

## **Constitution Preamble**

**The Evangelical Covenant Church of America has its roots in historical Christianity as it emerged in the Protestant Reformation, in the biblical instruction of the Lutheran State Church of Sweden, and in the great spiritual awakenings of the nineteenth century. These three influences have in large measure shaped its development and are to be borne in mind in seeking to understand its distinctive spirit.**

**The Covenant Church adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Holy Scriptures, the Old and the New Testament, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. It has traditionally valued the historic confessions of the Christian church, particularly the Apostles' Creed, while at the same time it has emphasized the sovereignty of the Word over all creedal interpretations, It has especially cherished the pietistic restatement of the doctrine of justification by faith as basic to its dual tasks of evangelism and Christian nurture, the New Testament emphasis upon personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, the reality of a fellowship of believers which recognizes but transcends theological difference, and the belief in baptism and the Lord's Supper as divinely ordained sacraments of the Church. While the Denomination traditionally practices infant baptism and dedication; in conformity with its principal of freedom it has recognized believer baptism.**

**This document that is in harmony with the above preamble is the constitution and the bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Roseau, Minnesota**

**ARTICLE 1  
Name**

**The name of this church shall be the  
Evangelical Covenant Church of Roseau, Minnesota.**

**ARTICLE II  
Affiliation**

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

**ARTICLE III  
Confessions of Faith**

**This 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  
Purpose**

**Section 1**

**The purpose of this church shall be to unite Christians in fellowship for spiritual development, for the winning of persons to Christ, and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to serve one another, this community, and the world through Christian education, home and world mission, and the institutions conducted by the Evangelical Covenant Church and its local regional conferences.**

## **Section 2**

**In order to achieve this purpose, the church in the unity of the Spirit, shall use the gifts that God has given it and the means of grace which God has placed at its disposal: The Word of God, baptism and Holy Communion.**

### **ARTICLE V Membership**

**Membership in this 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, they have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the total ministry of this church and to share its fellowship and obligations,**

### **ARTICLE VI Leadership Council**

**The general administration of the church shall be vested in a body known as the leadership council, which shall consist of the pastor, chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, deacon board chair, board of trustees chair, board of Christian formation chair and, the board of missions and outreach chair. All members of the leadership council shall be members of the church.**

### **ARTICLE VII Congregational business Meetings**

**Regular meetings shall be held at stated intervals, at least once each quarter. The annual business meeting of the congregation shall be held as near the first of the year as feasible. At the annual meeting of the congregation, written reports shall be submitted by the pastor and by each board and committee of the church. Audited financial reports shall be submitted by the treasurer of the church and each of its organizations.**

**Officers for the ensuing year shall be elected by secret ballot. The treasurer, however, shall be elected by the trustees from among their own members. Only members who are sixteen years of age or over shall be eligible to vote.**

**ARTICLE VIII  
Property**

**In the event of schism within the church, 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. In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of The Evangelical Covenant Church of America and the Northwest Conference.**

**ARTICLE IX  
Amendments**

**Amendments in harmony with this constitution and not in conflict with Covenant principals 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 annual meeting. When this church receives aid from the regional conference and /or the Covenant through subsidy or loans, such proposed amendments must also be approved by the regional conference board and the executive secretary of Covenant home missions.**

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE 1 Membership**

#### **Section 1. Admission into membership**

##### **a. Application for membership**

**Application for membership shall be placed with the pastor or a member of the deacon board. Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete an inquirer's class. All applicants shall appear before the deacon board to give a confession of their Christian faith according to ARTICLE V of this constitution. When the deacon board has reviewed their application and received their testimony favorably, their application shall be submitted to the next congregational business meeting for approval.**

**A unanimous vote by acclamation of those members present shall be required for acceptance into membership. Any member voting against the acceptance of the applicant must immediately appear before the deacon board and give cause for their dissenting vote, basing their objections on the Word of God, whereupon the deacon board shall determine the validity of the dissenting vote.**

##### **b. Transfer of membership**

**Applicants from other Christian churches shall submit letters of transfer, when available, to the pastor and/or the deacon board, who shall act upon the application (according to the requirements of paragraph a) of this section.**

##### **c. Reception of new members**

**Applicants who are voted into membership of this church shall be welcomed at the next service of Holy Communion.**

#### **Section 2. Children of members**

**Children of the members of the church and its constituency shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached confirmation age, they may receive instruction from the pastor(s) in the Word of God,**

**Christian doctrine, and the history of the Covenant church, using material that represents and supports Covenant theology. Following confirmation, they may apply for church membership as outlined under Section 1, paragraph a, of this article.**

### **Section 3. Responsibility of Membership**

**Every member 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 the local church and the denomination.**

### **Section 4. Discipline**

#### **a. Negligent members**

**Members willfully living contrary to the Confession of faith outlined in the church membership application, shall, at the discretion of the deacon board, be required to meet with this board for counsel and spiritual direction concerning the neglected membership responsibilities. If this invitation and the resultant direction are not heeded, they shall be dealt with as an erring member.**

#### **b. Erring Members**

**A member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be admonished according to the procedure outline in Matthew 18: 15-18 and Galatians 6:1. A fellow member having knowledge of such error shall in the spirit of Christian love seek to restore the individual. If that individual does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the deacon board, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore them. If that individual fails to heed the counsel of the deacon board, their error shall be brought before a business meeting of the church. Discipline shall then be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the church.**

### **c. Dismissal**

**Dismissal of members under paragraphs a) and b) of this section must be acted on by the church, which alone has the authority. A two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a congregational business meeting is necessary for such action.**

### **Section 5. Transfer of Members**

**A member who moves to another community should soon thereafter identify themselves with the local Covenant church. If there is no Covenant church, he/ they should identify themselves with some other evangelical Christian church. Application for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to the pastor, who shall issue the transfer to the church with which a member is uniting. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through the deacon board at the next meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record.**

### **Section 6. Removal of Membership**

**Request for withdrawal from membership in the church shall be made in writing to the pastor or the deacon board. After careful consideration, the deacon board may present a recommendation for withdrawal to a business meeting of the church.**

### **Section 7. Forfeiture of Rights**

**A member who has been properly dismissed from the church or has withdrawn their membership has forfeited all membership privileges and rights to any and all property of the church.**

### **Section 8. Non-member regular attendees**

**Non-member regular attendees shall be enrolled by the church as 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**

### **The Pastor(s)**

#### **Section 1. Qualifications**

The Pastor(s) of the church shall meet the New Testament requirements of the office (1 Timothy 3:2-7) and shall be a member in good standing in the Covenant Ministerial and follow the Rules and Regulations of the board of the Ministry. And shall by virtue of their call be a member of the church.

#### **Section 2. Duties**

The Pastor(s) shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully giving themselves to pastoral work. The pastor shall provide the church with an accurate record of their pastoral acts and present a written report to the church annual business meeting. The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church. The pastor(s) shall attend all Leadership Council meetings and other meetings as requested.

#### **Section 3. Cooperation**

The Pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference, their fellow ministers, the Leadership Council and all church staff.

#### **Section 4. Call**

The Pastor(s) shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two Sundays in advance. The Pastor(s) shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. This committee shall be elected by a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine members and shall work closely with the regional conference



**superintendent. The pastor(s) shall be called by secret ballot with a two-thirds vote required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the pastor(s) for termination of their pastoral duties.**

#### **Section 5. Charges against the pastor**

**Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the executive board, charging a pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Covenant (Matthew 18:15-18) If in the judgment of the leadership council of the church there is substance to the charges, the case shall be referred to the regional conference superintendent. The superintendent shall confer with the Covenant executive director of the ministry. These two officers shall confer and determine the order of responsibility on pursuing the matter according to the Rules for the Ordered Ministry of The Evangelical Covenant Church regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church.**

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **Employed Church Staff**

**Membership of the Covenant Church is recommended. All church staff shall be hired by the Leadership Council and shall report to the Leadership Council or appropriate board as appointed by the Leadership Council. An exception to this is the Treasurer, who is elected by the Trustee Board. Salary and benefits shall be proposed by the Trustees and recommended to the Leadership Council. A performance evaluation, based on their current job description, shall be done annually and at any other time at the discretion of the Leadership Council.**

**ARTICLE IV**  
**Leadership Council**

**Section 1. Qualifications**

All Leadership Council Members shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the total ministry of the church.

**Section 2. Chair**

The Chair shall preside at all business meetings in the church and of the Leadership Council. The Chair shall confer with the pastor(s) in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor can give by virtue of their training, experience and calling. The chair shall be responsible for leadership of the church services in the absence of the pastor(s). The church chair shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church.

**Section 3. Vice-chair**

The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in their absence, and assist in the chair's duties.

**Section 4. Secretary**

The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated and shall be responsible for the official document of the church. The secretary shall deliver a copy of all business meeting minutes to the church chair within 10 days of said meeting.

**Section 5. Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be responsible for all funds and shall make disbursements as authorized by the church or board of trustees. The treasurer shall also present a written report of the receipts and expenditures to each regular business meeting of the church.

**ARTICLE V**  
**Leadership Council and Boards**

**Section 1. Qualifications**

**Members of the leadership council and boards shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the total ministry of the church.**

**Section 2. Leadership Council**

**The Leadership Council in its administrative responsibility shall function within the limitations set by the congregation and in general shall have the following responsibilities:**

- a) To discuss and deliberate on such matters and problems that arise in the activities of the church, review the programs and ministries of the church, and coordinate and oversee the work of the Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, Board of Christian Formation, Board of Missions and Outreach and all other church committees, receive reports and recommendations, and take action as needed.**
- b) To ensure that decisions of the congregation are carried out.**
- c) To encourage representatives of various groups and organizations within the church to present concerns and issues to the Leadership Council for consideration.**
- d) To review and coordinate the church calendar and approve the use of the church facilities.**
- e) Consider requests for absence of salaried personnel and make suitable arrangements.**
- f) In the event of the resignation or death of a Leadership Council Member, to appoint a replacement to serve until the next annual meeting.**

**Section 3. Board of Trustees**

- a) The board of trustees shall consist of not less than three and not more than nine members. The trustees shall direct the financial needs of the church, exercise proper supervision over church**

**properties, arrange for adequate insurance coverage for all church properties and for possible liabilities, and arrange for payment of salaries, honorariums, purchases, and all other obligations authorized by the church.**

- b) The trustees shall count and transmit all collections to the treasurer. They shall submit an inventory of all assets and liabilities to the annual meeting of the church. The trustees shall have the authority by their own decision to expend up to \$1000.00 for maintenance and repair of the church. They are not authorized to dispose of or purchase property for the church except as directed by a duly called church business meeting.**
- c) It shall be the responsibility of the trustees to provide the pastor(s) with equipment necessary for the efficient conduct of their work and to reimburse them for reasonable expenses incurred in the service of the church. They shall review annually the salaries of the pastor and other employed church staff and make recommendations to the Leadership Council.**
- d) The board of trustees shall encourage the spirit and practice of stewardship in the church and in all phases of the work of the conference and the Covenant.**
- e) The trustees shall immediately after the annual meeting of the church elect from their own number a-treasurer and secretary.**
- f) The trustees shall grant use of church equipment for appropriate events**

#### **Section 4. Board of Deacons**

**The deacon board shall consist of three deacons and three deaconesses, who shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church and shall assist the pastor in developing and maintaining a continuing program of evangelism; assist the pastor in administering the sacraments; and in the absence of the pastor, together with the chair of the church, be responsible for the**

services of the church. The deacon board shall be authorized to receive and administer benevolences and care for the sick and needy. The deacon board immediately after the annual meeting of the church shall organize itself by selecting a secretary.

#### **Section 5. Board of Christian Formation**

The board of Christian formation shall consist of six to eight members. The board shall be responsible for the educational programs for the church, its curriculum, teachers, and leaders. The board shall meet following the annual meeting of the congregation and elect its own secretary.

#### **Board of Missions and Outreach.**

The board of missions and outreach shall consist of no less than 5 members. The board immediately after the annual meeting of the church shall organize itself by selecting a secretary.

The board shall be responsible for meeting the spiritual and humanitarian needs on a global and local basis, beyond our congregation.

### **ARTICLE VI Committees**

#### **Section 1. Pastoral Relations Committee**

The pastoral relations committee shall consist of the vice-chair of the leadership council (as the chair of the committee), chair of the leadership council, one representative each from the board of deacons, board of trustees, board of Christian formation and board of missions and outreach as selected by the respective boards and two members at large selected by the leadership council. This shall be done as soon as possible following the annual meeting of the congregation. The committee shall evaluate the ministry of each pastor and work toward effective relationships between the

congregation and the pastoral staff. The committee shall annually review the compensation of the pastoral staff and recommend adjustment to the trustee board.

## **Section 2. Nominating Committee**

The nominating committee shall consist of the pastor, leadership council chair, and one representative each from the board of deacons, board of trustees, board of Christian formation, board of missions and outreach and four members at large. The Congregation shall elect these at- large Church members. The at-large members shall serve two year terms. The initial terms of the at-large members shall be alternated so that at least two at-large members shall be elected each year.

The nominating committee, after being convened by the leadership council chair, shall elect from among its members a chair and a secretary. The responsibilities of the committee shall include the following:

- 1) Prepare a ballot for the annual meeting of the congregation listing one qualified candidate for each office to be filled. The ballot shall include the position of Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary (1 year terms) open positions on the Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Christian Formation Board and the Mission and Outreach Board (3 year terms), the Deacon Board Chair, The Trustee Board Chair, the Christian Formation Board Chair, the Mission Outreach Board Chair (1 year terms), and at –large nominating committee members, (four for year 2014) (two each subsequent year for 2 year terms).**
- 2) Confirm the willingness of each candidate to serve before listing his or her name on the ballot.**
- 3) Present a complete ballot to the annual meeting of the congregation. This shall constitute completion of the**

committee's assignment unless given specific responsibilities at said annual meeting.

### **Section 3. Standing Committees**

Standing committees shall be the committees assembled by the leadership council to assist in the mission of the church. Current standing committees include the, Music Committee, Worship Committee, Fellowship Committee, Decorating Committee, Health Ministry Committee, Bluewater Bible Camp Committee, Women's Ministry Committee, and Ministry Growth team. These committees shall be approved by the annual business meeting of the congregation.

### **Section 4. Special Committees**

Special committees for specific purposes may be appointed by any duly constituted business meeting of the congregation or the boards according to need, but shall be automatically terminated at the next annual meeting of the congregation, unless specifically extended by said annual meeting of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VII Meetings**

### **Section 1. Public Services**

Public services shall be conducted regularly on Sunday, and when deemed appropriate, on weekdays, the worship, the preaching and teaching of God's Word, and prayer.

### **Section 2. Conduction Sacraments**

The sacrament of Holy Communion shall be conducted regularly as determined by vote of the church. The sacrament of baptism shall be conducted in keeping with Covenant principles and according to the needs of the constituency.

### **Section 3. Congregational Business Meetings**

**Church business meetings shall be held regularly as stipulated in ARTICLE VII of the constitution. Special business meetings may be called by the chair of the leadership council at the request or approval of the leadership council after proper notification has been made.**

## **ARTICLE VIII General Provisions**

### **Section 1. Quorum**

**Not less than 25 members attending a congregational business meeting, properly called, shall constitute a quorum. The quorum for leadership council meetings shall be 75% of said council. The quorum for all board and committee meetings shall be 50 percent of its members.**

### **Section 2. Rules of Order**

**All business meetings of the leadership council and of the boards, committees, and organizations of the church shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.**

## **ARTICLE IX Amendments**

**Amendments to these bylaws that are not in conflict with the constitution or with the Model Constitutions for Local Covenant Churches may be adopted at any regular congregational business meeting or at a special congregational business meeting called for that purpose by a two-thirds vote of the members present**



**and voting providing that such amendments have been presented in writing at a preceding regular business meeting.**

**Approved January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Annual Meeting**