

## **IMAGO DEI METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH BYLAWS**

### **Article I – Name**

The name of this church shall be Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church, also known as Imago Dei MCC, hereinafter referred to as “the Church.”

### **Article II – Affiliation**

This Church is a member Congregation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC); ascribes to the government, doctrine, vision, mission, and values of UFMCC; and agrees to abide by the UFMCC Bylaws and decisions made by General Conference.

- A. Successor Corporation - The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is the 501(c) (3) corporation designated to receive the Church’s property in the event of dissolution or abandonment of Imago Dei MCC or disaffiliation from the UFMCC, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.
- B. Disaffiliation – A decision to disaffiliate from the UFMCC shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting called for the purpose of disaffiliating and shall be decided in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

### **Article III – Purpose**

The purpose of this Church is Christian worship, witness, service, and fellowship; all born in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of UFMCC and local Church Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.

### **Article IV – Members and Friends**

Members and Friends make a commitment to God and this Church, which yields both benefits and responsibilities. As a church body, Imago Dei MCC is committed to providing a place of worship to God, a community for individuals to grow spiritually and be nurtured as they step out into the service of Jesus Christ making a positive difference seeking to bring the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

- A. Member of the Church - A person who supports the vision, mission, core values and strategic plan of the Church and desires to be a part of the work of the Church through the making of a covenant to practice an active prayer life, to faithfully attend worship and commit to becoming a disciple of Christ, to steadfastly serve God by sharing gifts and talents, to make a financial commitment to this Church, and to treat themselves and others with dignity and respect.

1. Criteria for Membership – Any baptized Christian who has completed a membership class or presented a letter of transfer from another MCC may become a Member by participating in the Rite of Membership. A Member in good standing is a Member who registers her/his attendance, provides identifiable financial support, makes a definite service contribution, and demonstrates interest and loyalty.
2. Membership List – The Clerk, who shall report changes monthly to the Board of Directors, shall maintain the list of Members in good standing. A list of members that are at risk for being deemed ‘inactive’ will be forwarded to the team facilitator of the Friendship and Membership Team four (4) times per year; in the months of January, April, August and October. Forwarding this list to the facilitator of the Friendship and Membership Team is for the purpose of contacting the member to encourage her/his return to active status.
3. Membership Review – The Board of Directors shall review the membership list in the month of January of each year.
  - a. A Member, who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of 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 she/he 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 registered attendance, 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, by vote, to drop any such inactive Member from the local Church membership roll.
  - d. If the inactive Member has registered attendance, identifiable financial support and has demonstrated interest and loyalty during the period of two (2) months immediately following notification, the Board of Directors shall have the authority, by vote, to restore the inactive Member to the list of Members in good standing without a public reception into membership during the April meeting of the Board of Directors.
  - e. The inactive Member who is not restored after the period of two (2) months immediately following notification shall be considered a former Member.
  - f. The Board of Directors shall notify this inactive Member, in writing, that she/he has been officially designated a former Member.
  - g. A former Member may be restored to the list of Members in good standing after completing a membership class and participating in the Rite of Membership.
4. Right to Appeal. A vote by the Board of Directors to drop an inactive Member from the local Church membership roll may be appealed by the now former Member to the next regular Congregational Meeting. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the now former Member is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the Church.
  - a. Appeal process. The request for an appeal shall be submitted, in writing, 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 now former Member wishes the appeal to continue, the request shall be included as an agenda item for the next regular Congregational Meeting
- B. Friend of the Church – A person who, for one reason or another, feels unable to become a Member but who supports the vision, mission, core values, and strategic plan of the Church and desires to be a part of the work of the Church may be designated as a “Friend of the Church.”
1. Criteria for Friend of the Church – Any person who has completed a membership class may become a Friend of the Church by participating in the Rite of Friendship. A Friend in good standing is a Friend who registers her/his attendance, provides identifiable financial support, makes a definite service contribution, and demonstrates interest and loyalty.
  2. The List of Friends of the Church - The Clerk, who shall report changes to the Board of Directors, shall maintain the list of Friends of the Church.
  3. Limitations on Friends of the Church – Friends may serve on appointed teams and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not vote at Congregational Meetings, serve on the Board of Directors, or represent the Congregation as a Lay Delegate. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates representing the Church at Regional and/or General Conferences.
- C. Discipline of Members and Friends – The Church cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct, as defined in the UFMCC Code of Conduct (Addendum One), on the part of any Member or Friend. The Board of Directors is empowered to remove, by majority vote, any Member or Friend from the list of Members and Friends in good standing, or take other appropriate disciplinary action. Therefore, the Board of Directors shall develop and implement a procedure for taking appropriate disciplinary action, as it deems necessary in the event of a violation of the Code of Conduct.
1. Right to Appeal – The disciplined Member or Friend may appeal the action of the Board to the next regular Congregational Meeting or at 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 the Member shall retain the right to vote at all Congregational Meetings, including the Congregational Meeting held to consider the appeal.
  2. Appeal Process – The request for an appeal shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the Board of Directors within twenty (20) days following the date when a Member or Friend is notified that the Member or Friend has been placed under discipline.
  3. The Board of Directors may consider the appeal and reverse its earlier decision without taking the matter to the Congregational Meeting.

4. Should the Board of Directors sustain its earlier decision and the Former Member or Former Friend of the Church 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 its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, documents of legal organization, and the General Conference.

- A. Name – The Congregational Meeting is where the Members of the Church conduct the business of the Church. All are welcome to attend.
- B. Time and Place – An Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held each year in the month of November. The Board of Directors shall determine the time and place of the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- C. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify Members of the Annual Congregational Meeting in writing at least six (6) weeks in advance of the Meeting. The Meeting shall also be announced at public worship and in Church publications.
- D. Voting Rights – Each Member in good standing has the right to vote. Proxy or any other form of absentee voting shall not be allowed.
- E. Votes Required for Approval – Decisions, including elections, require approval by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of those Members in good standing present and voting, unless otherwise required by UFMCC Bylaws or otherwise stated in these local Church Bylaws.
- F. Quorum – In order to transact business, no less than twenty percent (20%) of the Members in good standing must be present.
- G. Agenda – The agenda for Congregational Meetings shall be determined by the Board of Directors and made available to the Congregation by the Clerk. The Clerk shall make the Agenda and all related documents available to the Congregation and mailed to the Members.
  1. Content – The agenda shall include, but is not limited to, election of members to the Board of Directors, election of Lay Delegates in the appropriate year, presentation of a financial report, approval of Church budget, and reports from the Board of Directors and the Pastor.
  2. Additions to Agenda – Members may request the Board of Directors to add agenda items by submitting additional agenda items to the Clerk, in writing, no later than three (3) weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting. The Board of Directors retains the right to refuse to add an item to the agenda of a Congregational Meeting if it was submitted past the deadline for agenda submissions or if the item is deemed inappropriate.

- H. Elections – All voting for elected positions shall be taken by secret and written ballot. Votes of affirmation from the floor are not permitted.
1. Counting Ballots - Two persons chosen by the Clerk will collect and count the ballots and will report the outcome to the Clerk and Moderator. The Moderator will report the totals for each candidate.
  2. Voided Ballots - Illegible ballots, ballots with more names than positions, and ballots where names are repeated for the same position shall not be counted.
- I. 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, with the following exceptions:
1. Calling a Special Congregational Meeting – A Special Congregational Meeting may be called by (a) majority vote of the Board, (b) the Pastor, or (c) a petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Members in good standing and submitted to the Clerk.
  2. Nature and Purpose - The nature and purpose of the Special Congregational Meeting shall be stated in the petition, in all notices related to the Special Congregational Meeting and be written into the agenda.
  3. Time and Place – A Special Congregational Meeting shall be held when duly called. The Board of Directors shall determine the date, time and location of the Special Congregational Meeting.
  4. Notification – The Board of Directors shall notify Members of a Special Congregational Meeting in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the Meeting. The Meeting shall also be announced at public worship.
- J. Congregational Forums - A Congregational Forum may be called by the (a) Board of Directors, (b) Pastor, or by (c) a petition signed by twenty-five percent (25 %) of the Members in good standing of the Church and submitted to the Board of Directors, for the purpose of discussing matters of concern to the Congregation. No binding votes may be conducted at a Congregational Forum.
1. Agenda - The agenda for the Congregational Forum shall be set by the Pastor and based on the purpose of the meeting.
  2. Scheduling - The date of the Congregational Forum shall be set by the Pastor and the Board of Directors.
  3. Notification - At least two (2) weeks prior to the Congregational Forum, the Board shall notify the Congregation through announcements at public worship and in church publications.

## **Article VI – Local Church Administrative Body**

The UFMCC has adopted a form of local church government which vests control in the Congregational Meetings of its members. Within this structure a basic “Board of Directors/Chief Executive Officer” model of governance is used to carry out the will of the Congregation. The work of the Board of Directors should be seen, like any other service in the Congregation, as a ministry, whose successful efforts are essential to the vision, mission, core values, and strategic plan of the Church.

- A. Name - The Local Church Administrative Body shall be the Board of Directors.
- B. Qualifications of the Board of Directors - Board Members must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality, leadership, and organizational management who are mature, have sound judgment, and have a proven record of commitment and accomplishment to the Church. Board Members must be good communicators, motivators, and team players, possessing integrity and accountability, while being devoted to continuous learning.
  - 1. Membership – Members of the Board of Directors must be Members in good standing of the Church.
  - 2. Conflict of Interest – More than one person from a household, family, or committed relationship; someone who is a church employee, or someone who is a Clergy Candidate shall not be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors.
- C. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:
  - 1. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing the Church with a set of Bylaws, which are subject to approval by Congregational Meeting and the Elder serving the Region and for submitting approved Bylaws to the Elder serving the Region.
  - 2. The Board of Directors shall have charge of all matters pertaining to:
    - a. The documents of legal organization and incorporation,
    - b. Church property and maintenance,
    - c. Risk management and financial affairs of the Church,
    - d. Naming the fiduciary body for any property acquired by the Church.
  - 3. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for:
    - a. Preparing the budget, including collecting and disbursing funds,
    - b. Keeping adequate Church records,
    - c. Making timely reports to the Congregation and UFMCC.
  - 4. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for facilitating:
    - a. A Stewardship Program,
    - b. A Fundraising Program,
    - c. Long range strategic planning.
  - 5. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for Membership Review as outlined in Article IV. A. 2.

6. The Board of Directors is responsible for providing advice and consent regarding personnel appointments made by the Pastor.
  7. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Board of Directors shall serve on and supervise the Pastoral Search Committee in consultation with the Regional Elder.
  8. Each Board member shall regularly attend worship service, represent the Church as a whole, and work toward consensus, while knowing the Church's vision, mission, core values, strategic plan, policies, and programs.
  9. Each Board member may receive one excused absence from a regularly scheduled board meeting within a calendar year.
- D. Composition – The Board of Directors shall consist of seven (7) 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 (2) year staggered terms, with half of the elected members being elected at each Annual Congregational Meeting. A Board Member, whether appointed or elected, shall not serve more than five (5) consecutive years.
- G. Election – The Board of Directors shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- H. Meetings – The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a month, with no fewer than ten months in a calendar a year hosting a meeting.
1. Executive Sessions - The Board of Directors, upon a majority vote of its members, may hold an Executive Session. An executive session is a closed session for Board members only and is held to address the following issues: Board of Directors training and development, personnel issues, consideration of disciplinary action, and review of Membership Rolls. Decisions arising out of business conducted in Executive Sessions must be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Except for executive sessions, meetings shall be open to the Congregation and to the public to attend as observers without voice or vote.
  2. Minutes – Draft minutes and financial reports shall be available to the Congregation within two (2) weeks after each meeting of the Board of Directors. Minutes shall include a record of those present and decisions made. A copy of the minutes shall become part of the permanent Church records.
  3. Agenda - The Moderator shall prepare the Agenda of each regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. The first agenda item of business shall be to adopt the previous meeting's minutes with any applicable revisions. Any individual Board Member or Member/Friend of the Church may recommend an item for the agenda in writing seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Any item for the agenda recommended less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting may be deferred to the following Board meeting. The Board shall determine when any item on the agenda that is not completed by the close of the meeting will be considered. The agenda shall be available the Sunday prior to the Board Meeting.

4. Reports - At each regular meeting, the Clerk, Pastor, and Treasurer shall submit written reports. All reports shall be distributed, if possible, to each of the Board members the Sunday prior to the Board meeting.
  - a. The Clerk's Report shall consist of the minutes of the Board and any changes to the Membership Roll.
    - i. Minutes of the Board will include the previous Board meeting, the minutes of all special Board meetings conducted since the previous regular meeting, decisions arising from Executive Sessions and the results of any decisions that may have been conducted by electronic mail.
    - ii. Membership Roll will include documentation of monthly, quarterly, and annual reviews as outlined in Article IV.1. and Article IV.2.
  - b. The Pastor's Report shall consist of an informational review of the Church's activities conducted during the preceding month and announcements of upcoming plans.
  - c. The Treasurer's Report shall consist of a written report of the financial income, assets, expenditures, and outstanding financial obligations of the Church. The treasurer shall report immediately any significant changes in income or expenditures that might have an effect on the administration of the budget or the financial status of the Church.
5. Church Records - All official Church records shall be kept at the Church Office.
- I. 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.
- J. Positions on the Board – Positions on the Board consist of the Official Officers of the Church and the Liaisons of the Church. The Official Officers of the Church are Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer. The Liaison Positions on the Board are Stewardship Liaison, Fund Raising Liaison, and Building & Property Liaison.
  1. Election of Officers and Liaisons – During the first meeting following elections to the Board, the Board of Directors shall determine persons to serve as Official Officers of the Church and to fill the Liaison Positions.
  2. Duties of Officers and Liaisons
    - a. Moderator – The Pastor shall serve as Moderator of the Board of Directors. The Moderator serves in effect as the Chief Executive Officer of the Church.
    - b. Vice-Moderator – The Vice Moderator shall work closely with the Moderator sharing the duties and responsibilities of chief executive officer as delegated by the Moderator. The Vice-Moderator shall serve as Moderator of the Board in the absence or upon the request of the Moderator.

- 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. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the preparation and maintenance of all financial records. This shall include, but is not limited to, a monthly financial report to the Board and an annual financial report to the Congregation. The monthly and annual reports shall reflect the financial income, assets, expenditures, and outstanding financial obligations of the Church.
  - e. Stewardship Liaison – The Stewardship Liaison shall be responsible for ensuring the facilitation of a year-round stewardship program within the Church, working with the Pastor and a team of laity, while reporting to the Board of Directors on, at least, a quarterly basis.
  - f. Fund Raising Liaison – The Fund Raising Liaison shall be responsible for facilitating all fund raising events in the Church working with the Pastor and a team of laity, while making regular reports to the Board of Directors whenever a Fundraising event is proposed or in progress.
  - g. Building & Property Liaison – The Building & Property Liaison shall be responsible for overseeing building and property maintenance and repair, while working with a team of laity and reporting to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis at minimum.
- I. Vacancies – In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the Board may appoint a qualified Member of the Church to fill the vacancy until the next Congregational Meeting, when an election shall be held to fill the un-expired term.
- 1. Notification of Vacancy - The Board of Directors shall notify the Congregation when a vacancy has occurred and shall notify the Congregation when an appointment has been made to fill the vacancy. These notifications shall be given through Church publications and announcements at public worship.
- J. Nominations – Any member who has been a member for at least six (6) months at the time of the Annual Congregational Meeting is eligible for nomination. The Nominating Committee, appointed by the Board, shall endeavor to have multiple candidates for each term to be elected by actively soliciting members to be candidates for the vacant positions as well as considering potential candidates who approach the Nominating Committee.
- 1. Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee will consist of three (3) members; one (1) active Board Member and two (2) Members in good standing who have been members for at least six (6) months prior to the formation of the Committee. The members of the Nominating Committee are appointed by the Board of Directors; members of the Board of Directors who are standing for election shall not participate in making the appointments. .
  - 2. Term of Office – The term of office for the members of the Nominating Committee will begin six (6) months prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting and end at the close of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

- K. Accountability, Discipline, Removal, and Right of Appeal – The Church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any member of the Board of Directors and, therefore, makes the following provisions for accountability, discipline, or removal.
1. Accountability – All members of the Board of Directors shall be accountable to the Church, the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) and the Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two). The Board of Directors shall conduct annual evaluations on the effectiveness of each Board member and the Board of Directors as a whole
  2. Discipline – All charges brought against a member of the Board of Directors must be in relation to a violation of either the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) or Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two) and submitted in writing to the entire Board of Directors. In the event of any formal discussion regarding allegation of charges being filed, the Board must notify the Board member being charged of the allegations and of the Board’s intention to hold a meeting to consider the charges. The person being charged shall have the opportunity to hear all of the charges and to respond to those charges at the meeting of the Board.
  3. Removal - The Board of Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors any of its members guilty of violation of the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) and/or the Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two), with the exception of the Pastor who must be disciplined in accordance with the UFMCC Bylaws. A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing of the Congregation may also initiate such a procedure.
  4. Right to Appeal - A disciplined member of the Board of Directors may appeal the action to the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting. 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. The vote of the Congregation shall be reported to the Regional Elder.
- N. 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 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 the loss arises from the director’s or officer’s own willful neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.
- O. Indemnity - The church shall protect every director and officer of the Church against all costs arising in relation to his/her relations with the Church, unless they are occasioned by her/his neglect or fraudulent or criminal actions.

## **Article VII – Pastor**

- A. Role – The Pastor is the UFMCC clergy person with a license to practice that has been called by God and elected by the Church to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher and spiritual leader of the Congregation until such time that the relationship is terminated. The Pastor shall also fulfill such other roles and responsibilities as are stated in the UFMCC Bylaws and policies of the Church.
- B. Responsibilities of the Pastor -
1. 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.
  2. The Pastor shall direct the performance of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as set forth in the Bylaws of the UFMCC.
  3. The Pastor shall direct performance of the Rite of Attaining Membership and Rite of Friendship to the Church as set forth in the Bylaws of the UFMCC.
  4. The Pastor shall direct performance of the Rite of Holy Union or Holy Matrimony.
  5. The Pastor shall direct performance of the Rite of Funeral or Memorial Service, the Rite of Laying on of Hands, the Rite of Blessing, as set forth in the Bylaws of the UFMCC. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise.
  6. The Pastor shall direct the Spiritual Education of the Congregation including but not limited to an ongoing program of Christian Education. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise.
  7. The Pastor shall direct the Congregational Caregiving Ministry of the Church. The Pastor may delegate such duties as seem wise.
  8. The Pastor shall direct all of the Programs of the Church and may delegate such duties as seem wise.
  9. The Pastor shall accept appointment to UFMCC offices or tasks representing the Fellowship or the Region if asked to do so by any Elder of the Fellowship, the MCC Board of Administration or an MCC Staff Member.
  10. The Pastor shall appoint compensated and uncompensated church staff, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.
  11. The Pastor shall determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the Church staff, subject to approval of the Board of Directors.
  12. 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.

13. The Pastor shall have other duties as outlined in the Pastoral Covenant.
- 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. The Covenant shall be reviewed annually. All provisions of the Covenant shall be subordinate to the Bylaws of the UFMCC and the Bylaws of the Church.
1. Conference Expenses – To the best of its ability, the Congregation shall fund the Pastor’s transportation, registration, housing, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences.
- D. Pastoral Vacancy – It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors to notify each member of the Congregation by mail of the Pastoral vacancy within ten (10) days of the Pastor’s notice of resignation or removal.
1. Interim Pastor - In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Board of Directors will consult with the Regional Elder as to possible candidates for Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor will be selected from the possible candidates by a decision made at a Special Congregational Meeting.
  2. Interim Pastoral Leader - In the event that a UFMCC clergy person is not available to serve as an Interim Pastor, the Board of Directors may request the Regional Elder to appoint an Interim Pastoral Leader, who shall be subject to a background check and credit check.
    - a. The term of office of the Interim Pastoral Leader shall be no more than one (1) year and will end when an Interim Pastor is appointed.
    - b. If the Interim Pastoral Leader is a member of the Church, 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 the Church, 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.
  3. Interim Pastor/Pastoral Leader – The Board of Directors and the Interim Pastor/Pastoral Leader, in consultation with the Regional Elder, shall develop a covenant between the Interim Pastor/Pastoral Leader and the Church. All provisions of the Covenant shall be subordinate to the Bylaws of the UFMCC and the Bylaws of the Church.
- E. Pastoral Search Committee - 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.
1. Composition of Pastoral Search Committee – The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members; four (4) members of the Board of Directors selected by the Board of Directors, and three (3) additional members elected at a Congregational Meeting. Once a

Board Member is on the Pastoral Search Committee, the Board Member shall continue to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee, even if the person's term on the Board expires, until a candidate for the Pastor is brought forth.

- F. Election of Pastor – To be elected, the candidate presented by the Pastoral Search Committee must receive more than eighty-five percent (85%) of the votes cast during a Congregational Meeting. If the candidate is not elected or declines the Call, then the matter shall be referred to the Pastoral Search Committee for presentation of another candidate.
- G. 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 covenant 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 IX: Conflict Resolution, and abiding by the UFMCC Bylaws. The Pastor shall remain in office unless the Pastor and Congregation choose to terminate the relationship through mutual agreement or until conclusion of the process of conflict resolution, as contained within the UFMCC Bylaws.
- H. Removing the Pastor from Office – The Church shall follow the process as outlined in the UFMCC Bylaws for removing the Pastor from office for disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty, or when irreconcilable differences arise that cannot be resolved through mutual agreement as outlined in Article IX: Conflict Resolution.

### **Article VIII – Lay Delegate**

The Church shall elect one (1) layperson for every one hundred (100) members in good standing, or part thereof, to serve as Lay Delegate. For every Lay Delegate elected, the church shall elect one Alternate Lay Delegate.

- A. Name – The Lay Delegate shall be the Congregation's Representative at all Regional and General Conferences. If the Lay Delegate is unable to represent, the Alternate Lay Delegate shall do so.
- B. Qualifications – The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate is an individual of obvious spiritual quality, leadership, sound judgment, and have a proven record of commitment and accomplishment to the Church. Lay/Alternate Delegates must be good communicators, motivators, and team players, possessing integrity and accountability, and be devoted to continuous learning.
- C. Responsibilities of the Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate:
  - 1. The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall be responsible for representing the Congregation at Regional and General Conferences.
  - 2. The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall be responsible for providing a written report to the Congregation and the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days following Regional and General Conference.

3. The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall communicate to the Congregation regarding UFMCC announcements, policy changes, opportunities for ministry and education, and concerns.
  4. The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall educate and encourage the Congregation to participate in the vision, mission, core values and strategic planning of the Fellowship.
  5. The Lay Delegate, when unable or unwilling to perform the duties of the position, shall immediately inform the Clerk of the Board of Directors in writing.
  6. The Alternate Lay Delegate shall be prepared to assume the responsibilities of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform said responsibilities.
    - a. Notification to Alternate Lay Delegate – When the Board of Directors is informed that the Lay Delegate is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay Delegate, the Clerk shall notify the Alternate Lay Delegate, in writing, to assume the responsibilities of Lay Delegate.
    - b. If the Alternate Lay Delegate is unable to serve, the Board shall appoint someone to serve in the absence of the Alternate Lay Delegate.
- D. Membership – The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall be a member in good standing of this Church.
- E. Term of Office – The term of office of Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall be two (2) years.
  1. Replacement - If a Lay Delegate, for any reason, does not fulfill a term, an elected Alternate Lay Delegate shall assume the position for the remainder of the term, and the Board shall appoint a new Alternate Lay Delegate. Should the position of Alternate Lay Delegate become vacant, the Board shall appoint a new Alternate Lay Delegate. Any appointed Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall serve until the next Congregational Meeting when an election shall be held for vacant positions(s).
- F. Election – The Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting following each General Conference.
- G. Training - Each newly elected Lay/Alternate Lay Delegate shall receive training from the Pastor and the previous Delegates when possible. The Delegates shall attend any Delegate Training provided by the Region and Fellowship.
- H. Funding - The Congregation shall fund at least 75% of the Lay Delegate's transportation, registration, housing, and per diem at General and Regional Conferences. Funding for the Alternate Lay Delegate shall be the same as the Lay Delegate when the Alternate Lay Delegate is acting in the capacity of the Lay Delegate.

Accountability, Discipline, Removal, and Right of Appeal – The Church cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any Delegate and, therefore, makes the following provisions for accountability, discipline, or removal.

- I. Accountability – The Delegates shall be accountable to the Church, the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) and the Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two). The Board of Directors

shall conduct annual evaluations on the effectiveness of each Delegate and on the Board of Directors as a whole.

1. Discipline – All charges brought against a Delegate must be in relation to a violation of the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) and/or the Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two) and must be submitted in writing to the entire Board of Directors. In the event of any formal discussion regarding allegation of charges being filed, the Board must notify the Delegate being charged of the allegations and of the Board's intention to hold a meeting to consider the charges. The person being charged shall have the opportunity to hear all of the charges and to respond to those charges at the meeting of the Board.
2. Removal - The Board of Directors may remove by a majority vote of the full Board any Delegate guilty of violation of the Code of Conduct (Addendum One) and/or the Leadership Covenant (Addendum Two). A petition submitted to the Clerk and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing of the Congregation may also initiate such a procedure.
3. Right to Appeal - A disciplined Delegate may appeal the action to the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting. The decision of the Congregational Meeting is final. Until the Congregational Meeting to consider the appeal, the position held by the disciplined Delegate shall be considered vacant. The vote of the Congregation shall be reported to the Regional Elder.

#### **Article IX – Conflict Resolution**

- A. Conflict - When there is conflict or difficulty within the Church, the Pastor, the Board of Directors, Lay Leadership and the Congregation agrees to abide by the Direct Dealing Policy of Imago Dei MCC (Addendum Three).
- B. Calling the Regional Elder - When there are conflicts or difficulty within the Church, including apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and the Congregation, the Elder serving the Region shall be invited to interface with that Church to take appropriate measures, to provide resources and support, and to attend, with voice, at any meeting of the local Church administrative body or Congregational Meeting.
  1. A Regional Elder is called when 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 invite intervention by the Regional Elder to resolve the conflict, in accordance with UFMCC Bylaws.

#### **Article X – Church Finances**

- A. Financial Stewardship – The Church adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed means of supporting the Church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, talent, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, the Church shall implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the church's ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship.

B. Annual Budget - The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the presentation of an annual balanced operating budget reflecting anticipated receipts and disbursements to the Congregational Meeting for approval by vote. The approved budget may be amended, as needed, by 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 to December, as required by the Fellowship for fiscal reporting.
2. Failure to Adopt – Failure to adopt a new budget at a Congregational Meeting shall cause the current budget (weekly amounts) to be extended until a budget is approved at a subsequent Congregational Meeting

C. Reporting:

1. Congregational Financial Report - The Board of Directors shall provide, at minimum, an Annual Financial Report to the Congregation. The Board shall also provide a financial report whenever significant changes in income or expenditures occur.
2. Assessments – The Board of Directors shall report quarterly 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 (10<sup>th</sup>) day of the month following the quarter reported.
3. 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.

D. Limit on Expenditures:

1. Pastor - The Pastor shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in any amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that amount requires the approval of the Board of Directors.
2. Board of Directors - The Board of Directors shall have the authority to commit church funds within the approved budget in any amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the annual budget; any expenditure greater than that amount requires congregational approval

E. Authorized Signatures – Any church bank or other financial accounts shall require two signatures for withdrawals, at least one of which shall be that of a church officer; all members of the Board of Directors shall have signature authority.

F. Church Property:

1. Board of Trustees – The Board of Directors, when the Church initiates a Capital Campaign Fund for the sake of purchasing property, will name a Board of Trustees for any real property acquired, or to be acquired, by the Church. The Board of Trustees will recommend property use and upkeep, repair, and maintenance of the property and other duties as

determined by the Board. The Board of Trustees is reportable and accountable to the Board of Directors.

2. Record of Property – The Board of Directors shall maintain a permanent record of all non-expendable items of physical property of the Church, the manner of their acquisition, the names of the donors of donated items, and the manner of their disposal. This record shall be maintained by the Clerk and kept on file at the Church office with a duplicate copy kept off site.
3. Beneficiary of Church Property – In accordance with UFMCC Bylaws, the Church hereby names UFMCC as the successor 501 (c) (3) corporation designated to receive the Church's property in the event of a dissolution or abandonment of the Church, or its disaffiliation from the UFMCC.

### **Article XI – Adoption and Amendments**

- A. Adoption – These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Congregational Meeting and approval by the Regional Elder.
- B. Amendments – These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened Congregational Meeting. Proposed amendments or repeals shall be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the Congregational Meeting at which the proposal is to be considered. Adoption of the amendment or the repeal shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote and is subject to approval by the Regional Elder. Amendments that are necessitated by amendments made to the UFMCC Bylaws shall not require approval by the Congregation.

**Addendum One  
Code of Conduct**

The following Code of Conduct, adopted by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), defines un-becoming conduct, disloyalty and dereliction of duty. It is the policy of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) that elected officers, employees and ministry leaders subscribe to this code.

UNBECOMING CONDUCT:

1. Pattern of untreated public drunkenness or substance abuse, which places a person's or congregant's safety in danger.
2. Misappropriation of church funds or property.
3. Misuse of the powers of the appointed or elected office for personal or sexual gain.
4. Any sexual relations with persons below the age of consent.
5. Non-consensual physical abuse or violence.
6. Sexual relations between supervisors and those they supervise or counselors and those they counsel.
7. Pattern of deceit or dishonesty.
8. Creating a person-centered ministry rather than a Christ-centered ministry, i.e. creating emotional dependency of the pastor, abuse of authority or divisiveness.
9. Knowingly violating the sanctity of another person's relationship covenant.
10. Inappropriate violation of confidentiality.
11. Sexual harassment, i.e. any sexually related behaviors that is unwelcome or offensive and which fails to respect the rights of others.

DISLOYALTY

1. Patterns of deliberate or malicious acts which damage or bring harm to a persons, a congregation or other church body within UFMCC.
2. Initiating or performing a ministry on behalf of UFMCC which is unauthorized and/or unaccountable.
3. Undermining the authority and ministry of the Pastor.

DERELICTION OF DUTY:

1. A pattern of ministry that leaves churches weakened rather than strengthened.
2. Leading a church into unreasonable indebtedness or breach of fiduciary duties.
3. Negligent supervision.
4. Failure to report acts of misconduct to the appropriate entities (authorities).

I pledge to uphold the Code of Conduct of the Imago Dei MCC as printed above:

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Signature

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Date

**Addendum Two**  
**Leadership Covenant**

*Leadership Expectations*

1. ***Spiritual Growth:*** Leaders are committed to grow as Christians through regular worship, personal prayer and increasing study. The Church must be led forward by Christians who are going forward into their relationship with God.
2. ***Exemplify Positive Faith:*** Things that leaders say to others should demonstrate their faith in God's grace by choosing to be constructive, supportive and positive. 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 difference. They do not talk about the problem with anyone who is not directly involved in the problem or its solution.
3. ***Tithing:*** Leaders make a financial commitment to the church. They lead the membership in developing a financial base to ensure future viability of the church. The membership has no reason to trust the leader's integrity if they are not being honest in their financial covenant with God.
4. ***Praying:*** Leaders regularly pray for the Pastor, the Board, the Staff and Leaders who are guiding the church. We should be able to count on the sustaining prayers of our sisters and brothers.
5. ***Living a Morally Mature Life:*** Although MCC is not in the habit of dictating how people ought to live, leaders understand that members expect them to be healthy examples. Leaders evaluate their behaviors in light of that reality and attempt to live in such a way that they are not stumbling blocks for others.
6. ***Mutual Accountability:*** The Bible talks about being submitted to one another in love (Eph.5: 21). Leaders must be willing to receive instruction and even discipline from fellow leaders or those put in authority over them. It is healthy that everyone can be accountable to someone and willing to participate in a mature way in this process.

As a potential leader of Imago Dei Metropolitan Community Church, I am willing to participate in this covenant relationship with other leaders of this church. May God's power strengthen me to be faithful and may God's grace forgive me should I fail.

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Signature

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Date

**Addendum Three**  
**The Direct Dealing Policy of Imago Dei MCC is an addendum to**  
**Article IX – Conflict Resolution.**

[1] **How We Deal with Each Other when Conflict Arises**

**Direct Dealing**

It is the policy of the local church, its administrative bodies, and program facilitators to directly deal with people regarding issues of the Church and to teach all members and friends of the Church in direct dealing. All church leadership will refuse to deal with proposals or concerns where the proponents of such are not willing to identify themselves by name. A person who is said to represent “many others in the Church” or “they” will be asked to identify by names these other individuals. Those individuals named as well as the person said to represent them, must be present in person or in writing before the concern or proposal will be considered by the pastor, administrative bodies and/or program facilitators. If the individual(s) is/are not willing to represent themselves or be identified, the pastor, administrative bodies, and/or program facilitators will consider the issue a non-issue.

Following Scriptural guidelines [Matthew 18:15-20], persons who have a grievance or concern will be requested to take their concern directly to the person(s) or ministry group involved.

If that person or group is unable to resolve the issue, then the parties may request, through the Board of Directors, that an appropriate facilitator<sup>1</sup> is appointed by the Board of Directors to help the people involved resolve their conflict. This meeting will be held only with all parties present.

If the conflict still cannot be resolved the parties may request that the Board of Directors assist in seeking a resolution to the conflict. Again, all parties involved must be present.

If the Board of Directors is unable to satisfactorily resolve the conflict, either the party or the Board of Directors will solicit the Regional Elder for consultation and/or intervention.

Issues that have not gone through the above process will not be placed on the Board of Directors’ agenda and will therefore be ruled out-of-order by the moderator at any Board or Congregational Meeting.

**Conflict Management**

The local church is a growing organization and conflict will occur as a result. Conflict is a fact of life in human society, including the Church. Conflict that hones the edge of an organization and keeps it mindful of and true to its purposes is healthy. An organization with no conflict at all must have either no purpose at all or at best, a very frivolous purpose.

Conflict can be good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, creative or destructive. All lay leaders are expected to handle conflict in a healthy, loving and creative way and expect the same from the membership of the Church.

Healthy conflict is where members in the Church deal with their issues up front. They talk directly to those with whom they are in disagreement. They bring substantive evidence with their particular viewpoint and their demands are reasonable. They present their viewpoints as supportive of the mission of the Church and are able to clearly show this in their presentation. They clearly have a deep love for the Church, love and respect leadership of the Church and are honorable in sharing their viewpoint. They do not make personal attacks on others with whom they disagree. They are introspective and are concerned that they have correct information. They view themselves as working with the Church leadership to find peaceful, loving solutions to the issue at hand for the good of all people concerned. Once a vote is taken on an issue, whether they were in agreement or not with the decision, they support the witness of the body evident in the vote. They continue to be constructive and positive in their work for the common good of the Church as witnessed to by the body.

Unhealthy conflict occurs when a member(s), on the basis of nonsubstantive evidence, goes out of his/her way to make insatiable and/or uninformed demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up.

The presence of antagonists and situations in which unhealthy conflict occurs are usually of a small number in any Congregation. However, such unhealthy conflict has the potential to disrupt, even to destroy, the mission and ministry of Christ through the people of God, as has been the experience of many of our churches in the UFMCC. Antagonism in the Church not dealt with directly when it occurs is one of the primary reasons why churches are unable to have steady, enduring growth, and one of the major reasons for the loss of dynamic, enthusiastic lay leaders and pastors. Antagonism left unchecked in the Church creates a negative, fearful and unhappy environment. Antagonistic people drain the leadership of their time and energy and do not make being involved in the Church a joyous and blessed experience. Antagonistic behavior is not loving behavior.

The Church will provide all new and current Board of Directors members with a copy of the book, *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*, by Kenneth C. Haugk, Augsburg Publishing House, 1988. All antagonistic behavior will be reported to the Board of Directors in a manner consistent with direct dealing and conflict management as outlined in the Bylaws of Imago Dei MCC.

If you are interested in reading more about conflict and the management of conflict, the following books are suggested:

*Managing Church Conflict*, Hugh F. Halverstadt. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1991.

*The Addictive Organization*, Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel. Harper & Row, NY, 1988.

*Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard*, David Augsburger. Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA, 1982.

*Caring Enough to Forgive*, David Augsburger. Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA 1981.

*Clergy Killers*, G. Lloyd Rediger. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1997.

## [2] **How We Work Together in Groups**

### **Confidentiality**

#### **Board of Directors**

When information regarding the local church is discussed with one Board of Directors member that information is open to all Board members. Board members will not be bound to keep secrets regarding church issues and will discourage gossip and slander in the Church by refusing to listen to unsubstantiated information about programs or people in the Church. Therefore, when talking to members or other interested parties about the Church's concerns, a Board member may not be called into confidence regarding church issues. If asked to keep the discussion in confidence, a Board member is obligated to inform such person that, by this policy, they are unable to do so. A Board member is obligated to share all information regarding the concerns of the Church, including names of people who are the sources of such information with the rest of the Board of Directors. Failure to do so will be deemed unbecoming conduct of the Board member.

Information revealed in executive session 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 being shared. Unauthorized disclosure of this information is prohibited and may be grounds for removal of the Board of Directors. If a non-Board member is involved in the 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.

#### Lay Leadership

When information regarding the local church is discussed with a Lay Leader that information is open to the Pastor who oversees all church programs. Lay Leaders will not be bound to keep secrets regarding church issues and will discourage gossip and slander in the Church by refusing to listen to unsubstantiated information about programs or people in the Church. Therefore, when talking to members or other interested parties about the Church's concerns, a Lay Leader may not be called into confidence regarding church issues. If asked to keep the discussion in confidence, a Lay Leader is obligated to inform such person that, by this policy, they are unable to do so. A Lay Leader is obligated to share all information regarding the concerns of the Church, including names of people who are the sources of such information with the Pastor. Failure to do so will be deemed unbecoming conduct of the Lay Leader.

### Personal vs. Congregational (Church) Issues

Not all issues brought to the Board of Directors or Lay Leadership are congregational issues. Because we are a diverse group of people, personal issues may arise and need to be dealt with differently than a congregational issue.

A congregational issue has the following identifiable characteristics:

1. A majority of the Board of Directors can witness to several different members, including Lay Leadership having voiced the issue in a church meeting or with them in person.
2. Board members themselves witness to the issue being of concern to the Congregation.
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.
4. The issue is repeatedly voiced on different occasions by those persons described above in numbers 1, 2, or 3.
5. The issue is especially voiced by persons known to be mature and trusted members of the Congregation, 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 Church.

A personal issue has the following identifiable characteristics:

1. It is brought up as an issue by one or a few people.
2. The issue is made known to the Board of Directors only through the same person(s) or through their lobbying efforts with other members in the Church.
3. The Board of Directors is unable to witness to this being a congregational issue.

If the Board of Directors deems that an issue is of a personal nature, to the best of its ability the Board of Directors will seek to see that the person(s) who has the issue get their needs met. However, the Board of Directors accepts that the Church will not be able to meet every personal need of its individual members.

**The Board of Directors will work to do so, as long as the issue or request does not violate the Bylaws of the local church or Fellowship, and does not require unreasonable assurances of action that the Board of Directors cannot accept responsibility for in light of the common good of the Church. If the Board of Directors deems that an issue is personal and it feels that the Church can assist the person in getting their needs met, the Board of Directors will refer the individual to the appropriate ministry or staff persons for assistance. The Board of Directors will not reconsider personal issues from the same person(s) regarding the same content in subsequent Board of Directors meetings.**