

NEW SONG COVENANT CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

A Historical Statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church as revised in 1957.

“The Evangelical Covenant Church 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 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 task 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 differences, and the belief in baptism and the Lord’s Supper as divinely ordained sacraments of the church. While the denomination has traditionally practiced the baptism of infants, in conformity with its principle of freedom it has also recognized the practice of believer baptism. The principle of personal freedom, so highly esteemed by the Covenant, is to be distinguished from the individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community.”

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of the New Song Covenant Church of Anchorage, Alaska.

Article I

Name

The name of this church shall be the New Song Covenant Church of Anchorage, Alaska.

Article II

Affiliation

The church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its Alaska 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

Purpose

We covenant to cultivate a community of worship committed to prayer, preaching and study of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments, and fellowship across gender, race, age, culture, and class.

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

Membership

Partnership (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 partners (membership) acting through congregational meetings. The management and administration and oversight of all business and spiritual affairs are delegated by the congregation to the appropriate leadership as delineated in the Bylaws. All elected leadership specified in the Bylaws shall be members of the church.

Article VIII

Congregational Business Meetings

Section 1. Congregational business meetings shall be held at stated intervals, but not less than annually. The annual congregational meeting shall be held as near the first of the year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor, the officers, and the ministry teams. Audited financial reports shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. Election for offices shall be held. The church budget shall also be submitted for action.

Section 2. Notice of all congregational business meetings shall be mailed to members not less than two weeks prior to the meeting and shall include the date, time of the meeting, and an annotated agenda of business to be transacted.

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 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 Alaska Conference.

Article X

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and the Model Constitutions for Local Covenant Churches 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 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 executive board of the regional conference.

BYLAWS - Leadership Team Model

Article I

Partnership (Membership)

Section 1. Responsibilities. The partners (members) of this church do covenant together by God's grace to live lives in a manner consistent with the standards of biblical teaching, including the support of this local ministry in attendance, prayer, service, and giving, to live lives in word and deed that are an encouragement to others to know and be like Jesus Christ, to reflect in all our relationships the servant love of our Lord, and to support the broader mission of Christ through the Regional Conference and Covenant.

Section 2. Procedure for Admission.

- a. Partnership (membership) is open to all who have made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ and have been baptized.
- b. Persons desiring to apply for partnership shall submit their application to the Pastor or to the Leadership Team. Partnership classes will normally precede the application.
- c. Upon completion of a partnership class, applicants shall meet with a committee appointed by the Leadership Team to give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Upon completion of such fellowship, the committee shall submit its recommendations on the applications to the Leadership Team who shall notify partners of the church of the recommendations. Any member objecting to or having concerns over the granting of partnership to an applicant shall communicate in writing such objection or concern to the Leadership Team within 10 days after notification by the Leadership Team.
- d. Final action on applications for partnership shall be taken by the Leadership Team within sixty (60) days of receiving the recommendations of the interview committee.
- e. Applicants who are voted into partnership of the church shall be welcomed at a worship service.

Section 3. Children of Partners. Children of partners of the church and its constituency shall be nurtured under its spiritual care.

Section 4. Discipline.

- a. Discipline of partners. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for admonishing partners who willfully neglect their responsibilities to the church or who err in doctrine or conduct.
- b. Erring partners. Any partner 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 partner having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore the erring partner. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the

Leadership Team, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the partner.

- c. After the above process has been completed, dismissal of a partner remaining in gross error in doctrine or conduct may result by a two-thirds vote of all current Leadership Team partners. Such action may be appealed in writing by the partner to the congregation for consideration at the next congregational meeting and overturned by a two-thirds vote at that meeting.

Section 5. Transfer of partners. Any partner desiring to transfer or withdraw from partnership shall make such request in writing to the Pastor or Leadership Team. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the Pastor.

Section 6. Recording. The names of those initiating and terminating partnership shall be duly recorded and made available to the congregation. The Leadership Team will be responsible for keeping the list current.

Article II

The Leadership Team

Section 1. Composition. The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than 5 nor more than 8 church partners, one of whom shall be the Senior Pastor (ex officio).

Section 2. Qualification. A Leadership Team member shall be a partner of the church and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-10.

Section 3. Election. Leadership Team members shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of those partners voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 4. Term of Office. Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of 2 years and shall not be elected for more than three consecutive terms. The terms of the first Leadership Team members elected pursuant to these Bylaws shall be alternated in order that equal Leadership Team members shall be elected each year. Initial Leadership Team members serving an abbreviated term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to three full consecutive terms.

Section 5. Vacancies. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of congregational partners voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by removal or resignation shall be filled by a vote of the partnership in the same manner as set forth in Section 3 above. A Leadership Team member elected to serve an unexpired term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to three full consecutive terms.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of Leadership Team members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Leadership Team.

- a. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the local body and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church. They shall present yearly ministry goals and objectives to the congregation.
- b. The Leadership Team shall act as the trustees of the church and its assets. They shall designate those Leadership Team members and any other partners of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.
- c. The Leadership Team shall elect from among themselves a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary.
 1. **Chair.** The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the board. The chair shall confer with senior pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor can give by virtue of his or her 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, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated and shall be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.
- d. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the membership for approval. Upon approval of the budget by the membership, 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 or available funds without prior approval of the membership. The Leadership Team shall appoint a member 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 established policy. The Leadership Team shall annually appoint auditors to audit the financial records of the church and report such findings to the congregation. Neither the treasurer nor financial secretary shall serve more than 5 consecutive years.
- e. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships including:
 1. Annual appraisal of the ministry of the senior pastor and the ministry of the other staff, and provide godly counsel or discipline as required.
 2. Annual review and approval of staff compensation and approval of compensation for new staff; approval of other personnel expenses for any staff member or activity, all subject to overall budget approval.
 3. Establishment of personnel policies.

4. Approval of changes in staff job descriptions and approval of job descriptions for new staff positions.
5. Maintenance of current job descriptions for all staff members.
6. Hiring of support staff.
- f. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for approving or rejecting applications for membership.
- g. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for dealing with partners who neglect their duties to the church and who err in doctrine and conduct, and shall do so in such a manner as to restore such partners to full and complete fellowship, if possible, and if not possible, to take such action as may be appropriate under the Holy Scriptures and the Constitution and Bylaws of the church, including expulsion from partnership. Discipline shall be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual disciplined as well as the welfare of the church. The Leadership Team shall not consider any grievance against a partner unless such grievance is submitted in writing and supported by the evidence of two or more witnesses.
- h. The Leadership Team shall hear and respond appropriately to concerns of partners.
- i. The Leadership Team shall determine Ministry Teams needed to carry out the church's mission and appoint appropriate leadership.
- j. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for the leadership of the church service in the absence of the pastor.

Section 8. Unity. Action by the Leadership Team shall be taken in such 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. Organization. Ministry Teams shall be chartered by the Leadership Team to implement specific ministries. The charter for a Ministry Team shall include: the statement of purpose; strategies; leadership structure; qualifications for ministry; and a provision that the ministry team shall terminate fifteen months from the most recent Leadership Team review. The list of Ministry Teams shall be determined annually by the Leadership Team, upon recommendation of the church staff, in accord with the church's purpose, strategies, objectives, and as consistent with organizational and functional effectiveness.

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

- a. Develop and annually review its charter for submission to the Leadership Team.

- 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. Meet as required to plan and execute specific ministry objectives.
- f. Review and provide a written report, at least annually, of progress against objectives to the Ministry Staff and Leadership Team.
- g. Each Ministry Team shall normally have at least one Leadership Team member as an ex-officio member, who may also serve as that ministry team's leader.

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.
- b. Ministry Team members may be selected by the Ministry Team leader in accord with guidelines in its ministry charter.
- c. Each Ministry Team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.

Article IV

Pastors

Section 1. Qualifications. Pastors of the church shall meet the qualifications set forth in the Holy Scriptures. All pastors shall be or become ordained, licensed, or commissioned by the Evangelical Covenant Church in accordance with their qualifications and duties for pastoral office, staff ministry, or lay ministry. A pastor shall be a partner of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 2. Call of Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced in writing two weeks in advance. The Senior Pastor 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 partners, including the Leadership Team chair. It shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent. The Senior Pastor shall be called by ballot with a two-thirds votes 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 Senior Pastor for termination of pastoral duties except as provided in Section 7.

Section 3. Call of other pastors. Other pastors may be called by a two-thirds vote of a congregational business meeting upon recommendation of the Leadership Team. The congregation may, by a two-thirds vote, delegate authority to call other ministers to the Leadership Team. In such a case, the Leadership Team shall give notice to the congregation of the recommendation for minister 10 days prior to the Leadership Team issuing a call. If the

Leadership Team receives written objection or concerns, the recommendation shall be submitted to a congregational business meeting. The duration of minister's tenure and the notice required for termination of service shall be set forth in the letter of call.

Section 4. Cooperation. The pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference, and other Covenant ministers.

Section 5. Duties of Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, and faithfully carry out pastoral work. The Senior 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 is responsible to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio 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. The Senior Pastor shall report to the Leadership Team.

Section 6. Other pastors. Other pastors shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Leadership Team and the Senior Pastor. They may be designated by the Leadership Team to be the leader or member of one or more Ministry Teams.

Section 7. Charges against a pastor. Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Leadership Team, 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 Team 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 secretary of the 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 Ministry of the Covenant regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church. However, any minister who fails to become licensed with the Evangelical Covenant Church within 90 days of beginning service or who loses a license may be dismissed at any time without prior notice by the Leadership Team.

Article V

Nominating Committee

Section 1. Composition. The nominating committee shall consist of one Leadership Team member designated by the Leadership Team, the Senior Pastor, and at least one member at large elected by a majority of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. The Leadership Team shall designate one of the committee members to serve as Chair of the nominating committee.

Section 2. Term. The terms of the member from the Leadership Team shall be at the pleasure of the Leadership Team. The at large member(s) shall serve two year terms. If there is more than one at large member, the terms of the at large members shall be alternated so that at least one at large member shall be elected each year.

Section 3. Quorum. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the nominating committee.

Section 4. Responsibilities. The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the offices of Leadership Team, the at large members of the nominating committee, and any other positions assigned to it either by the Leadership Team or congregation.

Section 5. Nominating procedure. 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. Any member of appropriate character, giftedness, and call may be considered for any position.

Section 6. 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.

Article VI

Meetings

Section 1. Annual meetings. The annual meeting shall be held within one month of the end of the fiscal year. If in the judgment of the Leadership Team the meeting cannot be held within such time it shall be held as soon thereafter as feasible. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a written annual report to the membership at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Special meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by 10% of the membership. The signed request for a special meeting will describe the purpose of the meeting and only those items listed will be discussed.

Section 3. Notification of meeting. All meetings shall be announced in writing to the membership of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section 4. Conduct of meeting. The Chair of the Leadership Team or such other person as may be designated by the Leadership Team in his or her 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 at any election on any subject at any annual or special meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. All votes shall be by secret ballot. The Chair of a meeting may call for open balloting where no objection is raised.

Section 6. Quorum. Ten percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for any special meeting, with a minimum of 10 members. Twenty percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting, with a minimum of 10 members.

Section 7. Rules of order. All business meetings of the church and of any other committees or organizations shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 8. Final voice. The congregation reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice.

Article VII

Amendments

Section 1. Procedure. These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the members at the meeting not less than 30 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on bylaws changes.