

HOPE COVENANT CHURCH
SAINT CLOUD, MINNESOTA
Feb. 23, 2026

CONSTITUTION
LEADERSHIP TEAM FORM

PREAMBLE

(An historical statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church as adopted by the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2002.)

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 By-laws of the Hope Covenant Church of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be the Hope Covenant Church of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

The church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) and its Northwest Conference (NWC). It is pledged to work in harmony with the ECC and NWC, and to faithfully support the mission, ministries, and policies of each.

ARTICLE III

Confession of Faith

We believe 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

We covenant to cultivate a community of worship committed to prayer, preaching and study of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments, and fellowship across gender, race, age, culture, and class. In so doing, we covenant to equip loving, giving, growing Christians to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ-- evangelizing the lost, ministering to those in need, and seeking justice for the oppressed.

ARTICLE V

Covenant Partnership

Covenant Partnership in the church is granted as provided in the by-laws 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.

ARTICLE VI

Governance

The authority of the government of this church is vested in its membership acting through duly called congregational meetings. The management, administration and oversight of business and spiritual 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 VII

Officers

The officers of the church shall be a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary, and treasurer. All officers shall be members of the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall serve as the Trustees of the church according to state requirements.

ARTICLE VIII

Congregational Meetings

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor(s), ministry staff, officers, and ministry teams. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. Election for offices shall be held. The church budget shall be submitted for action.

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.

Assets of the Church

1. The congregation shall hold title to its own assets.
2. In the event of schism within the church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, 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 By-laws, as determined by the executive board of the NWC.

ARTICLE IX

3. 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 NWC 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 ECC and the NWC, shared equally for the furtherance of the mission of both in that region, primarily, but not exclusively through church planting.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution, the Model Constitutions for Local ECC Churches, non-profit laws of Minnesota, and not in conflict with ECC principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the congregation, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the NWC executive board.

BYLAWS - LEADERSHIP TEAM MODEL

ARTICLE I

Covenant Partnership

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of Covenant Partnership is to frame both the identity and function of church participation in a way consistent with scripture and the arc of God's long vision for the restoration of all things. The Covenant relationship initiated by God speaks to the essential role relationships play in the perpetuation of blessing out into the world. Hope Covenant Partners are formed in community and called out together in mission. Scripture offers several images to express this identity and purpose of community (Body of Christ, temple, Holy nation, Royal Priest (1 Peter 2:9)). Covenant Partners are formed through worship, shaped by prayer, healed through love and sent out to be hope for the life of the world through renewable yearly Covenant Commitments.

Section 2. Responsibilities.

- a. Calling our members "Covenant Partners" highlights that we are making meaningful promises to one another. It shows that our relationships at Hope Covenant matter and play a vital role in living out our mission to be Hope for the Life of the World. We see this Covenant Commitment playing out in two relationship dynamics.
 1. **God's Relationship to his Church.** God initiated a covenant relationship with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and then a new Covenant through Jesus! In each of these Covenants, God establishes a relationship for a purpose: Partnership in mission. God invites us into a Covenantal relationship to receive his blessing in order to bring that blessing out into the world.
 2. **Relationship to one another.** Covenant Partners are invited by God's grace to make a Covenant Commitment to one another, reflecting an intentional commitment to be a blessing to one another and to reflect that blessing out into our community. This commitment includes but is not limited to prayer, empathy, believing the best in each other, patience, generosity, forgiveness and loving one another sacrificially in a manner fitting of the gospel.
- b. **Hope Covenant Partner Commitments**
 1. **Commitment of Church leadership to Covenant Partners.** Hope Covenant leadership commits to a standard of conduct in line with the biblical ethic which includes but is not limited to transparency, honesty, generosity and integrity. Hope Covenant also commits to a regular habit of checking in with Covenant Partners at least once a year, for the purpose of encouragement, support, and prayer. This is done through the Covenant Partner Team who are tasked with welcoming new Covenant Partners and scheduling personal check-in visits.
 2. **Commitment of Covenant Partners to one another.** Covenant Partners are formed by four main commitments to the church as an extension of our walk with Jesus.
 - Commitment to invest in the life of Hope Covenant through regular participation as able (weekend gatherings, Congregational meetings).
 - Commitment to invest in the mission and vision of Hope, the Conference and Denomination through generosity and whole life stewardship.
 - Commitment to invest in one's walk with Jesus through the discipleship opportunities as provided.
 - Commitment to invest in the community of Hope through regular acts of service.

Section 3. Initial Admission and Renewal of Covenant Partnership. Covenant Partnership is offered to those who through faith in Jesus, have been born anew into a living hope through the Holy Spirit, have

been baptized in Christ, strive to follow Jesus as his apprentice, and intend to faithfully support the vision of this church and serve the people of this community.

a. Initial Covenant Partnership

1. Covenant Partnership classes will be offered periodically throughout the year. Persons interested in *initial* Covenant Partnership shall complete a Covenant Partnership application. Applicants shall meet with the Spiritual Life Team to offer testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ and be given a chance to voice questions or concerns about Covenant Partnership. Applicants are then recommended to the Leadership Team by the Spiritual Life Team for approval and are voted (majority required) into Covenant Partnership until January of the following year, when they will be invited to renew their Covenant Partnership (see *Covenant Partnership Renewal* below).
2. Applicants who are received into Covenant Partnership shall be introduced to the congregation. First time Covenant Partners shall be invited to make a public confession of their Christian Faith, as outlined in the Covenant Book of Worship

b. Renewal of Covenant Partnership. Covenant Partnership is an annually renewed commitment as part of our ongoing formation as whole followers of Jesus. Existing Covenant Partners will be given the opportunity to renew their Covenant Partnership each January during the weekend worship services but are allowed to renew (apply) throughout the year.

c. Withdrawal and Removal of Covenant Partnership

1. Any Covenant Partner desiring to transfer or withdraw from Covenant Partnership shall make such a request in writing to the Pastor or Leadership Team. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the Pastor if so requested. Covenant Partners in need of extra support will be cared for during their annual check-in with the Covenant Partner Team. Covenant Partners who move or choose to not renew their Covenant Commitments at the beginning of the new year will automatically be transferred to the Legacy Membership unless specifically specified otherwise by the Covenant Partner.
2. Covenant Partners who choose to NOT renew their partnership will automatically be placed on the Legacy Membership roll of Hope Covenant Church. This non-voting roll reflects the legacy of a Covenant Partner in perpetuity.

Section 4. Children. Children of the church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. They shall receive instruction in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church, normally using the confirmation/discipleship material of the ECC. At age 16, they may apply for Covenant Partnership as outlined under Section 3 of this article.

Section 5. Support and Accountability of Covenant Partners.

- a. Support of Covenant Partners.** The Covenant Partner Care Team, operating as an extension of the Leadership Team, is responsible for supporting Covenant Partners who may struggle to fulfill the commitments outlined in the Covenant Partner Agreement.
- b. When Accountability Is Required.** In the event that a Covenant Partner is not in harmony with the vision of Hope Covenant Church, the general principles of Christian community, or demonstrates obvious and ongoing neglect of Covenant Partner commitments, the Covenant Partner Care Team shall engage in healthy, relational, and restoration-minded conversations. These interactions will follow the biblical guidelines found in Matthew 18:15–18 and Galatians 6:1–10, always seeking reconciliation and growth.
- c. Dismissal of a Covenant Partner.** Dismissal shall only be considered as a last resort, after every reasonable effort toward restoration has been made. Non-voluntary dismissal due to persistent neglect of covenant commitments or conduct unbecoming of a Covenant Partner may occur by a

two-thirds (2/3) vote of all current Leadership Team members. The dismissed Covenant Partner retains the right to appeal this decision to the congregation at the next scheduled congregational meeting.

- d. The Spirit of Support and Accountability.** All actions of support and accountability are undertaken to promote a healthy, Christ-centered community. This work is informed by Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit and characterized by honesty, grace, and relational care — always with the ultimate aim of restoration, reconciliation, and spiritual growth.
- e. Forfeiture of rights:** A Covenant Partner who has been properly dismissed from the church or has withdrawn their partnership, has forfeited all rights and privilege and will be moved to the legacy roster of Hope Covenant Church.

Section 6. Recording. The names of those joining, terminating, or letting their Covenant Partnership expire shall be duly recorded and reported on an annual basis.

ARTICLE II

The Leadership Team

Section 1. Purpose. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the congregation and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church.

Section 2. Composition. The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than 5 nor more than 9 Leadership Team members. This includes the Lead Pastor (ex officio) and the Chair of the Spiritual Care Team. The Leadership Team may appoint other pastors or staff members as non-voting advisors, and may remove the same.

Section 3. Qualification. Any member of the church meeting the biblical standards of character and giftedness for church leaders may be nominated and elected to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Election. Leadership Team members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by a majority vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 5. Term of Office. Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service, subject again to the terms stated in this article.

Section 6. Vacancies and Removal. A Leadership Team member may resign. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of congregational members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by resignation or removal may be filled by appointment through the 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team. A Leadership Team member appointed to serve an unexpired term of less than half the remaining term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to two full consecutive terms.

Section 7. Notification of Meetings. All Leadership Team members shall receive a minimum 3-day advance notification of any meeting, including time and place of the meeting. In emergency situations, the 3-day notice may be waived by the 2/3 vote of the entire Leadership Team.

Section 8. Quorum. A majority of Leadership Team members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9. Decisions. The Leadership Team shall strive for unanimity. Matters shall be determined by a majority vote of a Leadership Team quorum, unless on a matter in which the Constitution and Bylaws require a different percentage.

Section 10. Organization. The Nominating Committee shall nominate a church chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer, in addition to the other at-large members of the Leadership Team. These positions shall be voted on by the Congregation at a congregational meeting.

1. **Chair.** The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team. The chair shall confer with the senior pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the senior pastor can give by virtue of training, experience, and calling.
2. **Vice-chair.** The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence and assist in the Chair's duties.

3. **Secretary.** The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team, conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated, and be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.
4. **Treasurer.** The treasurer shall ensure proper policies, processes, reporting, and reviewing of all matters related to the finances of the church, including the submission of monthly financial reports to the Leadership Team.

Section 11. Responsibilities of the Leadership Team. In being responsible to the congregation for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the church and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church, the Leadership team shall:

- a. present annual mission and ministry objectives to the congregation;
- b. determine Ministry Teams needed to carry out the church's mission and ministry, and appoint appropriate leadership for the Ministry Teams;
- c. approve church policies;
- d. be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships including:
 1. Hiring and dismissal of staff subject to the provisions of these Bylaws. Action shall be by 2/3 vote;
 2. annual appraisal of the senior pastor and of the ministry staff, and providing godly counsel or discipline as required;
 3. annual review and approval of staff compensation and compensation for new staff; and other personnel expenses for any staff member or activity;
 4. establishment of personnel policies;
 5. approval of changes in staff job descriptions and approval of job descriptions for new staff positions; and
 6. maintenance of current job descriptions for all staff members;
- e. Be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the Covenant Partnership roll for approval. Upon approval of the budget by Covenant Partners, the Leadership Team shall be responsible for seeing that the budget is carried out as approved. The Leadership Team shall have the authority to appropriately adjust budget items and amounts where ministry objectives necessitate but in no event shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget without prior notification of the Covenant Partners. The Leadership Team shall appoint a Covenant Partner of the church as financial secretary (not necessarily a Leadership Team member) who shall be authorized to receive monies on behalf of the church and shall appoint a treasurer (not necessarily a Leadership Team member) to disburse funds for church purposes in accordance with standard accounting procedures for non-profit organizations. The Leadership Team shall annually request a review of the financial records of the church, by someone other than the treasurer, and report such findings to the congregation. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service. Hear and respond appropriately to concerns of Covenant Partners;
- f. Be responsible for church discipline as outlined in Article I, Section 5 of these By-laws;
- g. Act as the trustees of the church for the advancement and protection of its assets. The Leadership Team shall designate those Leadership Team members and any other Covenant Partner of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church;
- h. Be responsible for action on applications for Covenant Partnership as outlined in Article I, Section 3 of these By-laws.

Section 12. Unity. Action by the Leadership Team shall be taken in such a manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

ARTICLE III

Ministry Teams

Section 1. Purpose. Ministry Teams shall be formed as required to implement the varied ministries of the church.

Section 2. Establishment. Ministry Teams shall be established by the Leadership Team to implement specific ministries. The configuration of Ministry Teams shall be reviewed regularly by the Leadership Team, upon recommendation of the church staff, in accord with the church's purpose, strategies, and objectives for mission and ministry.

Section 3. Duties. The duties of Ministry Teams shall be to:

- a. Meet as required to plan and execute specific mission and ministry objectives.
- b. Recruit and train ministry personnel.
- c. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
- d. Submit annually to the Leadership Team proposed budgets and objectives for the forthcoming year and manage consistent with approved budgets.
- e. Report as requested to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Leadership.

- a. The leader of a Ministry Team shall be approved by the Leadership Team in consultation with the pastor(s). The team leader will serve as liaison to the Leadership Team to provide reports and information when requested, and to forward requests to the Leadership Team when necessary.
- b. Ministry Team members may be selected by the Ministry Team leader. The Leadership Team may remove a Ministry Team member.
- c. Each Ministry Team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.
- d. The Leadership Team may appoint one of its members to be an ex officio member of any Ministry Team, who may also serve as that Ministry Team's leader.
- e. Ministry team leaders will meet together as necessary for the purposes of coordination, encouragement, and mutual planning. The Senior Minister or Leadership Team designee shall oversee such meetings.

ARTICLE IV

Pastoral and Ministry Staff

Section 1. Purpose. Pastoral and additional ministry staff servant-leadership positions are created to help the congregation fulfill Christ's purposes in the world and among its Covenant Partners.

Section 2. Pastoral Qualifications. Pastors of the church shall meet the qualifications for character, giftedness, and call set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The Lead Pastor shall be an ordained pastor in good standing with the ECC. Other pastors shall be credentialed by the ECC in accordance with their qualifications and duties. A pastor shall be a Covenant Partner of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 3. 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. This committee shall be elected by the Covenant Partners at a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine Covenant Partners, including the Leadership Team chair. It shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent. The Lead Pastor shall be called by written ballot with a two-thirds vote of Covenant Partners present and voting required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or denomination through appropriations, the call shall be with the approval of the NWC.

Section 4. Call of Additional Pastors and Credentialed Ministry Staff. Additional staff members to hold ministerial credentials 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 Leadership Team will recommend one candidate for a call, and the vote shall be by written ballot, with two-thirds vote required for call. The Leadership Team may establish the search committee or may serve as the search committee. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or denomination through appropriations, the call shall be with the approval of the NWC. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time unless otherwise noted at the time of call.

Section 5. Duties of the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, provide missional leadership, and faithfully carry out pastoral work. The Lead Pastor shall direct the church staff, providing counsel, encouragement, and Christian discipline so as to assist in the accomplishment of objectives for each staff member. All staff shall be responsible to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall be a member of the Leadership Team and an ex officio member of all ministry teams and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives and strategies in conjunction with the mission and purpose of the church.

Section 6. Duties of Additional Pastors and Ministry Staff Members. Additional pastors and ministry staff members shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Lead Pastor. They may be designated by the Leadership Team to be the leader or member of one or more Ministry Teams.

Section 7. Cooperation. The pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the ECC and the NWC.

Section 8. Resignation of a Pastor or Ministry Staff Member. A pastor or ministry staff member may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Leadership Team. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, six weeks' notice should be observed.

Section 9. Dismissal. The dismissal of a pastor or ministry staff member should be undertaken only after avenues of remediation have been pursued.

- a. **Dismissal of the Lead Pastor.** The dismissal of the senior 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 Leadership Team, or through the request of the congregation accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the Covenant Partners. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the Covenant Partners. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Covenant Partners 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 Covenant Partners present and voting is necessary to dismiss the senior pastor.
- b. **Dismissal of Additional Pastors and Ministry Staff.** Additional pastors and ministry staff called by the congregation may be dismissed by the 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team. A meeting to overturn the action of the Leadership Team may be called through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition signed by 20% of the Covenant Partners. The quorum

for such a meeting shall be 50% of the Covenant Partners. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Covenant Partners shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The pastor or ministry staff member in question shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The vote shall be by written ballot. A majority vote of Covenant Partners present and voting is necessary to overturn the action of the Leadership Team.

Section 10. Charges against a Pastor. Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Leadership Team and the NWC superintendent, charging a pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the ECC. The superintendent shall confer with the ECC 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 ECC regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church. A pastor or staff member credentialed by the ECC may be suspended by the ECC during this process. However, any minister who fails to become credentialed with the ECC may be suspended or recommended for dismissal at any time without prior notice by the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee.

- a. **Composition.** The nominating committee shall consist of one Leadership Team member designated by the Leadership Team, the Lead Pastor or staff member designated by the Lead Pastor, and at least two members at-large elected by a majority of the Covenant Partners voting at a congregational meeting. The Leadership Team shall designate one of the committee members to serve as Chair of the nominating committee.
- b. **Term.** The terms of the member from the Leadership Team shall be at the pleasure of the Leadership Team. The at-large members shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service. The initial terms of the at-large members shall be alternated so that at least one at-large member shall be elected each year.
- c. **Quorum.** A majority of Covenant Partners shall constitute a quorum of the nominating committee.
- d. **Responsibilities.** The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the offices of Leadership Team and the at-large members of the nominating committee.
- e. **Nominating procedure.** Any Covenant Partners of appropriate character, giftedness, and call may be considered for any position. One or more candidates for the office of Leadership Team shall be nominated by the nominating committee. One or more candidates for the office of at-large members of the nominating committee shall be nominated.
- f. **Unity.** Actions by the nominating committee shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Section 2. Pastoral Search Committee. The Lead Pastor shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. The nominee shall meet the criteria set out in Article IV, Section 2 of these Bylaws. This committee shall be elected by a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine members, including the Leadership Team chair. It shall work closely with the NWC superintendent.

Section 3. Mutual Ministry Committee.

The mutual ministry committee shall work toward a vital, healthy, mutually beneficial relationship between the congregation and the pastors and ministry staff. The mutual ministry committee shall have four main areas of responsibility:

- a. care and encouragement for the pastors, ministry staff, and their families;
- b. receiving the perspectives and concerns of each pastor and ministry staff member relative to the congregation and ministry;
- c. communicating the perspectives and concerns of the congregation to each pastor and ministry staff member relative to that person's ministry; and
- d. periodic review of personal and church goals.

The mutual ministry committee shall be made up of the Leadership Chair or Vice Chair (who shall chair this committee), a member of the Leadership Team selected by the Leadership Team, and two congregational Covenant Partners elected by the congregation at a congregational meeting. Elected at-large members shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service.

Section 4. Other Special Committees. The Leadership Team or the congregation may establish a committee to address a specific task. The committee shall report back to the body which formed it unless otherwise instructed by its founding body. The committee shall terminate upon the completion of its task.

ARTICLE VI

Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Congregational Meeting. The church budget shall be submitted to the congregation for action at a congregational meeting prior to year end.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the Annual Meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor(s), ministry staff, officers, and ministry teams. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. Election for offices shall be held.

Section 3. Other meetings. Other meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by 10% of the Covenant Partners, unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws.

Section 4. Notification of meeting. All meetings shall be announced by written communication to the Covenant Partners at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section 5. Conduct of meeting. The chair of the Leadership Team or such other person as may be designated by the Leadership Team in the chair's absence shall serve as chair of any meeting of the Covenant Partners.

Section 6. Voting. Each Covenant Partner, and only Covenant Partner, shall be entitled to cast one vote on any matter at hand at any meeting of the Covenant Partnership. Such votes must be cast in person. In the case of a virtual/hybrid meeting, electronic ballots would be valid. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. All votes shall be by written ballot. The chair of the meeting may call for open balloting where no objection is raised.

Section 7. Quorum. Twenty percent of the Covenant Partners shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting, with a minimum of 20 Covenant Partners. Unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws, ten percent

of the Covenant Partner roll shall constitute a quorum for any other meeting, with a minimum of 20 Covenant Partners.

Section 8. 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 9. 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 by-laws. 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 VII

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 Covenant Partner Roll, 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 executive board of the NWC.

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 NWC 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 ECC and the NWC, shared equally for the furtherance of the mission of both in that region, primarily through church planting.

ARTICLE VIII

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 Leadership Team or through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the Covenant Partnership.

Section 3. Notification. All Covenant Partners 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 Covenant Partners 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 VII, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

Section 6. Collaboration. Should congregational attendance stand below 25, the NWC executive board may appoint an ex officio member to the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

Section 1. Procedure. These By-laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the Covenant Partners present and voting at a duly called meeting for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the By-laws must be presented in writing to the Covenant Partners not less than 90 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on By-law changes. Article VII, Sections 3 and 4, Article VIII and Article IX may only be amended with the prior approval of the NWC executive board.

Amended 2/2026