



Constitution and Bylaws

**October 14, 2009 and January 13, 2010
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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The Evangelical Covenant Church is a communion of congregations gathered by God, united in Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey the great commandment and the great commission. It affirms its companionship in faith with other church bodies and all those who fear God and keep God's commandments.

The Evangelical Covenant Church adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Bible. It confesses that the Holy Scripture, the Old and the New Testament, is the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. It affirms the historic confessions of the Christian Church, particularly the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed, while emphasizing the sovereignty of the Word of God over all creedal interpretations.

In continuity with the renewal movements of historic Pietism, the Evangelical Covenant Church especially cherishes the dual emphasis on new birth and new life in Christ, believing that personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the foundation for our mission of evangelism and Christian nurture. Our common experience of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ continues to sustain the Evangelical Covenant Church as an interdependent body of believers that recognizes but transcends our theological differences.

The Evangelical Covenant Church celebrates two divinely ordained sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Recognizing the reality of freedom in Christ, and in conscious dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, we practice both the baptism of infants and believer baptism. The Evangelical Covenant Church embraces this freedom in Christ as a gift that preserves personal conviction, yet guards against an individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community.

The Evangelical Covenant Church has its roots in historical Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the biblical instruction of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and the great spiritual awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These influences, together with more recent North American renewal movements, continue to shape its development and distinctive spirit. The Evangelical Covenant Church is committed to reaching across boundaries of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, and status in the cultivation of communities of life and service.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of Centennial Covenant Church of Littleton, Colorado.

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be *Centennial Covenant Church of Littleton, Colorado*.

ARTICLE II AFFILIATION

The church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its Midwest Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the Covenant and its decisions and to support its program, policies, and institutions.

ARTICLE III CONFESSION OF FAITH

The church believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct.

ARTICLE IV MISSION

Centennial Covenant exists
to glorify God by following Jesus
on a shared journey of transformation
in his mission for our broken world.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the church is granted on application to those who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope, have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the total ministry of the church and to share its fellowship and obligations.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Financial Secretary, and a Treasurer.

ARTICLE VII GOVERNANCE

The authority of the government of this church is vested in its membership acting through duly called congregational meetings. The oversight, management, and administration of spiritual and business affairs are delegated by the congregation to appropriate leadership as delineated in the Bylaws. All elected leadership specified in the Bylaws shall be members of the church.

ARTICLE VIII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer and the church budget shall be submitted for action. Another Annual Meeting shall be held for election for offices.

Section 2. Other Congregational Meetings

Additional congregational meetings shall be held not less than semiannually. Items as required by the Constitution and By-laws shall be submitted for congregational action.

ARTICLE IX PROPERTY

In the event of schism within the church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, the title of all church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group which abides by this Constitution, as determined by the Executive Board of the Midwest Conference. In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Midwest Conference.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Amendments in harmony with this Constitution and not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in an Annual Meeting of the church, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding business meeting. Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the Midwest Conference Executive Board of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of membership is to covenant with other followers of Christ in cultivating a community of faith to carry out his mission for this church as stated in the Constitution, Article IV.

Section 2. Responsibilities

By the grace of God, every member shall make the following commitments:

- a) to seek personal growth in faith, hope, and love;
- b) to affirm the church's commitment to the authority of the Bible, and the freedom each member has to grow uniquely in an understanding and practice of faith;
- c) to share in the regular gatherings of the church;
- d) to serve within and outside the fellowship according to the gifts and guidance God gives;
- e) to support the overall ministries and mission of the church through prayer, and regular proportionate financial giving;
- f) to protect the unity of the church through mutual respect, truthfulness, love, and support of the church's leadership.

Section 3. Admission

- a) Membership in the church is granted to those who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope through the Holy Spirit, have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, promise to faithfully support the mission, ministries, and policies of the church, and to share in its fellowship and obligations.
- b) Upon completion of a membership class, persons desiring to apply for membership shall submit their application to the Council of Elders. Applicants shall meet with a committee appointed by the Council of Elders to give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Upon completion of such, the committee shall submit its recommendations on the applications to the Council of Elders who shall notify members of the church of the recommendations for approval by a majority of members present at a congregational business meeting. Any member objecting to or having concerns over the granting of membership to an applicant shall communicate in writing such objection or concern to the Council of Elders within 10 days after notification by the Council of Elders.
- c) Applicants who are received into membership of the church shall be welcomed at a worship service and make public confession of their Christian faith, as outlined in *The Covenant Book of Worship*.

Section 4. Inactive Members

- a) Any member who without reasonable excuse does not regularly participate in the church's gatherings and ministries for a period of one year shall become an "Inactive Member" and shall be notified in writing of this change in status. The membership of an Inactive Member who without reasonable excuse has not regularly participated for a second year may be addressed as a "negligent member" under Section 5a of this Article.
- b) An Inactive Member shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum for any business meeting of the membership, and shall not have the right to vote or to hold elected office.
- c) An Inactive Member may ask to receive communications from the church and, after having shown renewed interest, may request a return to status as an active member which may be granted by action of the Council of Elders.

Section 5. Discipline

- a) Negligent members. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for admonishing members who willfully neglect their responsibilities to the church or who err in doctrine or conduct.
- b) Erring members. Any member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. Any member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore the erring member. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Council of Elders in writing, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the member.
- c) After the above process has been completed, dismissal of a member remaining in gross error in doctrine or conduct may result by a two-thirds vote of all current Council of Elders members. Such action may be appealed within one year by the member to the congregation for consideration at the next congregational meeting.

Section 6. Withdrawal and Removal of Membership

- a) Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such request in writing to a Pastor or Council of Elders. Letters of transfer shall be issued by a Pastor if so requested, and the member is in good standing.
- b) The Council of Elders shall annually review the membership roster to determine inactivity. Those determined to have neglected their responsibilities may be approached under the process outlined in Section 5 of this article.

Section 7. Non-member "Friends"

Non-member parish "friends" shall be enrolled by the church as a part of its total constituency. The church and its Pastor shall serve them in all their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider this as their church home. They shall be kept informed of the activities of the church.

ARTICLE II COUNCIL OF ELDERS

Section 1. Purpose

The Council of Elders shall be authorized by the congregation to oversee and guide the church's life, health and mission according to God's Word and Spirit for His glory through the release of His gifts in His body.

Section 2. Qualifications

The office of Elder shall be open to any man or woman who is a member in good standing and meets the scriptural character qualifications for the office of Elder described in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3 as interpreted by the Evangelical Covenant Church. In addition, eligibility shall be based upon the person's active participation in the church by demonstrating spiritual maturity and gifts of ministry leadership for at least one year.

Section 3. Size, Composition, Election, and Tenure

- a) The Council of Elders shall consist of six (6) elected members, plus the Lead Pastor who is an ex-officio member.
- b) The Chair, Vice-Chair, and four at large members shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church.
- c) All Council of Elder members shall serve for terms of three (3) years in such manner that the terms of two members shall expire each year. Council members may succeed themselves only once. Any Elder who has served the term limit will be eligible for re-election after a lapse of one year.

Section 4. Quorum for Elder Meetings

- a) Five (5) members must be present for a vote: the Chair or Vice Chair (1), and four (4) from the remaining membership of the Council of Elders.
- b) Four (4) members must be present to conduct a meeting for discussion of church affairs: the Chair or Vice Chair (1) and three (3) from the remaining membership of the Council of Elders. Any vote must be tabled until such a time that a quorum of five (5) is present.

Section 5. Priority Responsibilities

- a) Follow Jesus as Head of the church (Acts 20:28a; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:12; Titus 1:5-8; 1 Peter 5:2-3)
 - Share life in Christ's presence as a community of believers.
 - Model living out of the church's Priority Callings, Shared Ministry Covenant and Covenant Affirmations.
- b) Discern God's desires and direction for the church (Acts 6:4; 15:2-6; 1 Cor. 3:6-11)
 - Give priority to abiding and listening prayer for guidance.
 - Lead discernment of the congregation's primary expressions of Christ's direction of the church including: Biblical Worldview, Mission, Shared Ministry Covenant, Priority Callings, their desired outcomes and faith projections.
- c) Guide the church's overall life and mission (Acts 6:4; 15:22-25; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:9; 1 Pet 5:2)
 - Articulate worldview guidelines and develop operational guiding policies.
 - Communicate with the congregation: regularly reporting discernments and decisions, and receiving feedback and counsel.
 - Advise Lead Pastor on Pastoral and Office Staffs' guidance and equipping of Ministry Teams.
 - Arrange for financial budget preparations through Ministry Teams and approve recommendations to Congregation.
- d) Equip the church as a body for its mission (Acts 6:3; Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - Delegate ministries aligned with Mission and Priority Callings to Church Staff and Ministry Teams.
 - Arrange for the congregation's call of Lead Pastor, identify roles and responsibilities, provide evaluation, advice and support, and arrange for coverage of ministries if unavailable.
 - Recommend candidates to the congregation for calls to other Pastoral Team positions.
 - Appoint short-term Committees needed for Council of Elder responsibilities.
 - Act as legal Trustees of the church and its properties, including delegation to Staff, Ministry Teams or Committees.
- e) Monitor and celebrate the church's overall ministries and mission (Acts 20:28b; Heb13:17)
 - Evaluate ministries according to tangible faith projections of desired outcomes to celebrate fruit and identify obstacles for ongoing discernment, guidance and equipping.

- Hold Lead Pastor accountable for Pastoral and Office Staffs' guidance and equipping of Ministry Teams in focused assessment of their health and ministries.
- f) Shepherd the church's participants (Acts 15:2-6; 20:28c; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2)
- Promote the caring for, discipling and equipping of individuals through the Pastoral Team and Ministry Teams.
 - Make recommendations for membership.
 - Exercise loving discipline of participants.
 - Mediate serious unresolved conflicts that impact the church body.

ARTICLE III OFFICERS

Section 1. Qualifications

- a) The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve as two of the six elected and voting Elders on the Council of Elders having met the qualifications as described in Article II, Section 2.
- b) The offices of Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall be open to any man or woman who is a member in good standing and meets the scriptural character qualifications for deacons described in I Timothy 3:8-15 as interpreted by the Evangelical Covenant Church. In addition, eligibility shall be based upon the person's active participation in the church by demonstrating spiritual maturity and gifts of ministry for at least one year.

Section 2. Duties

- a) The Chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Council of Elders, conferring with the Lead Pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings.
- b) The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair, and assume the duties of the Chair in his or her absence.
- c) The Secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the Council of Elders, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated to him or her. The secretary shall also be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.
- d) The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds committed to the church and shall make disbursements as authorized by the church or the Council of Elders. The Treasurer shall also present a written report of the receipts and expenditures as requested by the Council of Elders.
- e) The Financial Secretary shall receive, record, and deposit all funds contributed to the church, and submit a record to the church Treasurer, and, upon request, to the Council of Elders.

Section 3. Council of Elder Participation

- a) The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve as voting Elders on the Council of Elders.
- b) The Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall be non-voting advisory participants in meetings of the Council of Elders, attending as deemed necessary by these officers or the Elders.

Section 4. Election and Tenure

At the annual congregational business meeting:

- a) The Chair and Vice Chair shall be nominated from the current members of the Council of Elders, excluding the Lead Pastor. Eligible nominees, who can also include those elected at the Annual Congregational Business meeting, shall then be elected for these officer positions at that same meeting.
- b) The term for Chair or Vice Chair will be for three years if they are newly elected Elders, or until the completion of the current members' terms as Elders, which ever ends first.
- c) The Chair or Vice Chair shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.
- d) Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall be elected for terms of three years and shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.
- e) Any Officer who has served the term limit will be eligible for re-election after a lapse of one year.

Section 5. Removal and Discipline

Any church Officer or Elder may be removed from office prior to the expiration of his or her term as follows:

- a) may resign voluntarily;
- b) may be removed from office by two-thirds vote of the members represented and voting at a properly convened business meeting;
- c) shall be deemed by the Council of Elders to have vacated his or her office upon ceasing to be a member in good standing or if he or she moves from the vicinity and thereby can no longer serve effectively.

Section 6. Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the Council of Elders or church Officers caused by resignation, removal, death, disqualification, or other incapacity, may be temporarily filled by a majority vote of all Elders then in office, or may be left vacant until the next annual election. Each Elder or church Officer chosen to fill a vacancy shall hold office until the next election of Elders and church. For the next annual business meeting, the Nominating Committee shall nominate a candidate to fill the unexpired term. An Elder or church Officer elected to fill an unexpired term shall be eligible to repeat his or her term once.

ARTICLE IV MINISTRY TEAMS

Section 1. Purpose

Ministry Teams are two or more church participants commissioned by the Pastoral Team to serve in specific ministries by cultivating communal abiding in Christ for transformation, mutual encouragement, and development of gifts within the church's Covenant Affirmations, Mission, Priority Callings and Shared Ministry Covenant. Ministry Team participation is a primary way the church lives out its conviction that every believer is a minister and a path for individual to follow Christ into growth, community and service.

Section 2. Priority Responsibilities

a) Ministry Teams

- 1) Embrace and regularly review the church's Mission, Priority Callings and Shared Ministry Covenant as the guiding basis for all Ministry Teams in carrying out all their responsibilities.
- 2) Discern and carry out the Ministry Team's specific purpose and responsibilities.
- 3) Seek, invite and incorporate new Team members as God leads.
- 4) Cultivate Team members' transformation, connecting and ministry gifts.
- 5) Identify annual desired outcomes.
- 6) Regularly assess ministries.
- 7) Propose annual Team financial budget requests as guided by Council of Elders.
- 8) Support the ministries of the whole church and of other Ministry Teams.

b) Ministry Team Leaders

- 1) Be responsible for convening and guiding the Team for its purpose and responsibilities.
- 2) Cultivate a culture within the Team that affirms and practices the church's Covenant Affirmations, Mission, Priority Callings, and Shared Ministry Covenant.
- 3) Communicate desired outcomes, ministry assessments, budget requests, and needed resources with the Pastoral Team member designated to guide, equip and serve the Team.

Section 3. Qualifications

a) Ministry Team participation is open to any church member or non-member who 1) is committed to Christ and the whole church's Covenant Affirmations, Mission, Priority Callings, and Shared Ministry Covenant, 2) whose gifts to serve have been affirmed by a Pastor and the Team Leader, 3) and is willing to serve with the Team.

b) Ministry Team Leaders shall be affirmed for their role by the Pastoral Team through active participation in the church and demonstration of spiritual maturity and gifts of ministry leadership.

Section 4. Establishment, Accountability, Tenure

a) Along with people's ongoing ministries in every area of life, Ministry Teams shall be commissioned by the Pastoral Team identifying a qualified Team Leader and at least one other Team member for an existing or new ministry needing a team structure.

b) Each Ministry Team is accountable to the particular Pastoral Team member designated to guide, equip and serve the Team, in accordance with the Council of Elders' guidance of overall church ministries.

c) Ministry Teams and their Leaders shall serve for one year, and then be prayerfully assessed by the Pastoral Team for renewals or conclusions of ministry as a Team and/or a Leader.

ARTICLE V PASTORAL TEAM AND CHURCH STAFF

Section 1. Purpose

The Pastoral Team, led by the Lead Pastor, shall be authorized by the congregation, with accountability to the Council of Elders, to lead, guide and equip the church for carrying out its Mission and Priority Callings according to God's Word and Spirit for his glory through the release of his gifts in his body.

Section 2. Qualifications

a. Pastoral Team

All Pastoral Team members shall 1) meet the scriptural character qualifications for servant leadership as Elders as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3, as interpreted by the Evangelical Covenant Church, 2) commit themselves to the church's Covenant Affirmations, Mission, Priority Callings, and Shared Ministry Covenant, with a willingness to serve in harmony with the church's denominational heritage and shared ministries, and 3) evidence gifts, training, and experience aligned with each one's particular call to serve. There shall be no gender restrictions. A Pastor shall be a church member by virtue of being called to serve.

b. Lead Pastor

In addition to the qualifications for all Pastors, the Lead Pastor shall hold or pursue ordination in good standing with the Evangelical Covenant Church, and have met the initial requirements for the denomination's ministerial license.

Section 3. Lead Pastor's Priority Responsibilities

The Lead Pastor shall serve as a member of the Council of Elders and the leader of the Pastoral Team in its purpose of guiding and equipping the congregation for its Mission and Priority Callings. With accountability under Christ to the Council of Elders, the Lead Pastor shall carry out or delegate to other Pastoral Team members the following responsibilities, as well as more specific duties identified by the Council of Elders in the Lead Pastor's Ministry Description.

a) Follow Jesus as Head of the church (Acts 20:28a; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:12; Titus 1:5-8; 1 Peter 5:2-3)

- Share life in Christ's presence with the congregation, Council of Elders and Pastoral Team.
- Model living out of the church's Priority Callings, Shared Ministry Covenant and Covenant Affirmations.

b) Discern God's desires and direction for the church (Acts 6:4; 15:2-6; 1 Cor. 3:6-11)

- Give priority to abiding and listening prayer for God's guidance.
- With the Council of Elders, lead discernment of the congregation's health and direction of the church.
- Lead the Pastoral Team's discernment from God of the purposes, desired outcomes, and strategies for the particular Ministry Teams they guide and equip.

c) Guide the church's overall life and mission (Acts 6:4; 15:22-25; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:9; 1 Pet 5:2)

- Lead the Pastoral Team and Council of Elders in their biblical guidance of the congregation and its members for living out its Mission and Priority Callings from Christ.
- Serve as the Council of Elders' primary communicator with the Pastoral Team and Support Staff.
- Receive advice from the Council of Elders on Pastoral Team's guidance and equipping of the church's Ministry Teams.

d) Equip the church as a body for its mission (Acts 6:3; Ephesians 4:11-13)

- Cultivate the congregation's culture of shared biblical beliefs, vision and values, as the primary steward of the church's Covenant Affirmations, Mission, Priority Callings, and Shared Ministry Covenant.
- Empower the Pastoral Team and Council of Elders through vision casting, encouragement, relationship building, and training for a release of their gifts to guide and equip the congregation and other church leaders.
- Serve on the Nominating Committee to identify candidates for the Council of Elders, church Officers, and Nominating Committee.
- Represent the congregation and further its mission through participation in relationships and shared ministries with other pastoral leaders in the church's community, denomination and other mission partnerships.
- Make recommendations to the Council of Elders for the Congregation's call of Pastoral Team members.
- Arrange for the hiring, guidance, equipping and support of other Church staff members, in accordance with policies defined by the Council of Elders.

e) Monitor and Celebrate the church's overall ministries and mission

(Acts 20:28b; Heb. 13:17)

- Evaluate the Pastoral Team's individual and shared leadership ministries according to tangible faith projections of desired outcomes to celebrate fruit and identify obstacles for ongoing discernment, guidance and equipping.
- Hold Pastoral Team members accountable for assessment of the health and ministries of the Ministry Teams they guide and equip.
- Promote the congregation's awareness and celebration of God's work in the church's life and ministries.

f) Shepherd the church's participants (Acts 15:2-6; 20:28c; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2)

- Mentor the Pastoral Team in their individual and shared relationships with Christ.
- Promote the caring for, discipling and equipping of individuals through the Pastoral Team, Ministry Teams, and direct participation.
- Participate in the Council of Elders' recommendations for membership, exercise of loving discipline, and mediation of serious unresolved conflicts that impact the church body.

Section 4. Pastoral Team's Priority Responsibilities

Members of the Pastoral Team shall carry out ministries of a) following Jesus, b) discerning direction, c) guiding, d) equipping, e) monitoring and celebrating, and f) shepherding in specific areas of the church's Mission with particular Ministry Teams, under the direction of the Lead Pastor and guided by a Ministry Description for each Pastor.

Section 5. Calling Pastors

a. Call of the Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. The Lead Pastor shall be nominated by a Pastoral Search Committee to be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at a congregational business meeting. The Pastoral Search Committee shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine members, including the Council of Elders Chair. It shall work closely with the Midwest Conference Superintendent. The Lead Pastor shall be called by written ballot with a two-thirds vote of members present and voting required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time.

b. Call of Additional Pastors

Additional Pastoral Team members shall be called at a congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced at least two weeks in advance. The meeting shall include the budget implications of the proposed position. The Council of Elders will recommend one candidate for a call, and the vote shall be by written ballot, with two-thirds vote required for call. The Council of Elders may establish a Search Committee or may serve as the Search Committee. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time unless otherwise noted at the time of call.

Section 6. Other Church Staff

Non-Pastoral Team employees of this Church shall be hired, supervised, and discharged by the Lead Pastor, subject to the approval of the Council of Elders. Prior to securing the services of such personnel, the Lead Pastor shall provide the Council of Elders with a written job description, with salary and other considerations stipulated. All Church staff shall be responsible to the Lead Pastor, though grievances may be handled by the Council of Elders or a standing committee, or a Ministry Team designated by the Council. Reporting assignments and Ministry Descriptions shall be defined by the Lead Pastor and approved by the Council.

Section 7. Administrative Leave

The Council of Elders, by a 2/3 vote, may place any Pastoral Team member on paid administrative leave for the welfare of the congregation and the Pastor.

Section 8. Resignation of a Pastor

A Pastoral Team member may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Council of Elders. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, six weeks' notice should be observed.

Section 9. Dismissal

The dismissal of a Pastor Team member should be undertaken only after avenues of remediation have been pursued.

a. Dismissal of the Lead Pastor

The dismissal of the Lead Pastor shall be by congregational vote at a special meeting called for that express purpose. Such an agenda item cannot be a part of, or added to, the agenda of any other meeting. The congregational meeting for such a vote may be called by the 2/3 action of the Council of Elders, or through the request of the congregation accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The Pastor shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The vote shall be by written ballot. A majority vote of members present and voting is necessary to dismiss the Lead Pastor.

b. Dismissal of Additional Pastoral Team members

Additional Pastoral Team members called by the congregation may be dismissed by the 2/3 vote of the Council of Elders. A meeting to overturn the action of the Council of Elders may be called through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition signed by 20% of the membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The Pastor Team member in question shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The vote shall be by written ballot. A majority vote of members present and voting is necessary to overturn the action of the Council of Elders.

Section 10. Charges Against a Pastor

Charges against a Pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Council of Elders and the Midwest Covenant Conference Superintendent, charging a Pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Evangelical Covenant Church. The Superintendent shall confer with the Evangelical Covenant Church Executive Minister of the Ordered Ministry. These two officers shall confer and determine the order of responsibility in pursuing the matter according to the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Ordered Ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church. A Pastoral Team member credentialed by the Evangelical Covenant Church may be suspended by the Evangelical Covenant Church during this process. However, any Pastor who fails to become credentialed with the Evangelical Covenant Church may be suspended or recommended for dismissal at any time without prior notice by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE VI NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Section 1. Composition, Qualifications, Election

- a) The Nominating Committee shall consist of four (4) members in good standing for a least one year, with spiritual discernment and familiarity with this church body as a whole. Committee members shall serve one two year term, with two members elected at each annual business meeting. Members of the Committee shall annually elect a chair from among themselves. A person shall not concurrently serve as a member of the Nominating Committee and the Council of Elders or as a church Officer. There shall be no consecutive terms. Any Nominating Committee member who has served a term will be eligible for re-election after a lapse of one year. The Lead Pastor shall also serve on this Committee, but not as the Chair.
- b) A candidate for this Committee may voluntarily submit his or her name to the Secretary, or may be nominated by a member, for inclusion on a list of nominees distributed to members prior to the annual meeting, or may be nominated by any member at the annual meeting. Members of this Committee shall be elected individually, not as a slate, by a plurality of the members voting at the annual business meeting.

Section 2. Responsibilities

At least one month prior to the annual business meeting, the Nominating Committee shall submit to members a list of one or more willing, qualified candidates for each elective office, including at least two candidates for this Committee. All nominations shall require the consent of the individual nominated. This Committee shall prepare ballots for all elections and, if needed, tabulate the voting results. In case of vacancies in elected offices, this Committee shall recommend a replacement in the same manner as other candidates.

ARTICLE VII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible to act upon the church budget. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer. Another Annual Meeting shall be held for election for offices.

Section 2. Other meetings

Other meetings may be called by the Council of Elders or by written request signed by 10% of the membership, unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws.

Section 3. Notification of meetings

The date, time and purpose of all meetings shall be announced by written communication to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section 4. Conduct of meetings

The Chair of the Council of Elders or such other person as may be designated by the Council of Elders in the Chair's absence shall serve as Chair of any meeting of the membership.

Section 5. Voting

Each member, and only members, shall be entitled to cast one vote on any matter at hand at any meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. The Chair of the meeting may call for open balloting where no objection is raised. Otherwise all votes shall be by written ballot.

Section 6. Quorum

Twenty percent (20%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting, with a minimum of 20 members. Unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws, ten percent (10%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for any other meeting, with a minimum of 20 members.

Section 7. Rules of order

All congregational meetings of the church and of any other committees or organizations shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 8. Final voice

The congregation reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice. A member may advance an item to the agenda of a Congregational Meeting by the majority vote of the membership at that meeting, providing that the item is not in conflict with other provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. An item brought to the agenda in this way shall be decided by a majority vote of the membership, unless the item requires a different percentage as outlined elsewhere in the Constitution and Bylaws, in which case that percentage shall be used.

ARTICLE VIII ASSETS

Section 1. Title

The congregation shall hold title to its own assets.

Section 2. Acquisition

Assets acquired through budgetary provisions do not need additional congregational approval. Assets acquired beyond budgetary provisions, particularly land or facility acquisition, require the approval of the congregation by majority vote.

Section 3. Disputed Assets

In the event of schism within the church, in which there are competing claims to the assets by various factions of the membership, the title of all church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group which abides by the Constitution and Bylaws, as determined by the Midwest Covenant Conference Executive Board .

Section 4. Assignment of Assets

No action for the sale or transfer of assets may be taken when the closure of the church is under consideration without the prior approval of the Midwest Covenant Conference Executive Board. In the event the congregation votes to cease, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Midwest Covenant Conference Executive Board, shared equally for the furtherance of the mission of both in that region, primarily through church planting.

ARTICLE IX CLOSURE

Section 1. Action Needed

The congregation may terminate its existence by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.

Section 2. Meeting Provisions

The decision on whether to close the church cannot be a part of, or added to, the agenda of any other meeting. The congregational meeting for such a vote may be called by the Council of Elders or through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the membership.

Section 3. Notification

All members of record must be notified of the meeting through first class mail at least two weeks in advance.

Section 4. Quorum

The quorum for such a meeting shall be all members of record who are present at the meeting.

Section 5. Asset Distribution

Upon the vote to close, the assets of the congregation shall be transferred according to Article VIII, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

Section 6. Collaboration

Should congregational attendance stand below 25, the Midwest Conference Executive Board may appoint an ex officio member to the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the membership present and voting at a duly called meeting for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the membership not less than 30 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on Bylaw changes. Article VIII sections 3 and 4, Article IX and Article X may be amended only with the prior approval of the Midwest Covenant Conference Executive Board.