

Anoka Covenant Church
Bylaws approved March 19, 2006

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

(A historical statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of The Evangelical Covenant Church as adopted by the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2001 and amended in 2003.)

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

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

In continuity with the renewal movements of historic Pietism, the Evangelical Covenant Church especially cherishes the dual emphasis on new birth and new life in Christ, believing that personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the foundation for our mission of evangelism and Christian nurture. Our common experience of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ continues to sustain the Evangelical Covenant Church as an interdependent body of believers that recognizes but transcends our theological differences.

The Evangelical Covenant Church celebrates two divinely ordained sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Recognizing the reality of freedom in Christ, and in conscious dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, we practice both the baptism of infants and believer baptism. The Evangelical Covenant Church embraces this freedom in Christ as a gift that preserves personal conviction, yet guards against an individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community.

The Evangelical Covenant Church has its roots in historical Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the biblical instruction of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and the great spiritual awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These influences, together with more recent North American renewal movements, continue to shape its development and distinctive spirit. The Evangelical Covenant Church is committed to reaching across boundaries of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, and status in the cultivation of communities of life and service.

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 Evangelical Covenant Church is the convention of delegates known as the Annual Meeting, which alone can adopt and amend the Constitution and Bylaws. The Evangelical Covenant Church shall be governed by this Constitution and Bylaws, its Articles of Incorporation, and all applicable laws.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of the Anoka Covenant Church of Anoka, Minnesota.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be Anoka Covenant Church of Anoka, 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, evangelism 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.

The mission of Anoka Covenant Church is To know Christ and to make Him known.

ARTICLE V

Membership

Membership 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 a financial officer. All officers shall be members of the Leadership Team. The term Leadership team shall be considered to be the equivalent of the trustees of the church.

ARTICLE VIII

Congregational Meetings

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. The church budget shall be submitted for action. The date for the election of the Leadership Team, nominating committee, mutual ministry committee and any other elected positions shall be set at this meeting.

Additional congregational meetings shall be held not less than semiannually. Items as required by the Constitution and Bylaws shall be submitted for congregational action. Only members at least who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.

ARTICLE IX

Assets of the Church

1. The congregation shall hold title to its own assets.
2. In the event of schism within the church, 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 bylaws, as determined by the executive board of the NWC.
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 or its designee. 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 X

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution, the Model Constitutions for Local Covenant 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 provided that at least a 90 day prior written notice is given to the congregation. Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the NWC executive board of the regional conference.

BYLAWS

As approved by the Congregation March 19, 2006

ARTICLE I

Membership

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of membership is to join with other followers of Christ in building a community of worship committed to prayer, preaching and study of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments, evangelism and fellowship across gender, race, age, culture, and class. In so doing, the membership covenants together 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.

Section 2. Rights of members.

a. Members have the right to vote on any matter at a congregational meeting. Membership does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Leadership Team) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Leadership Team), be treated as a trespasser. The authority of the pastor expires after 30 days absent specific authority from the Leadership Team.

b. A member may inspect or copy at their expense the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of open and non-confidential church meetings and Leadership Team meetings upon written request made at least five business days before the requested inspection date, or earlier if the church staff prefers. A member may not under any circumstances inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church or the accounting books and financial records of the church. A member does not have any right to inspect or copy names, addresses or other information about other members or friends of the church except as the church chooses to publish in a directory or other public source.

Section 3. Responsibilities. The 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 congregation 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 ECC and NWC.

Section 4. Procedure for Admission.

a. Membership in the church shall be considered upon application 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 or will be baptized within the next year 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 and who have completed a membership class.

b. Upon completion of a membership class, persons desiring to apply for membership shall submit their application to the Leadership Team. Applicants shall meet with the Senior Pastor or a committee appointed by the Leadership Team to give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Upon completion of such, the committee shall submit its recommendations on the applications to the Leadership Team who shall notify members of the church of the recommendations at least 7 days before the next congregational business meeting. Any member objecting to or having concerns over the granting of membership to an applicant may communicate in writing or otherwise such objection or concern to the Leadership Team.

c. Final action on applications for membership shall be taken by the congregation at the next business meeting.

d. Applicants who are received into membership of the church shall be welcomed at a service and make public confession of their Christian faith.

Section 5. Children. Children of the church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. They shall be offered instruction in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church. They may apply for church membership as outlined under Section of this article.

Section 6. Discipline.

a. *Discipline of members.* The Leadership Team shall be responsible for admonishing members who willfully neglect their responsibilities to the church or who err in doctrine or conduct.

b. *Erring members.* Any member including members of the Leadership Team 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 member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore the erring member. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Leadership Team in writing, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the member.

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

Section 7. Withdrawal and Removal of Membership. Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such request in writing to the Pastor or Leadership Team. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the Pastor if so requested, and the member is in good standing. The Leadership Team shall annually review the membership roster to determine inactivity. Those determined to have neglected their responsibilities may be approached under the process outlined in Section 6 of this article. The membership of any individual member is subject to termination by 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team based on inactivity over an extended period of time. Six months of continuous absence from any regular church activity is presumed to be sufficient inactivity to warrant removal. Members shall be contacted by mail or other means to be informed of the possibility of removal before final action is taken.

Section 8. Recording. The names of those terminating membership shall be duly recorded and reported to the congregational meeting following such action.

Section 9 . Nonmember friends. Nonmember friends of the church shall be enrolled by the church as part of its total constituency. The church and its Pastors 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 and are welcome to serve in ministry, but shall not have the privilege of voting nor of serving in leadership roles

Section 10. Designated contributions. From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Every effort shall be made to follow the suggestions and designations of the donor if this can be done in a manner consistent with the vision and purposes of the church. Any variation must be with the written consent of the donor or representative of the donor. If the donor or representative cannot be located, then the funds shall be used as determined by the Leadership Team.

Section 11. Disputes. Believing that lawsuits between believers are not in accordance with Scripture as set forth in I Corinthians chapter 6, all members are expected to submit any dispute between members or involving the church or any church staff to Christian mediation through Peacemakers Ministry or a similar organization if available. This section does not apply to lawsuits brought for the exclusive purpose of obtaining compensation from an insurance policy.

ARTICLE II

The Leadership Team

Section 1. Purpose. The Leadership Team, also known as the Church Council, shall lead the congregation as elders and 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. The Leadership Team is accountable to the congregation, who shall have the right and duty to review the conduct and character of the Leadership Team and its individual members to insure that they are fulfilling their responsibilities in a biblical and responsible manner.

Section 2. Composition. The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than seven (7) nor more than nine (9) Leadership Team members, one of whom shall be the Senior Pastor . Leadership Team members shall function as elders/overseers as these terms are used in the Scriptures. The Leadership Team may appoint other pastors or staff members as non-voting advisors to the Leadership Team, and may remove the same.

Section 3. Qualification. Any member of the church meeting the biblical standards of character as found in I Timothy 3: 1-12 and Titus 1: 6-9, is gifted for church leadership, and who is active in the support of the ministry of the church, financially and otherwise may be nominated and elected to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Election. Leadership Team members shall be interviewed and nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by a 2/3 vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation. Names may be submitted to the Nominating Committee at least two weeks before a meeting.

Section 5. Term of Office. Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of three 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 by written statement submitted to the Leadership Team. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of congregational members voting at a meeting. Vacancies created by resignation or removal may be filled by appointment through the 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team. The appointed Leadership Team member shall serve in place of the resigning or removed member subject to affirmation by 2/3 vote at the next congregational meeting.

Section 7. Notification of Meetings. All Leadership Team members shall receive a minimum 30-day advance notification of any meeting, including time and place of the meeting. In emergency situations, the 30-day notice may be waived by the 2/3 vote of the entire Leadership Team.

Section 8. Quorum. Two thirds of the 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. Any action of the Leadership team is subject to being changed by a two thirds vote of members at a congregational meeting unless another percentage is specified for that action .

Section 10. Organization The congregation shall elect from its members individuals to serve as leaders/elders on the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall elect from among themselves a chair, vice chair, a secretary, treasurer (financial officer) and such other officers required by the Constitution. The Leadership Team may appoint deacons to lead ministry teams as deemed advisable. Officers shall function under the supervision of and be accountable to the entire Leadership Team.

a. **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.

b. **Vice-chair.** The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence, assist in the Chair's duties, and may chair the mutual ministry committee.

c. **Secretary.** The secretary shall oversee the recording, keeping, publication and preservation of minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team, the preservation of the membership register, all official correspondence and for the official seal and documents of the church. .

d. **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. Delegation of specific duties is permitted. If there is a financial secretary, that person shall operate under the direction of the treasurer.

e. **Dual officer positions.** No Leadership Team member shall hold more than one office on the Team except that the Vice Chair may be elected to serve as Treasurer.

Section 11. Functions and Responsibilities of the Leadership Team.

Leadership Team members have the following functions as set forth in the Scriptures: guide the church under the direction of the Holy Spirit, shepherd followers of Christ and seekers, teach and preach, admonish and discipline those in error in accordance with the Scripture and pray for the sick. In fulfilling these functions, the Leadership Team shall pray consistently, call the church to prayer and otherwise direct and oversee all ministries and business affairs of the church. Specific responsibilities of the Leadership Team include the following:

- 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:
 - i. hiring and dismissal of staff subject to the provisions of these Bylaws. Action shall be by 2/3 vote of those in attendance; At least two people from the committee or ministry team most directly affected by the position shall be involved in the selection and hiring process of staff.
 - ii. annual appraisal of the senior pastor and of the ministry staff, and providing godly counsel or discipline as required;
 - iii. annual review and approval of staff compensation and compensation for new staff; and other personnel expenses for any staff member or activity;
 - iv. establishment and administration of personnel policies;
 - v. approval of changes in staff job descriptions and approval of job descriptions for new staff positions; and
 - vi. 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 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 except as specifically restricted by congregational vote but in no event shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget without prior notification of the membership.

f. appoint a Bookkeeper to disburse funds for church purposes in accordance with standard accounting procedures for non-profit organizations. The Bookkeeper may be a member of the staff or an outside service as determined by the Leadership Team. The Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Bookkeeper shall be covered by appropriate fidelity insurance or bonding as determined by the Leadership Team and paid for by the church. The Leadership Team shall annually arrange for a review of the financial records of the church and report such findings to the congregation. An audit shall be conducted at least every 7 years. The Leadership Team shall review, update and approve policies and procedures to assure adequate separation of duties in all church financial matters.

g. listen and respond appropriately to concerns of members;

h. be responsible for church discipline as outlined in Article I, Section 6 of these Bylaws;

i. 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 members of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church;

j. be responsible for action on applications for membership as outlined in Article I, Section 4 of these Bylaws and for withdrawal and removal of members as set forth in Article I, Section 7.

k. implement the vision and directives of the congregation in a manner consistent with Covenant doctrine, and communicate to the members in a timely manner the decisions that it makes.

l. meet with ministry teams at least annually to review the respective ministries and plan future mission and ministry objectives; listen and respond to proposals and concerns of said teams and meet with them such additional times as required to properly fulfill the role of overseer of the Ministry Teams.

m. be responsible through its individual members to review published minutes and actions of the Leadership Team and affirm that they are correct or present corrections to be published for the general membership.

n. hold one another accountable to live lives consistent with the calling of leaders/elders of the church.

Section 12. 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 as outlined in Ephesians 4: 1-6

Section 13. Meetings. All meetings of the Leadership Team are open to any member of the church except as voted to be closed by majority vote of the Leadership Team. Closed meetings are only to discuss matters determined to be sensitive and confidential. No official action may be taken during a closed meeting., but the meeting must first be reopened before a vote is taken.

Section 14. Individual responsibilities. In addition to the requirements of section 11 (l) above, each Leadership Team member shall meet annually with each of his or her designated ministry teams to plan the implementation of the vision and directives of the congregation and Leadership Team as it pertains to that ministry. The leadership team members shall further meet with and consult with their respective Ministry Team leaders on an ongoing basis in such a manner as to properly fulfill the role of overseer of the Ministry Teams.

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 in consultation with the appropriate 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. Meet with and report as requested to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Leadership.

- a. The leader of a Ministry Team shall be appointed 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 in consultation with the Ministry Team leader.
- 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.

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 members.

Section 2. Pastoral Qualifications. Pastors of the church shall meet the qualifications for character, giftedness, and call set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The Senior/Lead Pastor (hereafter referred to as the Senior Pastor) shall be an ordained pastor in good standing with the ECC or shall be eligible for ordination within a reasonable time of hiring. A pastor shall be a member of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 3. Call of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced three weeks in advance. The Senior Pastor shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. This committee shall be elected by the membership at 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 regional conference superintendent. The Senior Pastor shall be called by written ballot with a two-thirds vote of members 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 NWC.

Section 4. Call of Additional Pastors and Staff. Additional Pastors and staff members as required may be hired by the Leadership Team as set forth in Article II, section 11 provided there is authority in the budget..

Section 5. Duties of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, provide missional leadership, 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 shall be responsible to the Senior Pastor. The Senior 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 Staff Members. Additional pastors and ministry staff members shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor. They may serve as the leader or a 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 Staff Member. A pastor or ministry staff member may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Leadership Team. Reasonable advance notice is expected to preserve continuity of ministry and leadership. The Leadership Team shall submit the Senior Pastor's letter of resignation to the NWC superintendent for review and comment.

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 Senior 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 membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members 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 2/3 vote of members present and voting is necessary to dismiss the senior pastor.

b. *Dismissal of Additional Pastors and Ministry Staff.* Additional pastors and ministry staff 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 membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members 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 members 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 for the 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 Senior Pastor or staff member designated by the Senior Pastor, and at least two members at-large elected by a majority of the members 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 serve two year terms. 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 members 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, the at-large members of the nominating committee, the at-large members of the mutual ministry committee, and any other positions assigned to it either by the Leadership Team or congregation.

e. **Nominating procedure.** Any member of Christian character, giftedness, and call may be considered for any position. One or more candidates for each elected position shall be nominated by the nominating committee.

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 as outlined in Ephesians 4:1-6.

Section 2. Pastoral Search Committee. The Senior 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 regional conference superintendent.

Section 3. Mutual Ministry Committee.

a. General 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 five main areas of responsibility:

- 1.. care and encouragement for the pastors, ministry staff, and their families;
- 2.. receiving the perspectives and concerns of each pastor and ministry staff member relative to the congregation and ministry;
3. communicating the perspectives and concerns of the congregation to each pastor and ministry staff member relative to that person's ministry; and
- 4.. periodic review of personal and ministry goals of the pastors and ministry staff
5. facilitate conflict resolution between Ministry Teams and the Leadership Team.

b. Composition. The mutual ministry committee shall be made up of the vice chair , a member of the Leadership Team selected by the Leadership Team, and at least two congregational members elected by the congregation at a congregational meeting. Elected at-large members shall serve a two year term and may serve no more than three successive terms

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.

Section 5. Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy on a committee, the Leadership Team may make an appointment to fill the vacancy until the next congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Congregational Meetings

Section 1. 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. The church budget shall be submitted for action.

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. Reports on an independent review of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. The church budget shall be submitted for action. The date for the election of the Leadership Team, nominating committee, mutual ministry committee and any other elected positions shall be set at this meeting.

Section 2. Other meetings. Other meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by 10% of the membership, unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws.

Section 3. Notification of meeting. All meetings shall be announced by written communication to the membership 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 the Chair's 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 on any matter at hand at any meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. The Chair of the meeting may call for open balloting where no objection is raised.

Section 6. Quorum. Twenty-five percent of the membership, as defined in the bylaws, or in the absence of a definition in the bylaws, as defined by the Leadership team, shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting or any meeting where there is an election of church leadership, with a minimum of 20 members present. Unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws, ten percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for any other meeting, with a minimum of 20 members.

Section 7. 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 8. 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 Bylaws. 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 membership, 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 membership.

Section 3. Notification. All members 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 members 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 conference executive board may appoint an ex-officio member to the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

Section 1. Procedure. These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the membership present and voting at a duly called meeting for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the membership not less than 90 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on bylaws 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.