BYLAWS FOR UNITY OF SAVANNAH

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UNITY OF SAVANNAH BY-LAWS

January 2014

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this association shall be Unity Church of Savannah

ARTICLE II - Purpose

Section 1. Statement of Purpose. The purpose of the Unity Church of Savannah, a state of Georgia corporation, is to teach the universal principles of Truth, as taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ and interpreted by Unity and Unity Worldwide Ministries, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the state of Georgia with headquarters at Lee's Summit, Missouri, hereinafter referred to as Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM).

Section 2. Accomplishment of Purpose. In the accomplishment of this purpose, Unity Church of Savannah shall endeavor to conduct services of worship and classes of instruction and to demonstrate the principles of Truth by using them in the operation of the ministry and to adopt other means that in the judgment of the minister will further the principles of practical Christianity among people everywhere.

Section 3. Unity Worldwide Ministries. Unity Church of Savannah shall be a vital part of the worldwide Unity movement and a member of Unity Worldwide Ministries. Any member of this ministry may call upon the resources and support of the UWM through its senior minister or co-ministers, Board of Trustees, staff, or through direct communication with UWM.

In the spirit of cooperation, the operation and conduct of this ministry shall comply with the regulations and policies of UWM as outlined in UWM Bylaws and these Bylaws of the Unity Church of Savannah, insofar as neither conflicts with the laws of the State of Georgia.

A. **Participation**. This ministry may have its voice heard and its wishes expressed in the membership meetings of UWM, and its members may participate in workshops, seminars, and classes designed to encourage and foster their spiritual development and that of the ministry.

B. **Resources.** This ministry can benefit from its membership in UWM and its corresponding region through direct support, materials, and coaching regarding organization, finances, music, adult and youth education, church growth programs, ethics compliance, and other topics related to church function.

C. **Leadership.** This ministry shall have as its leader an ordained or licensed Unity minister(s) approved for ministry employment by UWM or a person serving under special dispensation approved by UWM. For the purpose of these bylaws, the term "minister" shall include a person serving under special dispensation of UWM.

D. **Teaching.** The principles of practical Christianity shall be taught through this ministry using methods, textbooks, literature, and other materials, including those approved by UWM.

E. **Mailings.** Copies of appropriate printed matter mailed by this ministry to its membership shall be sent to the offices of UWM.

F. **Reports.** The ministry shall make annual financial reports to UWM as required.

ARTICLE III - Office and Official Records

Section 1. Principal Office. The Board of Trustees will fix the principal executive office of the corporation. Said office shall be in the County of Chatham, State of Georgia, or at such other place within the State of Georgia as the Board of Trustees hereafter shall designate. The Corporation may also have offices at such other place or places, as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate. *[NOTE: Governments commonly require designation of the principal office of a corporation, at which legal service can be made.]*

Section 2. Official Records. Records of membership, finances, donation, corporate minutes, and other records required by law or as designated by the Board of Trustees shall be maintained at the principal office of the corporation. Confidential documents are available only for use by the minister(s), board members, or designated professional staff. Other documents are available to active members upon request. Corporate renewal forms will be filed annually, as required by the State of Georgia.

ARTICLE IV - Members

Section 1. Qualifications. A member of Unity Church of Savannah will endeavor to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity and further the work of this ministry through active interest, love, and support.

Section 2. New Member Procedures. Anyone desiring membership in Unity Church of Savannah will attend a "New Member Orientation" class and then file an application for membership with the ministry office. All staff ministers and licensed Unity teachers are considered members of this ministry. Individuals under the age of 16 may apply for a non-voting Junior Membership by following the same procedure**.** Anyone having a membership at another New Thought Church does not have to attend a New Member Orientation class.

Section 3. Classes of Members. There shall be two classes of members of this ministry: active and inactive. Active members have full membership rights and may participate and vote in any membership meeting.

A. **Active Membership.**

1. **New Members.** After acceptance as a new member, each member shall have voting rights at all membership meetings up through and including the next regularly scheduled annual membership meeting after joining the church.
2. **Existing Members** To retain active membership rights, each member must indicate a desire to remain an active member by completing and returning to the church a yearly membership renewal card or such document as approved by the Board of Trustees. Active members may serve on the Board of Trustees and /or vote at any membership meeting.

B. **Reinstatement of Inactive Membership.**

1. **Reinstatement within two years.** If a member who has become inactive wishes to return to active status within the first two years after becoming an inactive member, such a member who meets membership qualifications will be reinstated.

2. **Reinstatement after two years.** If a member has been inactive for two years or more and desires to become an active member again, such a member must reapply for active membership in the same manner required of new members.

C. **Removal of Membership for Cause.** The Board of Trustees may remove a member for cause. Prior to

any vote concerning removal, the member in question must be notified by certified mail (or its equivalent) at least ten (10) days prior to the Board of Trustees meeting of the changes that may lead to removal of membership and thereafter be given an opportunity for a hearing before the Board. A 2/3rds vote by the Board shall be required for removal of membership provided that the senior minister or co-ministers are in agreement with this action.

Section 4. Powers of Active Members. Each active member of the Unity Church of Savannah shall have the following powers:

A. To vote at any membership meeting at which the member is present;

B. Serve on ministry teams if selected; speak in debate at any membership meeting according to the rules provided for debate;

C. Offer suggestions to the minister(s) or Board of Trustees as may seem advisable for the good of this ministry;

D. Contact UWM regional representative or UWM directly for guidance, support, or information on available resources; and

E. Participate in all activities and programs of the ministry.

ARTICLE V - Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meetings. There shall be one annual membership meeting each year.

A. Date and Location of Annual Meeting. The annual membership meeting shall be held at the principal executive office of the ministry on the **4th Sunday in January** at a time established by agreement between the senior minister or co-ministers and the Board of Trustees.

B. Notice. Written notice stating the date, time, and place of the annual meeting will be mailed to all active members at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. The postmark will serve as verification that written notice was given to the membership in accordance with this section.

C. Quorum. Those active members present will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any annual membership meeting.

D. Presiding Officer. The President of the Board of Trustees (or alternative as established by the Board) shall serve as the presiding officer of the annual membership meeting.

E. Participation. The right to speak in debate, make motions, and vote during annual meetings shall be restricted to those active members present. The right of other persons to speak during membership meetings may be extended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Association representatives have a right to speak when the senior minister or co-ministers, the Board of Trustees, or any member has invited them.

F. Voting. Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, a majority vote of the active members present and voting will be necessary for approval or disapproval of the action being voted upon. Proxy, absentee, or electronic (Internet, email, fax, etc.) voting is not allowed.

G. Power and Authority. Annual membership meetings shall have the power and authority to do all of the following:

1. Elect members to the Board of Trustees;
2. Approve proposed amendments to these bylaws;
3. Approve by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote any expenditure regarding the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry that exceeds twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) or 25% of the previous year's income, which ever is greater;
4. Elect a member and an alternate, to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team;
5. Override any action of the Board of Trustees provided that notice of the action to be voted upon is submitted to all active members in writing ten (10) days prior to the meeting and is approved by a 2/3rds vote;
6. Remove by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote any or all trustee(s) from the Board of Trustees; and
7. Vote on any matters officially brought to the attention of the membership.

H. Prayer. In any annual membership meeting, the Board President, minister(s), and UWM 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 President will provide a period of prayer and silence.

Section 2. Special Membership Meeting.

A. Requesting Special Meetings. Any time the affairs of this ministry warrant, a special membership meeting may be requested by the senior minister or co-ministers; a majority vote of the entire number of trustees currently serving on the Board of Trustees; or a petition signed by one-tenth (1/10th) of the active membership and submitted to the Board of Trustees.

B. Calling Special Meetings. Upon receiving proper request for a special membership meeting, the President of the Board of Trustees shall call the meeting on behalf of the requesting party within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request. The location, notice, 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 meeting shall be limited to the pre-stated purpose(s) given in the meeting notice.

ARTICLE VI – Board of Trustees

Section 1. Membership. The Board of Trustees shall be composed of the senior minister or co-ministers and no fewer than four (4) and no more than six (6) **other** trustees and one (1) alternate trustee elected from among the "active membership" of Unity Church of Savannah at the annual membership meeting.

Section 2. Term of Office. Elected trustees will hold office for three years, or until their successors have been elected and assume office. The alternate Trustee will be a non-voting member and will serve a term of one (1) year. Trustees elected at any annual membership meeting shall take office at the conclusion of the annual membership meeting at which they were elected. No elected trustee will serve more than **two consecutive terms** without an interval of one year between terms. **Any person who serves on the board more than half of a term shall be credited with having served a full term.**

Section 3. Prohibition of Service. The following persons are prohibited from serving on the Board of Trustees:

- any active licensed Unity teacher;
- relatives, significant others or household members of any board member or licensed Unity teacher;
- individuals receiving compensation from the ministry with the exception of the senior minister or co-ministers;

- relatives, significant others, or household members of any individual receiving compensation from the ministry.

Section 4. Regular Board Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees will be held at the principal executive offices of this ministry on a date to be decided upon by the Board of Trustees.

Section 5. Special Board Meetings. The President of the Board will call special meetings of the board if requested by the senior minister or co-ministers; if requested by two or more trustees; or if the President of the Board deems it necessary. Any request for a special board meeting shall be made in writing to the Board Secretary. All current board members, including the senior minister or co-ministers, shall be given notice of any special board meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. The attendance of any member of the board at the meeting shall serve as a waiver of this notice requirement.

Section 6. Quorum. A simple majority of the total number of trustees currently serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 7. Minister(s) Attendance. The senior minister or co-ministers has/have the right to attend all board meetings, with the exception of those meetings or portions thereof that pertain to determinations of the minister's salary and/or review of the ministers work record.

Section 8. 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 before 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 9. Duties and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. As representatives of the membership, the Board of Trustees shall:

A. Uphold the spiritual purpose of this ministry as stated in Article II, Section 2 of these bylaws;

B. Uphold the highest best interests of the membership in conducting the business of this ministry;

C. Be conversant with these bylaws and establish policy for the operation of this ministry;

D. Be faithful in attendance at services as well as board and membership meetings of this ministry;

E. Determine the business needs of this ministry and authorize payment of funds for those purposes;

F. Administer the real and personal property of this ministry;

G. Make decisions regarding the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property belonging to this ministry provided that all decisions concerning the sale, pledge, or proposed financing of real property exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) or 25% of the previous year's income, which ever is greater shall be presented to the membership at a properly constituted membership meeting for final approval;

H. Employ a licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) through cooperation with the employment management procedures of UWM of Unity Churches International;

I. 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;

J. As recommended by the senior minister or co-ministers, determine staff positions and authorize funds for their financial support;

K. Establish the dates for the beginning and ending of the fiscal year;

L. Cause to be prepared each year a complete financial statement with disclosures that will set forth the financial conditions and operations of the ministry;

M. Secure a fidelity bond or theft and dishonesty insurance for persons handling church funds;

N. Fill the unexpired term of any trustee;

O. Elect officers of the board and their successors to fill any unexpired term when necessary;

P. Create such ministry teams as needed to support the functions and responsibilities of the board;

Q. Advise the President of the Board on appointments to ministry teams;

R. Seek Association assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry;

S. Attend and actively participate in ongoing board education programs;

T. Consider other issues brought to their attention by the minister or members of the board;

U. Keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of active and inactive members;

V. Keep or cause to be kept accurate records of gifts to the ministry in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;

W. Issue or cause to be issued necessary 1099 and W-2 forms in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;

X. Acknowledge in writing contributions in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations;

Y. Secure liability insurance for all Board of Trustee members and minister(s); and

Z. Take such other actions as may be deemed necessary for the best interests of this ministry.

Section 10. Nomination and Election.

A. Qualifications. To be eligible to be elected to the Board of Trustees, a person must be an active member of the Unity Church of Savannah and must have established a pattern of attendance and systematic giving. Finally, such candidates must have been active members for at least one year prior to any annual meeting election. In addition, candidates for election shall endeavor to live in accord with the Jesus Christ principles of love and truth as taught by Unity; work to further the purposes of this ministry through active interest, love, and support; be a sincere and continuing student of Unity always remaining conversant with its teachings; and shall have demonstrated leadership capabilities.

B. Nominating Ministry Team.

1. **Selection.** A Nominating Ministry Team will be formed at least three months prior to the annual membership meeting. The ministry team will consist of the senior minister or co-ministers and three active members selected in the following manner:
2.
   a. At the annual membership meeting, the membership shall, from among the active membership of the ministry, select one of its active members as the Chairperson and an alternate to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team for the following year's election. In the event the person elected to serve becomes unavailable, the alternate shall serve as the Chairperson. If the alternate also becomes unavailable to serve, the board will elect a person from among the active members who is not a current member of the board to fill the vacancy.
   b. The board will elect one of its trustees to serve on the Nominating Ministry Team.
   c. In the event of an interim board, the Nominating Ministry Team shall complete its selection process within thirty (30) days from the establishment of the interim board.

2. **Duties and Responsibilities.** The Nominating Ministry Team will initiate a search for at least two qualified candidates for nomination as members of the Board of Trustees. The report of the Nominating Ministry Team will be sent to all active members at least ten (10) days prior to the annual membership meeting.

C. Nomination Procedure. The presiding officer of the annual membership meeting shall:

1. Read Article VI, Section 10A and 10D of these bylaws just prior to beginning the process of nomination and election;
2. Call upon the Chairperson of the Nominating Ministry Team to offer the ministry team's nominations; and

D. Election Procedure. The election shall be held at the annual meeting, and shall be by ballot if there are any partial terms to be filled or there are more than two nominees. The result of the vote shall be announced to the annual meeting. The two nominees receiving the largest number of votes will be elected to full three (3) year terms. The candidates receiving the next highest number of votes will be elected to the longest unexpired term.

Section 11. Removal from Office by the Board of Trustees. Any trustee may resign at any time. In addition any trustee may be removed by the Board of Trustees by a 2/3rds vote due to unexcused absences from three successive regular board meetings or because of a failure to fulfill the duties of the office.

Section 12. Vacancies. Should a vacancy occur among the elected members of the Board of Trustees, the board may select a qualified replacement to fill the position. A majority vote shall be necessary for election. The term of service for any replacement shall expire on the date of the next annual meeting.

Section 13. Board of Trustees Officers. The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer. All officers will be selected 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 selecting officers. The term of office shall be one year or until successors are elected.

Section 14. Duties of Officers.

A. President. The president shall preside at all Board of Trustees meetings; preside at all membership meetings; appoint members of ministry teams with the advice of the board; serve as an ex officio member of all ministry teams except the Nominating Ministry Team; sign such papers and documents upon proper authorization as may be necessary; and be responsible for the planning of board orientation,

retreats, and workshops.

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 will be elected from among the remaining trustees to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

C. **Secretary.** The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate record of the minutes of all board and membership meetings; hold in custody and be responsible for all reports, contracts, other legal papers, and the meeting minute books which will be kept at the principal executive office of the ministry at all times or in such other depository as prescribed by the board; attend to all official business as directed by the board; keep or cause to be kept accurate active and inactive membership lists; and send or cause to be sent yearly membership renewal cards to all active or inactive members.

D. **Treasurer.** The treasurer shall be custodian of all funds belonging to this ministry; pay out or cause to be paid out funds authorized by the board; keep, or cause to be kept, a record of all financial transactions; submit a monthly financial report at each regular board meeting; submit a financial report covering the last complete fiscal year to the annual membership meeting; and account for, or cause to be accounted for by the appointment of qualified persons, all funds received being responsible to assure that they are deposited in accounts authorized by the board. When counting ministry funds there should be at least two (2) persons present.

ARTICLE VII – Administration, Management and Leadership

Section 1. Administration. The administration of Unity Church of Savannah shall be vested in the senior minister or co-ministers as the administrative director(s), and the Board of Trustees elected from the membership.

Section 2. Minister(s).

A. **Senior Minister or Co-ministers.** The senior minister or co-ministers will be duly licensed or ordained Unity minister(s).

1. **Duties.** As the spiritual leader(s) of this ministry, the senior minister or co-ministers will be responsible for the scheduling, conduct, and content of services, classes, and all other activities that further the purpose of this ministry. As administrative director(s), the minister(s) shall:

    a. Be responsible for the complete functioning of this ministry, including the hiring and termination of all employees including associate or assistant ministers;
    b. Serve as voting member(s) of the Board of Trustees on all matters except their own employment, or that of their successor(s);
    c. Create ministry teams related to these duties;
    d. Appoint the members of such ministry teams;
    e. Serve as ex officio members of all ministry teams;
    f. Be responsible for seeking UWM's assistance in the event of a dispute adversely affecting the ministry.

2. **Selection.** The Board of Trustees shall select the senior minister or co-ministers following the employment procedures for ministerial personnel of UWM.

3. **Compensation.** The Board of Trustees shall set the compensation of the senior minister or co-

ministers employed by this ministry.

B. **Associate and/or Assistant Ministers.** Associate and/or assistant minister(s) will be duly licensed or ordained Unity minister(s) or a Licensed Unity Teacher who function(s) with less responsibility than the senior minister or co-ministers.

1. **Duties.** The associate and/or assistant minister(s) will perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities assigned them by the senior or co-ministers.

2. **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 or co-minister(s).

Section 3. Definitions.

A. **A Unity Ministry.** A member ministry in UWM of Unity Churches International recognized by UWM will have a duly ordained or licensed Unity minister, or a person serving under special dispensation as its Spiritual Leader. (For additional criteria, contact UWM of Unity Churches International office.)

B. **Senior Minister.** A Unity minister duly ordained, licensed [or serving under special dispensation by UWM of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), who assumes the spiritual and administrative leadership role in a member ministry. This leader works in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the member ministry, and is to oversee the teaching, preaching (lesson), worship services, healing, counseling, prayer, administrative, and fellowship activities of the ministry.

C. **Co-Minister.** In shared partnership ministries, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed by UWM of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), who equally assumes the spiritual and administrative leadership role with another co-minister in a member ministry. These leaders work in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the member ministry, and oversee the teaching, preaching (lesson), worship services, healing, counseling, prayer, administrative, and fellowship activities of the ministry.

D. **Associate Minister.** In ministries with more than one minister, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed as a Licensed Unity Teacher by UWM of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), serving in a member ministry. The Associate Minister may be equal in ability, but functions with less responsibility than the Senior Minister. The Associate Minister reports to the Senior Minister, who determines the scope of the associate's responsibilities.

E. **Assistant Minister.** In ministries with more than one minister, a Unity minister duly ordained or licensed as a Licensed Unity Teacher by UWM of Unity Churches International (or Unity School of Christianity prior to July 1, 1966), serving in a member ministry. The skills and/or experience of the Assistant Minister may be less than those of the Senior Minister. The assistant may be placed in a specialized service area of the ministry, i.e., pastoral visitation, or administrative support. The skills of the assistant are, therefore allowed to develop for a more comprehensive range of ministry service of the assistant, and the ministry.

ARTICLE VIII - Ministry Teams

With the exception of the Nominating Ministry Team, ministry teams may be appointed by the President of the Board or the senior minister or co-ministers for their respective areas of responsibility.

Article IX – Dissolution

Should there be a plan to dissolve, or should this corporation be dissolved, the remaining members of the Board of Trustees will manage the disposition of all property and funds remaining after payment of the debts of this corporation. All property, other assets, and remaining funds of the corporation will be, upon decisions by the Board, disbursed in one of three ways:

1) For the payment of all debts.
2) For the use of any/all assets can be used for the benefit of another (one or more) religious groups or deserving charity in the greater Savannah, GA area.
3) Delivered to UWM of Unity Churches International, a nonprofit corporation organized **under** the laws of the State of Georgia, for religious and educational purposes.

The Board is expected to act in good faith with regards this responsibility. Given that obligation to the corporation is fulfilled, the Board will then have no financial liability to the corporation or the Church membership.

In the event of 3) above, such funds or property will be for the use and benefit of UWM as may be determined by the Board of Trustees of UWM, in alignment with current policies and procedures. Further, UWM will make available according to its current policies and procedures, funds for the reestablishment of a Unity ministry in Savannah, GA. Should UWM no longer exist, or the Board considers such action most prudent, any assets remaining of this corporation after dissolution will be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the County in which the principal executive offices of the corporation 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 5.01(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

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 are applicable 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 adopted at any annual or special membership meeting provided that written notice setting forth the exact wording of such proposed amendment(s) or general revision has been mailed to all active members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which they will be considered. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the active members present and voting will be necessary to adopt any amendment(s) to or general revision of these bylaws