

# Proposed 2024 Bylaws for Unity Renaissance

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# 2024 Bylaws for Unity Renaissance

## ARTICLE I

### Name

The name of the Church Corporation is Unity Renaissance, hereinafter referred to as Unity Renaissance.

## ARTICLE II

### Purpose

#### Section 1. Statement of Purpose

Unity Renaissance is organized and shall be operated exclusively as a nonprofit church, for the religious, charitable, and educational purposes stated in the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. The purpose of Unity Renaissance, a Virginia corporation, is to teach the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ and other spiritual teachers, and interpreted by Unity and the Association of Unity Churches, Inc. (d/b/a Unity Worldwide Ministries, a Georgia nonprofit corporation, with headquarters at Unity Village, Missouri, hereinafter referred to as Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM)).

#### Section 2. Accomplishment of Purpose

In the accomplishment of this purpose, Unity Renaissance shall endeavor to conduct services of worship and classes of instruction and demonstrate the principles of Truth by using them in the operation of Unity Renaissance as well as adopt other means that, in the judgment of the minister and Board of Trustees, will further the principles of positive, practical Christianity.

If the ministry is temporarily without a minister, the Board of Trustees (Board), will notify the UWM Member Support Team within five to seven (5-7) days and will carry out this and all other functions until a new minister is selected.

#### Section 3. Unity Worldwide Ministries

Unity Renaissance shall be a vital part of the worldwide Unity movement and a member of the Unity Worldwide Ministries. Any member of Unity Renaissance may call upon the resources and support of Unity Worldwide Ministries through its Senior Minister or Co-ministers, Board of Trustees, staff, or through direct communication with Unity Worldwide Ministries.

In the spirit of cooperation, the operation and conduct of this ministry shall strive to comply with the bylaws, policies, and regulations of UWM, insofar as they do not conflict with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### A. UWM Membership

Unity Renaissance shall strive to comply with the Member Ministry requirements and expectations as outlined in the UWM Membership Model Policy.

## **B. Participation**

Unity Renaissance may have its voice heard and its wishes expressed in the membership meetings of Unity Worldwide Ministries, and its members may participate in workshops, seminars, and classes designed to encourage and foster their spiritual development and that of Unity Renaissance.

## **C. Resources**

Unity Renaissance can benefit from its membership in Unity Worldwide Ministries and its corresponding region through direct support, materials, and coaching regarding the organization, finances, music, adult and youth education, church growth programs, ethics compliance, and other topics related to church function.

## **D. Leadership**

Unity Renaissance shall have as its leader an ordained or licensed Unity Minister(s) approved for ministry employment by Unity Worldwide Ministries or a person serving under special dispensation approved by Unity Worldwide Ministries. For the purpose of these Bylaws, the term "minister" shall include a person serving under special dispensation of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

## **E. Teaching**

The principles of positive, practical Christianity shall be taught through Unity Renaissance using methods, textbooks, literature, and other materials from both inside and outside the Unity movement.

## **F. Comply with Requests**

Unity Renaissance shall endeavor to comply with all requests from UWM for identifying ministry information including, but not limited to the following:

1. Articles of Incorporation.
2. Bylaws whenever updated.
3. Deeds to properties owned by the ministry.
4. Form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number, once it has been returned by the IRS to the ministry. 8822-B, Change of Address or Responsible Party.

## **G. Reports**

1. Unity Renaissance shall make annual reports to UWM as required.
2. Unity Renaissance shall inform UWM whenever a change is made in the ministry's phone number, address, or email.
3. Unity Renaissance shall inform the UWM Member Support Team within five to seven (5-7) days whenever a change is made in ministerial leadership.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Office and Official Records**

#### **Section 1. Principal Office**

The principal executive office of Unity Renaissance shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Said office shall be at 1120 Eden Way, North, Chesapeake, of the Commonwealth of Virginia or at such other place within the Commonwealth of Virginia as the Board of Trustees hereafter shall designate. Unity Renaissance may also conduct operations at such other place or places, as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate.

#### **Section 2. Official Records**

Records of membership, finances, donation records, corporate minutes, and other records required by law or as designated by the Board of Trustees shall be maintained at the principal office of Unity Renaissance. Confidential documents, as identified by the minister and Board of Trustees, are available only for use by the Minister(s), Board members, and designated staff as required for the execution of their duties. Non-confidential documents are available to members upon request.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Members**

#### **Section 1. Qualification**

A member of Unity Renaissance shall endeavor to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Jesus Christ and Unity and further the work of Unity Renaissance through active interest, involvement and support. See Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure Manual for specific steps for becoming a member. Non-members / former members may attend Unity Renaissance services and classes but do not have full access and privileges as a member. No members of this Church, nor any officer, staff member, nor any member of the Board shall by virtue of such membership, office or position, incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts or omissions of this church corporation.

#### **Section 2. Membership Application**

Anyone 13 years of age or older and desiring membership in Unity Renaissance will file an application for membership with the ministry office. Following completion of membership requirements (see Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure Manual for specific qualification requirements) the Board of Trustees will review the application at the next meeting and vote on approval. The applicant will be notified of the Board's action by the Board Secretary.

## **Section 3. Membership**

### **A. Member Designation**

Members shall be designated “local” and “remote” to identify physical location and method of participation at Unity Renaissance (“local” defined as having the ability and intent to participate in person at Unity Renaissance for some services and classes, “remote” defined as not having the ability or intent of in person participation at Unity Renaissance). The only reason for this designation is to identify those that participate in a “remote”, on-line only process, which does not allow them to qualify for nomination as a Board of Trustee or Nomination Council member.

### **B. New Members**

Sixty (60) days after Board of Trustee membership application approval, a new member shall have voting rights at all Membership meetings up through and including the next regularly scheduled Annual Membership meeting.

### **C. Existing Members**

To retain membership rights, each member of Unity Renaissance must indicate a desire to remain a member by completing a yearly membership renewal process (form or electronic verification) as approved by the Board of Trustees. If no current membership documentation is on file for that calendar year prior to, or at, the Annual Membership meeting, that person becomes a former member and cannot serve on the Board of Trustees or vote at any membership meeting (non-member).

### **D. Youth Members**

Youth membership has the same qualifications requirements as adults and must be renewed yearly, with the following provisions:

1. Youth membership is open to those who are no less than thirteen (13) years of age and no more than seventeen (17) years of age and have parent/guardian consent.
2. A youth member shall have the right to speak at all meetings which members have the right to speak. Youth members shall be ineligible to vote at the Annual and Special Membership meetings. Upon obtaining the age of eighteen (18) a youth member becomes a voting member.
3. Youth members are not eligible to serve as members of the Board of Trustees or on the Nomination Council.
4. Youth members may be designated by the Board of Trustees as members of committees and teams at Unity Renaissance.

### **E. Former Members**

Unity Renaissance members that do not complete the renewal process prior to the succeeding year’s annual meeting are considered former members (non-member).

## **Section 4. Reinstatement of Former Members**

### **A. Reinstatement within two years**

Former members who wish to return to membership within the first two (2) years after becoming designated a former member, who meet all current membership qualifications (see Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure for member qualification requirements) and complete membership renewal requirements, and when approved by the Board of Trustees, shall be reinstated as members. In order to vote at a Membership meeting such members must fulfill these requirements at least sixty (60) days before a membership meeting.

### **B. Reinstatement after two years**

Persons who have not been members for two (2) years or more after being designated as a former member (non-member), and those persons who desire to return to membership, may reapply in the same manner required of new members (see Unity Renaissance Policy Procedure manual for new member requirements).

## **Section 5. Removal of Membership for Cause**

A member may be removed for cause by the Board of Trustees. Prior to any vote concerning removal, the member in question must be notified by a certified process (communication via certified mail, verified electronic with additional phone contact) at least thirty (30) days prior to the board of trustees meeting regarding the charges that may lead to the removal of membership and thereafter be given an opportunity for a hearing before the Board. The member shall have the right to be present at the hearing by the Board of Trustees and may bring a person to counsel him/her who must be a member of Unity Renaissance. A two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the entire membership of the Board currently in office shall be required for the removal of membership. A member so removed is ineligible to be reinstated as a member within two years of removal unless approved by a follow on two-thirds (2/3rds) Board vote. (Disruptive Behavior is identified in Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure Manual)

## **Section 6. Rights of Members**

Each member of Unity Renaissance shall have the following rights:

- A.** To vote at any Membership meeting, either in person, by telephone, or by other electronic means simultaneously with a minimum standard being verbal communication.
- B.** To serve on Board of Trustee committees and ministry teams if selected.
- C.** To speak in a debate at any Membership meeting according to the rules provided for debate.
- D.** To offer suggestions to the minister(s) or Board of Trustees as may seem advisable for the good of the ministry, having said suggestion acknowledged by the minister(s) or Board of Trustees.
- E.** To contact a Regional Representative of UWM Member Support Team directly for guidance, support, or information on available resources.
- F.** To participate in all activities and programs of Unity Renaissance.

- G. To review the Annual Financial Report, Annual Membership/Special Membership Meeting minutes, monthly financial report, and Board meeting minutes.
- H. To attend Board of Trustee regular monthly meetings should a member notify the board (see Article VI, Section 4).
- I. Additional items listed under Article V-Meetings, Section 1 Meetings.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1. Annual Membership Meeting**

There shall be one Annual Membership meeting each year.

##### **A. Date and Location of Annual Membership Meeting**

The Annual Membership meeting shall be held during the months of January or February at the principal location of Unity Renaissance and/or online at a time and date established by agreement between the Senior Minister (or co-ministers) and Board of Trustees.

##### **B. Notice of Annual Membership Meeting**

Written notice stating the date, time, and place (connections requirements for online participation) of the Annual Membership Meeting shall be sent to all members at least 10 day prior to meeting by electronic mail, posted to the Unity Renaissance website, and may be sent via postal mail if specifically requested by a member, at membership renewal or at least twenty (20) days in advance of that membership meeting.

##### **C. Quorum**

Those members present and using electronic means (online) will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Annual Membership Meeting.

##### **D. Presiding Officer**

The President of the Board of Trustees shall serve as the Presiding Officer of the Annual Membership meeting unless the President relinquishes the chair to another Board member, to a representative of UWM, or to a professional registered parliamentarian.

##### **E. Participation**

The right to speak in debate, to make motions, and to vote during Annual Meetings shall be restricted to those members who are physically present or in person by electronic means, and who were admitted to membership at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the annual meeting. The right of other persons to speak during membership meetings may be extended by the Presiding Officer or by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the attending members. UWM's representative(s) have a right to speak when they are at that meeting if in an official capacity.

## **F. Voting**

Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a majority of the members qualified to vote (participating in the Annual Membership Meeting) is required to elect Board of Trustee members and approve or disapprove any action being voted upon. Intimidation and coercion regarding an individual's vote are strictly prohibited.

## **G. Power and Authority**

Annual Membership Meetings shall have the power and authority to do all of the following:

1. Elect voting members of the Board of Trustees.
2. Approve proposed amendments to these Bylaws.
3. Approve by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership of Unity Renaissance present, any expenditure exceeding fifty thousand (\$50,000.00) with a specified maximum overage unless said expenditures have already been approved as part of a larger project. In the case of major projects for expanding or improving the Unity Renaissance facility or property, a membership vote will be taken with a required two-thirds (2/3) approval before a contract on the project is signed.
4. Elect three (3) members to serve on the Nominating Council.
5. Override any action of the Board of Trustees provided that notice of the action to be voted upon is submitted to all members in writing via electronic mail, posted to the Unity Renaissance website, and may be sent via postal mail if specifically requested by a member ten (10) days prior to the meeting and is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) present membership vote.
6. Remove by a two-thirds (2/3) present membership vote, any or all Voting Trustee(s) from the Board of Trustees provided notice of the action is sent (electronic mail, posted to Unity Renaissance website and postal mail if specifically identified by a member) to all members fifteen (15) days prior to the annual meeting and if specifically on the agenda.
7. Any member may request in writing, no later than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting, that a specified matter be placed on the agenda, pending review by the Board of Trustees.
8. Vote on any matters officially brought to the attention of the membership.

## **H. Prayer**

In any Annual Membership Meeting, the Board President (or Presiding Officer), minister(s), and Unity Worldwide Ministries Representative, or any member may request that action on an item of business be suspended while the membership enters into a time of prayer on the issue. Upon such request the Presiding Officer shall provide a period of prayer and silence before resuming the meeting.



## **Section 2. Special Membership Meeting**

### **A. Requesting Special Membership Meetings**

Any time the affairs of Unity Renaissance warrant, a Special Membership Meeting may be requested by the Senior Minister or Co-ministers, a majority vote of the Voting Board of Trustees, and by a member submitting a petition to the Board of Trustees having been signed by 10% of the membership with a specific written request for action required at a Special Membership Meeting.

### **B. Calling Special Membership Meetings**

Upon receiving proper request for a special membership meeting, the President of the Board of Trustees shall set a date within sixty (60) days of receipt of the request for the Special Membership meeting to be held. The notice of a Special Membership meeting shall be sent as per an Annual meeting and at least 20 days prior to the meeting date. The location, quorum, Presiding Officer, participation, voting, and prayer provisions for Special Membership meetings shall be the same as those for Annual meetings.

### **C. Special Meeting Business**

Business conducted at a Special Membership meeting shall be limited to the pre-stated purpose(s) given in the meeting notice. No other business may be addressed, however, normal informational agenda items may be addressed if combined with a typical quarterly Community Forum.

### **D. Community Forum**

Unity Renaissance Community Forums are normally quarterly, informational meetings for the membership and congregation. A Community Forum may be considered a Special Membership meeting pending the scope and type business required (Bylaw changes, large money distribution, contract signing, etc. – identified in Power and Authority of Annual Membership Meetings (Article V, Section 1. G)). If a Community Forum is used as a Special Membership Meeting, it will be identified as such and use the rules set forth above for a Special Membership meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI Board of Trustees**

### **Section 1. Composition**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of 10 Members of Unity Renaissance.

- A.** Seven (7) Voting Board of Trustee members: the Senior Minister (or Co-Ministers consisting of one ministerial vote) and six (6) Trustees, elected;
- B.** Three (3) Non-Voting Board of Trustee members, selected by the Voting Board of Trustees members.

## **Section 2. Eligibility and Term of Office**

Eligibility for Unity Renaissance Voting and Non-Voting Board of Trustee members requires the individual to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM), uphold the Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, Social Media Policy, Mutual Accountability Agreements/Covenant, and other ministry policies, and, have the time, skills, and disposition to serve on the Board of Trustees.

### **A. Voting Board of Trustee members.**

1. Shall hold office for three years or until a successor is duly elected.
2. The terms of two elected Voting Trustees shall expire annually and their offices shall be filled at the Annual Membership meeting.
3. Any person shall be eligible to serve two consecutive full terms each regardless of any time served fulfilling the remainder of another Voting Trustees' term.
4. No elected Voting Trustees shall serve more than two consecutive full terms of three years each without an interval of one year between terms.

### **B. Non-Voting Board of Trustee members.**

1. There shall be three (3) Non-Voting Trustees appointed by the Voting Board of Trustees to act as the "voice" of the congregation at all Board of Trustee meetings. They are to also affect the purposes of conveyances, etc. to comply with the Code of Virginia, Title 57, Chapter 2, and Section 57-8. Trustees so appointed will be function under the law of the Code of Virginia related to religious and charitable matters.
2. Each Non-voting Trustee shall hold office for six years, or until a successor is duly elected.
3. The term of one Non-Voting Trustee shall expire every other year (ending on an odd numbered year).
4. Their office shall normally be filled by a vote of the Voting Board of Trustees at its March meeting
5. The new Non-Voting Trustee will assume office upon acceptance by the nominee.

## **Section 3. Prohibition of Service**

The following persons are prohibited from applying to or serving on the Board of Trustees:

- A.** Individuals receiving compensation from Unity Renaissance (Licensed Unity Teachers, staff members, guest speakers, vendors, etc.) with the exception of the Senior Ministers (or Co-Ministers), workshop or class facilitators.
- B.** Spouses, significant others or immediate household members/relatives (parents/children, siblings) of any Board member or Licensed Unity Teacher / Licensed/Ordained Unity Minister, or other Board candidate.
- C.** Apart from the Senior Minister or Co-Ministers, individuals with spouses, significant others or related household members that are considered salary/hourly staff from Unity Renaissance.

- D. No Board member shall follow an immediate family member, spouse, significant other, or related family member without a one (1) year interval between terms of service to the Board of Trustees.

#### **Section 4. Regular Monthly Board Meetings**

Regular monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at least once a month unless otherwise determined by the Board. There must be a minimum of one (1) Board meeting per quarter. The Board of Trustees shall strive to announce the normal monthly meeting time/place at least seven (7) days prior to each meeting (on Unity Renaissance website and announcements at weekly services), along with identifying if in person or electronic media.

The Board has the authority to determine to what level a Board meeting will be open to the Unity Renaissance membership. Members may attend a regular meeting to observe as long as the meeting is not reviewing confidential agenda items (or will be asked to leave prior to discussion on any confidential items). A member may be able to speak at the Board monthly meeting if a request is made to the President of the Board (via letter or email) at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting (specific topic and limit on time is required), although the President may request members to speak at a meeting with less notice.

Confidential matters such as, but not limited to, minister employment, evaluations, legal matters or pending litigation and other Confidential items are to be held in an Executive Session (no members may participate unless specifically requested by the President of the Board). Only Executive Session motions passed should be recorded in the public minutes with no specifics or notes of the discussion.

#### **Section 5. Special Board Meetings**

Special meeting of the Board shall be called by the President under any of the following conditions:

- A. At the request of the Senior Minister or Co-Ministers.
- B. At the request of two or more Trustees.
- C. As the President of the Board deems it necessary.

Any request for a Special Board meeting shall be made to all members of the Board, and preferably 48 hours prior to the meeting date/time. All current Board members including the Senior Minister or Co -Ministers shall be notified. A reasonable effort will be made to contact all members of the Board via email and/or phone.

A written record of the Special Board meeting will be kept and filed with the Secretary, a required with a Regular Monthly Board meeting.

#### **Section 6. Action without a Meeting**

The Board may take an action without a meeting if consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed, or electronically communicated to and acknowledged by all of the Board of Trustees as a complete group and is thereafter ratified at a regular board meeting or special board meeting (normally done using email). Individual communications to Board members regarding action without a meeting is prohibited. For Board transparency, full group communication is strongly encouraged.

## **Section 7. Quorum**

A majority of the total number of Voting Board of Trustees including the minister(s) constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Unless otherwise provided herein, the vote of a majority of the Voting Trustees present and voting shall be necessary for approval of the action being voted upon. Should the total number of Voting Trustees, including the minister(s), fall below a quorum, the remaining Voting Trustees shall refer to and implement Sections 10.C and 13 concerning vacancies. Telephonic or electronic attendance is permitted and is not considered an absence.

## **Section 8. Board Authority**

- A.** Except as provided in these bylaws, all authority is vested in the Board of Trustees (including the Senior Minister/ co-ministers as an active voting member) only when it meets in session after notice to all Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister (or co-ministers), and a quorum is present.
- B.** When discussing the Senior Minister's (or co-ministers) compensation, working conditions, or review of the minister's work record, the Board of Trustees may decide to exclude the minister from that portion of the discussion.
- C.** The Unity Renaissance Board of Trustees is always accountable to the membership of Unity Renaissance.

## **Section 9. Prayer**

It is important that in addition to adhering to the normal procedures for legal functioning set forth in these Bylaws, that the spiritual principles taught by Unity be utilized in the handling of decisions by the Board of Trustees. During the discussion of an item of business any trustee may request time for prayer about an issue. Upon such request the President shall provide a period of prayer and silence.

## **Section 10. Board of Trustees**

### **A. Voting Board of Trustees**

#### **1. Roles, Duties and Responsibilities of the Voting Board of Trustees**

As representatives of the membership, the Voting Board of Trustees shall:

- a) Uphold the best interests, policies and vision, mission, values, and or purpose statements of the ministry membership in conducting the business of this ministry. Speak with "one voice" as a Board of Trustees honoring the authority held only as a group and not as individual Trustees.
- b) Be conversant with bylaws, articles of incorporation, establish policy for the operation of Unity Renaissance, and function in alignment with these documents/policies.
- c) Be faithful in attendance at weekly services as well as Board, Annual membership, and special meetings of Unity Renaissance. Be faithful in attendance of Board meetings, Board retreats, and Board trainings.
- d) Determine the business needs of this ministry. Plan, prioritize, and authorize payment of funds for those purposes in alignment with the Unity Renaissance annual budget.

- e) Provide for the administration, care, and upkeep of the real and personal property of Unity Renaissance.
- f) Make decisions regarding the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to Unity Renaissance provided that all decisions concerning the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property exceeding \$25,000 dollars and other expenditures exceeding \$50,000 in the aggregate, shall be presented to the membership at a properly constituted membership meeting for final approval.
- g) Employ an ordained or licensed Unity minister(s) through cooperation with the employment procedures of the Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM). Provide the Senior Minister with an accurate job description, contract of hire, and a clear understanding of accountabilities. If the Senior Minister (or co-ministers) position becomes vacant, the board shall notify the UWM Member Support Team within five to seven (5-7) days. During times when a Senior Minister is not employed or available, the Board of Trustees will take on the responsibilities of the Senior Minister (see Article VII, Section 2A).
- h) When conflict arises between the individual Board members or between the Board and the senior minister (or co-ministers), Unity Renaissance shall seek to reconcile differences and immediately notify the UWM Member Support Team for help with procedures and to provide guidance and consultation. After a ministry and its Senior Minister (or co-ministers) have sought to reconcile differences and cooperated with the procedures and guidance of UWM, the Board of Trustees may terminate the employment of a Senior Minister (or co-ministers) by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote (excluding the minister).
- i) As recommended by the Senior Minister (or co-ministers), determine staff positions, including associate and assistant ministers, and authorize compensation through the Annual Budget process (this includes specific amounts of compensation for each position – full time salary and part time hourly).
- j) Establish the fiscal year as the calendar year unless the Board finds a compelling reason to adopt a non-calendar fiscal year.
- k) Adopt an annual income and expense budget approved by a majority vote of the Voting Board of Trustees and present to the membership at the Annual Membership meeting. Function within the parameters of the approved budget. Anytime an approved budget line item requires a change or amendment, the Board must vote to update the budget line item to meet the new proposed expenditure for the year.
- l) Authorize annual reviews or periodic audits of the finances of Unity Renaissance which shall be conducted by an outside auditor approved by the Board.
- m) Ensure accounting records are current and properly entered and maintained for all aspects of Unity Renaissance. Employ a qualified bookkeeper or accountant for this purpose.
- n) Identify and initiate a Board of Trustee approved yearly membership renewal process (electronic and manual). Keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of members and former members.
- o) Fill the unexpired term of any Board of Trustee member (Voting and Non-Voting) promptly and ensure any new Board members meet all Board qualifications.
- p) Elect officers of the Board of Trustees and their successors to fill any unexpired term when necessary.

- q) Create Board committees as needed related to Board functions, tasks, projects, based on the roles and responsibilities of the Board. Board Committees report to the Board of Trustees to provide clarity and information in support of the Board functions, while Ministry Teams report to the Senior Minister for the smooth functioning and day-to-day functioning of Unity Renaissance.
- r) Advise the President of the Board on appointments to such Board committees who have the time, skills, and disposition to serve on such Board committees.
- s) Promptly seek UWM Member Support assistance in the event of a dispute affecting the ministry.
- t) Attend and actively participate in annual and ongoing Board education programs and training.
- u) Consider issues brought to their attention by the Minister(s) or members of the Board, having said issues acknowledged by the Minister(s) or Board of Trustees.
- v) Keep or cause to be kept a background check on all staff and volunteers directly involved with the children's programs, individuals handling funds, and current/potential Board members. Update or cause to update all background checks at least every three years (see Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure on Background Checks).
- w) Keep or cause to be kept accurate records of financial and tangible gifts to Unity Renaissance in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations; acknowledge in writing contributions in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.
- x) Issue or cause to be issued necessary 1099 and W-2 forms in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.
- y) Secure insurance covering the building, grounds, and other properties, also Worker's Compensation insurance and liability insurance for all Board of Trustee members, minister(s), and either a fidelity bond or theft and dishonesty insurance for all persons who handle money.
- z) Take such other actions as may be deemed necessary for the best interests of Unity Renaissance.
- aa) Send or cause to be sent the Annual Ministry Report (AMR) to UWM.
- bb) Ensure all staff ministers send or cause to be sent their annual Credentialed Leader Report (CLR) to UWM.
- cc) Ensure all staff ministers cause their fellow staff ministers and Licensed Unity Teachers from this ministry to send or cause to be sent their annual Credentialed Leader Report (CLR) to UWM.
- dd) If the ministry employs a spiritual leader under special dispensation, the Board will ensure the spiritual leader sends or causes to be sent their 6-month SD renewal report to UWM.

## **2. Qualifications of the Voting Trustees**

Any person elected to the Voting Board of Trustees must be an active member of Unity Renaissance at the time of nomination. He/She shall be a person who:

- a) Desires to serve on the Board of Trustees as a Voting member.
- b) Endeavors to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of Love and Truth as taught by Unity.
- c) Furthers the work of Unity Renaissance through active interest, love and support.
- d) Is a sincere and continuing student of Unity, conversant with its teachings and has completed all required membership classes.
- e) Shall have attended a minimum of one (1) Board Meeting and one (1) Financial Committee meeting prior submission of a Board application.
- f) Has two (2) consecutive years of local membership to include leadership positions, attendance in classes, and/or other volunteer service immediately prior submitting his/her Board Application, along with completing a background check that shows the member is in good standing within the community.
- g) Is willing and committed during his/her term on the Board to serve as a Board Officer (Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, President) for whichever office he/she is elected by the members of the board.

## **B. Non-Voting Board of Trustees**

### **1. Non-Voting Board of Trustee Roles and Responsibilities**

- a) Assist the Senior Minister (co-ministers) in providing spiritual support to the congregation.
- b) Serve as advisor to the Voting Board of Trustees and the Minister or Co-Minister(s) providing feedback and ideas obtained through observation of church activities and interaction with members of the congregation.
- c) Attend a minimum of six (6) regularly scheduled Board meetings each year.
- d) Uphold the Statement of Purpose of Unity Renaissance.
- e) Be faithful in attendance at services and church sponsored functions.
- f) Effect the purposes of conveyances, etc. to comply with the Code of Virginia, Title 57, Chapter 2, and Section 57-8 relating to Unity Renaissance.

### **2. Qualifications of the Non-Voting Trustees**

Any person nominated by the Voting Board of Trustees as Non-voting Trustee must have been a local member of Unity Renaissance for two or more consecutive years. He/she shall be a person who:

- a) Exemplifies the spirit and teachings of Unity Renaissance and serves as a role model.
- b) Has a strong knowledge and interest in the ethical considerations of financial matters.
- c) Desires to serve as a Non-Voting Board of Trustee member.

- d) Endeavors to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of Love and Truth as taught by Unity. Has two (2) consecutive years of local membership to include leadership positions, attendance in classes, and/or other volunteer service immediately prior submitting their Board Application, along with completing a background check that shows the member is in good standing within the community.
- e) Has demonstrated an interest in advancing his/her knowledge of Unity principles and practice by attending Unity class(es) or conferences, and workshop(s).
- f) Furthers the work of Unity Renaissance through his/her active interest, involvement and support.
- g) Can provide support to individual/s of the Church in their time of need or crisis through prayer, personal interaction, or visitation.

**B. Vacancy**

Should a vacancy occur in the office of a Non-voting Trustee during their term, the Voting Board of Trustees shall appoint a new Non-Voting Trustee to complete the remaining term.

**Section 11. Nomination and Election**

**A. Nominating Council**

**1. Qualifications**

- a) Prospective members of the Nominating Council shall have been local members of Unity Renaissance for more than two consecutive years.
- b) Has demonstrated an interest in advancing his/her knowledge of Unity principles and practice by attending Unity classes or conferences, and workshop(s).

**2. Selection**

At the Unity Renaissance Annual Membership meeting, a Nominating Council shall be selected to generate qualified Board of Trustee nominations for the next year. Three (3) members shall be selected to serve over the coming year, with the Senior Minister (co-ministers) and one member from the Voting Board of Trustees. Nomination Council members shall be local members of Unity Renaissance and have more than two (2) years of consecutive membership as a member at Unity Renaissance.

- a) At the annual membership meeting, the membership shall select three (3) members to serve on the Nominating Council for the following year's election. Only two (2) primary members are required for the Nomination Council, with the third member selected as additional member or backup in case one of the members are unable to fulfill the duties.
- b) The Board shall elect one of its Trustees to serve on the Nominating Committee as the board liaison, along with the Senior Minister (co-ministers).
- c) The Nominating Council shall select its Chairperson from one of the congregational elected members.
- d) In the event of an interim Board is required due to membership voting out the current Board of Trustees, the Nominating Council shall complete its selection process within thirty (30) days from the establishment of the interim Board.



### **3. Duties and Responsibilities**

The Nominating Council shall initiate a search for a minimum of one (1) qualified candidate per opening for nomination as a member of the Board of Trustees. A standardized application and vetting process shall be used consistently for all potential Board candidates including a background check. The Nomination Council will validate the application package with the Board and make it available to candidates starting prior to the fourth quarter of the year (normally in September). Completed application packages will be returned to the Nomination Council from the candidates. Completed packages are to be handled as a confidential document(s). The Nomination Council shall validate the information submitted on the application package and review the results of the background investigation, submitting a slate of qualified candidates to the Board of Trustees.

#### **B. Nomination Procedure**

1. The Nomination Council shall meet immediately after selection at the Annual Meeting to determine the timeline and dates associated with the nomination and election process, to include all Board of Trustee and Financial Committee meeting dates. These dates shall be submitted to the church for inclusion on the church calendar.
2. The Council shall make an announcement to recruit possible Board candidates at each Unity Renaissance Community Forum throughout the year.
3. In August, the Council shall formalize the applications process. This involves establishing deadlines, updating the applications form and identifying the procedure for returning completed applications to the Council.
4. In September, the Council shall make available applications for nomination and publicize the application process throughout the local membership.
5. During the first Sunday in November, at each service, the President of the Board or a designee shall call for additional nominations from the floor then close the nominations as explained below.
  - a) Read Bylaws (Article VI, Section 9A, Paragraph 2) to the Members present; and Call for any additional nominations from the floor, stating that this will be the final call for nominations from the floor.
  - b) Following Robert's Rules, accept the nomination of any qualified member and ask the nominee to accept or decline the nomination. If the nominee is not present, the nomination will be accepted temporarily, and the meeting will continue.
  - c) Close the nominations from the floor once there are no further nominations from the floor.
6. The Nominating Council shall contact any "temporary" nominees after the meeting and before the applications deadline to ask the nominee to accept or decline the nomination. They shall receive all completed applications by the last business day in December and generate a slate of candidates. They will announce the slate at the normal congregation services during the first Sunday in January.
7. The Nomination Council shall arrange Meet & Greet functions for members to meet the candidates during Sundays in January/February before the Annual Membership meeting.

### **C. Election of Voting Board Trustee Candidates**

The election of Voting Board of Trustees shall take place during the Annual Membership Meeting.

1. The two nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to full three (3) year terms.
2. Should a tiebreaker be required, an immediate vote of the members present will be taken, deciding the tie.
3. In the case of an un-expired Board of Trustee term, the candidates(s) receiving the next highest number of votes will be elected to the longest unexpired term(s).
4. Voting Trustees shall assume their respective offices at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees following the Annual Membership Meeting.
5. Voting Trustees whose terms have expired shall serve an additional two months as Voting members of the Board to provide continuity during the transition period.

### **Section 12. Removal of Board of Trustees Members**

#### **A. Removal from the Board of Trustees**

Any Voting or Non-Voting Board of Trustee may resign at any time.

#### **B. Removal from the Board of Trustees**

Any Voting or Non-Voting Board member may be removed by a 2/3s vote of the other Voting Board members. Board members may be removed due to unexcused absences from three (3) successive regular Board meetings, failure to fulfill the duties of the office, failure to uphold the Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, Social Media Policy, and other Unity Renaissance policies, or disruptive or unethical behavior.

### **Section 13. Vacancies**

- A. Should one or two vacancies occur among the elected members of the Voting Board of Trustees, the Board shall select qualified replacements to fill the position. A majority vote by the Board shall be necessary for appointment. The term of service for any replacement shall expire on the date of the next annual meeting. Only persons meeting the nomination qualifications may be considered as replacements.
- B. Should more than two vacancies occur simultaneously among the elected members of the Voting Board of Trustees or should the total number of Trustees fall below a quorum of existing elected Board members [this includes the minister], two Special Membership meetings will be called.
  1. The first meeting will occur within thirty [30] days of the vacating member's last day of service. The purpose of this meeting shall be:
    - a) To elect interim Board members (normally four (4) Voting Board members).
    - b) To constitute or reconstitute the Nominating Council.

- c) To set the date for a second meeting. The second Special Membership meeting will be held no later than seventy-five (75) days after the first meeting.
- C. The Nominating Council shall complete their search for Board nominees that will replace interim Board members. This shall normally be accomplished within thirty [30] days of the first Special Membership meeting.
  - 1. The results of their work shall generate a slate of potential new Voting Board members. This slate shall be emailed, posted to the Unity Renaissance website and mailed to members that have previously requested mailing of annual / special membership meetings information to all members within forty-five [45] days of the second Special Membership meeting.
- D. The Board members will be elected at the second of these Special Membership meetings. If the regular Annual Meeting of Unity Renaissance should be scheduled in this time period, then the Board elections will be held at the regular Annual Meeting.
- E. Election Procedure. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes will fill the longest unexpired term, the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes receives the next longest term. This procedure is followed until all vacancies are filled.

#### **Section 14. Board of Trustees Officers**

The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be President, Vice President, two (2) Secretaries and two (2) Treasurers. All officers will be elected in a manner determined by the Board at the first Board meeting after the annual meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose of electing officers. Each officer is elected for one year and may be re-elected.

#### **Section 15. Duties of Officers**

##### **A. President**

The President shall preside at all Board of Trustee meetings, preside at all Membership meetings, appoint members of Board committees related to Board functions (except the Nominating Committee) with the advice of the Board and Minister (co-ministers) – may designate a Presiding Officer as necessary for meetings (normally the Board Vice President). Serve as an ex officio member of all Board committees except the Nominating Committee, ensure an audit of the Treasurer's books and any other financial records is conducted annually and sign such papers and documents upon proper authorization as may be necessary. Mentor the incoming President into the duties and responsibilities of the office.

##### **B. Vice President**

The Vice President shall assist the President in the performance of that officer's duties, perform all the duties of the President of the Board in the absence of the President, and succeed to the office of President in case the office of the President becomes vacant. In such a case, a new Vice President shall be elected from among the remaining Board of Trustees to fill the remainder of the unexpired term. Be responsible for collaborating with the Senior Minister in the planning of Board orientations, retreats, and workshops. Serve as the Chairperson of the Membership Renewal Committee and designate an assistant to aid in the function of this office.

### **C. Secretary**

Two Secretaries shall be elected by the Board. The Secretaries shall keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the minutes of all Board and Membership meetings, hold in custody or cause for the safe keeping of and be responsible for all reports, contracts, and other legal papers, keep the meeting minute books at the principal executive office of the ministry at all times or in such other depository as prescribed by the Board, be a signatory to any legally required documents which the state or local government determine necessary, attend to all official business as directed by the Board, keep or cause to be kept up-to-date Membership lists, and keep or cause to be kept a record of the length of term for each active Board member.

### **D. Treasurer**

Two Treasurers shall be elected by the Board. The Treasurers shall be the custodian of all funds belonging to Unity Renaissance, payout or cause to be paid out funds authorized by the Board, see that all expenditures are evidenced by proper receipts and vouchers, keep or cause to be kept a record of all financial transactions, submit comprehensive monthly financial reports at each regular Board meeting to be reviewed and understood by fellow Board members, submit a financial report covering the last complete fiscal year, be the Chairperson (one of the Treasurers) for the Financial Committee and appoint members that can support financial decisions at Unity Renaissance, using the Financial Committee and with the Senior Minister (co-ministers), generate a budget for the upcoming year to be reviewed by the Membership at the Annual Membership meeting, with assistance of the Finance Committee, develop and maintain oversight of Unity Renaissance's financial investments, mortgage of properties and any other significant contributions that have monetary value, and account or cause to be accounted for by the appointment of qualified persons all funds received being responsible to assure that all such funds are deposited in accounts authorized by the Board. When counting funds, responsible to ensure at least two (2) people are present and duplicate the counting process for accuracy. The Treasurers and all counters are required to pass background checks for the faithful performance of his or her duties as the ministry policy may require.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Administration, Management and Leadership**

#### **Section 1. Administration**

The administration of Unity Renaissance shall be vested in the Senior Minister (co-ministers) and the Board of Trustees elected from the membership. The governance of Unity Renaissance shall be vested in the Board of Trustees, which is elected by and answerable to the membership, with the spiritual leadership vested in the Senior Minister (co-ministers), who is answerable to the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

## **Section 2. Minister(s)**

### **A. Senior Minister (Co-Ministers)**

The Senior Minister (co-ministers) shall be duly licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) or someone serving under special dispensation from UWM.

#### **1. Senior Minister (Co-Minister) Qualifications**

The Senior Minister (co-ministers) at Unity Renaissance shall agree to abide by the UWM Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, Social Media Policy, UWM Membership Model Policy, and additional policies and procedures of the ministry.

#### **2. Duties**

As the spiritual leader(s) of Unity Renaissance, the Senior Minister (co-ministers) will be responsible for the scheduling, conduct, and content of services, classes, and all other activities that further the purpose of Unity Renaissance. The Senior Minister (co-ministers) shall:

- a) Be responsible for the complete functioning of Unity Renaissance, including the hiring and termination of all employees including associate or assistant ministers. Provide to the Board an accounting of compensation for all employees and if changes in staffing are necessary, both paid and volunteers, a report to the Board on implementation prior to any final action is required.
- b) Execute the day to day matters of the Unity Renaissance and remain within the approved Board budget. Financial proposals and items that exceed the line item budget must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.
- c) Be and serve as voting member(s) of the Board of Trustees on all matters except their own employment, or that of their successor(s). Inform the Board and membership of the policies, directions, activities and services provided by the UWM and UWM Eastern Region.
- d) Serve as ex officio member(s) of all ministry teams.
- e) Be responsible for creating specific ministry teams related to these duties; and appoint the members of these ministry teams (Adult Education Team, Ushers & Greeters Team, Congregant Care Team, Youth and Family Team, etc.). Ministry teams report to the minister for the smooth functioning of the ministry.
- f) Be responsible for promptly seeking UWM Member Support Team assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry, including other credentialed Unity leaders.
- g) Supervises the implementation of the Policies and Procedures as set by the Board.

### **3. Selection**

The Board of Trustees shall select the Senior Minister (or co-ministers) following the employment procedures for ministerial personnel of UWM following communication within five to seven (5-7) days of a leadership change with the UWM Member Support Team.

### **4. Compensation**

The compensation of the Senior Minister (or co-ministers) employed by Unity Renaissance shall be set by the Board of Trustees and be in alignment with the approved annual budget. A plan for regular ministerial and ministry evaluations shall be instituted by the Board of Trustees including minister compensation adjustments.

## **B. Associate and/or Assistant Ministers**

Associate and/or assistant minister(s) are hired by the Senior Minister (co-ministers) with the consent for the position to be funded by the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister (co-ministers) shall select the associate and/or assistant minister (or assistant co-ministers) following the employment procedures for ministerial personnel of UWM. These ministers' function with less responsibility than the Senior Minister (co-ministers) and report directly to the Senior Minister (co-ministers).

### **1. Qualifications**

Any associate and/or assistant minister shall agree to abide by the UWM Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, Social Media Policy, UWM Membership Model Policy, and additional policies of the ministry.

### **2. Duties**

The associate and/or assistant minister(s) shall perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities assigned to them by the Senior Minister (co-ministers).

### **3. Compensation**

To the extent funded by the Board, the compensation of the associate and/or assistant Minister(s) shall be fixed by the Senior Minister (co-ministers).

## **Section 3. Definitions**

### **A. A Unity Ministry**

A member ministry is a ministry recognized by UWM.

### **B. Senior Minister**

A Senior Minister is a Unity minister duly ordained, licensed, or serving under special dispensation by the Association of Unity Churches Inc. (d/b/a Unity Worldwide Ministries) or by Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966, who assumes the spiritual and administrative leadership role in a UWM member ministry. This leader oversees teaching, preaching, healing, counseling, praying, and all spiritual services and fellowship activities of the ministry. The Senior Minister shall also be responsible for overseeing the administration and operation of the ministry.

### **C. Co-Minister**

In shared partnership ministries, a co-minister is a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed by the Association of Unity Churches Inc. (d/b/a Unity Worldwide Ministries) or by Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966, or serving under special dispensation, who equally assumes the leadership role with another minister in a UWM member ministry.

### **D. Associate Minister**

In ministries with more than one minister, an associate minister may be equal in ability, but function with less responsibility than the Senior Minister. The associate minister reports directly to the Senior Minister, who determines the scope of the associate's responsibilities.

### **E. Assistant Minister**

The skills and/or experience of the assistant minister may be less than those of the senior minister. The assistant minister reports directly to the senior minister, who determines the scope of the assistant's responsibilities.

## **ARTICLE VIII Committees, Ministries, Teams and Councils**

### **Section 1. Committees**

- A.** Committees are established under the bylaws (such as the Finance Committee and the Membership Committee) or are appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees, (such as the Bylaws Committee and the Human Resource Committee) to serve the business of the Board as stated in Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.
- B.** Only active/voting members of Unity Renaissance will be considered as members for committees, with the Board designated lead of the committee selecting members for the committee.

### **Section 2. Ministries**

- A.** Ministries are created by the Senior Minister (co-Ministers) to support the mission and vision of Unity Renaissance.
- B.** All members of Unity Renaissance will be considered as members for ministries.

### **Section 3. Teams**

- A.** Teams may be created by members of the congregation as social/affinity groups. Teams may also be sub-units within a Ministry (created as outlined above). All Teams will be sanctioned by and be overseen by the Senior Minister.
- B.** All members of Unity Renaissance will be considered as members for teams.

## **Section 4. Councils**

- A.** Councils are created by the voting membership to serve the needs of the membership (such as the Nominating Council and the Evolutionary Council).
- B.** Only local, adult members of Unity Renaissance will be considered as members for Councils.

## **ARTICLE IX Dissolution**

In the event that Unity Renaissance is dissolved, after the liquidation of property, real estate, and all assets, the ministry shall deliver all funds remaining after the payment of the debts of Unity Renaissance shall be delivered to UWM. Such funds shall be for the use and benefit of UWM as may be determined by the UWM Board of Trustees in alignment with current policies and procedures. Should UWM no longer exist, any remaining assets of Unity Renaissance after dissolution shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of Chesapeake, Virginia, the city/county in which the principal executive offices of the ministry are then located and shall be used exclusively for such purposes or distributed to such organization or organizations as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for purposes set out in Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended.

## **ARTICLE X Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the meetings of this corporation in all cases to which they apply and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the corporation may adopt.

## **ARTICLE XI Amendment of Bylaws**

Any amendment(s) to or general revision of these Bylaws may be considered by Unity Renaissance after review of the proposed amendment or revision by UWM. After such review, the proposed amendment(s) or revision of these Bylaws may be adopted at any annual or special membership meeting provided that notice has been emailed or mailed (request for postal mailing must be requested by the member) to all members at least ten (10) working days to the meeting at which they will be considered. When revision(s) to the Bylaws are proposed, the entire document, with notations of changes, will be made available for membership viewing and posted to the Unity Renaissance website, and will be mailed out to a members only at their request. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the members present (in person and electronically) and voting will be necessary to adopt any amendment(s) to or general revision of these Bylaws. These Bylaws fully supersede all previous Bylaws adopted by Unity Renaissance. The Unity Renaissance Policy and Procedure Manual will further define the working relationships within the church structure and are to be used to supplement the Bylaws.



If the Commonwealth of Virginia requires the Unity Renaissance Board of Trustees approval prior to adoption of the amendments or general revision of the Bylaws, the Board of Trustees will ratify the changes by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of the Board members present and voting at the first meeting of the Board following the membership meeting vote.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Attest:**

These Bylaws, reviewed and approved by Unity Worldwide Ministries, and adopted by the membership at the membership meeting on May 5, 2024, supersede all previous Bylaws adopted by Unity Renaissance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minister

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date