keeping, SOPP 9).

SOPP 13.5 All fundraising events require prior approval by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 14 Receipt of Donations (Excluding Cash)

SOPP 14.1 The church reserves the right to accept or refuse any non-cash donation from an individual or organization. It should be clearly understood that when the church accepts any such donation, the church assumes full rights of ownership, including the right to rent, alter, sell, or any other act of ownership where deemed prudent.

SOPP 14.2 Should a representative of the church wish to solicit the donation of a specific item (excluding approved fundraising events) with a value of \$500 or more, the individual proposing such solicitation must notify the Board of Directors for discussion at its regular monthly meeting. The purpose of notification to the Board of Directors is to discuss and/or research the following:

SOPP 14.2.1 Any liability or other exposure the church may experience by receiving the donation, and the steps to reduce that liability or other exposure.

SOPP 14.2.2 Any monetary expense involved in receiving the donation, including but not limited to the cost to reduce liability or other exposure, insurance, and operation and maintenance expenses, as applicable.

SOPP 14.2.3 Whether or not the receipt of the donation is consistent with the mission and vision of the church.

SOPP 14.3 Based on these considerations, the Board of Directors may encourage the solicitation or acceptance of the donation, request that the donation meet specific parameters, or encourage the donation of a different item which reduces liability or exposure, reduces expense, or more closely fits the church's mission and vision.

SOPP 15 Charges for Use of Facilities

SOPP 15.1 Requests for use of any portion of the church facilities are to be directed to the church office.

SOPP 15.2 Pricing for use of the facilities is established by the Board of Directors; established pricing is negotiable for special event.

SOPP 16 Sound Equipment Usage Fees and Scheduling Guidelines

- SOPP 16.1** A “sound equipment Usage” request form must be submitted by anyone needing use of the sound equipment at least 14 days in advance of the event.
- SOPP 16.2** A trained Sound Technician from our church will be required to run the equipment and will be scheduled based on their availability for the event.
- SOPP 16.3** Equipment installed in the main sanctuary will not be moved to any other room for use. (Possible exceptions for Ministry Groups only).
- SOPP 16.4** Equipment in the main sanctuary shall not be disconnected or moved around within the room for any reason except with specific permission from the Pastor of MCCLA and under the supervision of a trained MCCLA Sound Technician.
- SOPP 16.5** The main sanctuary is to be kept locked at all times when not in use by the authorization of and under the supervision of MCCLA.
- SOPP 16.6** Fees for equipment usage and Sound Technicians will be based on an hourly charge with any portion of an hour being charged the full hourly rate, as established by the Pastor.
- SOPP 16.7** Fees must be paid in full by the day of the event. (Waiving of certain fees/portion of fees and timeline adjustments may be left to the Pastor’s discretion). Ministry groups of the church will not be charged for the use of sound equipment or Sound Techs when used for sanctioned ministry events. However, use of the sound system (other than for regularly scheduled worship services) must be requested at least 14 days in advance of the event.

SOPP 17 Benevolence/Financial Assistance

SOPP 17.1 All requests for financial assistance, whether from individuals or from organizations, are to be directed to the Pastor or a designated staff person.

SOPP 18 Holy Union/Holy Matrimony Policy

SOPP 18.1 Scheduling

SOPP 18.1.1 For scheduling purposes, it is preferred that couples contact the church office at least six months in advance of their planned ceremony. However, we will do our best to accommodate couples with less notice.

SOPP 18.1.2 All scheduling of space will be done through the MCCLA church office.

SOPP 18.2 Requirements: In order to officiate a Ceremony, the following is required of the couple:

SOPP 18.2.1 It is preferred that couples will have been in relationship for at least one year prior to their ceremony. At the minister's discretion, ceremonies may be performed for couples in relationship a minimum of six months.

SOPP 18.2.2 If either party has previously been legally married, they must have secured a legal divorce prior to the ceremony. If either party has had a prior ceremony conducted by UFMCC, that Union must be officially dissolved before this ceremony is conducted.

SOPP 18.3 Pre-Holy Union/Holy Matrimony Orientation: The presiding minister may meet with the couple a minimum of three times prior to the ceremony. Additional appointments can be made at the discretion of the minister.

SOPP 18.4 Minister's Fees

SOPP 18.4.1 No fee will be required of members of the congregation. It is assumed that they already support the ministry of our clergy through their tithes and offerings. However, it is appropriate to suggest an honorarium as a "thank you" to the presiding clergy.

SOPP 18.4.2 For couples who are not members of our congregation, a fee will be charged. Additional fees for travel or other services beyond performing the ceremony can be charged at the minister's discretion.

SOPP 18.5 Building Use Fees and Policies

SOPP 18.5.1 Building use fees will be charged in accordance with the fee schedule established by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 18.5.2 A cleaning deposit equal to the use fee will be required for receptions held on the church's premises. The couple will be responsible for all set up and clean up of the facility. The deposit will be returned after the ceremony provided that

the reception area has been left in satisfactory condition and pursuant to the minister's approval.

SOPP 18.5.3 All fees and deposits are due by the last appointment with the minister.

SOPP 18.5.4 Except for the use of refrigerators (should the church have refrigerators), no kitchen facilities will be made available.

SOPP 18.5.5 No alcohol is allowed on the premises.

SOPP 18.5.6 All building use fees will be designated for our Building Fund.

SOPP 18.6 Minister's Discretion

SOPP 18.6.1 The minister has the right to refuse to conduct a Holy Union.

SOPP 18.6.2 The minister has the right to require professional counseling as a prerequisite to the Holy Union.

SOPP 18.7 Disclaimer: Holy Unions are not legally binding at this time in the state California. It is a spiritual ceremony, asking for God's blessing on the relationship.

SOPP 19 Security and Confidentiality

SOPP 19.1 Copyright Recognition

SOPP 19.1.1 The church will respect the copyright of all printed materials used in worship, Christian education, music, or any other ministry area. Photocopying of copyrighted materials is not condoned and will not be tolerated.

SOPP 19.1.2 The church will secure a copyright license from CCLI or some other reputable licensing agent and will endeavor to abide by the licensing guidelines in order to acquire the right to use songs contained in the copyright license program.

SOPP 19.2 Church Building Security

SOPP 19.2.1 The church may hire professional security guards for special events to protect the premises and the personal property of people attending the event. The fee for the security will be debited to the ministry area hosting the event.

SOPP 19.2.2 The organizers of any particular event within the church shall be responsible for:

SOPP 19.2.2.1 Ensuring that the space used is left in a clean and orderly fashion;

SOPP 19.2.2.2 Ensuring that the building is secured after the event; event planners must arrange for a member of church leadership designated by the Pastor to be available to lock and alarm the building.

SOPP 19.2.3 Please see 'Offering Counting Procedures' for securing the building after Sunday services.

SOPP 19.3 Office Building Security

SOPP 19.3.1 To secure the safety and security of staff, records and property, exterior doors at the office building will be kept locked except to allow appropriate entrance to and exit from the building.

SOPP 19.3.2 To ensure confidentiality of church records, interior office doors and appropriate file cabinets shall be locked at the close of each business day.

SOPP 19.3.3 The Pastor and Vice Moderator shall keep a complete set of back-up keys.

SOPP 19.3.4 Prudent care shall be exercised by all those entering/leaving the building, especially at night. Groups of two or more persons are encouraged whenever possible.

SOPP 19.4 Equipment Use

SOPP 19.4.1 In order to ensure the proper use and maintenance of church equipment, all church equipment is to be used for church business only. This includes, but is not limited to, sound and lighting equipment, telephones/cell phones and computers.

SOPP 19.4.2 Requests to use church equipment for a personal or community project may be considered by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 19.5 Confidentiality of Information

SOPP 19.5.1 Church financial Records: See Financial Documentation/Record Keeping, Section V. Availability of Financial Records, elsewhere in these SOPP's.

SOPP 19.5.2 Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors or of Congregational meetings are kept on file in the church office, are posted at the church, at the office and on the MCCLA website on a monthly basis, and can be made available to all members of the church by request.

SOPP 19.5.3 All personal data of congregants, including records of financial support, shall remain confidential.

SOPP 19.5.3.1 Authorized staff and volunteers will have access to portions of the church's database, as needed to perform their jobs.

SOPP 19.5.3.2 Telephone numbers may be released to Team Leaders of various ministry areas to expedite church related business.

SOPP 19.5.3.3 Personal data maintained for the church's use shall be supplied to another organization only with the expressed permission of the congregant.

SOPP 19.5.3.4 The church's mailing list shall not be sold or given to other organizations.

SOPP 19.5.3.5 Photographs, videos, and personal information may appear on the church's webpage without the expressed permission of the congregants.

SOPP 19.6 All church data shall be maintained and backed-up in a secure manner.

SOPP 19.6.1 Computer back-up shall take place weekly. Back-up should be kept for one month rolling.

SOPP 19.6.2 Backup data on compact discs shall be stored:

SOPP 19.6.2.1 In the appropriate church office

SOPP 19.6.2.2 In the church safe

SOPP 19.6.2.3 Off-site with the Treasurer

SOPP 19.6.3 Personnel records are to be securely stored

SOPP 19.6.3.1 Personnel records will be maintained in a locked file cabinet.

SOPP 19.6.3.2 Access to personnel records shall be limited to the Pastor, the Vice Moderator, one designated staff person, if required, and to the Board of Directors in executive session, if required.

SOPP 20 External Media

It is the policy of the Church to protect the identity of its congregants from the media, unless a person or persons specifically agree to have their picture taken or have their name identified. In order to provide this protection, the following procedures shall be followed: *(The following does not apply to media or video recorded by authorized by church personnel.)*

SOPP 20.1 Greeters, Ushers, the Board of Directors and Staff members shall discuss this policy annually at a Council Of Ministries meeting.

SOPP 20.2 Any person from the media who wishes to conduct an interview and/or outside organization requesting a speaker shall be directed to either the Pastor or a designated staff person by Greeters, Ushers or Board Members. Only these two individuals shall be spokespersons for the church, or, if the media so requests, will seek out others to be interviewed.

SOPP 20.3 Any individual or group wishing to contact the media on behalf of MCCLA must first obtain approval from the Pastor or the Board of Directors (in the absence of the Pastor).

SOPP 20.4 The Pastor, designated staff person or members of the Board of Directors are responsible for notifying any media which appear for any service follow the rules by which they may take video, photographs, or interview congregants, which are:

SOPP 20.4.1 The media should understand that they are on private property and they shall only be allowed to stay if they agree to follow the procedures laid out herein.

SOPP 20.4.2 The media should also understand that they are present during a worship service or other special event, and should conduct themselves in a manner that will not disrupt the event.

SOPP 20.4.3 All congregants shall be informed of media presence prior to service/event.

SOPP 20.4.4 No videos or photographs shall be taken during Communion. To ensure this, all video cameras shall have their lenses turned to the floor and photographers shall turn off cameras or place their lens cap on their cameras.

SOPP 20.4.5 No video, photograph, or interview which identifies a congregant shall be allowed unless specifically authorized by the individual.

SOPP 20.5 The Greeters, Ushers or Board members shall also ensure that the Pastor and/or the designated staff person are advised that the media are present.

SOPP 21 Paid Personal

SOPP 21.1 Definition of Employment Status

SOPP 21.1.1 Employee Classifications

SOPP 21.1.1.1 Full-time are those persons who are regularly scheduled to work 40 hours or more each week and who are continuously employed for 10 months or more during a calendar year.

SOPP 21.1.1.2 Part-time are those employed to work less than 35 hours per week and may or may not be regularly scheduled.

SOPP 21.1.1.3 Temporary are those persons whose assignment is short-term; usually not continuing beyond 6 months.

SOPP 21.1.2 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Classification

SOPP 21.1.2.1 Exempt employees are those persons whose positions meet specific tests established by the FLSA and state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements, however, must fill out a time record to track benefits such as vacation and holidays taken.

SOPP 21.1.2.2 Non-exempt employees are those persons whose positions do not meet FLSA exemption tests. They may be paid a weekly salary or hourly rate; are subject to premium pay for overtime and must complete a time record to meet the reporting requirements of federal and state agencies.

SOPP 21.2 Employment Policy

SOPP 21.2.1 Selection and Supervision of Personnel

SOPP 21.2.1.1 Applicants for vacant positions are hired on the basis of educational training, professional experience, individual merits and competence for a position.

SOPP 21.2.1.2 MCCLA is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, disability, family responsibility, veteran's status, or other status protected by applicable law.

SOPP 21.2.1.3 Due to a possible conflict of interest, relatives by blood, marriage, or adoption and/or partners may not be employed by the church. Exceptions will be made only upon the approval of the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.2.1.4 The contract between the church and the Pastor, whether interim or elected, shall cover the following areas and be considered binding to both parties: Employee Compensation including Salary, Benefits, and Covered Expenses; Job Description and Job Status (i.e.: interim, part-time, or full-time); Evaluation, Contract Renewal, and Resignation.

SOPP 21.2.1.5 The Pastor shall abide by the expectations of the Clergy Code of Conduct as required by the UFMCC.

SOPP 21.2.1.6 The Pastor or his/her designated representative shall employ all employees of the church. All appointments should be approved by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.2.1.7 The Pastor serves as Personnel Director and supervisor of all paid staff positions, as per UFMCC By-Laws.

SOPP 21.2.1.8 In the absence of a Pastor, the Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors shall assume the responsibility of Personnel Director.

SOPP 21.2.2 Probationary Period

SOPP 21.2.2.1 The probationary period is a period of time during which both an employee and their supervisor have the opportunity to evaluate the employee's performance of church duties and his/her competence for a designated position or task.

SOPP 21.2.2.2 The Pastor may terminate employment during the probationary period if it is determined that the employee's job performance does not meet its standards.

SOPP 21.2.2.3 The probationary period for a new entrant extends for three (3) months for all employees (excluding the Pastor) after their initial start date. For the Pastor, refer to the Pastor's contract.

SOPP 21.2.3 Official Employer

SOPP 21.2.3.1 All employees are employees of the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles and are subject to the policies established by the Board of Directors and its authorized directives.

SOPP 21.2.4 Personnel Records

- SOPP 21.2.4.1** Confidential personnel records shall be maintained for each employee. This shall be done by a designated staff person under the supervision of the Pastor as Director of Personnel.
- SOPP 21.2.4.2** Job Description: A written job description should be provided for all employees. Performance standards will also be developed for each position.
- SOPP 21.2.4.3** All employees should possess special aptitudes, skills, and capacities in their field of work and who are sympathetic to the purpose, goals, and objectives of the church.
- SOPP 21.2.4.4** In recognition of the mission, values, culture, and statement of faith of the church, employees should possess a cooperative spirit and hold the goodwill of their members and congregants they serve and the public. They should exhibit the desire and capacity to learn, to grow and to improve their own workmanship.
- SOPP 21.2.4.5** A letter of understanding, including a job description, salary compensation and other pertinent information is required for all positions. The letter of understanding is composed by the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors. This letter of understanding must be signed by all employees and kept in their personnel file.

SOPP 21.2.5 Employee Evaluations

- SOPP 21.2.5.1** An employee evaluation is an appraisal of the employee's performance of the specified duties of his/her position. The evaluation is arrived at by a joint effort of the employee and the Pastor or by their designee, or the Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors in the pastor's absence. The final evaluation, in writing, is kept on file in the employee's personnel record and must be signed by the Pastor and the employee.
- SOPP 21.2.5.2** Annually, each Board Member, including the Pastor, will individually evaluate the Pastor using an agreed upon written format. The evaluation will be based on:
- SOPP 21.2.5.2.1** Observations of the Pastor.
 - SOPP 21.2.5.2.2** The monthly Pastor reports for the given year.
 - SOPP 21.2.5.2.3** The Pastor's self-assessment of his/her progress toward meeting the current year's individual development plan. After reviewing a summary of the ratings of the Pastor's performance, the Board of Directors or its designated sub committee, with the exception of the Pastor, shall meet to develop consensus on the overall rating of the Pastor in advance of sharing the evaluation results with the Pastor.

A brief written summary supporting the overall rating shall be provided to the Pastor along with the summary of the separate ratings. Upon completion of the annual evaluation process, the Pastor shall present his/her development plan for the subsequent year.

SOPP 21.2.5.3 The employee shall have the opportunity to review his/her written evaluation. If she/he is in disagreement with the said evaluation, she/he has the right to attach his/her own written statement covering the evaluation. This shall be attached to the written evaluation and kept in the employee's personnel record

SOPP 21.2.5.4 An evaluation based on the job description and performance standards shall be conducted at the end of all employees' probationary period and at least annually thereafter at the end of the church fiscal year in December. Any merit increases will be effective starting January 1.

SOPP 21.2.5.5 A development plan shall be created for each employee with their supervisor upon hire, at any change in responsibility, and annually at the time of the evaluation.

SOPP 21.3 Conditions on the Job

SOPP 21.3.1 Work Hours

SOPP 21.3.1.1 Scheduled working hours for all employees shall be approved by the Pastor. The work schedule for employees will include covering all hours that the office is scheduled to be open; any required meetings or appointments with lay leadership, the congregation or the public; and worship services as detailed in job descriptions

SOPP 21.3.1.2 The workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday.

SOPP 21.3.1.3 Meal breaks of one (1) hour or less may be taken when shifts of six (6) or more hours are worked.

SOPP 21.3.1.4 Personal breaks of fifteen (15) minutes or less may be taken for every work shift of (4) hours.

SOPP 21.3.2 Attendance

SOPP 21.3.2.1 Each employee is an integral part of the church team, and his or her presence and daily contribution is needed to keep the operation running efficiently. All employees are expected to be at work by the start of their scheduled shift and to remain at work until the end of their scheduled work shift.

SOPP 21.3.3 Dress Code

SOPP 21.3.3.1 Every employee of the church must be aware that his/her personal appearance directly affects the church's public image and ability to effectively serve the congregation. Personal appearance must be neat, clean, non-offensive, and appropriate for the position duties that the employee is to be performing.

SOPP 21.3.3.2 A dress code that is business-like attire for all employees will be developed by the staff and monitored by the Senior Pastor and adhered to while in the church office or worship services.

SOPP 21.3.3.3 Any employee not suitably dressed or groomed may be sent home by their supervisor without pay until such time as the employee presents himself/herself in a state and dress that adheres to this dress code policy. If an employee continuously fails to abide by this policy, further disciplinary action may be taken including suspension or dismissal.

SOPP 21.3.4 Rules of Conduct

SOPP 21.3.4.1 All staff members are representatives of the church and, as such, are expected to conduct themselves in a Christian manner. Actions dangerous to co-workers, alcohol or drug abuse, dishonesty, disorderly conduct, frequent tardiness, neglect of duty, unexcused absenteeism, insubordination, verbal or physical abuse, violation of the confidentiality of congregant or employee information, and willful destruction of church property are among some of the inappropriate behaviors which may result in disciplinary action leading to dismissal.

SOPP 21.3.4.2 All staff members shall agree to uphold the Leadership Expectations as contained in these Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

SOPP 21.4 Non-Wage Benefits

SOPP 21.4.1 All benefits are based on the original hire date.

SOPP 21.4.2 Personal Days Program

SOPP 21.4.2.1 MCCLA provides 20, 25, 30 or 35 paid days (eight-hour days) off per year depending on length of service and job classification. Accrual of hours for Personal Days begins on the first day of employment. These days may be used as vacation, sick days, for bereavement purposes, or for other personal reasons, and may be carried over up to an annual limit of 100% or accrued days for later use no later than June 30th of the following year. **All time off must be scheduled with the employee's supervisor.**

SOPP 21.4.2.2 In no case will an active employee be paid for unused Personal Days.

SOPP 21.4.2.3 If an employee resigns his/her position with MCCLA, he/she will be paid for personal days accrued through the last pay period. Upon termination of employment, if an employee has a negative personal-hour balance, the payments made to the employee by MCCLA for those hours will be deducted from the employee's last pay check.

SOPP 21.4.2.4 The accrual limits for days off per year in the Personal Days Program for all full time employees' are as follows:

Classification/Years of Service	Days Off	Hours Off	Maximum Carry-over Days/Hours
Full time employees including Directors, Associate Pastoral Staff, Support Staff with less than 3 years of service.	20	160	10/80
Full time employees including Directors, Associate Pastoral Staff, Support Staff with 3–8 years of service.	25	200	12.50/100
Full time employees including Directors, Associate Pastoral Staff, Support Staff with 8-15 years of service.	30	240	15/150
Full time employees including Directors, Associate Pastoral Staff, Support Staff with greater than 15 years of service.	35	280	17.5/140

SOPP 21.4.2.5 Part-time employees are not eligible to participate in the Personal Days Program.

SOPP 21.4.2.6 Accrual for the Personal Days Off Program begins on January 1st of each year. In the first year New hires will accrue Personal Days Off prorated based on length of service for that year (i.e. Start date of July 1st = 50% accrual or 10 days for a new Associate Pastor). No pro-rata allowance is provided if employed after October 1.

SOPP 21.4.2.7 Temporary employees do not earn Personal Days Off.

SOPP 21.4.2.8 A report of a personal day taken must be submitted on a time sheet, charged to personal day and submitted by the first of the month for the previous month. A permanent record of personal day use must be maintained for each employee.

SOPP 21.4.2.9 A doctor's written statement may be required for personal days taken exceeding three (3) consecutive working days due to illness.

SOPP 21.4.3 Compensatory Time

SOPP 21.4.3.1 Provision is made for employees to take compensatory time only by prior arrangement with the Pastor.

SOPP 21.4.3.2 For exempt employees, compensatory time must be arranged ahead of time with the Pastor or immediate supervisor.

SOPP 21.4.3.3 The "comp time" off must be used within the following month of accrual, again, with prior arrangement. If it is not used within the following month, it is lost.

SOPP 21.4.3.4 Non-exempt employees do not earn compensatory pay. All additional hours worked may not be compensated without advanced authorization.

SOPP 21.4.3.5 A report of compensatory time must be submitted on a time sheet for each period and submitted monthly. A permanent record of compensatory time must be maintained for each employee.

SOPP 21.4.4 Holidays

SOPP 21.4.4.1 The church recognizes the following days as paid full day holidays: New Year's Day, Presidents' Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. The church office will also be closed.

SOPP 21.4.4.2 The church recognizes the following days as paid half-day holidays: Good Friday, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve. The church office will close at noon on these days.

SOPP 21.4.4.3 Full-time employees may also have their birthday as a paid holiday or a floating holiday.

SOPP 21.4.4.4 Full-time staff who are required to be on duty on a specified holiday will be given compensatory time off.

SOPP 21.4.5 Jury Duty

SOPP 21.4.5.1 MCCLA recognizes our employee's commitment to the community, including jury service when requested. If you are a full time employee MCCLA provides full salary while you are on jury service and unable to work your regularly scheduled hours. Part-time employees will receive full pay as well based upon the average hours worked over the previous six months. You may also keep any compensation provided by the courts for your time and service.

SOPP 21.4.6 Health Insurance

SOPP 21.4.6.1 All eligible employees (as determined by the carrier) may participate in the church's Group Health Insurance Program. The employee's cost of coverage is paid as determined by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.4.6.2 Employee's may cover their eligible dependents under the Health Insurance Program by paying for the additional cost of coverage through payroll deduction.

SOPP 21.4.7 Worker's Compensation

SOPP 21.4.7.1 Any employee who suffers a personal injury arising out of and in the course of his/her employment shall be paid compensation in the matter and to the extent provided under the Worker's Compensation Insurance Act of the State of California.

SOPP 21.4.7.2 Employees must report on-the-job injuries immediately to their supervisor. All related paperwork should be completed within 24 hours of the occurrence.

SOPP 21.4.7.3 Any reimbursement for wages from Worker's Compensation shall not be in addition to normal salary/wage. For the duration of time in which an employee is receiving his/her normal salary from the church, he/she is required to endorse the Worker's Compensation check to the church.

SOPP 21.4.8 Professional Development

SOPP 21.4.8.1 The church encourages members of the staff to attend conferences, institutes and seminars conducted by recognized organizations for the purpose of advancement and development of the staff member and the church. Leaves with pay for this purpose may be granted at the discretion of the Pastor.

SOPP 21.4.8.2 Insofar as possible, funds are made available for professional conferences in the annual Ministry Funding Plan of the church. These funds shall be for remuneration of expenses incurred pursuant to funding plan specifications.

SOPP 21.4.8.3 This funding is available to full-time and part-time staff (at the discretion of the Pastor) in accordance with the particular year's funding plan specifications.

SOPP 21.4.8.4 All funding must be approved by the Board of Directors prior to incurring expenses.

SOPP 21.5 Salary Administration

SOPP 21.5.1 Salary Administration

SOPP 21.5.1.1 New paid staff positions are created by the suggestion of the Pastor and the approval of the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.5.1.2 All salaries are approved by the Board of Directors. Salary is based primarily on training, experience, and the responsibilities of the position.

SOPP 21.5.1.3 Initial salary shall be determined by the Board of Directors at the start of employment. A change of title or job responsibilities may require a re-evaluation of salary.

SOPP 21.5.1.4 Any increases in salary shall be based on job performance and as funding plan allows.

SOPP 21.5.1.5 A work performance review shall be done with each employee with the Pastor or their immediate supervisor at least annually.

SOPP 21.5.1.6 An employee must be employed a minimum of six (6) months to be considered for merit increases.

SOPP 21.5.1.7 Monetary gifts with the approval of the Board of Directors (such as at Christmas or the end of the year) given to employees shall be reported as income for tax purposes.

SOPP 21.5.1.8 Authorized overtime is paid on the basis of one-and-a-half times the approved hourly rate for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek for non-exempt employees.

SOPP 21.5.1.9 Advances against salary or wages shall not normally be allowed. Under extreme need, an employee may request a ruling from the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.5.1.10 Employees may receive their paychecks up to one week early before going on vacation if prior arrangements are made with the designated staff person.

SOPP 21.5.1.11 Payroll checks are paid on the 1st and 15th day of each month for all regular part time and full time staff. In the event that the pay date falls on a holiday, checks/direct deposit will be issued on the last working day.

SOPP 21.5.1.12 Pay Deductions: Deductions are made from each employee's salary on a weekly basis for the purpose of Federal, State, and all other applicable Taxes, and Social Security payments as appropriate for each employee's position.

SOPP 21.5.2 Expenses Incidental to the Job

SOPP 21.5.2.1 Expenses authorized in conjunction with assigned job responsibilities (i.e., telephone, bus fare, car allowance, meals, etc.) shall be reimbursed by the church in accordance with arrangements made with the Pastor prior to incurring the expense. All receipts shall be turned in within 30 days of expense to the church or it may not be reimbursed. No reimbursement shall be made without a receipt for expenses incurred.

SOPP 21.5.2.2 This section covers only those expenses incurred during the performance of an employee's normal designated duties. Expenses incurred when at seminars, conferences, etc., are provided under the Financial Documentation / Record Keeping section of these Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

SOPP 21.5.2.3 Employees shall be reimbursed for mileage incurred in performing their duties. Mileage must be approved by the Pastor and shall be paid at the current IRS standard rate. Reimbursement for mileage will be paid on the first paycheck of the month following receipt of the approved mileage reimbursement request.

SOPP 21.6 Leave of Absences

SOPP 21.6.1 Leave of Absence

SOPP 21.6.1.1 Employees requesting absence from work, not covered by sick leave, disability, or family medical leave is at the discretion of the Pastor. Any leave of absence is time away from church duties without pay. The primary purpose of a leave of absence is to retain valuable employees.

SOPP 21.6.1.2 Approved leaves of absences do not interrupt continuous service for the purpose of personnel policy or participation in the benefit program. The employee's original date of employment remains in effect. Merit evaluation dates will be moved by the length of the leave of absence.

SOPP 21.6.1.3 Absence from work for a period of 30 days or less is considered time off and does not come under leave-of-absence provisions. A leave of absence can extend initially up to three (3) months, with the option to extend the leave up to additional three (3) months when the initial period has expired.

SOPP 21.6.1.4 Requests for leave of absence will be granted only under the following conditions:

SOPP 21.6.1.4.1 The employee has been on the regular payroll for one year or more.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.2 The church desires to retain the employee in its service.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.3 The requested leave is one in which unusual circumstances exist or one which will benefit both the church and the employee.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.4 The employee intends to return to the church at the end of the leave of absence.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.5 Work requirements permit the employee's absence without reasonable disruption of work.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.6 An employee's employment terminates if the leave of absence exceeds six months.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.7 The church's share of the employee's benefit program will be the responsibility of the employee during the leave of absence.

SOPP 21.6.1.4.8 The request is submitted in writing to the Pastor and approved by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.6.2 Family and Medical Leave

SOPP 21.6.2.1 A "family or medical leave of absence" is defined as an approved absence available to eligible employees under certain circumstances for consecutive or intermittent periods of up to twelve (12) weeks per calendar year.

SOPP 21.6.2.2 Circumstances under which leave may be taken include the birth of a child, the placement of a child with the employee (adoption or foster care), situations where an employee is needed to care for a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition and cases where an employee is unable to perform his or her duties because of a serious health condition.

SOPP 21.6.2.3 To qualify for leave under this policy, an employee must have been employed by the church for at least twelve (12) months. In addition, the employee must have worked at least 1,000 hours during the twelve-month period prior to requesting leave.

SOPP 21.6.2.4 If an employee is entitled to paid leave or time off under another policy, the employee must take all that time off prior to taking any unpaid leave under this policy. When an employee has taken all available accrued paid leave, any additional leave taken under this policy will be unpaid.

SOPP 21.6.2.5 The church requires medical certification if an employee requests leave on account of a serious health problem or to care for a seriously ill family member.

SOPP 21.6.2.6 When the need for leave is foreseeable (such as the birth, adoption or placement of a child and in cases of planned medical treatment), the employee must notify the church thirty (30) days in advance of the requested leave. When thirty (30) days' advance notice is not practical, notice must be given as soon as possible after the employee learns of the need for the leave.

SOPP 21.6.2.7 Employees taking family and medical leave under this policy are eligible to continue coverage under the church's health program for the duration of the leave.

SOPP 21.6.3 Jury Duty

SOPP 21.6.3.1 Leave(s) for jury duty with pay shall be provided so that employees called to serve on a jury suffer no loss of regular income and no loss of other benefits due. Documentation of pay during jury duty must be provided to the church in order to receive salary and benefits.

SOPP 21.6.3.2 Pay will be regular salary.

SOPP 21.6.3.3 This policy applies only to full-time and part-time employees.

SOPP 21.6.4 Bereavement

SOPP 21.6.4.1 In the case of death in the immediate family of the full-time employee (i.e., spouse, child, parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, grandparent, sister-in-law, brother-in-law) no deduction of pay shall be made

from absence from work for a period of three days. Special circumstances requiring an extended period of time must be authorized by the Pastor or immediate supervisor.

SOPP 21.6.4.2 Bereavement requests for the death of other relatives/friends, not listed above, must be approved by Pastor or the Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.6.5 Sabbatical Leave

SOPP 21.6.5.1 The Senior Pastor shall be allowed sabbatical leave for the purpose of personal renewal and/or professional development.

SOPP 21.6.6 Termination of Employment

SOPP 21.6.7 Resignation

SOPP 21.6.7.1 In the event of an employee's resignation, it is expected that exempt employees submit their written resignation at least one (1) month prior to the effective date of resignation to their immediate supervisor.

SOPP 21.6.7.2 Non-exempt employees are expected to submit their written resignation two (2) weeks prior to the effective date of resignation to their immediate supervisor.

SOPP 21.6.7.3 All employees leaving the church are expected to leave records in such conditions as to aid their successors.

SOPP 21.6.7.4 Exit Interview: An exit interview will be conducted by the Pastor and/or the designated member of the Board of Directors with all employees terminating employment. Recording of the exit interview will contain information regarding the employee's reason(s) for termination and shall be placed in the employee's personnel record.

SOPP 21.6.7.5 An employee who is absent for three (3) consecutive work days and who fails to inform their supervisor of the reason for their absence will be considered to have abandoned their job.

SOPP 21.6.8 Dismissal and Suspension

SOPP 21.6.8.1 All employees shall follow the Rules of Conduct listed under the Conditions of Employment, SOPP 20.3.4, of this policy.

SOPP 21.6.8.2 In cases of poor work performance by an employee, the church follows a policy of progressive discipline which shall include an initial verbal warning, one written warning and one written reprimand to be placed in the employee's personnel record and signed by the employee and their supervisor.

SOPP 21.6.8.3 After having received a written reprimand, the employee is automatically placed on up to thirty (30) day probation. Anytime during this probation, a final determination of the employee's status can be made up to and including dismissal.

SOPP 21.6.9 Grievance Procedure

SOPP 21.6.9.1 An employee who has a grievance about decisions made regarding their employment and/or dismissal/suspension or their treatment by the church shall first discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor. Both the immediate supervisor and the employee are encouraged to approach the discussion with an attitude of resolution rather than conflict. The immediate supervisor shall prepare a memo regarding the facts of the discussion and the outcome, which shall be signed by the supervisor and the employee placed in the employee's personnel file.

SOPP 21.6.9.2 If the immediate supervisor and employee are unable to resolve the grievance, the immediate supervisor will make arrangements for a meeting between the employee, immediate supervisor, and the Pastor. All participants are encouraged to approach the meeting with an attitude of resolution. The Pastor shall prepare a memo regarding the facts of the meeting and the outcome, which shall be signed by the Pastor, supervisor, and employee and placed in the employee's personnel file.

SOPP 21.6.9.3 If the grievance is not resolved at the meeting, the Pastor shall arrange a meeting with the employee, immediate supervisor, Pastor, and Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors. This shall be the final meeting in an attempt to resolve the grievance. The Vice Moderator shall prepare a memo regarding the facts of the meeting and the final resolution of the grievance, which shall be signed by the Vice Moderator, Pastor, supervisor and employee and placed in the employee's personnel file.

SOPP 21.7 Computer Usage, Internet Access and Electronic Mail Policies

SOPP 21.7.1 Computer Usage

SOPP 21.7.1.1 The computer systems are provided by the church for employees to facilitate the performance of church work. Their contents are the property of the church. Employees should be aware that there is no expectation of privacy regarding the contents of church computer files. Church management or the

Board of Directors may monitor files and retrieve the contents for legitimate business reasons

SOPP 21.7.1.2 Employees are responsible for maintaining the security of their files and pass codes. Precautions should be taken to prevent unauthorized access to your terminal or desktop tools by logging off when a terminal or desktop screen is to be left unattended. Unauthorized entry to another employee's terminal is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

SOPP 21.7.1.3 All church business shall be conducted using the church's official email addresses and web sites or one approved by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 21.7.2 Electronic Mail

SOPP 21.7.2.1 Electronic mail systems are assets owned by the church. They are critical components of the church communication system. Employees should be aware that there is no expectation of privacy regarding church e-mail. Thus, there is no guarantee of privacy in a church employee's use of the church e-mail system. Employee should, therefore, conduct themselves accordingly.

SOPP 21.7.2.2 Efficient use of the church e-mail system dictates that messages should be concise and directed to individuals with an interest or need to know.

SOPP 21.7.2.3 Misuse of the church e-mail system may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SOPP 21.7.3 Internet Access

SOPP 21.7.3.1 The church encourages exploration of the Internet and reasonable personal use of church Internet access is permitted, but such use should not interfere or conflict with church use. Employees should exercise good judgment regarding the reasonableness of personal use.

SOPP 21.7.3.2 Misuse of Internet Access may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The following types of behavior are prohibited:

SOPP 21.7.3.2.1 Obscene, sexually explicit, pornographic, profane or offensive material may not be transmitted over the church communication system.

SOPP 21.7.3.2.2 Use of the church communication system to set up or service personal business

SOPP 21.7.3.2.3 Church-confidential messages should be distributed internally to church personnel or other authorized individuals only. Church proprietary information may not be transmitted outside of the

church through e-mail.

SOPP 21.7.3.2.4 The unauthorized use of a pass code or a mailbox is prohibited.

SOPP 21.7.3.2.5 Broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, or other non-church-related matters is prohibited.

SOPP 22 **Volunteers**

SOPP 22.1 Definition of Volunteer: Any individual to which the church has assigned tasks involving the business or ministry of the church, without financial compensation. This includes, but is not specifically limited to: Board of Directors, Council on Ministries, individuals serving on Ministry Teams, and individuals assisting with office tasks or building maintenance and repair.

SOPP 22.2 Application and screening of volunteers shall be conducted according to the appropriate section(s) of Risk Management included in these SOPP's.

SOPP 22.3 All volunteers shall be informed of their respective Team Leaders and their staff liaison by whom they are supported.

SOPP 22.4 The church's Liability Insurance shall cover volunteers only when an injury is sustained as a result of doing the church's business. This does not include when a volunteer is traveling from home to church, or from church to home. This does, however, include travel, which is directly related to conducting the church's business or ministry. If an injury should occur, the procedure in the Risk Management section of these SOPP's shall apply.

SOPP 23 Board of Directors

SOPP 23.1 Requirements and Restrictions for Serving on the Board of Directors

SOPP 23.1.1 A member of the Board of Directors must meet all criteria as outlined in the current MCCLA By-laws as they pertain to Boards of Directors and/or local church authority.

SOPP 23.1.2 A member of the Board of Directors must adhere to the Leadership Expectations included in these Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

SOPP 23.1.3 A member of the Board of Directors must be Spirit-filled, dedicated to serving Jesus Christ through serving God's people, and committed to this church. Evidence of this is seen in:

SOPP 23.1.3.1 A good personal devotional life. Those who would lead Christ's Church should be in prayer for the Pastor, the church, and its ministry daily.

SOPP 23.1.3.2 Frequent attendance at worship. Those who would oversee the church's primary needs must be a part of the worshipping community.

SOPP 23.1.3.3 Tithing. Scriptures tell us that we are to give one-tenth of our income to God. Those who would be members of the Board of Directors are encouraged to exhibit and model commitment by giving their tithe.

SOPP 23.1.3.4 Involvement. A person who would lead the church must be faithful in his or her own ministry to be an example.

SOPP 23.1.3.5 Members of the Board of Directors shall adhere to the Conflict Resolution section of these SOPP's, as they apply to the Board of Directors.

SOPP 23.1.4 Members in good standing (see Membership Requirements) having attained eighteen (18) years of age may serve on the Board of Directors.

SOPP 23.2 In the Absence of a Pastor

SOPP 23.2.1 The Vice Moderator, under the advisement of the Board of Directors, shall act as Personnel Director in the absence of a Pastor, and assume all such duties related to personnel normally borne by the Pastor.

SOPP 23.2.2 The Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors shall assume the responsibility of preparing the agenda and moderating Board and Congregational meetings, unless otherwise decided by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors.

While assuming the role of Moderator, the Board's Vice Moderator shall maintain equal vote with other Board members.

SOPP 23.2.3 All other duties normally performed by the Pastor shall, as equitably and appropriately as possible, be shared among the paid staff, other members of the Board of Directors, and members of the Council of Ministries.

SOPP 23.3 Definition: Spouse

SOPP 23.3.1 Any two persons who have had a legally accepted marriage ceremony/ registered domestic partnership uniting them to each other and are currently involved in an ongoing relationship together.

SOPP 23.3.2 Any persons who have had a Holy Union ceremony and are currently involved in that relationship together.

SOPP 23.3.3 Co-partners in an ongoing relationship who have been dating each other for one (1) year or more.

SOPP 24 Council on Ministries

SOPP 24.1 Definition: The Council on Ministries is comprised of the team leaders of the various ministry teams within the church body and the leaders/facilitators of the various affinity groups within the church body. The purpose of the Council on Ministries is multifold:

SOPP 24.1.1 To provide cohesiveness in the ministries offered by the church.

SOPP 24.1.2 To provide a clearer distinction between and definition of those ministry areas, so as to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts.

SOPP 24.1.3 To provide a means of communicating plans and ideas.

SOPP 24.1.4 To provide a means of consistent presentation of our vision, values and mission.

SOPP 24.1.5 To provide a vehicle for further refining the definition of ministry at MCCLA.

SOPP 24.2 Appointment and Responsibilities

SOPP 24.2.1 Team leaders of ministry areas are chosen by a collaborative effort of the staff liaison, current team leader(s) and feedback from the members. It is preferred that all team leaders are members of the church or he/she is expected to complete the membership process within their tenure.

SOPP 24.2.2 Members of the Council on Ministries shall not hold any elected position within the church aside from the following exception: Members of the Council of Ministries may serve as elected delegates to UFMCC denominational conferences.

SOPP 24.2.3 Length of term shall be at least one (1) year. A team leader may be reappointed at the discretion of the Pastor or changed through the process outlined in SOPP 23.2.1 above.

SOPP 24.2.4 Each team leader shall receive a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures and Policies and be aware of its contents and inform their team of the appropriate sections of the SOPP's.

SOPP 24.2.5 Members of the Council on Ministries shall agree to uphold the Leadership Expectations incorporated in these Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

SOPP 24.2.6 Team leaders shall attend scheduled meetings of the Council.

SOPP 24.2.7 Reports shall be submitted by each team leader, either verbally or in writing, as needed, at each meeting of the Council. Team leaders will submit an annual report as requested by the staff.

SOPP 24.2.8 Team leaders shall fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the job description for their ministry area.

SOPP 24.2.9 The Pastor will attend the Council on Ministry meetings, or may appoint someone to serve in the event of his/her absence.

SOPP 24.2.10 The Council on Ministries shall choose a team leader(s) in April of each year from its members by a majority vote. The COM leader shall be responsible for developing an agenda and moderating the council meetings. The COM leader shall have an equal vote with other council members. The COM leader shall act as liaison between the staff, council and Board of Directors. The COM leader's term is one (1) year.

SOPP 24.3 Appropriate Dress

SOPP 24.3.1 Every team member of the church must be aware that his/her personal appearance directly affects the church's public image and ability to effectively serve the congregation. Personal appearance must be neat, clean, non-offensive, and appropriate when representing MCCLA in the community or during worship services.

SOPP 24.4 Termination of Service

SOPP 24.4.1 If a team leader is no longer willing or able to complete their term, a resignation shall be submitted to the Pastoral staff member in charge of that ministry area. Thirty (30) days notice is requested.

SOPP 24.4.2 If concerns or problems arise within a ministry area, the Pastoral staff member shall discuss those concerns with the team leader involved. If the team leader wishes to complete his/her term, specific goals for change will be established. If the team leader does not wish to continue, a written resignation shall be requested.

SOPP 24.4.3 If after an appropriate time period, not less than thirty (30) days, there appears to be no improvement, the Pastoral staff member shall consider an appropriate course of action consistent with the intent of the Conflict Resolution Section of the church, included in these Standard Operating Policies and Procedures.

SOPP 24.4.4 The decision of the Pastor constitutes final approval for dismissal.

SOPP 25 Teaching Church

As a designated Teaching Church for the UFMCC, MCCLA takes on the responsibility for helping to provide experiential training for potential UFMCC clergy who are actively enrolled in the approved credentialing process. Individuals who are ready to enter their required period of experiential training (known as Clergy Candidacy period) for ordination in UFMCC may do that training at this location with the following stipulations:

SOPP 25.1 Acceptance of a Clergy Candidate

SOPP 25.1.1 Potential candidate must provide to the local Pastor or Pastor and Supervising Clergy (if someone other than the local Pastor is to be the Supervising Clergy):

SOPP 25.1.1.1 Copies of papers on their personal call to ministry and spiritual journey, statement of faith, understanding of homosexuality and Christianity, and a clear set of personal goals for the candidacy period.

SOPP 25.1.1.2 At least 2 personal references and 2 professional MCC references.

SOPP 25.1.1.3 A plan for obtaining housing, work, and other personal support needs during candidacy.

SOPP 25.1.2 Potential candidate should submit to a personal interview (or, if geographical distance is prohibitive, interview by telephone) with both the Pastor and the Supervising Clergy.

SOPP 25.1.3 Acceptance of a clergy candidate must be affirmed by the Board of Directors.

SOPP 25.2 Upon Acceptance of Clergy Candidate

SOPP 25.2.1 A time line shall be established by the candidate, the Supervising Clergy, and the Pastor regarding start date, expected duration (typically 1 full year), and goals to be achieved during candidacy period.

SOPP 25.2.2 Candidate shall meet at least monthly throughout the candidacy period with both the Supervising Clergy and the local Pastor (separate meetings are acceptable, but meeting together is preferred).

SOPP 25.2.3 It shall be understood that (if the local Pastor is not also the Supervising Clergy), the candidate's time line for Ordination and educational needs shall be overseen by the Supervising Clergy; the candidate's experiential needs and ministry training assignments shall be overseen by the Pastor. Specific goals and objectives shall be put in writing and monitored by all parties named above.

SOPP 25.3 Expectations of Clergy Candidates: During the full period of experiential training at the local church, candidates shall be expected to:

SOPP 25.3.1 Behave in a professional manner at all times just as if s/he were employed by the local church, including maintaining appropriate boundaries with all congregants.

SOPP 25.3.2 Adhere to the UFMCC's Clergy Code of Conduct.

SOPP 25.3.3 Support and uphold the local church's Statement of Values.

SOPP 25.3.4 Be open and honest at all times with the Pastor and the Supervising Clergy regarding his/her needs and personal responses to the candidacy experience.

SOPP 25.3.5 Take responsibility for seeing that his/her personal, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are being met.

SOPP 25.3.6 Meet the expectations and commitments laid out in the written candidacy goals and objectives established with the Pastor and the Supervising Clergy.

SOPP 25.3.7 Be open to guidance, instruction, and reasonable requests made by the Pastor and the Supervising Clergy.

SOPP 25.4 In order to support the Clergy Candidate, the local church shall:

SOPP 25.4.1 Provide a weekly stipend at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

SOPP 25.4.2 Attempt to support the candidate's search for housing and employment by soliciting assistance and advice from the congregation.

SOPP 25.4.3 Allow the candidate to accept preaching opportunities at other churches (as long as his/her obligations to the local church are not compromised).

SOPP 25.4.4 Pay standard mileage and per diem for any conferences, educational seminars, or special events when the candidate is asked to represent the local church at the discretion of the Pastor and supervising clergy.

SOPP 25.4.5 Treat the candidate as any professional staff member would be treated with respect, Christian love, and prayerful support.

SOPP 25.4.6 Offer the candidate opportunities for church-wide fund-raising efforts to help cover tuition and travel costs for required coursework or conferences.

SOPP 25.4.7 If the candidate chooses to be Ordained in this local church, the church *may* pay reasonable expenses for an appropriate service and reception (cap to be determined by the Board of Directors).

SOPP 25.5 The local church, Pastor, and Supervising Clergy reserve the right to decline acceptance of a potential Clergy Candidate for any reason, and may terminate the period of candidacy should any parties fail to meet the above stated requirements. Such termination process shall include intervention from the District Board of Ordained Ministry.

SOPP 26 Leadership Expectations

The following are the leadership expectations, which are applied to paid and appointed staff, the Board of Directors, and the Council of Ministries at MCCLA.

SOPP 26.1 Spiritual Growth: Leaders are committed to grow as Christians through regular worship, personal prayer/meditation, and increasing study. The church is led forward by Christians that are going forward in their relationship with God.

SOPP 26.2 Exemplify Positive Faith: Things that leaders say to others are said in constructive, supportive and positive ways. Leaders believe that God can change a situation, and rather than simply complain or criticize, leaders pray and do what they can to make a positive difference. They do not talk about the problem with anyone who is not directly involved in the problem or its solution.

SOPP 26.3 Tithing: Leaders have an understanding that a portion of all they have been given by God (time, talent and money) is to be returned to the work of God in the church. Following the biblical guideline of the giving of a tithe, leaders are encouraged to make a commitment to tithe or be on an intentional journey to being tithers. Since our church professes a goal of being a tithing church, leaders are asked to model this form of giving so that the goal of truly being a tithing church will become a reality.

SOPP 26.4 Praying: Leaders commit to praying for the Pastor, the Board, the staff, and others who are guiding this church. We are sustained in ministry as we are prayed for by our sisters and brothers.

SOPP 26.5 Living a Healthy Mature Life: Although this church is not in the habit of dictating how people ought to live, leaders understand that members have a right to expect their leaders to be healthy examples. Leaders evaluate their own behavior in the light of that reality and attempt to live in such a way that they are not stumbling blocks for others.

SOPP 26.6 Mutual Accountability: The Bible talks about being submitted to one another in love (Ephesians 5:21). Leaders are willing to receive instructions and even constructive criticism from fellow leaders, or those put in a supervisory position over them. It is healthy that everyone be accountable to someone and willing to participate in a mature way in this process.

SOPP 27 Conflict Management

SOPP 27.1 Conflict Management Philosophy

Metropolitan Community Church, Los Angeles, California, is committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment supportive of personal and spiritual growth. This church recognizes the rights of its pastors, employees, contractors, members, and guests to have an environment free of interpersonal violence such as harassment and abuse of a physical, psychological, or sexual nature.

We believe that harassment and abuse are not the fault of the victim. A person who has been harassed or abused needs support, empowerment, and a structure which provides an effective, safe, and prompt response to his/her complaint.

We understand that harassment and abuse may not be intentional, and may, in fact, arise through miscommunication or lack of awareness. When uncomfortable and/or unacceptable behaviors occur, an individual can sometimes resolve the situation himself/herself through direct discussion with the responsible party. Since this direct approach is not always appropriate, a Church Relations Team shall be formed to provide the church with a means of safely and effectively resolving such situations.

We recognize the right of an individual who is accused of inappropriate behavior to respond to allegations, unless the panel deems informing that individual of the allegations unnecessary, unhelpful or unsafe to panel members or the complainant.

Along with this policy statement are Church Relations Procedures which include guidelines for the formation and functioning of the Church Relations Team. The church also supports the Bylaws of The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as revised at General Conference XX, Toronto, Ontario (Canada) and at the March 2002 Meeting of General Council, effective January regarding professional behavior which are not part of this document.

This Church Relations Policy Statement and the Church Relations Procedures are also considered to include prohibitions against all criminal behaviors.

Church Relations Procedures

1. Church Relations Team - Formation and Functioning

The Board of Directors shall appoint a Church Relations Team of five members consisting of a board member, and four members of the congregation to serve for two years. The four will include two women and two men, and replacements will be appointed by the Board as necessary or as terms expire.

The team shall handle complaints according to the following guidelines:

- 1.1. All complaints shall be given prompt and fair consideration.
- 1.2. Persons presenting complaints shall be free of coercion, restraints, interference, discrimination, or reprisal.
- 1.3. The Church Relations Team shall act with sensitivity, objectivity, and fairness in handling these complaints.
- 1.4. Decisions of the Relations Panel must reflect a quorum of at least two persons.
- 1.5. The team will appoint a chairperson and a back-up chairperson to fill in if the chairperson is unavailable.
- 1.6. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing to any member of the Church Relations Team. That member will then contact the chairperson who will arrange for a formation of a panel consisting of at least two other members, one of whom will be a man, the other to be a woman, to address the complaint. The involvement of the non-board members on the three (3) panel team should be rotated as much as possible between the four (4) non-board members.
- 1.7. Except under extenuating circumstances, the panel shall meet within ten (10) days of the complaint being made, and shall issue a decision within ten (10) days of the panel's first meeting. (At any point in this process the panel may determine that the panel is not the appropriate body to address or deal with this complaint.) (Days refer to calendar days unless otherwise specified.)
- 1.8. If the panel's decision involves any disciplinary action against the offender, the panel shall make that recommendation to the Board of Directors. If no disciplinary action is involved, the panel's decision can close the complaint process.
- 1.9. A complaint against the pastor will be handled in the same manner specified above.
- 1.10. A written record shall be kept using a standard form(s) developed by the Church Relations Team. Unless otherwise required, this confidential record shall only be accessible to the Church Relations Team members, the Board of Directors and the pastor. Access shall be further limited if the complaint involves any of these parties.
- 1.11. In handling any given complaint, the panel shall not be required to keep a written record if the complaint is resolved informally or dropped at the request of the

complainant. Under such circumstances, neither shall the panel be required to contact the individual the complaint was against.

2. Definitions Of Harassment and Abuse

Introduction

Two principal forms of interpersonal violence are harassment and abuse, which are defined below. If an individual feels his/her personal safety has been violated in this congregation by a behavior or form of misconduct that is not specified here, they may still file a complaint with the Church Relations Team.

2.1. Harassment

Harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome conduct that in the case of sexual harassment has sexual overtones. All forms of harassment can feel intrusive, intimidating, hostile, offensive and/or humiliating to the victim. This includes physical, psychological, and sexual harassment:

- 2.2. Physical - pertaining to unwanted touch, contact, or other physical intrusions on another's space.
- 2.3. Psychological - pertaining to emotional and mental levels of pestering, intruding, stalking, etc.
- 2.4. Sexual - pertaining to unwanted sexualized behaviors, which may be in the form of:
 - 2.4.1. physical conduct - touching, pinching, brushing against, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual contact, etc.;
 - 2.4.2. verbal conduct - sexually suggestive or obscene comments, sexual propositions, threats (including threat of job loss or other punishment unless victim engages in sexual relations), jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, etc.;
 - 2.4.3. written conduct - sexually suggestive or obscene written material.

3. Abuse

Abuse is a pattern of behavior that is used to control and/or dominate another person. Abuse can be physical, psychological, and/or sexual.

- 3.1. Physical - includes actual or threatened harm, such as hitting, shoving, kicking, or throwing things.
- 3.2. Psychological - includes being mistreated mentally and emotionally, such as being insulted, ridiculed, or threatened verbally.

- 3.3. Sexual - includes any of the behaviors above. Three major areas of concern are:
- 3.3.1. Sexual relating or contact between an adult and a minor;
 - 3.3.2. Sexual relating or contact between minors that violates one of them because of the other's role or position of power; and
 - 3.3.3. Sexual relating or contact between adults that violates one of them because of the other's role or position of power.

4. Policy Regarding Behavior of Pastor

- 4.1. The pastor will recognize the power the ministry gives him/her and refrain from practices which are harmful to others and which endanger his/her integrity or professional effectiveness.
- 4.2. Such practices include, but are not limited to, sexual activity with a child, with an adult in the congregation who is not his/her spouse or partner, with a counselee, with the spouse or partner of a person in the congregation, with an intern, with an employee/staff member, or with anyone else whose relationship with the pastor would be exploited by a sexual involvement.
- 4.3. The pastor, if single, shall not be prohibited from a dating relationship with a person in the congregation. Before becoming sexually involved with a person in the congregation, the pastor will take special care to examine his/her commitment, motives, intentionality, and the nature of such activity and its consequences for the pastor, the other person, and the congregation.
- 4.4. The pastor will not invade the private and intimate bonds of others' lives, nor trespass on those bonds for the pastor's own advantage or need. In any relationship of intimate confidentiality, the pastor will not exploit the needs of another person.
- 4.5. Sexual misconduct is a violation of the pastoral relationship in which a person in a position of religious leadership takes advantage of a vulnerable person instead of protecting him/her. It covers a wide range of activity, and the harm caused by this misconduct is related to the degree of seriousness. The range below is from (a) the least degree of seriousness to (e) the greatest degree of seriousness:
 - 4.5.1. Sexual innuendoes;
 - 4.5.2. Inappropriate touching;
 - 4.5.3. Unwelcome advances or requests for sexual favours;
 - 4.5.4. Sexual relations with an adult under inappropriate circumstances;
 - 4.5.5. Sexual relations with a minor under any circumstances.

5. Procedure to Handle Complaint Against Church Pastor

- 5.1. The complainant shall make a confidential statement, verbally or in writing, to a member of the Church Relations Team. That member will then contact the chairperson, who will arrange for a special Church Relations Team panel to be formed. This special panel shall include a member of the Board of Directors, and two members of the congregation (from the Church Relations Team, if possible). The panel will meet within ten (10) days after the complaint was made. A written record of the complaint shall be made at the time of the meeting.
- 5.2. The Church Relations Team panel shall issue a decision within ten (10) days after the first meeting of the panel. The process of reaching a decision may include a meeting between the complainant, the pastor, and the panel, if such a meeting will not put the complainant at risk.

6. Policy Regarding Behavior of Staff

- 6.1. The staff shall be held to similar standards as the pastor. Staff members, if single, shall not be prohibited from a dating relationship with another staff member or a person in the congregation. Before becoming sexually involved with another staff member or a person in the congregation, a staff member will take special care to examine his/her commitment, motives, intentionality, and the nature of such activity and its consequences for himself/herself, the other person, and the congregation.

7. Procedure to Handle Complaint Against Staff

- 7.1. The complainant shall make a confidential statement, verbally or in writing, to a member of the Church Relations Team. That member will then contact the chairperson, who will arrange for the three (3) person panel formed from the Church Relations Team to meet within ten (10) days of the complaint being made. A written record of the complaint shall be made at the time of the meeting. The panel from the Church Relations Team shall issue a decision within ten (10) days of the panel's first meeting. The process of reaching this decision may include a meeting between the complainant, the staff member against whom the complaint is directed, and the panel, if such a meeting will not put the complainant at risk. As is deemed appropriate by the panel, the panel shall report the nature of the complaint and the panel's decision regarding the complaint to the Personnel Team.

8. Policy Regarding Sexual Harassment of Employees

All employees and persons who have been contracted with for their labor have the right to an environment free from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is prohibited by State and Federal Law.

- 8.1. Sexual harassment may include:
 - 8.1.1. Personally sexually offensive verbal comments;
 - 8.1.2. Sexual or smutty jokes;
 - 8.1.3. Repeated comments or teasing about someone's alleged sexual activities or private life;
 - 8.1.4. Persistent, unwelcome social invitations, telephone calls or emails from workmates at work or at home;
 - 8.1.5. Following someone home from work;
 - 8.1.6. Offensive hand or body gestures;
 - 8.1.7. Physical contact - e.g., patting, pinching, touching or putting an arm around another person's body - which is unwelcome;
 - 8.1.8. Provocative visual material - e.g., posters of a sexual nature;
 - 8.1.9. Hints or promises of preferential treatment in exchange for sex, or threats of differential treatment if sexual behavior is not offered;
 - 8.1.10. Sexual assault and/or rape.

9. Procedure to Handle Complaint of Church Employee

- 9.1. When an employee has an unresolved complaint about another employee or anyone s/he encounters in the context of the church work environment, the employee shall first discuss the complaint with the pastor or the Personnel Team. If the employee would like further assistance in resolving the complaint, the employee can submit the complaint in writing to the Church Relations Team, along with an explanation of actions taken to date. If the pastor and/or the Personnel Team have been involved in any attempts at resolution, they shall also submit documentation. (If the complaint is against the pastor, see section 3 of this document for procedure.)
- 9.2. The Church Relations Team will, within ten (10) days of the complaint being made, have the panel meet to review all written materials relating to the complaint and meet with all relevant parties. Except under extenuating circumstances, the panel will issue a decision within ten (10) days of the panel's first meeting, which will close the complaint process.

10. Policy Regarding Behavior of Member or Guest

We believe our church needs to have clearly communicated standards. Misconduct on the part of a member or guest can have harmful effects on any individual as well as on the rest of the congregation.

This is intended to protect the welfare of all individuals, including the church staff and pastor. Gradations of seriousness can apply to all forms of harassment and abuse. For example, the

following list applies to sexual misconduct, where (10.1) is least serious and (10.5) is most serious:

- 10.1. Unwelcome sexual innuendoes
- 10.2. Inappropriate touching
- 10.3. Unwelcome advances or requests for sexual favours
- 10.4. Sexual relations with an adult under inappropriate circumstances
- 10.5. Sexual relations with a minor under any circumstances.

Appropriate steps will be taken when the behavior of a member or guest has the effect of interfering with another person's personal safety and/or spiritual growth.

11. Procedure for Complaint Against Member or Guest

- 11.1. The pastor, church staff, and church officers all have the right to exclude or remove from the church premises, by any lawful means, any person whose conduct is so disruptive and/or offensive so as to impair the functioning of the church. This conduct may come to their attention by direct observation or by verbal or written complaint of another member or guest. The objectionable conduct may be in person, by mail, by telephone, by email, or by other means.
- 11.2. If the complainant and/or church official (such as pastor, staff member, etc.) believes the person committing the objectionable behavior is not aware that his/her actions are disruptive or offensive, the complainant and/or church official can attempt to resolve the situation by approaching the person in this way:
 - 11.2.1. Clearly and directly tell the person what action is disruptive and/or offensive.
 - 11.2.2. State that you expect the person to stop this behavior.
 - 11.2.3. Firmly tell the person that if his/her actions persist, you will file a formal
 - 11.2.4. action with the Church Relations Team whose role includes
 - 11.2.5. investigation and resolution of such issues.
- 11.3. If this effort is ineffective or such an approach is deemed unacceptable or inadvisable, the complainant can make a confidential statement, verbally or in writing, to any member of the Church Relations Team. That member will then contact the chairperson, who will arrange for the three person panel formed from the Church Relations Team to meet within ten (10) days of the complaint being made and attempt mediation and resolution, while respecting the confidentiality of all parties concerned. If the complainant or the panel believes there to be a possible risk of harm, the identity of the complainant shall be kept confidential. The panel shall issue a decision within ten (10) days of the first meeting of the panel.

- 11.4. The Church Relations Team panel may resolve the complaint by recommending to the Board of Directors that they do any or all of the following:
- 11.5. Permanent or temporary barring of offender from church premises and functions;
- 11.6. Termination of team, council, teaching or volunteer positions;
- 11.7. Requirement that offender enter a therapy programme to remain a church member;
- 11.8. Removal of offender from church membership;
- 11.9. Filing of formal charges under California law.

Conflict of Interest

SOPP 27.1.1 It is the policy of this church that any member or employee shall abstain from involvement, by voting or otherwise participating in the decision-making process, in those situations where said person is deemed to have a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest is deemed to exist where:

SOPP 27.1.1.1 The person has a substantive interest, whether direct or indirect, in the matter at hand or the other parties involved.

SOPP 27.1.1.2 The person is a Director, officer or employee of the organization being dealt with.

SOPP 27.1.1.3 The person's spouse, children, parent or siblings are in relations 1. and 2. above to the organization or matters at hand.

SOPP 27.1.2 We believe that our church must never be in a position to directly or indirectly be the cause of the deterioration of a primary personal relationship, a parent/child relationship, a church/church employee relationship, a leader/leader relationship or a church/community agency due to a conflict of interest. This conflict of interest policy is designed to uphold and support all of the valuable relationships of our members and at the same time to enable the church to conduct business in a fair and equitable manner for all parties involved.

SOPP 27.1.3 In those situations where a conflict of interest is deemed to exist or has the potential to exist, any member will notify the Pastor or the Board Vice Moderator in the absence of the pastor, and who shall then notify the Board of Directors. Once notified the Board of Directors will issue a directive as to how the particular situation is to be handled taking into consideration the above definition of conflict of interest.

SOPP 27.1.4 All church members and employees are encouraged to participate actively in community and professional activities. Volunteering, political activity, membership on Boards of Directors and advisory bodies, and running for elective

office are all commendable endeavors. Because members may not always be fully aware of all inter-agency involvements, they should inform the Pastor or the Board Vice Moderator in the absence of the pastor of any intentions to participate in any activity which could potentially involve a conflict of interest.

SOPP 27.2 Confidentiality

SOPP 27.2.1 Inherently, if someone is intending goodwill in his or concern about church issues or church personnel then he or she will have no need to have another member keep a secret for them by asking for a person's confidence. Conversely, someone whose intent is negative and destructive will often use the calling of another into confidence to spread unsubstantiated information about a church issue or a member of the church which serves to tear down the church or people rather than to build them up. Therefore, church members will not be bound to keep secrets regarding church issues and will discourage negative and destructive gossip in the church by refusing to listen to unsubstantiated information about programs or people in the church.

SOPP 27.2.2 Accordingly, when talking to members or other interested parties about issues concerning the church, a member may not be called into confidence regarding church issues. If asked to keep the discussion about the church or about a church staff/member in confidence, a church member is obligated to tell the person that he or she cannot hold information about the church in confidence. A member is obligated to share all information regarding the concerns of the church (positive or negative), including names of people who are sources of such information with the Board of Directors. Failure to do so will be deemed unbecoming conduct of a member.

SOPP 27.2.3 Information revealed in Executive Sessions of the Board of Directors is to be held in strict confidence. In very rare situations, it may be necessary to share Executive Session information with specific individuals. However, the Board of Directors must authorize disclosure of this information prior to it being shared. Should Board members have concerns about issues discussed in Executive Sessions they are to speak about these issues only with their fellow Board members. Unauthorized disclosure of Executive Session information is prohibited and may be grounds for removal of a Board member. If a non-Board member is involved in an Executive Session and does not have the authorization of the Board to share such information with other people and does so, such behavior will be deemed unbecoming conduct of a member.

SOPP 27.2.4 In order to know the current financial resources, to create the needed financial resources for the operation of the church, to note changes in giving so that the Board of Directors can assure the congregation of enough financial resources to meet the budget of the church and to check each member's standing in regards to the giving of identifiable contributions per MCCLA By-laws for church membership, it is necessary that the Pastor, Board of Directors and any financial team leaders have access to the giving records of individual members.

Members understand that at no time will a list of contributions with names of individuals be published. The Pastor, Board of Directors and financial team leaders will hold all individual contribution information in the strictest confidence. Any sharing of individual contribution information with anyone outside of the Board or Financial Team Executive Session meetings will be considered unbecoming conduct of a member and cause for the removal of a person's membership status.

SOPP 27.3 Determination of a Personal versus a Congregational Issue

SOPP 27.3.1 Not all issues brought to the Board of Directors or the congregation are congregational issues. Because we serve a diverse group of people, personal issues may arise and need to be dealt with differently than congregational issues. Therefore, before an issue is placed on the agenda for a Board of Directors meeting or a congregational meeting the Board of Directors will have determined that an issue is congregational in nature using the following guidelines.

SOPP 27.3.1.1 A congregational issue has the following identifiable characteristics:

SOPP 27.3.1.1.1 A majority of the Board of Directors can witness to several different members having voiced the issue in church meetings or with them in person.

SOPP 27.3.1.1.2 Board members themselves witness to the issue being of concern to the congregation.

SOPP 27.3.1.1.3 The issue is brought up as an individual concern by a substantial number of members of their own volition rather than having been prompted by the lobbying efforts of another individual in the church.

SOPP 27.3.1.1.4 The issue is repeatedly voiced on different occasions by those in 26.8.1.1.1, .2 and .3 above.

SOPP 27.3.1.1.5 The issue is especially voiced by persons known to be mature and trusted members of the congregation, by those who are known to behave in healthy ways in their relationship with the church, by those who have proven commitment to the mission of the church over time and who support the church in positive and constructive ways for the common good of the whole of the church.

SOPP 27.3.1.1.6 The congregation at its annual meetings informs the Board of Directors by consensus or motion of a particular concern.

SOPP 27.3.1.2 A personal issue has the following identifiable characteristics:

SOPP 27.3.1.2.1 It is brought up as an issue by one or a few people.

SOPP 27.3.1.2.2 The issue is made known to the Board only through the same person(s) or through their lobbying efforts with other members in the church or by those who have behaved repeatedly in unhealthy ways in relationship to others in the church or in response to church issues.

SOPP 27.3.1.2.3 The Board is unable to witness to this being a congregational issue.

SOPP 27.3.1.3 If the Board deems an issue to be of a personal nature, to the best of its ability, the Board of Directors will seek to see that the person who has the issue gets his or her need met. However, members accept that the church itself will be limited to current church ministries in terms of what personal needs the church may be expected to meet. Those personal needs that the church's ministry programs do not address at the time the issue is submitted to the Board will not be able to be met by the church. Should it be determined that there is no current ministry that addresses a particular personal need, the Board will refer a person with such need to agencies or services outside the church if they are known to exist. Once a personal issue has been acted upon by the Board of Directors, the Board will not reconsider personal issues from the same person(s) regarding the same content in subsequent Board meetings.

SOPP 27.3.1.4 Congregational issues that are presented in between annual congregational meetings will be acted upon by the Board of Directors. As it is the Board of Directors' responsibility to act upon issues of concern on behalf of the congregation, the Board will place congregational issues on the agenda of a congregational meeting which have not been satisfactorily resolved or will report their progress on issues they are currently working on. Additionally, the Board of Directors will post their meeting agenda for each month, as well as conduct periodic forums to inform the congregation of their work on issues of concern to the congregation.

SOPP 28 Risk Management

SOPP 28.1 Responsibilities of Church Leaders

SOPP 28.1.1 Leadership Expectations: Paid and appointed staff, members of the Board of Directors, and members of the Council on Ministries are expected to comply with the Leadership Expectations as included in these SOPP's.

SOPP 28.1.2 Fiduciary Responsibility: The Pastor and members of the Board of Directors have a fiduciary obligation to the church to act in good faith and in the best interest of the church. Additionally, the congregation entrusts money and property to the Pastor and the Board, and such trust can and should be protected by legal means, wherever possible. Beyond legal obligations, the Pastor and the Board have an ethical obligation and moral imperative of our faith to act in ways helpful, and not hurtful, to ourselves and others.

SOPP 28.1.3 Incorporation: The church is incorporated under the State of California's non-profit corporation laws, having filed the appropriate paperwork with the Secretary of State's office. It is the responsibility of the Pastor and the Board of Directors to ensure that such incorporation is maintained, including any re-application or updating of information required by the Secretary of State's office.

SOPP 28.1.4 Annual Risk Management Audit: The designated staff member, in conjunction with the Pastor and the Board of Directors, shall develop the means for conducting an annual risk management audit. Said audit should include fiduciary checks and balances and a Board approved review of insurance.

SOPP 28.2 Risks of Legal Exposure Identified

SOPP 28.2.1 Negligence: Negligence is conduct which creates an unreasonable risk of harm to another's person or property and which does in fact result in injury or damage. Negligent conduct need not be and usually is not intentional. It may consist either of a specific act or failure to act. Examples include failing to warn members and visitors of a known dangerous condition on the property, or failure to adequately screen or supervise church workers. Reducing exposure to liability from negligence is the responsibility of the leadership, especially the Board of Directors, who develop policies and procedures to reduce the risk of exposure due to negligence.

SOPP 28.2.2 Defamation: Words that tend to injure the reputation of another constitute defamation. The words must be communicated to another individual or group, and in fact diminish the esteem, respect, goodwill, or confidence in which the defamed person is held. Words may not be considered defamatory unless they are made with legal malice, that is with knowledge that a statement is false, or made with reckless disregard concerning whether the words are true or false. It is

imperative that the leadership of this church reduce the risk of exposure to defamation liability by speaking the truth, and then only when necessary, in regards to an individual's character.

SOPP 28.2.3 Undue Influence: Undue influence refers to the dominion and control over the mind of another. For example, an individual makes a donation to the church, and then is unduly influenced by clergy, staff, or volunteers, or attempts to unduly influence the clergy, staff, or volunteers, because of the donation. Another example is an individual who is seeking spiritual guidance from clergy, and the individual is controlled or coerced to perform a specific action as a result of seeking such guidance. Limiting exposure to this liability involves the awareness of clergy, staff, leadership, and volunteers.

SOPP 28.2.4 Invasion of Privacy: Invasion of privacy includes four separate kinds of conduct:

SOPP 28.2.4.1 Public disclosure of private facts (such as public comments disclosing immoral personal conduct of an individual, or giving history being made public by name);

SOPP 28.2.4.2 Use of another's name or likeness (such as publishing a picture of a person who is in worship or in a program sponsored by the church without his or her written consent) excluding in a public place.

SOPP 28.2.4.3 False light in the public eye (such as attributing opinions, statements, or beliefs to other persons that are not in fact held);

SOPP 28.2.4.4 Intruding on another's seclusion (such as entering another's home without consent or making persistent and unwanted telephone calls to another).

SOPP 28.2.5 Clergy Malpractice: Clergy malpractice has occasionally been stated as a cause of action in lawsuits against churches or clergy. Malpractice is generally defined as a failure to exercise an accepted degree of skill in the performance of professional duties that results in injury to another. Courts, however, have consistently refused to recognize clergy malpractice as a basis for legal liability. By following the Clergy Code of Conduct as required by the UFMCC and the Conflict Management Policies and Procedures, clergy greatly reduce the risk of clergy malpractice liability.

SOPP 28.2.6 Contract Liability: Clergy and church officers should refrain from signing contracts unless they are certain that:

SOPP 28.2.6.1 The contract has been properly authorized (as in a motion by the Board of Directors).

SOPP 28.2.6.2 They are authorized to sign on behalf of the church.

SOPP 28.2.6.3 Church officers should only sign contracts in a representative capacity where the officer's title appears beside, above, or underneath the signature, e.g., Rev. Jane A. Smith, Pastor, MCC Los Angeles. In some circumstances, signature without such designation can leave the officer personally liable for the terms of the contract. It is also advisable to have all contracts reviewed by an attorney prior to signature.

SOPP 28.2.7 Securities Law Violations: Clergy and church officers may expose themselves to legal liability under the state and/or federal securities laws in two possible ways:

SOPP 28.2.7.1 Through sale of church securities without registration under state law as salespersons or agents;

SOPP 28.2.7.2 Through the use of any fraudulent or deceptive practice in the sale of church securities.

SOPP 28.3 It is very important to be aware that such laws include both civil and criminal exposure to church leaders. Churches considering a church bond program to finance property should review the Church Bond Guidelines of the North American Securities Administrators Association and should retain qualified legal counsel to guide them in establishing and managing the program.

SOPP 28.3.1 Failure to Report Child Abuse: Definitions of the laws regarding reporting of suspected child abuse varies from state to state, and some include a mandatory duty of clergy to report known or reasonably suspected cases of child abuse. Clergy should not assume that they have no duty to report and should not assume that the clergy-penitent privilege relieves their duty to report. Clergy and other church leadership should be familiar with the child abuse reporting requirements of California and act accordingly.

SOPP 28.3.2 Diversion of Church Funds: Church funds and assets are to be held in trust for the religious and charitable purposes of the church. None of a church's net earnings can benefit a private individual, except for the payment of reasonable compensation for services rendered and to provide emergency assistance. Diversion of church funds can be intentional, such as use of church funds for travel or entertainment, which is not properly authorized. Church officers may also be held legally accountable for violating the terms or restrictions of properties and funds held in trust by the church, such as diversion of designated funds from their intended purpose or projects.

SOPP 28.3.3 Sexual Misconduct of Church Workers: The following is from Reports and Directives of General Conference XVII, UFMCC, 1995, p. 170: Sexual Misconduct is defined as:

SOPP 28.3.3.1 Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent; or

SOPP 28.3.3.2 Sexual harassment in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, sexually-oriented humor or language; questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications; undesired physical contact; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; or repeated requests for social engagements; or

SOPP 28.3.3.3 Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to, the development or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a clergyperson, employee, or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

SOPP 28.4 Pastoral Relationship is defined as: A relationship between a clergyperson, employee or any volunteer and any person to whom such clergyperson provides on an individual basis counseling or from whom such clergyperson, employee or volunteer has received a confession or confidential or privileged information of a personal nature. Please also refer to the Leadership Expectations included in these SOPP's.

SOPP 28.4.1 Political Activities: The federal tax exempt status the church carries by provision of the Internal Revenue Service Code requires that the church's activities include no substantial part of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

SOPP 28.5 Attempting to influence legislation occurs when reference is made to specific legislators regarding such legislation. Substantial is measured by the amount of expenditure. For most MCC churches, up to 20% of the total budget could be spent for lobbying activities.

SOPP 28.6 Participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office is defined by a news release issued by the IRS on May 4, 1992, which reads, in part: These organizations cannot endorse any candidates, make any donations to their campaigns, engage in fund raising, distribute statements, or become involved in any other activities which may be beneficial or detrimental to any candidate.

SOPP 28.6.1 Based on these guidelines, the following points are pertinent:

SOPP 28.6.1.1 Organizations may sponsor debates or forums to educate voters. But if the forum or debate shows a preference for or against a certain candidate, it becomes a prohibited activity.

SOPP 28.6.1.2 Ballot initiatives (i.e., Propositions, School Bond Issues) are treated as an item of legislation, not as political campaigns. Therefore, ballot initiatives are treated as a form of attempting to influence legislation, and may be done within allowable limits.

SOPP 28.7 Youth and Children's Activities

SOPP 28.7.1 Programs for children and youth can be some of the most valuable of our church's ministries. However, these activities inevitably carry with them one of the highest risks of legal exposure; allegations of child sexual abuse. It is the policy of this church to provide a safe, healthy environment for children and youth by developing and enforcing risk prevention and management procedures.

SOPP 28.7.1.1 The following policies reflect this church's commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in church sponsored youth and children's activities.

SOPP 28.7.1.1.1 Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse are prohibited from volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.

SOPP 28.7.1.1.2 Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. Individuals who have such a history should discuss their desire to work with children or youth with the Pastor prior to engaging in any volunteer service.

SOPP 28.7.1.1.3 Adult volunteers must observe the two adult rule. This requires that adults are never alone with children or youth without another adult being present.

SOPP 28.7.1.1.4 Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to their supervisor.

SOPP 28.7.2 Selection and Screening of Workers: Whether paid or volunteer, all workers who wish to be involved with ministry programs for children and youth must be screened. This screening process includes the following:

SOPP 28.7.2.1 Completion of an application/screening form available from the Pastor or a designated staff person. This screening form includes standard personal information, the member's area of interest and length of

commitment, identification and explanation of any prior civil liability and/or criminal convictions for sexual abuse, molestation or related crimes, a five year church history including previous volunteer work, two personal references, the member's authorization for release of information to the church from any or all persons or organizations included in the screening form, and an authorization for a criminal records check.

SOPP 28.7.2.2 The Pastor or a designated staff person shall contact any organizations, churches, and personal references indicated on the application/screening form and record the information provided on a Record of Contact form.

SOPP 28.7.2.3 The Pastor shall conduct a personal interview with the interested member, clarifying information provided on the application/ screening form or from contacts made with organizations, churches, and personal references.

SOPP 28.7.2.4 A criminal records check shall be performed.

SOPP 28.7.2.5 At the Pastor's discretion or the Board Vice Moderator in the absence of the pastor and in accordance with the policies in these SOPP's, the interested member shall either be approved or not approved to work with youth and children's activities.

SOPP 28.7.3 Training of Workers: Once an individual is approved to work with children and youth in church programs, they will not begin to do so until they have attended a training session conducted by the Team Leader on the churches related policies, identifying the signs of child sexual abuse, and reporting of suspected child sexual abuse.

SOPP 28.7.4 Supervision of Workers: Even with the implementation of a screening program, the church may be held liable for any injuries sustained to children or youth during church sponsored activities on the basis of negligent supervision. To reduce this risk, the church has in place the following procedures regarding supervision of workers.

SOPP 28.7.4.1 **Two Adult Rule:** Two adult workers should be present during any church sponsored children or youth activity. Preferably, at least one of these adults should be age 21 or older.

SOPP 28.7.4.2 **Parental Permission:** Children should have parental permission for involvement in church sponsored children and youth programs or activities (including children's church.) Form must be returned with the parent's signature.

SOPP 28.7.4.3 **Volunteer Awareness:** If any volunteer should see any activity on the part of another volunteer which could be construed as inappropriate, the

volunteer should pull aside the one performing the activity and advise them that the activity should stop. Incident should be reported to a staff member in writing within 24 hours.

SOPP 28.7.5 Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

SOPP 28.7.5.1 The State of California requires those exercising the supervision over a child for any part of a twenty-four hour day to report to the Division of Family Services any abuse or neglect, or probable cause for abuse or neglect, involving a child (under age 18). This means that the church is required to make such reports when abuse or neglect is suspected based on probable cause. Therefore, all volunteers who work with children and youth must:

SOPP 28.7.5.2 Be aware of probable cause for abuse and neglect, whether sustained during church activities or otherwise, and report all such incidents to the Pastor immediately.

SOPP 28.7.5.3 California uses the following definitions:

SOPP 28.7.5.3.1 Abuse is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody, and control, except that discipline including spanking, administered in a reasonable manner, shall not be construed to be abuse.

SOPP 28.7.5.3.2 Neglect is failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child's well-being.

SOPP 28.7.5.3.3 Probable cause is available facts when viewed in the light of surrounding circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to believe a child was abused or neglected.

SOPP 28.7.5.4 The Pastor, as the person in charge or a designated agent of the church is required to make a report to the Division of Family Services. Such report can be made by telephone at the Division of Family Services toll-free telephone number (800-540-4000), and must include:

SOPP 28.7.5.4.1 The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other persons responsible for the child's care, if known;

SOPP 28.7.5.4.2 The child's age, sex, and race;

SOPP 28.7.5.4.3 The nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or neglect, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse or neglect to the child or the child's siblings;

SOPP 28.7.5.4.4 The name, age and address of the person responsible for the

- injuries, abuse or neglect, if known;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.5** Family composition;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.6** The source of the report;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.7** The name and address of the person making the report, their occupation, and where they can be reached;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.8** The actions taken by the source, including the taking of color photographs;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.9** Removal or keeping of the child;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.10** Notification to the coroner or medical examiner in the instance of a death;
- SOPP 28.7.5.4.11** Other information that the person making the report believes may be helpful in the furtherance of the purposes of reporting.

SOPP 28.7.5.5 If there is evidence of sexual abuse or sexual molestation of a child, the Pastor is required to make the report within 24 hours.

SOPP 28.7.5.6 The State specifically states that any legally recognized privileged communication, except that between attorney and client, shall not apply to situations involving known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Therefore, clergy cannot fail to report based on clergy confidentiality.

SOPP 28.7.6 Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect by a Church Worker

SOPP 28.7.6.1 All allegations of child abuse or neglect by church workers are taken seriously and shall be responded to with the respect, care, and confidentiality such allegations demand. Such response should include:

SOPP 28.7.6.2 Offering pastoral care and support to the alleged victim and their family. Care and safety of the alleged victim should be the church's first priority.

SOPP 28.7.6.2.1 Treating the accused with dignity and support.

SOPP 28.7.6.2.2 Avoiding the natural human tendency to try to place blame, either on the alleged victim or the accused. It is especially important that the alleged victim not feel they are being held responsible in any way.

SOPP 28.7.6.3 In the event of any allegation of child abuse or neglect by a church worker, the Pastor shall serve as the designated individual to deal with all agencies and the media. All other individuals connected with the church **must** refer all inquiries to the Pastor.

SOPP 28.7.6.4 The Pastor shall take and document the following actions:

SOPP 28.7.6.4.1 Ensure the safety of the alleged victim and other children or youth present.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.2 Report the incident immediately to the Division of Family Services, and then to the church's attorney, the church's insurance carrier, the Elder with responsibility for MCCLA, and the UFMCC Executive Offices.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.3 Notify the parents of the child.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.4 Initiate the UFMCC Judiciary procedures immediately if the allegation is made against a UFMCC clergy person.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.5 Temporarily relieve the accused of his or her duties until the investigation and disposition of the matter is concluded.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.6 If at all possible, the Pastor should have the church's attorney present while answering any investigative questions by law enforcement or social service agencies.

SOPP 28.7.6.4.7 If necessary, the Pastor will draft a public statement, in consultation with the church's attorney if necessary, to be given to the congregation, and to the media if the media makes inquiries. Care should be taken to avoid details of the allegations and to convey concern for the alleged victim while avoiding prejudice towards the accused.

SOPP 28.8 Spiritual Guidance Activities

SOPP 28.8.1 Definition and Limitation of Spiritual Guidance Activities

SOPP 28.8.1.1 This church abides by the UFMCC General Council's policy, which states that, It is unbecoming conduct for UFMCC Clergy to engage in any type of psychological counseling for which they are not licensed by applicable civil laws and do not hold appropriate credentials. UFMCC clergy credentials do not license one to do such counseling (General Council XIX Minutes 94.10.CP.02 and 96.03.GC.28)

SOPP 28.8.1.2 This church, therefore, abides by the following:

SOPP 28.8.1.2.1 This church, through its pastor, staff, or lay ministers, provides spiritual guidance for those seeking to be renewed, equipped, and strengthened in their relationship with God and in Christian ministry.

SOPP 28.8.1.2.2 This church does **not** provide, in any form or manner, psychiatric or mental health counseling per se. We believe that this type of counseling can be very beneficial when indicated but we are limited in expertise to guidance of a spiritual nature only. Referrals to professional, licensed psychotherapists in the community will be

provided upon request or when indicated.

SOPP 28.8.1.2.3 This church reserves the right to bring to a close any ongoing spiritual guidance if the pastor, staff member, or lay minister finds that the needs or issues of the individual involved exceed the limits of spiritual guidance. At that time, every reasonable effort will be made to assist the individual in accessing competent, professional psychotherapy should they desire to pursue further support more amenable to their current issues and challenges.

SOPP 28.8.1.3 The information shared by any individual receiving spiritual guidance will be held in confidence. However, we provide for the following limits on confidentiality within spiritual guidance activities, as required by law and/or conscience:

SOPP 28.8.1.3.1 If and when information is disclosed regarding the actual or suspect abuse or neglect of a person under the age of 18, or over the age of 64 the Pastor shall be made aware of such information (if the Pastor is not providing the spiritual guidance), and the Pastor shall report this actual or suspected abuse to the Division of Family Services.

SOPP 28.8.1.3.2 If and when information is disclosed regarding any suicidal ideation, plan, or intent on the part of the individual, the Pastor shall be made aware of such information (if the Pastor is not providing the spiritual guidance), and the Pastor reserves the right to take appropriate and reasonable measures to ensure the safety of the individual.

SOPP 28.8.1.3.3 If and when information is disclosed regarding any homicidal ideation, plan, or intent on the part of the individual, the Pastor shall be made aware of such information (if the Pastor is not providing the spiritual guidance), and the Pastor reserves the right to take appropriate and reasonable measures to ensure the safety of the imagined and/or intended victim.

SOPP 28.8.2 Safeguards in Spiritual Guidance Activities:

SOPP 28.8.2.1 In order to limit the liability of the church, the following safeguards are to be provided during any spiritual guidance:

SOPP 28.8.2.1.1 Spiritual guidance should only occur in the homes of the parties involved at the discretion of the pastoral staff. Spiritual guidance can also occur in the setting of a room or office of the church.

SOPP 28.8.2.1.2 Whenever possible, spiritual guidance should be provided in a room which has a window.

SOPP 28.8.2.1.3 Wherever possible, it is advisable that the individuals involved not be the only one's present in the building during spiritual guidance activities.

SOPP 28.8.2.1.4 Written records of all spiritual guidance activities should be carefully maintained, assuring total confidentiality of all contents (except where provided in this section).

SOPP 28.8.3 Indications for Immediate Referral and Warning Signs:

SOPP 28.8.3.1 The following is provided as information only, due to the subjective interpretation of the individual providing spiritual guidance:

SOPP 28.8.3.1.1 If an individual receiving spiritual guidance shows indications of any of the following, the individual should be referred to a professional counselor:

SOPP 28.8.3.1.2 Substance or behavioral addiction or abuse, including:

SOPP 28.8.3.1.3 Insufficient funds, although employed;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.4 Excessive absences at work;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.5 Odd sleeping and eating schedules;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.6 Relationship conflicts;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.7 Transient irritability or paranoia;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.8 Unpredictable and impulsive behavior;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9 Clinical signs of a significant affective disorder, such as anxiety or depression, including:

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.1 Recent changes in sleep patterns, appetite, weight, activity level, and/or concentration;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.2 Lack of enjoyment;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.3 Suicidal ideation, plan, or intent;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.4 Past suicide attempts;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.5 Psychosis, such as hallucinations (of any type) or delusions (fixed belief system not based in reality).

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.6 Sharing that there is emotional or physical abuse in their primary relationship;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.7 Shows or shares significant issues related to being a survivor of emotional/physical/sexual abuse;

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.8 Shows difficulty maintaining focus on spiritual issues (tends to continually digress to issues of a mental health/ emotional nature, relationship problems, addictions, past abuse, etc.);

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.9 Inappropriate level of interest in the pastor, staff, or lay minister providing the spiritual guidance (asks questions of a personal nature regarding romantic relationships, sex, interests, past experiences, abuse survivor, etc.);

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.10 Disassociative episodes (cannot remember the last couple minutes of conversation, becomes overwhelmed emotionally and checks out temporarily, vivid flashback of past abuse, etc.);

SOPP 28.8.3.1.9.11 Idealization of the pastor, staff, or lay minister providing the spiritual guidance (deems them as only person capable of healing/helping them, seeks increase in frequency or duration of sessions, offers gifts, writes poetry/songs for them, requests meetings outside of the church or at inappropriate hours, calls frequently, resistant to termination of spiritual guidance and referral).

SOPP 28.9 Insurance Coverage

SOPP 28.9.1 Annual Review: As part of the Board of Director's responsibilities, insurance should be reviewed annually to be sure the church has adequate insurance to recover losses, and to ensure that the appropriate types of insurance and endorsements are being purchased.

SOPP 28.9.2 Documentation

SOPP 28.9.2.1 Annual Board approval of the insurance coverage must be documented in Board minutes, including any action taken to decrease/increase insurance.

SOPP 28.9.2.2 A video inventory of church assets should be prepared periodically, updated as appropriate and kept off-site.

SOPP 28.9.2.3 Backup files of all computer data regarding costs and/or appraisals should be kept off-site.

SOPP 28.9.2.4 Permanent legal documents (such as real estate title, wills, bequests, insurance policies, etc.) should be copied and one set kept off-site in a secure location to maintain confidentiality.

SOPP 28.9.3 Contact with the Insurance Company: As soon as any loss is discovered, an allegation of misconduct reported, or a liability issue is raised, the designated staff person should notify the insurance company. Insurance companies have and will refuse coverage if not notified on a timely basis.

SOPP 28.9.4 Types of Insurance

SOPP 28.9.4.1 General Liability (Multi-Peril): This type of insurance responds to lawsuits which may involve personal or property injury, bodily injury, damage, and sexual misconduct or molestation. The insurance should apply whether or not the injury or damage occurs at or away from the church by anyone acting on behalf of the church. Personal injury includes libel, slander,

invasion of privacy, and other infringements on the rights of an individual or organization. Sexual misconduct or molestation are defined elsewhere in these SOPP's.

SOPP 28.9.4.2 Professional Liability: This insurance covers the exposure which clergy has from guidance and counseling activities. Often the exposure is due to the real or imagined relationship between the clergy and the individual receiving guidance or counseling.

SOPP 28.9.4.3 Directors & Officers (D&O)

SOPP 28.9.4.3.1 A good multi-peril policy will include officers, directors, and trustees as insured for lawsuits involving bodily injury, property damage and personal injury. However, almost no multi-peril policy automatically covers directors and officers for errors and omissions, or bad judgment. This coverage may be available as an option in a multi-peril policy, or as a separate policy. This type of coverage may also be referred to as errors and omissions, directors and officers, or directors, officers, and trustees insurance.

SOPP 28.9.4.3.2 In California, there are statutes which provide immunity from personal liability for official acts:

SOPP 28.9.4.3.2.1 Any officer or member of the governing body of an entity under the standards of section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, who is not compensated for his services on a salary or prorated equivalent basis, shall be immune from personal liability for any civil damages arising from acts performed in his official capacity. The immunity shall extend only to such actions for which the person would not otherwise be liable, but for his affiliation with such an entity. This immunity shall not apply to intentional conduct, wanton or willful conduct, or gross negligence. Nothing herein shall be construed to create or abolish an immunity in favor of the entity itself (emphasis added)

SOPP 28.9.4.3.2.2 in part: para.1(3)] Volunteer, an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or a governmental entity who is not compensated for his services on a salary or prorated equivalent basis. This term shall not include those covered by section 537.117. [para. 2.] Any volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity shall be immune from personal liability for any act or omission resulting in damage or injury to any person intended to receive benefit from such volunteer's service if: (1) The volunteer acted in good faith and within the scope of his official functions and duties with the organization or entity; and (2) The damage or injury was not

caused by the intentional or malicious conduct or by the negligence of such volunteer. [para. 3.] Nothing in this section shall be construed to create or abolish an immunity in favor of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity. (emphasis added)

SOPP 28.9.4.4 Property Insurance: This insurance protects the church building (if owned by the church) and its contents. Contents insurance can be purchased in situations where the church rents rather than owns the building.

SOPP 28.9.4.4.1 Amount of insurance: This should be calculated on the basis of replacement value rather than original purchase price or market value. If necessary, someone familiar with church property and contents should be consulted to assist with determining replacement values.

SOPP 28.9.4.4.2 Type of coverage: Cause of Loss or Named Peril insurance will only cover losses resulting from the cause which is named in the policy (such as windstorm, hail, fire). All Risk or Comprehensive insurance will cover all causes of loss except those which are listed as exclusions (such as wear and tear, war, flood, etc.). However, this type of insurance does not always cover all items and riders or separate policies may be required.

SOPP 28.9.4.4.3 Types of riders:

- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.1** Glass
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.2** Building Ordinances
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.3** Earthquake and/or Flood
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.4** Theft and employee dishonesty
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.5** Signs (especially signs off the premises)
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.6** Buildings under construction
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.7** Antiques/artwork
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.8** Computer hardware and software
- SOPP 28.9.4.4.3.9** Steam and hot water boilers

SOPP 28.9.5 Employment Practices Insurance: This type of insurance covers suits brought against the church by employees (such as sexual harassment, equal opportunity claims, wrongful termination, etc.).

SOPP 28.9.6 Workers' Compensation Insurance: This type of insurance covers benefits to those employees who are injured during the performance of their duties for the church. Although typically considered self-employed for tax purposes, clergy are classified as employees for workers' compensation purposes. Additionally, recent developments in workers' compensation law in California has classified unpaid workers or volunteers (anyone who is performing assigned duties and are acting on behalf of an organization) as employees covered by workers' compensation law.

SOPP 29 Amendment Policy

It is the policy of Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles to provide a means by which the ongoing business of the church may be addressed through amendments to policy and procedure.

SOPP 29.1 The Board of Directors may, at any time, by majority vote, amend the SOPP.

SOPP 29.2 An amendment to an existing policy or procedure must be designated as a revision with the date, and the entire section replaced in the manual. Date of the Board Meeting minutes where revisions were approved should be listed at the end of the document.

SOPP 29.3 Membership shall be notified of amendments through Board minutes and upon request.

Appendix A Date of Last Revisions

Approved October 21, 2010