

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of COMMONS CHURCH



Approved by the membership March 11, 2020

CONSTITUTION for THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF CALGARY

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 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 in the cultivation of communities of life and service.

THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF CALGARY is an Evangelical Covenant Church located in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF CALGARY.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of the church shall be THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF CALGARY, hereafter referred to as “the Church”. The name of the denominational affiliation is Evangelical Covenant Church in Canada, hereafter referred to as “ECCC”.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

The Church is a member of the ECCC and is pledged to work in harmony with the Covenant and its decisions and to support its program, policies and institutions (ministries).

ARTICLE III

Confession of Faith

The Church believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE IV

Purpose

We have a conviction that the Creator God is at work to heal and remake the whole world through the person of Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit. Our mission then, is to join with God in the renewal of all things— agents of reconciliation in our homes, our neighbourhoods, our careers, and city through the work of God in us.

ARTICLE V

Membership

Membership in The Church is granted as provided in the Bylaws to those who profess trust in our Lord Jesus Christ and 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 the 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 designated officers of this church shall be a chair, vice-chair, a secretary and a financial officer/treasurer. All officers shall be members of the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE VIII

Congregational Meetings

An Annual Congregational Meeting shall be as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the Lead Pastor and by various ministry teams as deemed necessary by the Leadership Team. The treasurer shall submit reports on an independent review of financial records 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 as necessary. Items as required by the Constitution and Bylaws shall be submitted for congregational action.

ARTICLE IX

Assets of this Church

1. The congregation shall hold title to its' own assets. No person shall profit from any real, personal, or mixed properties held by the Church.
2. In the event of a 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 that abides by the Constitution and Bylaws as determined by the Leadership Board of The ECCC.
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 Leadership Board of The ECCC.
4. In the event of dissolution, or the congregation votes cease, the property and all assets of this church shall become the property of The ECCC.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this Constitution and not in conflict with the Evangelical Covenant Church principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting in an annual meeting of the congregation, providing the proposed amendment(s) was presented in written form to all members at least 1 month prior to the annual meeting date.

Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the Leadership Board of The ECCC.

BYLAWS for THE CHURCH

ARTICLE I

Membership

Section 1: Preamble

We are all part of community the moment we walk in the door and choose to be part of the collective conversation. However, at an organizational level Membership is needed in order to help make collective decisions and provide proper accountability and support for our leadership.

In that light, every Member is given a voice in the unfolding vision and direction of our community and is expected to model a vibrant and ongoing relationship with Christ and our local church.

Section 2: Responsibilities

The following ideas help us better understand the role of a member.

Together we:

- a. teach new participants about our community (Mission, Vision, Values) and those new to faith about basic Christian Theology (see affirmations section).
- b. lead by countering negative talk with positive conversation, by courageously addressing concerns in a healthy way with leadership, and by actively involving ourselves in the work it takes to run a church.
- c. contribute financially so that the community remains financially sustainable. We don't teach a particular measure in terms of our financial giving but we aspire to be generous people.

d. take an active role in helping to measure the health and productivity of our leaders (through open, honest conversation) and the effectiveness of our worship experiences and communication strategies (through in-seat surveys).

e. commit to pray for wisdom in our leadership, discernment concerning the specific will of God for our Church, and the courage to fulfill our mission in the city.

f. take personal responsibility to study the scriptures in order to stay growing in our own faith and to better understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

g. expect the church to be committed to individuals. We are in this for the long haul and that means that when we see areas for growth in each other we can name them and challenge each other, in love, without the shadow of judgement or condescension.

h. trust our leadership to be accessible. Church is more than sermons and information, it is community. Leadership can't be the beginning and ending of this process but we expect the pastoral staff to make a conscious effort to be available outside church for the rhythms of care and conversation.

Section 3: Admission into Membership

1. Application for Membership

Upon completion of a membership class, persons desiring to apply for membership shall submit their application to the Leadership Team. As part of the membership class applicants shall give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Upon completion of such, the Leadership Team will review and approve new members.

2. Reception

Applicants who are received into membership of the church shall be welcomed at the next congregational meeting of The Church.

Section 4: Children and Youth

Children and Youth have a significant place in the life of The Church. The church shall seek to nurture each individual, regardless of age, toward spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ. Members must be at least 16 years of age.

Section 5: Membership Renewal

1. Renewal

Active status must be renewed yearly. Members must renew their active status at any point in the 12 months prior to the Annual General Meeting in order to be able to vote at said meeting. Active status renewal can be done either in written application or by email. Renewal forms will be available during public gatherings and the designated email address will be publicized two months prior to any regularly scheduled congregational meeting. There is no cost to become a member or to renew active status.

2. Active Members

To be Active, a member must be a regular attendee of The Church and participate in the ministry of the church in keeping with their gifting and health as determined by the Leadership Team at the point of renewal. All Active members have voting privileges. The Leadership Team may present a list of the Active and Inactive members where appropriate.

3. Inactive Members

Members who do not renew active status automatically move to inactive status. Inactive members will remain part of church contact lists and be informed of all congregational meetings unless they request to be removed from the membership role. Inactive members will not have voting privileges. Inactive members can renew their active status at any point within five years of moving to inactive status. The Leadership Team may present a list of the Active and Inactive members where appropriate.

Section 6: Discipline and Care

Any member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be given spiritual care and direction as outlined in Matthew 18: 15-18 and Galatians 6:1. The goal is always to achieve a loving restoration of the one who has stumbled. Any member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love and where they are comfortable, seek to restore the erring member. If the individual fails to heed the counsel of restoration, the Leadership Team shall listen to the full issue and make a decision regarding the status of membership. Any decision made by the Leadership Team requires a two-thirds vote of all current Leadership Team members.

Section 7: Transfer of Member

Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such a request in writing to the Leadership Team. The Pastor shall issue Letter(s) of transfer.

Section 8: Recording

The names of those joining and terminating membership shall be duly recorded and reported at the next Congregational Meeting following the action.

Section 9: Non-member Friends

Non-member church friends shall be considered a part of the total constituency of The Church family. The church and its' Pastor shall serve them in their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider this their church home and to move in commitment towards membership. Non-member church friends shall have a voice, but no voting privileges at Congregational Meetings.

ARTICLE II

Leadership Team

Section 1: Purpose

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

The Leadership Team shall govern with an emphasis on (a) biblically-based integrity and truthfulness in all methods and practices, (b) visionary leadership rather than administrative management, (c) clear distinction of Leadership Team and Lead Pastors roles, (d) collective rather than individual decisions, (e) future rather than past or present focus, and (f) pro-activity rather than reactivity.

Accordingly, the Leadership Team is accountable to Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church, and to The Church community. The Leadership Team recognizes the affirmations of the ECC.

Section 2: Composition

The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than five and not more than nine members, plus the Lead Pastor (non-voting). Staff are not eligible for voting positions on the Leadership Team but may be invited by the team to meetings as necessary. Immediate family members (spouses, parents, children) of staff or other lead team members shall not be eligible for election to the Leadership Team. The Chair shall hold the golden vote in the event of a tie but efforts will be made to work together with consensus rather than majority decisions.

Section 3: Qualifications

Any active member of this church meeting the Biblical standard of character and giftedness for church leaders, and deemed to live out the responsibilities of a member (Article 1 Section 2) may be nominated and elected to the

Leadership Team. The Nomination Committee will be responsible to review any candidate who chooses to allow his/her name to stand to determine whether the candidate meets this criteria. See Article V

Section 4: Election

Leadership Team members shall be elected by two-thirds vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose. A Nominating Committee is established for this purpose to receive nominations. Nominations will be accepted up until the Sunday prior to the scheduled congregational meeting. Nominations from the floor of the meeting shall not be allowed.

Section 5: Term of Office

Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of up to three years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms with possible extensions in special circumstances at the invitation of the Nomination Committee. After one year off, a member may be eligible for subsequent service.

Section 6: Vacancies

A Leadership Team member may resign. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a majority vote of congregational members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. A Leadership Team member may be removed by a 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team, (see **Section 10: Care and Discipline**) Vacancies created by removal or resignation shall be filled by appointment of the Leadership Team effective until the end of the original term.

Section 7: Quorum

A majority of Leadership Team members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 8: Responsibilities of the Leadership Team

1. The Leadership Team shall present yearly ministry goals and objectives to the congregation.
2. The Leadership Team shall act as the Directors of the church and its assets. They shall designate those Leadership Team members and any other members of this church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.
3. The Leadership Team shall elect from among them a Chair, Vice-Chair Secretary, and Financial Officer/Treasurer. As a non-voting member of the Leadership Team the Lead Pastor will not be eligible for these positions.
 - i. **Chair:** The Chair shall preside at all Congregation Meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team. The Chair shall confer with the Lead Pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor can give by virtue of the pastor's training, experience and calling.
 - ii. **Vice Chair:** The Vic-Chair shall preside at all Congregation Meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team in the absence of the Chair.
 - iii. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all Congregational 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.
 - iv. **Financial Officer:** The Financial Officer shall ensure proper policies, processes, reporting, and reviewing of documents related to the finances of the Church.
4. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for reviewing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the Membership for approval.

- i. 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 the board authorize debt without prior approval of the Membership.
 - ii. The Leadership Team shall annually appoint auditors to review the financial records of this church.
- 5. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships including:
 - i. Annual appraisal of the ministry of the Lead Pastor and to provide godly counsel or discipline as required.
 - ii. Annual review and approval of staff compensation and approval of compensation for new staff positions, all subject to overall budget approval.
 - iii. Establishment of personnel policies
 - iv. Approval of any changes to Lead Pastor job description and review of changes in staff job descriptions and of job descriptions for new staff positions, including maintenance of job descriptions for all staff positions
- 6. The Leadership team is responsible to carry out duties outlined in Article I: Membership. In addition to Membership Section 3, Discipline and Care, where discipline must 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 member unless such grievance is submitted in writing and supported by the evidence of two or more witnesses.

7. The Leadership Team shall hear and respond appropriately to the concerns of members.
8. The Leadership Team shall determine Ministry Teams needed to carry out this church's mission and appoint appropriate leadership.

Section 9: 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.

Section 10: Care and Discipline

The Leadership Team is expected to act in Christian character and with the best interests of the Church in mind. If for any reason a team member is found to act in contravention of these standards all care will be given to restoring that person in grace. If necessary a 2/3 vote of the Leadership Team will remove that person from their position on the Leadership Team. If discipline requires the dissolution of membership privileges see ARTICLE 1 Section 4.

ARTICLE III

Ministerial Credentials

Section 1: Categories

There shall be the following categories of credentials: **Licensed**.

Candidates for **ordination** may work with the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada.

Section 2: Qualifications to Receive Credentials

All applicants for credentials shall be employed in a full or part time capacity by Commons Church, have a personal experience of salvation and shall subscribe to the Affirmations and Creeds of Commons Church.

Credential holders shall be expected to maintain biblical standards of holiness, and always, as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall seek to conform to the positive virtues of love, mercy, and forgiveness as taught by the Lord.

1. **Time Requirement:** The time required to apply for credentials, shall be a minimum of two full and continuous years of ministry in a comparable ministry setting.
2. **Proven Ministry:** A proven ministry shall be understood to mean that the candidate has clear evidence of the following:
 - i. The call of God.
 - ii. The operation of the ministry gifts according to Ephesians 4:11:12.
Provision shall also be made for specialized ministries such as music, Christian education, and visitation.
 - iii. Discipline and maturity in personal life and effectiveness in preaching or other means of communicating the gospel.
 - iv. The manifestation of genuine spiritual concern for all people.
3. **MINISTRY APPOINTMENT:** The granting of this credential shall be conditional upon the applicant currently holding an appointment in ministry at Commons Church or a related ministry.
4. **PRE-LICENSE TRAINING:** Candidates for credentials shall complete at a minimum a bachelors degree in theological or biblical studies.
5. **EXCEPTIONS FOR LICENSING:** Whereas there may be a legitimate need to consider an exception from qualification for this credential, such

exception may be granted only by the Senior Pastor and Leadership Team upon application from the candidate.

Section 3: DISCIPLINE

1. **THE NATURE AND PURPOSES OF DISCIPLINE:** Discipline is an application of scriptural principles that guide conduct and lifestyle. The aims of discipline are that God may be honoured, that the purity and welfare of the ministry may be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration. Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of the minister, while fully providing for the protection and advancement of the spiritual welfare of our local assemblies. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of both justice and mercy. The following actions shall be proceeded with only after all other avenues of Christian counsel and admonition have been attempted.

2. CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- I. Any moral failure involving sexual misconduct (including but not limited to sexual assault).
- II. Any moral or ethical failure unbecoming to a credential holder (including but not limited to deception, fraud, theft, assault).
- III. The propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to those affirmed by Commons Church.
- IV. A contentious or non cooperative spirit, an assumption of dictatorial authority, or an arbitrary rejection of counsel and direction from the Lead Pastor or Leadership Team.
- V. The mismanagement of church finances.

- VI. Any action that results in employment with Commons Church being terminated or in Membership at Commons Church being revoked. See Article 1 Section 6

Section 4 DETERMINATION OF DISCIPLINE

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Leadership Team to determine whether the circumstances of the case merit probation, suspension, or dismissal. The Leadership Team shall weigh decisions on:
 - I. the basis of the offence itself;
 - II. the manner and thoroughness of repentance;
 - III. the attitude of the offending credential holder toward the discipline; the manifested willingness to cooperate;
 - IV. the requirements of the Constitution and By-Laws.
2. If the verdict is guilty, the credential shall be suspended immediately unless it is determined to be a minor violation. Ministry employment may also be terminated.
3. If, in the opinion of the Leadership Team, restoration is feasible, a restoration program shall be provided.

Section 5: THE OFFICIAL MINISTERIAL LIST

1. A list of all credential holders shall be issued at every Annual General Meeting of Commons Church

Section 6: CEREMONIES AND ORDINANCES

1. Ministers holding credentials with Commons Church are permitted to conduct the various ceremonies and ordinances in accordance with the customs and practices of Commons Church and the laws of Alberta.

2. Licensed ministers are permitted to solemnize marriages if they are registered with the government.

Section 7: MARRIAGE CEREMONY

1. We recognize a need for each ceremony to be customized for the couple but all ceremonies will follow a basic outline
 - I. Prayer
 - II. Homily
 - III. Vows
 - IV. Exchange of Rings or Symbol of Marriage
 - V. Pronouncement of Marriage
 - VI. Singing of License and Registry by Couple, Officiant, and Witnesses
 - VII. Prayer and Blessing

Section 8: SACRAMENTS, TENETS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

1. Commons Church recognizes the sacraments of Marriage, Eucharist, and the Baptism of both infants and adults
2. Commons Church recognizes the tenets of the Evangelical Covenant Church
 - I. We affirm the centrality of the word of God.
 - II. We affirm the necessity of the new birth.
 - III. We affirm a commitment to the whole mission of the church.
 - IV. We affirm the church as a fellowship of believers.
 - V. We affirm a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit.

VI. We affirm the reality of freedom in Christ.

3. Commons Church recognizes the historic Apostles' creed as the guiding religious beliefs of the Christian faith

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

ARTICLE IV

Pastoral Staff

Section 1: Qualifications

The pastoral staff shall meet the New Testament requirements of their office as dictated in 1 Timothy 3: 2-7. They shall be in agreement with the purpose and values of this congregation. The Lead Pastor may hold ministerial credentials (or be in the process to hold credentials) with either The Evangelical Covenant Church or through Commons Church. Pastors and their spouses shall be members by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 2: Duties

The pastoral staff shall devote themselves to the service of this church as servant leaders. The staff shall devote themselves to faithfully upholding

God's Word and to giving themselves to their pastoral work. They shall model personal integrity and love toward the congregation. They shall work in cooperation with the Leadership Team.

Section 3: Call of a new Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor shall be called at an Annual or special Congregational Meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. A Pastoral Search Committee shall select a pastoral candidate.

The Search Committee shall be selected by the Leadership Team and shall have three to seven members. The Search Committee shall have at least two members who are not a part of the Leadership Team. The Search Committee shall work cooperatively with The ECCC through the office of the Superintendent.

A Pastor must receive a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at the Congregational Meeting to receive a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time.

Section 4: 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 non-voting member of the Leadership Team and a non-voting 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 this church.

Section 5: Cooperation

All Pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, strive to work in harmony with the Evangelical Covenant Church and The ECCC.

Section 6: Other Pastors

Other pastors shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Lead Pastor.

Section 7: Resignation of the Lead Pastor

Under ordinary circumstances the Lead Pastor may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Leadership Team, with a minimum of six weeks' notice required by this church or the Pastor for termination of pastoral duties. Should there be extenuating circumstances the six-week notice will be waived.

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, intentional instruction of false doctrine, unethical behaviour, or disloyalty to the Evangelical Covenant Church (Matthew 18: 15-18). If in the discernment 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 Covenant regarding discipline, prior to further action by the Church.

ARTICLE V

Nominating Committee

Section 1: Composition

The Nominating Committee shall consist of one Leadership Team member designated by the Leadership Team, the Lead Pastor, and at least two members of this church not from the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team

shall designate one of the committee members to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee.

Section 2: Quorum

A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the Nominating Committee.

Section 3: Responsibilities

The Nomination Committee will be responsible to 1. receive nominations from the congregation, 2. make nominations on behalf of the congregation, 3. review nominees to determine whether the candidate meets the criteria named in Article II Section 3 and in the Leadership Team Qualifications set out in the Related Materials section, and to 4. approach those nominated to see if they will allow their name to stand for election. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for providing appropriate nominations to fill the offices of the Leadership Team, and any other positions assigned to it either by the Leadership Team or congregation – for example: conference delegates.

Section 4: 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 Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held as near to the beginning of the year as feasible. The Pastor, Ministry staff, the Leadership Team, and the

Financial Officer or Treasurer shall submit written reports. The budget shall be presented at this meeting.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by two-thirds of the Membership.

Section 3: Notification of Meetings

All meetings shall be announced and presented 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 shall serve as Chair of any meeting of the Membership.

Section 5: Voting

Each Active member and only active members shall be entitled to cast one vote in any election on any subject at any Annual or Special Meeting of the Membership. Voting may be conducted at the in-person Meeting and electronic voting may be provided prior to the meeting date. Voting access, if provided, will be available by request to each active member. Members who request an electronic vote will not be eligible to vote in person. Scrutineers will count electronic votes along with on-site votes for each subject being voted on at the time of the in-person vote.

Section 6: Quorum

One-third of the active Membership shall constitute a quorum of any Congregational Meeting.

Section 7: Rules of Order

All Congregational Meetings shall be guided by the Biblical principle to “speak the truth in love” and to have things done “decently and in order”. Robert’s Rules of Order shall be the organizational guide for The Church.

Section 8: Final Voice

The congregation reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

Section 1: Procedure

Amendments in harmony with the Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of those members present in an Annual Meeting of the congregation. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the members not less than 30 days prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting.

RELATED MATERIALS

Leadership Team Qualifications

In our community we use the term “Leadership Team” to designate not only the functional leadership role but also the collective eldership role.

The terms “elders” and “overseers” are interchangeable and designate the primary spiritual leaders of the church (Titus 1:5, 7; Acts 20: 17, 28). The term “elder” emphasizes maturity and “overseer” emphasizes the leadership responsibility. Ideally the local church has a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). Elders are equal in authority, but not equal in influence. For example, the Pastor serves a unique role within the community setting vision but does not necessarily speak solely for God or with unquestioned authority. The elders’ authority is to be expressed in leadership but not lording it over the community (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:17).

Elders have responsibility for prayer ministry (James 5:14), teaching and shaping the church’s doctrine (Acts 6:4, Acts 20:27-31; 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17; Titus 1:9), and the pastoring of the community (1 Peter 5:2). For us, this means that the primary teaching voice for community gatherings be represented in the eldership but also that each lead team member be comfortable to explain core Christian concepts clearly and effectively in conversation. This type of relational-pastoral dynamic is something we reach towards as a community sensing the need for the community to participate in the pastoral role. For more information on our place within the Christian tradition, see the affirmations of the ECCC.

The scriptures talk about elders being blameless in character (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Obviously this does not mean perfect. However it does indicate an ongoing pattern of conformance to the life of Christ which includes healthy lifestyle choices, commitment to spiritual growth and generosity in personal interactions and finances. We do not teach tithing (a 10% donation to the church) as an absolute requirement in our community but we do understand that generosity and positive contribution to the ongoing life of the community are a scriptural imperative. Elders are expected therefore to model this commitment, contributing to the community with their time and finances generously, as life circumstances allow.

An elder must be the “husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; 3:12). We understand that this qualification does not exclude women, an unmarried person, someone remarried after the death of a spouse, nor necessarily one who has divorced and remarried. The phrase describes for us, a reputation as a “faithful” spouse.

In Scripture elders were selected by the original church planter (Acts 14:23) or by other elders (Titus 1:5), with recognition from the congregation for its leaders (Acts 6:3; 15:22-23). In our tradition, the existing lead team takes the initiative to approach potential team members based on an assessment of the qualifications outlined here and an eye towards identifying and acknowledging those who are operating with the relational authority in the community.

It is assumed that all elders operate in the best interest of the community at all times.

Scripture does not describe how elders should organize themselves, so this is determined by church size, cultural context and specific needs of the body. This document reflects our best attempts to appropriately organize ourselves.