

# **Restated Constitution of the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church**

## **Preamble**

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

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

## **Introduction**

The Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church, in order to accomplish its mission and purposes, has formulated and adopted this Constitution and Bylaws. The Constitution recognizes that the highest constituted authority of the Midwest Conference is the convention of delegates known as the Annual Meeting, which alone can adopt and amend the Constitution and Bylaws. The Midwest Conference shall be governed by this Constitution and Bylaws, its Articles of Incorporation, and all applicable laws.

## **ARTICLE I Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Hereinafter, the Midwest Conference may be called the Conference and the Evangelical Covenant Church be called the ECC.

## **ARTICLE II Confession**

The Conference 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.

## **ARTICLE III Establishment and Purpose**

Section 3.1. The Conference is a mission region of the ECC. As such, it is a separately incorporated association of ECC congregations, recognized as provided in the bylaws of the ECC.

Section 3.2. As a mission region, the Conference exists to serve its local churches and to minister on their behalf to better make known the good news of saving faith in Jesus Christ, to encourage a Christlike life among its members, and to carry out Christ's redeeming work of love, mercy, and justice in the world.

Section 3.3. The Conference is incorporated in the state of Nebraska as a not-for-profit organization. The delegates to the Annual Meeting are the corporate members of the Conference.

## **ARTICLE IV Territory**

Section 4.1. The boundaries of the Conference shall be determined by the ECC Annual Meeting, upon the recommendation of the Executive Board of the ECC after consultation with the Conference.

Section 4.2. The territory assigned to the Conference comprises the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, western half of Missouri, Colorado and Wyoming.

## **Article V Membership**

Section 5.1. The Conference is composed of Christian congregations united in faith and service.

Section 5.2. Membership is open to evangelical Christian congregations that are in accord with the Preamble and Confession of the ECC, and that meet the requirements stated in the ECC Constitution and Bylaws, which are repeated in this Constitution and Bylaws. A congregation seeking membership shall follow the procedure determined by the ECC Executive Board, which is repeated in these Bylaws.

Section 5.3. Membership is granted dually in both the Conference and the ECC. A congregation cannot be a member of one without being a member of the other.

Section 5.4. Member congregations pledge mutually to support the principles, policies and programs of the Conference and the ECC. This includes regular financial support of the Conference and the ECC. The Constitution and Bylaws of member congregations shall be in general agreement with the principles of the ECC Preamble, Constitution, and Bylaws. Member congregations have freedom in the management of local matters.

Section 5.5. Member congregations that through decision or practice are out of harmony with the principles, policies, programs, or institutions of the ECC may be dismissed from the ECC and Conference, according to the procedures stated in the Bylaws.

Section 5.6. A congregation seeking to sever its affiliation with the ECC and Conference shall follow the procedures stated in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VI Officers**

Section 6.1. The Superintendent shall be one of the officers of the Conference. Other officers shall be a chair, vice-chair, treasurer, and secretary, who shall also serve in those capacities on the Executive Board. The Bylaws may provide for additional or assistant officers.

Section 6.2. Officers shall be selected according to the procedures stated in the Bylaws.

Section 6.3. Officers shall have duties and responsibilities provided in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII Annual Meeting**

Section 7.1. A convention of delegates, known as the Annual Meeting, shall be the highest constituted authority in the Conference.

Section 7.2. There shall be one regular session of the Annual Meeting each year, the date of which shall be prior to the ECC Annual Meeting as determined by the Executive Board.

Section 7.3. As the highest deliberative and decision-making body of the Conference, the Annual Meeting shall approve the admission and dismissal of congregations, elect or call persons to leadership positions as provided in the Bylaws, approve the budget of the Conference, receive and approve reports, amend the Constitution and Bylaws, conduct other such business as may properly come before it, and make decisions necessary to the mutual work of the Conference, affiliated institutions, and the ECC, as provided in the Bylaws.

Section 7.4. Each Conference congregation and each institution and corporation recognized by the Conference is entitled to send one or more delegates to the Annual Meeting, as provided in the Bylaws. The Conference Superintendent and elected members of the Executive Board shall be ex officio delegates. The Bylaws may provide for additional delegates and advisors. Each delegate shall serve for a term that expires at the convening of the next Annual Meeting as provided in the Bylaws. Each delegate shall be a corporate member of the Conference for the duration of that delegate's term.

Section 7.5. Special sessions of the Annual Meeting may be called by the Executive Board, by the Superintendent with the concurrence of the Executive Board, or by a majority of the current delegates. At least thirty days before the date of each special meeting, the secretary of the

Conference shall send a notice to each current delegate, stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

Section 7.6. One-third of delegates registered and certified in accordance with the Bylaws shall constitute a quorum for any regular or special session of an Annual Meeting.

### **ARTICLE VIII Executive Board**

Section 8.1. The Executive Board shall be the agent of the Annual Meeting in making decisions for, and otherwise acting on behalf of, the Conference when the Annual Meeting is not in session. This agency does not include powers reserved exclusively to the Annual Meeting by the constitution and bylaws or by decision of the Annual Meeting. The Executive Board shall be responsible to the Annual Meeting for its decisions and actions.

Section 8.2. The Executive Board shall be responsible for ensuring that all matters required to be brought to the Annual Meeting under this constitution and bylaws are in fact brought to the Annual Meeting.

Section 8.3. The Executive Board shall have the authority and responsibility for ensuring that the policies, procedures, and actions of the Conference comply with this constitution and bylaws.

Section 8.4. The Executive Board shall have the authority and responsibility for ensuring that the officers and staff of the Conference comply with this constitution and bylaws.

Section 8.5. The Annual Meeting shall elect members of the Executive Board as provided in the bylaws.

Section 8.6. The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Board. The Bylaws may provide for additional ex officio members, as well as for advisors.

Section 8.7. The Executive Board may establish committees and/or otherwise organize itself for the accomplishment of its assignments.

Section 8.8. Additional responsibilities for the Executive Board shall be delineated in the Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE IX Ministries**

The Conference shall have ministries to be responsible for specific missions and purposes of the Conference. These shall be in cooperation with each other, the congregations, the ECC, and affiliated corporations and institutions. Conference ministries shall be recognized and organized according to provisions identified in the bylaws.

### **ARTICLE X The Superintendent**

The Superintendent shall be the pastor and chief executive officer of the conference and its mission, with responsibilities delineated in the bylaws. The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Board and all other administrative entities aligned with the Conference. The Superintendent shall be elected according to provisions in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE XI Corporations and Institutions**

Section 11.1. The Conference may establish or recognize corporations and institutions to be responsible for specific missions and purposes of the Conference, in cooperation with each other, the congregations, and the ECC.

Section 11.2. Each corporation and institution established by the Conference shall be identified in the Bylaws.

Section 11.3. Each corporation and institution established by the Conference shall have officers and boards of directors as required by law and provided in the Bylaws. The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors of each corporation and institution established by the Conference.

## **ARTICLE XII Asset Resolution and Distribution of Assets**

Section 12.1. In case of schism within the Conference, all property and other assets belonging to the Conference shall belong to the group which upholds and adheres to this constitution and bylaws as determined by the ECC Executive Board.

Section 12.2. Should the Conference be dissolved or diminish to less than ten member churches, all right, title, and interest to property, real, personal, tangible, and intangible, and all other assets shall pass to the ECC.

Section 12.3. A member church which withdraws or is dismissed from this Conference and the ECC shall be subject to immediate payment of all loans, grants, or property received from the Conference and the ECC. The church shall also forfeit all rights to Conference and ECC property.

## **ARTICLE XIII Amendments**

Section 13.1. Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be introduced in writing at an Annual Meeting, but may not be acted upon until the next Annual Meeting, and for adoption must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the accredited delegates present and voting at the Annual Meeting.

Section 13.2. Proposed amendments to this constitution and bylaws shall be in harmony with the ECC Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 14.3. The secretary shall have proposed amendments published in an official publication of the Conference and shall transmit them in writing to each source of delegates at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting, at which final action is to be taken.

NOTES:

Change made to constitution 5-25-10: name of the organization from “Midwest Regional Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church” to “Midwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church.” (proposed amendment presented to 2007 MWC delegates and acted upon at 2008 MWC annual meeting).