THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE
EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF LAFAYETTE, INC.
an Indiana Nonprofit Corporation
(Originally adopted June 24, 1997, revised xxxxx 2022~~October 2015~~)

PREAMBLE

(A Historical Statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of The Evangelical Covenant Church denomination as revised in ~~1957~~ 2001)

~~"The Evangelical Covenant Church has its roots in historical Christianity as it emerged in the Protestant Reformation, in the biblical instruction of the Lutheran State Church of Sweden, and in the great spiritual awakenings of the nineteenth century. These three influences have in large measure shaped its development and are to be borne in mind in seeking to understand its distinctive spirit.~~

~~"The Covenant Church adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. It has traditionally valued the historic confessions of the Christian Church, particularly the Apostles' Creed, while at the same time it has emphasized the sovereignty of the Word over all creedal interpretations. It has especially cherished the pietistic restatement of the doctrine of justification by faith as basic to its dual task of evangelism and Christian nurture, the New Testament emphasis upon personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, the reality of a fellowship of believers which recognizes but transcends theological differences, and the belief in baptism and the Lord's Supper as divinely ordained sacraments of the church. While the denomination has traditionally practiced the baptism of infants, in conformity with its principle of freedom it has given room to divergent views. The principle of personal freedom, so highly esteemed by the Covenant, is to be distinguished from the individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community."~~

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.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Lafayette, Inc. an Indiana Nonprofit Corporation.

ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - Name

The legal name of this church shall be: "The Evangelical Covenant Church of Lafayette, Inc. an Indiana Nonprofit Corporation." This church will also go by the names: "Evangelical Covenant Church" and "ECC."

ARTICLE II - Confession of Faith

The church (referred to hereafter as "ECC") believes in and accepts the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testament, as the revealed Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. (Isaiah 40:8; Psalm 93:5; 119:105; Matthew 18; Luke 1:4; 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Galatians 1:8; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:16, 19-21; 3:2; Hebrews 1:1-2)

ARTICLE III - Affiliation

ECC is a member of the denomination known as The Evangelical Covenant Church (referred to hereafter as "the Covenant Denomination") and of its Central Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the programs, policies, and institutions of the Covenant Denomination.

ARTICLE IV - Purpose

Section 1
The purpose of ECC shall be to unite Christians in fellowship for spiritual development, for the leading of others to Christ, and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through Christian education, home and world missions, and the institutions conducted by the Covenant Denomination and the Central Conference.

Section 2
In order to achieve this purpose, ECC, in the unity of the Spirit, shall use the gifts that God has given it and the means of grace which God has placed at its disposal: the Word of God, baptism, and Holy Communion. (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:4-16)

ARTICLE V - Membership

Membership in ECC is granted on application to those who through faith in God's son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope, have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the total ministry of ECC and to share its fellowship and obligations.

ARTICLE VI - Pastors

The pastors shall be thorough and experienced Christians, known to be living true God-fearing lives and having a call and the gift to preach and/or teach the Word of God. The pastors shall be members of ECC by virtue of acceptance of a call from the congregation.

ARTICLE VII - Church Council and Governance

Section 1
The general administration of ECC shall be vested in a body known as the Church Council (referred to hereafter as "the Council"), which shall consist of the Senior/Lead Pastor and six other individuals, all of whom shall be full members of ECC, selected from amongst the lay leadership in accordance with the Bylaws. The Council shall select from its membership a chairperson in accordance with the Bylaws; this individual will also serve as the Church Chair (referred to hereafter as "the Chair").

Section 2
The authority of the governance of ECC is vested in the membership through congregational meetings. Each member shall have one vote. The management and administration and oversight of all business and spiritual affairs are delegated by the congregation to the Council and appropriate leadership as delineated in the Bylaws. All elected leadership positions specified in the Bylaws shall be filled with members in good standing of ECC.

ARTICLE VIII - Administrative Meetings of the Church

Section 1
The Council shall ordinarily meet once per month on a regularly announced schedule, at the call of the Chair or the Senior/Lead Pastor, or on the written request of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council. All Council meetings shall be open to all members of ECC. The Council may agree to enter an Executive Session where sensitive matters may be discussed by not voted on, in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 2
There shall be three regular congregational business meetings of ECC held on a regular schedule throughout the year. The minutes of the meetings shall be made available to the members of the congregation.

Section 3
Special business meetings of the congregation may be called by the Chair when necessary, after the Chair has conferred with the Council. Special business meetings of the congregation may be called by the Council upon written request of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members. Also, special business meetings of the congregation may be called upon written petition of a quorum of the membership. Special business meetings shall be announced at a minimum of two Sunday morning services before the meeting.

Section 4
Election of Council members shall be held at an appropriate congregational business meeting. A budget shall be presented for approval and adoption at a designated congregational business meeting.

Section 5
Written annual reports of the previous year's activities of ECC shall be presented at the annual congregational business meeting. These shall include a written report by the professional staff, financial officers, and the Council. The annual reports shall be made available to the members of the congregation.

Section 6
All meetings shall be conducted in conformity with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX - Organizations of the Church

Section 1
ECC acknowledges only those organizations (committees, commissions, or other groups) that have been organized in harmony with the ECC Confession of Faith (Article II) and Purpose (Article IV) and sanctioned by the Council.

Section 2
Only professing Christians who are ECC members of good standing are to be elected to the Council.

ARTICLE X - Property

Section 1
In case members of ECC should differ in opinion enough to cause a separation, which we pray God will prevent, the property, real and otherwise, shall belong to those who adhere to this constitution, as determined by the Executive Board of the Central Conference.

Section 2
Should ECC dissolve, the property and all assets shall belong to the Covenant Denomination and the Central Conference.

ARTICLE XI - Amendments

Section 1
Amendments to this Constitution in harmony with Articles II, III, and IV and not in conflict with the principles and policies of the Covenant Denomination can be considered only at a regular congregational business meeting of ECC; adoption shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present, but a motion for such an amendment must have been made at a regular congregational business meeting held at least three months previously.

Section 2
Articles II, X, and XI of this Constitution cannot be changed in meaning or deleted.

ARTICLE XII - Bylaws

Bylaws not in conflict with this Constitution may be adopted or amended at a regular congregational business meeting of ECC. Adoption shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present, but a motion for such amendment must have been made in writing and discussed at a regular congregational business meeting held at least three months previously.

- This Constitution was adopted at a special business meeting of ECC in September 1935, and amended at the annual business meetings, January 1, 1949; January 6, 1953; December 7, 1954; December 4, 1956; December 3, 1957; December 8, 1959; and December 6, 1960.
- The Constitution was rewritten to incorporate Bylaws at the annual business meeting December 1965, and its adoption was reconfirmed at a business meeting of the congregation December 10, 1974.
- The Constitution was revised January 3, 1981, and April, 1986.
- Minor revisions were made on October 19, 1993, and again July, 1995.
- A major revision involving a change from a Board form of governance to a Council form was approved on June 24, 1997.
- A revision to move ECC's Fiscal Year from February 1 to July 1, and to move to three (3) congregational meetings per calendar year was approved January 8, 2006.
- In January 2009, the Constitution was amended to reflect incorporation of the church as a nonprofit organization in the State of Indiana. The Bylaws were revised to more clearly delineate the grounds and procedures for dismissal of a pastor, and to clarify how members of the church's professional staff may move into pastoral positions.
- In October 2015, revisions were made to update Article I – Membership and Article IV – Church Officers.
- In xxxx 2022, revisions were made to update Article III – The Pastors and updates were made to congregational care removing the role of the Diaconate throughout the document. Updates were made to address virtual meetings in Article VIII. The preamble was updated. Various other minor formatting changes were made.

ARTICLES OF THE BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - Membership

Section 1 - Admission into membership

(a) -Application for membership

Persons desiring to become full members of ECC shall make written application to the Senior/Lead Pastor of ECC. ~~and to the Diaconate.~~ The application must include the applicant's confession of Christian faith in accordance with Article V of the Constitution. After the applicant has completed the Membership Class at ECC or another Evangelical Covenant church, the Senior/Lead Pastor or delegate~~members of the Diaconate~~ shall acquaint themselves with the applicant's spiritual life and conduct and, if seen fit, shall recommend the applicant for church membership. The candidate's application is to be acted upon at the next congregational business meeting. The applicant may attend the meeting, but should not be present when the vote is taken. A two-thirds (2/3) majority affirmative vote of those present shall be necessary to admit applicants as full members to ECC.

(b) Children

Children of the members of ECC and its constituency shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached an appropriate age, they should receive special instruction through the church's confirmation class in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church. Upon manifestation of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and interview by the pastor, they may be received into membership of ECC as outlined under Section 1 (a) of this Article. Confirmands who make application for church membership within two years of completing confirmation must be interviewed by the Senior/Lead Pastor or delegate~~Diaconate~~, but do not need to complete the Membership Class.

(c) Transfer of Membership

Applicants from other Christian churches may submit letters of transfer, to the Senior/Lead Pastor.~~ and the Diaconate.~~ Applicants should complete the Membership Class prior to applying for membership unless they transfer from another Evangelical Covenant church. The Senior/Lead Pastor or delegate~~The Diaconate~~ shall then act upon the application in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) Reception of New Members

Applicants who are voted into membership of ECC will be invited to a designated Sunday Worship service to make public confession of their faith and to be extended the hand of fellowship by the pastor and congregation.

Section 2 - Associate Membership

An associate member shall be one who wishes to identify with ECC and still retain membership in a Christian church in another community. Applicants for associate membership must qualify for membership under Article V of the Constitution and shall make application and be acted upon in accordance with Section 1 (a) and (d) of Article I of these Bylaws.

Section 3 - Honorary Members

Members or former members of ECC whose primary work is serving the Church of Jesus Christ elsewhere, especially as preachers, teachers, or missionaries, may be retained on ECC rolls as honorary members. Election to honorary membership shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a congregational business meeting.

Section 4 - Removal of Membership

Individuals may be removed from the regular membership roll in the following circumstances:

(a) Letter of Transfer

Applications for transfer of membership to another church shall be made in writing to the Senior/Lead Pastor, who shall issue the transfer to the church with which the individual is uniting. Such transfers shall be reported through the Council~~Diaconate~~ to the next congregational business meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record. In the Senior/Lead Pastor's absence, ECC may issue the letter of transfer.

(b) Letter of Resignation

Requests for withdrawal from membership in ECC should be made in writing to the Senior/Lead Pastor or the Council. Such requests shall be presented to the next congregational business meeting after due consideration by the Council and shall be made a matter of record.

(c) Termination of Participation

Individuals who, except for age, health, or circumstance, voluntarily cease participating in the activities of ~~-~~ECC, or who withdraw from ECC fellowship and do not communicate with ECC for a period of twelve months, shall be reviewed by the Council or delegate.~~Diaconate.~~ After due notification of the individual, if possible, and after dealing with such individuals in accordance with Article II, Section 2, of the Bylaws, when possible, the Council~~Diaconate~~ shall recommend ~~to~~ the ~~Council~~ appropriate action or removal of such membership.

(d) Dismissal

Individuals may be dismissed from membership for reasons of discipline in accordance with Article II, Section 2, of the Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present at a congregational business meeting upon recommendation ~~of the Diaconate through~~ the Council.

Section 5 - Voting, Property Rights, and Church Statistics

(a~~)~~ ~~)~~ Voting

Except as provided herein, only members, associate members, and honorary members present at the time of a vote may vote in congregational business meetings. In the event a member, associate member, or honorary member is unavailable to attend a congregational business meeting at which a Council election or vote to call a pastor will be held due to participation in an ECC-sponsored activity, the member shall have the right to cast a private, paper ballot prior to the meeting. The ballot must be delivered to the Chair or Secretary and included in the collection of ballots during the congregational business meeting.

(b) Property Rights

Only members have claim to property of ECC. An individual who has been dismissed from ECC in accordance with Section 4 (d) of this Article or has otherwise withdrawn from membership has forfeited all rights to any and all property of ECC.

Section 6 - Non-member friends (Affiliates)

Non-member friends shall be enrolled by ECC as a part of its total constituency. ECC and the pastors shall serve them in all their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider ECC as their church home. If it is their desire, they shall be kept informed of the activities of ECC. Affiliates may include non-members who are regular in attendance, former members, or individuals who by reason of interest or family associations wish to maintain contact with ECC.

ARTICLE II - Responsibilities and Discipline of Church members

Section 1 - Responsibilities of membership

All members shall be expected to assume the responsibilities and obligations placed upon them by the Word of God and the church. They shall, through the witness of life and word, consecrated service, prayer, and financial support further the cause of Christ in the local church, in the community, and in the Covenant Denomination.

Section 2 - Discipline

(a) Negligent members

Members who ~~are~~ willfully neglect the duties of membership by ~~regularly~~ failing to regularly attend services

of ECC, ~~or to contribute to the support of ECC according to their means~~ shall be counseled~~ccounseled~~ by the Senior/Lead Pastor. ~~and, if appropriate, members of the Diaconate.~~ If this counseling is ignored, they shall individually be dealt with as erring members.

(b) Erring members

When there is clear and reliable evidence that a member has erred in doctrine or conduct unbecoming a Christian, that member shall then be counseled in accordance to Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. A fellow member having full knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of love, seek to restore that person. If that person does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought before the Council~~Diaconate~~ and the Senior/Lead Pastor, who shall, in meekness, gentleness, and love seek to restore that person. If that person fails to heed the counsel of the pastor ~~and the Diaconate~~, the error shall be brought ~~by the Diaconate~~ to the Council and if necessary to a congregational business meeting to determine the discipline to be administered.

(c) Discipline

Discipline shall be administered in the spirit of Christian love and with due regard for the welfare of the erring individual as well as the welfare of ECC. Dismissal of a member must be acted on by the ECC membership, which alone has the authority. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at a congregational business meeting is required for such action.

ARTICLE III - The Pastors

Section 1 - Qualifications

While all members of ECC share in the one ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, ECC recognizes the necessity of a specially ordered ministry. As used in these bylaws, pastor means a person called and set apart to this specially ordered ministry under the authority of ECC and the Covenant Denomination.

The pastors of ECC shall meet the Biblical character requirements of the office and be members of the Covenant Ministerium. They shall be or become ordained, licensed, or commissioned by The Evangelical Covenant Church in accordance with their qualifications and duties for pastoral office, staff ministry, or lay ministry. They shall by virtue of a call be members of ECC.

Section 2 - The Call

(a) The Senior/Lead Pastor and other full-time pastoral staff shall be called as a result of an affirmative written ballot taken at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two Sundays in advance. They shall be called for an indefinite period by at least a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present and voting from among candidates recommended by a pastoral search committee.

(b) The termination of any of the pastors' service to ECC shall require at least six weeks' notice by the pastor.

(c) The requirements of this Section do not apply to interim pastoral staff.

(d) The requirements of this Section do not apply to part-time pastoral positions of one-half FTE (full-time employee) or less.

Section 3 - <u>The Pastoral Search Committee</u>

(a) Pastoral search committees for the selection of any of the pastors shall be elected from nomination from the floor at a regular or special congregational meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two Sundays in advance. Pastoral search committees shall consist of six to eight members representative of the diversity of ECC and with consideration for the particular pastoral level being sought. The Chair, if not otherwise elected to the committee, shall be an ex-officio member with voting rights.

(b) The Chair may appoint another Council member or members to serve on these committees.

(c) Pastoral search committees shall consult with the Superintendent of the Central Conference and the Executive Secretary of the Covenant Department of the Ordered Ministry.

(d) Because ECC encourages members of the professional staff (directors) to seek pastoral licensing or ordination when they are so qualified, such individuals may be considered for pastoral designations without the need for a search committee. In such cases, the requirements of Section 2 pertaining to *<u>The Call</u>* shall still apply.

Section 4 - <u>Responsibilities of the Pastors</u>

(a) The Senior/Lead Pastor shall lead a careful personal life; keep watch over the congregation; provide leadership and direction for the programs of ECC; lead the meetings for edification, preaching, and teaching the Word of God; administer the sacraments; and see that proper Christian order and records are kept in the church. The Senior/Lead Pastor shall make regular reports to the Council and an annual written report to the congregation. The Senior/Lead Pastor shall report directly to the Council.

(b) Other pastoral staff shall have the same qualities as the Senior/Lead Pastor and shall assist the Senior/Lead Pastor according to their respective job descriptions. Each shall make an annual report to the congregation. Pastoral staff members will report directly to the Council and will be directly supervised by the Senior/Lead Pastor.

(c) The Senior/Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of pastoral search committees for all junior pastoral staff. No pastoral staff shall be members of a search committee for a Senior/Lead Pastor.

(d) The pastors shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant Denomination, the Central Conference, and other Evangelical Covenant ministers.

Section 5 - <u>Pastoral Relations</u>

The Council shall serve as the pastoral relations committee for the Senior/Lead Pastor and other pastoral and professional staff of ECC. The Council, in this capacity, shall meet with each of the pastors at least once each quarter for the purpose of discussing items that will promote more effective work by the church and the pastors for the Kingdom of God.

Section 6 - Complaint Against a Pastor

(a) Complaint against any of the pastors can be recognized only in agreement with I Timothy 5:19.

(b) Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Council, specifying the nature of the charges which may include but are not limited to: indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, disloyalty to the Covenant, inability to lead ECC or to adequately perform the duties of pastor, or failure to fulfill the pastoral commitments outlined in the Letter of Call. Matthew 18:15-18 shall serve as a guide. If in the judgment of the Council (acting in the absence of any pastor against whom a complaint has been made) there is substance to the charges, the case shall be referred to the Central Conference Superintendent who will confer with the Covenant Executive Minister of the Ordered Ministry. These two officers will confer and determine the order of responsibility in pursuing the matter according to the Rules and Regulations of the Department of the Ordered Ministry of the Covenant regarding discipline, prior to further action by ECC.

Section 7 – Dismissal of a Pastor- For Cause

(a) One of the Council's primary responsibilities is to protect and preserve the body of believers at ECC. The act of dismissing a pastor should never be done hastily, without great deliberation and prayer, and without having done all due diligence to gather the facts necessary to make such a monumental decision. The Council should act in a very forthright and timely manner once the necessity and inevitability of –dismissal is reached.

(b) Once the Central Conference Superintendent is satisfied that just cause to dismiss the pastor exists (see Sec. 6b), the Council may move to dismiss that pastor. The Council, as representative employer for the congregation, has the authority and responsibility to terminate a pastor for just cause. A congregational vote to dismiss the pastor is not required.

(c) The Council shall give the congregation notice of its intent to dismiss and shall schedule a congregational meeting for the purpose of explaining the charges brought against the pastor as well as the efforts made to correct or restore the situation. Before the Council makes a final vote on the matter, it shall receive input from members of the congregation relating to the issue(s) leading to the recommendation to dismiss.

During this congregational meeting, the Council will consider both the need to be publicly accountable to the members and the appropriate need for confidentiality of facts to protect the pastor from gossip and to protect third parties (innocent or involved).

(d) When an announcement of intent to dismiss occurs, the pastor being charged shall cease from further official church duties until such time as the matter has been resolved. If the Council later withdraws its notice of intent to dismiss, the pastor may resume official duties. If the Council votes to dismiss, termination of the Call and employment will be effective immediately.

(e) The Council vote to dismiss the pastor should take place in a separate closed-door meeting -within a reasonable timeframe after the above congregational meeting.

If the Council vote pertains to the Senior/Lead Pastor, a vote to dismiss requires a two-thirds majority (four) of the six elected Council members. If the Council vote pertains to any of the

other pastors, the Senior/Lead Pastor participates in the vote as an ex-officio member of Council, and a vote to dismiss requires a two-thirds majority (five) of the seven Council members.

(f) The Council should consider the many ways that such a separation of service might be accomplished with the love, sensitivity and forgiveness that our Lord Jesus Christ commands. ~~Examples of this might include an offer for occupational and/or psychological counseling and testing, an extended severance pay package, extension of medical insurance benefits during the family transition, financial help with relocation expenses, etc.~~

Any financial severance arrangements shall be at the discretion of the Council and shall take into consideration the pastor's personal situation, the reasons for the dismissal, and other factors as appropriate.

Section 8 – Dismissal of a Pastor for Reasons Other than Cause

(a) (a) One of the Council's primary responsibilities is to protect and preserve the body of believers at ECC. The act of dismissing a pastor should never be done hastily, without great deliberation and prayer, and without having done all due diligence to gather the facts necessary to make such a monumental decision. The Council should act in a very forthright and timely manner once the necessity and inevitability of dismissal is reached.

(b) There may be situations that arise in the life of the church such as reduction in attendance, giving not meeting the budget, change in missional direction of the church, etc. where reductions in pastoral staffing may have to be considered. In such cases, the Church Council shall determine which pastoral position(s), if any, should be eliminated and why.

(c) The Council vote to dismiss the pastor should take place in a separate closed-door meeting. within a reasonable timeframe after the above congregational meeting. If the Council vote pertains to the Senior/Lead Pastor, a vote to dismiss requires a two-thirds majority (four) of the six elected Council members. If the Council vote pertains to any of the other pastors, the Senior/Lead Pastor participates in the vote as an ex-officio member of Council, and a vote to dismiss requires a two-thirds majority (five) of the seven Council members.

(d) The Council shall inform the Central Conference Superintendent regarding its determination for pastoral staff reduction, after which it should prepare a formal recommendation to the congregation. The recommendation should include pertinent information on the issues that led to the recommendation as well as the effective date that the dismissal is to occur.

(e) The Council shall give the congregation notice of its recommendation for terminating a position and shall schedule a congregational meeting for the purpose of acting on the recommendation. The congregational meeting for acting on the recommendation must be scheduled no sooner than 2 weeks following the notice.

(f) A congregational vote of 2/3 of those members voting shall be required to eliminate a pastoral staff position. If elimination of a position is approved, the termination date shall be no sooner than 6 weeks after the date of the vote.

(g) Upon announcement of a recommendation to eliminate a pastoral position, the individual in that position may continue to conduct the duties of that position until the termination date.

(h) The Council should consider the many ways that such a separation of service might be accomplished with the love, sensitivity and forgiveness that our Lord Jesus Christ commands. Any financial severance arrangements shall be at the discretion of the Council and shall take into consideration the pastor's personal situation, the reasons for the dismissal, and other factors as appropriate.

ARTICLE IV - Church Officers and Supporting Roles

Section 1- Church Officers
Officers of ECC shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the total ministry of ECC. The officers of ECC shall be: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer.

Section 2- Church Chair
The Chair shall preside at all Council and congregational meetings and encourage the observance of good parliamentary law. The Chair shall preside at any public worship period in the absence of the pastors or shall delegate the duty to another member of ECC. The Chair shall have the authority to appoint ad hoc committees to serve the needs of ECC except as provided elsewhere in this Constitution and Bylaws.

The Chair shall coordinate and present an annual budget in conjunction with the Council at an appropriate meeting for approval by the congregation.

Section 3 – Church Vice-Chair
The Vice-Chair shall serve in the absence of the Chair.

Section 4- Church Secretary
The secretary shall keep accurate records of the congregational and Council sessions, both regular and extra, and preserve the minutes of meetings for future reference. In case of absence, the secretary shall obtain a replacement. In addition, the secretary shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as may be delegated to the secretary. The secretary shall also be responsible for the official seal and documents of ECC.

Section 5- Church Chief Financial Officer
The chief financial officer and assistant(s) shall receive, record, and acknowledge any gifts to ECC, preserve privacy of gifts and givers, and submit a monthly financial report to the Council.

Section 6 – Financial Assistants
The chief financial officer, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall appoint financial assistants who shall receive all current money of ECC and make disbursements according to the decision of ECC. The chief financial officer shall assure that accurate records are kept, that appropriate checks and balances are utilized, and shall present a financial report at every regular session of the Council. The chief financial officer shall report the balancing of the books and give a full financial report at an appropriate congregational business meeting of ECC.

Section 7 – Church Treasurer
The chief financial officer, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall appoint a treasurer who shall be the primary signer for all check disbursements according to the decisions of Council and the ECC membership. Additionally, the treasurer will advise the Chief Financial Officer on accounting and IRS compliance matters and may randomly review the finances of ECC.

Section 8 – Bookkeeping and Review of Accounts
The Chief Financial Officer will ensure that segregation of duties for all bookkeeping and accounting process is in place including the following; (1~~following: (1~~.) the individual generating and recording disbursements in the accounting system does not sign checks for the disbursements; (2.) the individual(s) responsible for counting and depositing receipts will not record the receipts in the accounting system; and (3.) the individual reconciling the bank statement will not be a signer on the account.
At the direction of the Council, the chief financial officer shall arrange for an internal review of all accounts by an internal financial review team leader approved by the Council. The chief financial officer shall present a written report of the review to the Council at their next monthly meeting and summarized in report to the annual congregational business meeting.

ARTICLE ~~-~~V - Church Council

Section 1 - Composition
The general administration and spiritual oversight of ECC, including long-range and strategic planning, shall be vested in the Council as set forth in the Constitution. Matters to be presented by the staff, church commissions or committees, or other church organizations to the congregational business meetings for action must be first considered by the Council. Lay members of the Council shall be elected directly by the congregation. The Senior/Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Council. In the event that the Senior/Lead Pastor's position is open, or if the Senior/Lead Pastor is temporarily incapacitated, the most senior of the associate pastors shall be designated as the pastoral member of the Council. However, if there is an interim pastor, that individual may fill the pastor's position on the Council if so approved by the Council.

Section 2 - Authority and Accountability
The authority of the government of ECC is vested in the membership through congregational meetings. Every member shall have one vote. The Council, as well as other commissions and committees that may be established to carry out particular tasks or responsibilities, shall be accountable to the congregation.

Section 3 - Qualifications
Council members shall have been members of ECC for at least four years at the time that they begin their Council term. They shall demonstrate a mature and deep walk with Jesus Christ; they shall be committed to and offer leadership in each area of the church's mission and vision; and they shall reflect biblical qualities of leadership and shall model integrity in the Christian life.

Section ~~-~~4 - Election of Council
Lay members of the Council shall be elected directly by the congregation as set forth in Article VII of these Bylaws. Council members shall be elected to three-year terms with one-third of the Council members being elected in any given year. In the event of a vacancy resulting from resignation, death, or other reasons, the Council shall nominate a replacement and an election by the congregation shall be held to fill the open position.

Section ~~-~~5 - Complaints Against Council Members

(a) Complaints against members of the Council can only be recognized in accordance with I Timothy 5:19.

(b) Charges against a Council member shall be submitted in writing to the Council, specifying the nature of the charges (indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Covenant). Matthew 18:15-18 shall serve as a guide. If in the judgment of the Council (acting in the absence of the individual against whom the complaint is made) there is substance to the complaint, the Council shall determine the appropriate action to be taken and, if necessary, shall refer the matter to the congregation for final action.

ARTICLE VI – Directors, ~~Diaconate,~~ Ministry Teams, and Commissions

Section 1 - Directors

The Council may hire part-time or full-time directors in a professional staff capacity to give proper time and leadership to any ministry area as they deem necessary. The selection process for the directors should be at the sole discretion of the Council. In cases where the ministry area is to be led by an individual at the pastoral level, the provisions of Article III shall apply.

Section 2- Ministry Teams and Commissions

Implementation of policies and programs established by congregational or Council action may be accomplished through ministry teams or~~,~~ commissions ~~and or the Diaconate.~~

(a) The broad areas of responsibility for the various ministry teams and commissions shall be delineated by the Council. Other ministry teams or commissions may be established from time to time by action of the Council as the need arises. Furthermore, ministry teams and commissions may be deleted by the Council if they no longer serve a needed function.

(b) Each ministry team or commission shall operate under the direction of a designated staff member who will be responsible for appointing the members and designating a chairperson. The ministry teams and commissions shall report on their activities from time to time as may be appropriate through the designated staff member to the Council and the Congregation.

~~*Section 3*~~

~~Members of the Diaconate shall be selected for three-year terms by the Council with the advice and consent of the Senior/Lead Pastor. Deacons may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms then wait one year before being eligible to serve again. The Diaconate shall assist the Senior/Lead Pastor in shepherding the congregation by~~

~~(a) providing opportunities for new believers to participate in discipleship activities,~~
~~(b) assisting current believers in advancing in their Christian lives, particularly by assuring that they are spiritually nurtured through small groups, and~~
~~(c) monitoring those individuals not in small groups in order to identify and provide ways to shepherd them as well.~~

~~The Diaconate and the Council shall serve communion on a regular schedule or as requested by the Senior/Lead Pastor.~~

ARTICLE VII - Elections

Section 1 - Nominations

Election of the Council shall be held at an appropriate congregational business meeting in the following manner:

(a) The Council shall nominate a slate of candidates from the active ECC membership to be voted upon to fill open Council positions (normally 2 per year). The proposed slate of candidates must be announced and posted at least one month prior to the congregational meeting at which the election is to be held.

(b) Additional nominations for Council may be made by any member of the congregation upon written petition to the Council, provided such nominations are made no later than two weeks prior to the congregational meeting at which the election is to be held. Names of any additional nominees must be announced and posted no later than one week prior to the election.

(c) A simple majority of the votes cast is necessary for the election of any candidate to the Council.

Section 2 - Qualifications of Council Members
All Council members shall be full members as stated in Article VII of the Constitution. Council members shall follow the guidelines in Article II Section 1 of these Bylaws.

Section 3 - Terms of Council Members
Council members may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Previous Council members who have been off the Council for at least one year are eligible for election to the Council.

Section 4 - Church and Council Officers
The Council shall annually elect from its membership a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. It shall also appoint a Chief Financial Officer who need not be a member of the Council. The Church Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary shall serve no more than three consecutive terms in the same office. The Chief Financial Officer may serve an indefinite number of successive terms.

Section 5 - Failure to Fulfill Responsibilities
Should a Council member be unable to actively participate in the ongoing work of the Council, whether due to illness, personal reasons, or other circumstances, he/she shall tender a resignation, or the Council may declare the position vacated. The vacated position shall then be filled in accordance with the provisions of Article VII Section 6 of these Bylaws.

Section 6 -- Vacancies
When a vacancy occurs on the Council for any reason, an election to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term shall be held at the next congregational business meeting. The Council shall select one or more nominees for the position, and the election shall be held in conformity with Article V Section 3.

ARTICLE VIII ~~– Quorum~~Business Meeting Matters

Section 1 - Quorum
A quorum at a congregational business meeting shall consist of 10 percent of ECC membership, at least three of whom shall be Council members.

A quorum for Council meetings shall be a majority of its membership, one of whom shall be the Chair or the Vice-Chair.

Section 2 – Meeting Location
The Council will communicate whether a meeting will be held in person, hybrid with in person and virtual attendees or all virtual attendees. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure accuracy in attendance and voting.

ARTICLE IX - Church Calendar

Section 1 – Fiscal Year
The fiscal year shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

Section 2 - Terms
The terms of office for all officers and Council members shall begin February 1 and end January 31. Names of Council members and officers shall be publicly communicated at the first Sunday following the February Council meeting.

Section 3 – Annual Congregational Meetings
The first regular congregational business meeting of the church year shall be held in January and shall be referred to as The Annual Congregational Meeting. This meeting will have the election to fill Council vacancies and the presentation of all written reports outlined in Article VIII, Section 5 of the Constitution.

Section 4 – Congregational Business Meetings
In addition to the Annual Congregational Meeting in January, the other two business meetings of ECC will be held on a regular schedule throughout the year, generally in January, May, and October. The annual budget will be presented and voted on in the May Congregational Business Meeting.

ARTICLE X - Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws not in conflict with the Constitution may be adopted or amended at a congregational business meeting of ECC. Adoption shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present, but a motion for such amendment must have been made in writing and discussed at a regular congregational business meeting held at least three months earlier.