

## **PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS: THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH**

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 the 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.

# FAITH EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE I Name and Affiliation

This church shall be named Faith Evangelical Covenant Church of Burnsville, Minnesota. For convenience, it may be known as Faith Covenant Church of Burnsville. This church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its Northwest Conference, with whom it will work in harmony and support.

## ARTICLE II Confession of Faith

Faith Covenant Church believes in the Old and New Testaments as the true Word of God and holds them as the only rule to be followed for faith, doctrine and conduct.

## ARTICLE III Purpose

The purpose of Faith Covenant Church is to honor God by reaching and changing lives for His sake. As we trust God working through us, our goal will be to accomplish this by providing an environment that encourages embracing and connected personal relationships within our congregation and our community; by equipping our congregation to live out our faith in visible ways; and by extending our faith into our community, our country, and our world through active evangelism, outreach, and missionary support.

## ARTICLE IV Membership

Membership in Faith Covenant Church of Burnsville shall be open to all who through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ have been born again to a new life; have shown themselves through confession to be followers of Christ; who have been baptized (either infant baptism, or believer baptism already concluded or to be concluded at the next baptismal service); and who promise to support the fellowship, the ministry and the obligations of this church. All pastoral staff and directors are members of Faith Covenant Church by virtue of their position.

## ARTICLE V The Congregation

The church congregation shall be the ultimate authority and shall delegate power to the Church Council to enable the Council to fulfill and discharge its responsibilities as specifically delineated in the church by-laws.

## ARTICLE VI Congregational Meetings

The congregation of the Church shall hold a congregational business meeting every fall, winter, and spring as scheduled by the Council to receive staff reports and conduct business. The first business meeting of each fiscal year (calendar year) shall be the annual meeting. Approval of the annual budget and election of new Council officers and members shall be required at the annual meeting.

A summary of the audited financial statement shall be submitted to the congregation within 120 days of the annual meeting. (Members wishing to view the complete audited statement may do so by requesting an appointment with the Corporate/Financial Secretary.)

The Council shall call special business meetings when deemed necessary. A minimum of 14 days written notice in the Sunday bulletin shall be required for all special business meetings or to reschedule required business meetings. An agenda for a business meeting shall be available the Sunday prior to the business meeting.

#### ARTICLE VII            Church Council

The Council shall be the governing administrative body of the church. Council membership shall be limited to members in good standing of Faith Covenant Church. The voting members shall be the eight lay-members elected by the congregation: President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, and five at-large members who will be assigned by the Council as representatives to one or more standing committees. The President and the Vice President shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and shall not succeed themselves. Other members of the Council shall have staggered terms of three (3) years and shall not succeed themselves more than once.

The President of the Council shall only exercise his/her right to vote in the event of a tie vote among those Council members present and voting. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio non-voting member of the Council. The Recording Secretary shall be elected by the congregation and shall be a non-voting member of the Council.

#### ARTICLE VIII            Church Committees

All standing committees shall have a member of the Council and in most cases member of the pastoral staff as liaisons as specifically provided in the Church By-Laws. The Council shall create ad hoc committees on an "as needed" basis whose chairpersons need not be members of the Council and shall report directly to the Council. Any standing committee may establish a sub-committee, or sub-committees, which shall report to the standing committee and whose chairperson need not be a Council member or staff person. (See Bylaws for specific standing committees.)

#### ARTICLE IX            Property

In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the church shall become the property of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Northwest Conference.

#### ARTICLE X            Amendments and Changes

Amendments and changes to the constitution shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a business meeting of the Church. Such amendments and changes shall first be presented in written form at a preceding business meeting.

## FAITH EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE I            Membership

#### A.        Application Process

To become a member of Faith Covenant Church of Burnsville, applicants shall be in regular church attendance for three (3) months, complete an inquirers' class, profess their commitment to the Christian faith as stated in Article IV of the Constitution, complete membership application forms, have been baptized (either infant baptism, or believer baptism already concluded or to be concluded at the next baptismal service), receive Church Council acceptance as presented by the Senior Pastor or a pastoral member he/she designates and be welcomed by the church congregation. All pastoral staff and directors shall be members by virtue of their position.

#### B.        Responsibilities of Membership

All members shall assume the responsibilities and obligations placed on them by the Word of God and the Church. They shall, through their witness by life and word, consecrated service, prayer, and financial support, further the cause of Christ in Faith Covenant Church of Burnsville and the Evangelical Covenant Church.

#### C.        Children

Children who attend the church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. Following confirmation as prescribed by Faith Covenant Church they may apply for church membership as outlined in the By-laws under Article 1-A: Application Process.

#### D.        Erring Members

Interpersonal conflicts among members and/or regular attendees shall be addressed according to the principles of Matthew 18: 15-18 and Galatians 6:1. Issues shall first be dealt with between the two individuals involved. If this proves to be unsuccessful, a third party is invited to intervene. If this intervention proves fruitless, and if the issue involves error in doctrine or conduct that is serious enough to damage the Church or its witness, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Council which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the fellow member and/or regular attendee. The Council shall administer discipline or delegate the administration of discipline in the Spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual(s) as well as the Church.

#### E.        Termination of Membership

Notwithstanding Article I, Paragraph D of these by-laws, termination of membership or removal of members from church rolls shall require the recommendation of the Senior Pastor and approval by majority vote of the Church Council.

ARTICLE II            The Church Council

The Council shall be the governing body of the Church on behalf of and with the authority of the congregation. The Council or its designees shall discharge the following responsibilities:

1. Oversee the spiritual life and ministry of the Church and set the Church calendar, all in coordination with the Pastoral Staff and directors.
2. Create, review, and approve policy relating to personnel, finance, and property, in support of the spiritual vision of the Church;
3. Evaluate and approve, based on the recommendation of the pastoral staff, the annual budget, and submit such budget to the congregation for approval;
4. Oversee all Church funds and review staff management of budget(s);
5. Provide for an annual internal or independent financial audit. At a minimum, the audit shall be independently conducted every three years;
6. Approve membership on all Pastoral Call Committees;
7. Evaluate and act on recommendations from the Senior Pastor;
8. Evaluate the Senior Pastor;
9. Supervise Church membership by approval of new members as presented by the Senior Pastor, or a pastoral member he/she designates.
10. Serve as the final authority in cases of membership discipline;
11. Maintain a complete set of approved minutes for all Council meetings and business meetings;
12. Assure compliance to the Church Constitution and By-Laws;
13. Meet monthly (generally on the third Tuesday) or more often as deemed necessary;
14. Require written ministry reports to be prepared by pastors and directors for all major ministry areas, to be available and distributed at least 7 days in advance of any regularly scheduled business meeting as specified in Article VI of the Constitution.
15. Approve dedicated accounts.

ARTICLE III            Council Organization

A.     President

The President of the Church Council shall be elected by congregational vote. Except as set forth below in Section B., the President shall be the presiding officer at all Church Council meetings and at all congregational meetings and shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees, sub-committees and ad hoc committees. The President shall be the designated signer of all corporate documents of the church. The President of the Council shall not exercise his/her right to vote except in the case of tie votes.

B.     Vice President

The Vice President shall be elected by congregational vote and shall be empowered to assume all the duties of the President in the President's absence including the signing of church documents and presiding over meetings. The Vice President shall assist the President in all aspects of the

President's duties. (In the event that both the President and Vice President are unavailable to chair a Council or congregational meeting, and the meeting proceeds, the President shall appoint another Council member to serve as the interim chair for that specific meeting.)

C. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be elected by majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting. The Financial Secretary shall be the caretaker of the Church's legal financial documents and files, including the Accounting Procedures Handbook, and shall lead the Council in its mission to be responsible for the financial integrity of the Church. The Financial Secretary shall, with the approval of the Council, have check signing authority as specified in the Accounting Procedures Handbook. The Financial Secretary shall fulfill the following duties:

1. Submit records of contributions, other revenues and disbursements to the Council and the congregation at business meetings;
2. Nominate tellers for Council approval and assess the system for collecting, counting, transmission and depositing Church receipts;
3. Evaluate the procedures for entering weekly contributions into the contributions system;
4. Ensure that contribution statements are sent to the contributors at the end of each quarter;
5. Ensure that accurate reconciliation of bank records is performed by staff;
6. Ensure that an internal or independent financial audit of the Church finances is performed annually and a summary made available to the congregation within 120 days of the annual meeting. At a minimum, an independent audit shall be conducted every three years;
7. Chair the Finance Committee;
8. Monitor special fund drives, building loans, and investments.

D. Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary is a member of Council but does not have a vote. The Recording Secretary shall fulfill the following duties:

1. Record the minutes of each Council meeting;
2. Record the minutes of each business meeting;
3. Keep a complete set of approved minutes;
4. Make approved minutes available to the Council and congregation upon request;
5. Maintain an updated copy of the Constitution and By-Laws;
6. Complete other duties as directed by the Council.

E. Additional Council Members

The Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Church Council. Five additional members-at-large shall be elected by congregational vote to serve as liaison members of standing committees identified in Article IV below. The Council shall assign at its discretion each of its at-large members to one or more standing committees.

## F. Vacancies

In the case of a vacancy of the President, Vice President or Financial Secretary, the Council shall promptly appoint a replacement from the existing Council members to serve until the next annual congregational meeting.

## ARTICLE IV Standing Committees

The following standing committees shall be maintained for the purpose of conducting the administrative and ministerial duties and responsibilities of the Church. The Council shall appoint liaisons to all standing committees. The Senior Pastor shall appoint staff liaisons to all ministerial standing committees. Staff participation in administrative standing committees shall be at the discretion of the Senior Pastor, or when invited by Council or committee for a specific purpose.

### 1. Administrative Committees

#### a. Nominating Committee

An announcement shall be made at least two weeks prior to the fall business meeting of the formation of a Nominating Committee. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to identify to the Council a slate of qualified candidates to fill expiring Council positions (and Pastoral Call Committee positions as required). Church membership in good standing is required for eligibility to serve on the Nominating Committee. For purposes of continuity, two members from the Nominating Committee from the previous year shall be selected by the Council President to serve on the new Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee members shall serve for a period of one year and can be renewed for a maximum of 1 additional year.

The Nominating Committee shall be comprised as follows:

- The chair shall be a Council member selected by the President
- The Senior Pastor
- Two members of the previous Nominating Committee selected by the President
- Three lay members selected by the committee chair

The Nominating Committee shall solicit from the congregation written applications for Council candidates. The Nominating Committee shall evaluate the applications, and submit to the Council a slate of qualified candidates, with the number of applicants being at least equal to the number of openings on the Council.

The number of candidates submitted by the Council to the congregation shall be at least equal to the number of openings on the Council. The congregation shall vote on the slate. The number of candidates elected to the Council shall not exceed the number of openings. Those candidates receiving the most votes shall be declared elected, after which the ballots shall be destroyed.

Additionally, nominees for President and Vice President of the Council shall be limited to past or present members of the Council.

b. Property Committee

The Property Committee shall be responsible for budgeted purchases and maintenance of all physical property of the church and to study and make recommendations regarding additions or changes to the properties of the church. The chairperson of the Property Committee shall be selected by Council from Council lay membership. The Property Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative.

c. Finance Committee

The chairperson of the Finance Committee shall be the Financial Secretary. The Finance Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and the Financial Secretary. Church membership in good standing is required to be eligible to serve on the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall advise and assist the Financial Secretary in carrying out his/her responsibilities.

d. Communications Committee

The Communications Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The Communications Committee shall help the staff and Council provide clear and timely communications to and from the congregation and the community. The Communications Committee shall assist staff and Council in consistently and broadly disseminating to the congregation and the community the purpose and beliefs of the Church in all forms of Church communications (including sermons, music, announcements and advertising).

2. Ministerial Committees

a. Pastoral Advisory Committee

The Pastoral Advisory Committee shall be established to assist and to ease the work of the Senior Pastor and it shall have no legislative powers. The Pastoral Advisory Committee shall consist of the President and Vice President of the Church Council and the Senior Pastor. The chairperson of the Pastoral Advisory Committee shall be the President. The duties of the Pastoral Advisory Committee shall be:

1. To act as an advisory committee to the Senior Pastor;
2. To function as the pastoral relations committee by reviewing, evaluating and recommending changes to the Council regarding annual ministry strategies and plans.
3. To review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the Council regarding staff, staff job descriptions, and staff salaries and benefits, all within the framework of the Employee Handbook. All recommended and budgeted permanent full-time or part-time pastoral staff additions/deletions shall be published with proposed job descriptions and responsibilities, fifteen days prior to a vote on the recommendation by the congregation.
4. To recommend agenda items for council meetings.

b. Global Outreach Committee

The Global Outreach Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The Global Outreach Committee shall recommend to the Council a missions program following the Biblical principles of:

The Great Commandment - Matthew 22:37-39

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

Members of the Global Outreach Committee shall remain abreast of specific missions, advise and recommend mission opportunities to the Council, and inform the congregation of mission programs and disbursements.

c. Evangelism/Discipleship Committee

The Evangelism/Discipleship Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The Vice President shall be the Council representative to the Evangelism/Discipleship Committee. The Evangelism/Discipleship Committee shall work to make and train disciples for Jesus Christ and to assist in the spiritual growth of the congregation.

d. Deacon Committee

The Deacon Committee shall consist of nine to twenty-one members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative.

The members of the diaconate shall be those individuals gifted by God for the purpose of providing help and care to each member and friend of the congregation.

e. Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The committee shall develop the philosophy and policies for the education ministry of the children of the congregation and assist in their implementation.

f. Worship/Arts Committee

The Worship/Arts Committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The committee shall formulate the Worship/Arts ministry, incorporating it into the worship program with a spirit of adoration and dedication to God.

g. Youth Ministries Committee

The Youth Ministries committee shall consist of five to nine members appointed by the staff representative and Council representative. The Committee shall develop the philosophy and policies for youth ministries of the congregation and assist in their implementation.

ARTICLE V            Pastoral Staff

The Pastoral Staff shall be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and shall be responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of the ministry of the church. The Senior Pastor shall submit job descriptions and annual ministry strategies and plans for each ministry area to the Council for approval. Each person on the staff shall plan and oversee programs in their area of responsibility; recruit, train, motivate and support lay persons to work in their area of ministry; and establish lay groups to advance the work of their particular area of ministry.

A pastor of the church shall meet the New Testament requirements of his/her office according to I Timothy 3:2-7 and shall be, or commit to become within one year, a member in good standing in the Covenant Ministerium. The Senior Pastor shall by virtue of the Call be a member of the Church, a member of the Council, and an ex-officio member of all organizations within the church. A pastor of the church shall be called by a congregational meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced at least twenty-one days in advance, and shall be chosen by ballot with a written two-thirds majority vote of all members present.

Procedure for calling the Senior Pastor shall be as follows

- A. A Call Committee shall be established consisting of the President, the Vice President, and five lay members of the congregation selected by the congregation following the same procedures set forth in Article IV Section A above for selecting members for the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Call Committee shall seek qualified applicants, conduct interviews, and recommend a candidate or candidates to the Council.
- C. The Council shall bring the recommendation to the congregation for approval.

After budget approval by the congregation, the procedure for calling other pastors shall be as follows:

- A. A Call Committee shall be established consisting of the President, Senior Pastor, and five (19) lay members of the congregation selected by the congregation following the same procedures set forth in Article IV Section A above for selecting members for the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Call Committee shall seek qualified applicants, conduct interviews, and recommend a candidate or candidates to the Council.
- C. The Council shall bring the recommendation to the congregation for approval.

Charges against any pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Church Council. If, in the judgment of the Church Council, a pastor has erred in doctrine or conduct the case shall be referred to the Northwest Conference prior to further action by the congregation

#### ARTICLE VI            General Provisions

##### A. Quorum

Ten percent of the congregational membership, including three officers of the Church Council, shall constitute a quorum of a properly called congregational meeting.

##### B. Amendments and Changes

Amendments and changes to these by-laws shall be adopted when deemed necessary at any properly called congregational meeting. Adoption shall be by a written two-thirds majority vote of all members present. A proposed by-law amendment shall first be presented in writing at a preceding congregational meeting.

##### C. Bonding and Insurance

Each staff pastor, congregational member, Council member or employee who is authorized to sign checks, other legal tender, or legal documents shall be bonded and insured according to their responsibilities as determined by the Church Council.

##### D. Church Encumbering

A two thirds majority vote of all members present at a properly called business meeting is necessary to increase the Church debt burden or obligation to pay above previously approved amounts. (A line of credit, in an amount not to exceed a limit approved by the Council, may be used to cover a temporary cash shortfall.) In addition, the same approval is required for any obligation to pay longer than a twelve-month period.