

**THE AMENDED
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF
FAITH COVENANT CHURCH**

Faith Covenant Church
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CONSTITUTION OF FAITH COVENANT CHURCH

Historical Note: The Church was organized with nine charter members, Saturday, August 1, 1914, at a meeting announced for this purpose and held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Palm, 675 Scotten Avenue, under the name of the Swedish Mission Church of Detroit, Michigan. It was subsequently known as the Evangelical Covenant Church of Detroit, Michigan and as of January 1, 1978 is known as Faith Covenant Church.

PREAMBLE

Faith Covenant Church exists to serve God by calling people into a lasting personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and to enable them to live as His disciples in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Evangelical Covenant Church, of which Faith Covenant Church is a member congregation, 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 adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Bible, 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. This includes 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 the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of Faith Covenant Church of Farmington Hills, Michigan.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Church is FAITH COVENANT CHURCH, (the "Church") of Farmington Hills, Michigan.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

The Church is a member of The Evangelical Covenant Church ("the Covenant") and its Great Lakes Conference (the "Conference"), and is pledged to work in harmony with the Covenant and its decisions and in supporting their program, policies, and institutions.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Membership in the Church is granted upon application to those who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again to a new life in Christ, have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the ministry of the Church and to share its fellowship and mission.

ARTICLE IV

Governance

The authority of the government of this Church is vested in its membership acting through Congregational Meetings. The management, administration and oversight of all business and spiritual affairs are delegated by the congregation to the appropriate leadership as delineated in the Bylaws. All elected leadership specified in the Bylaws shall be members of the Church.

ARTICLE V

Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Schedule.

At least two regular Congregational Meetings shall be held at stated intervals. They shall be known as the Winter and Spring Congregational Meetings, respectively. Additional Congregational Meetings may also be called.

Section 2. Notice.

Members shall be notified of all Congregational Meetings not less than 10 days prior to the meeting and shall include the date, time, and an agenda of business to be transacted.

ARTICLE VI

Property

Section 1. Real Estate.

The purchase, leasing and disposition of real estate and/or the pledging, conveyance or encumbering of real estate or other Church property to secure mortgage loans or other debt must be authorized by the Church at a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose, subject to the following special conditions:

- A. Each member shall be notified, not less than three weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Said notice shall state the time and place of the meeting and briefly describe the proposition to be considered.
- B. A two-thirds majority of all members present and voting at a Special Congregational Meeting so called shall constitute authority.

C. The Executive Committee in its Trustee function shall be empowered to carry out the decisions of the meeting.

Section 2. Division.

In the event of a division in the Church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, the title to all Church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group that abides by this Constitution, as determined by the Executive Board of the Conference.

Section 3. Dissolution.

In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the Church shall become and be the property of the Covenant and the Conference.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this Constitution and not in conflict with the principles and policies of the Covenant may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in a Winter or Spring Congregational Meeting. Such a proposed amendment must be presented in written form at a Winter, Spring or Special Congregational Meeting no less than six months prior to the Winter or Spring Congregational Meeting at which it is to be voted on. Articles VI and VII may be amended only with the approval of the Executive Board of the Conference.

**BYLAWS OF
FAITH COVENANT CHURCH**

ARTICLE I

Membership

Section 1. Application for Membership.

A written application for membership in the Church shall be placed with a Pastor. The applicant shall complete a membership class, after which he or she shall appear before the Executive Committee or its designees to give a confession of his or her Christian faith, according to Article III of the Constitution. When the Executive Committee or its designees have reviewed the application and favorably received his or her testimony, the application shall be submitted to a Congregational Meeting for a vote.

Section 2. Transfer of Membership.

An applicant from another Covenant Church may submit a letter of transfer to a Pastor. After the applicant has completed a membership class, the Church shall act upon the application according to Section 1.

Section 3. Reception of New Members.

Applicants who are voted into membership of the Church shall be welcomed at a public worship service and make confession of their Christian faith, as outlined in A Book of Worship for Covenant Churches.

Section 4. Children of Members and Friends

Children of members and friends of the Church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached a suitable age, they shall be given an opportunity to receive instruction from the Pastor(s) or other teachers in the Bible, Christian doctrine, and Church history by way of Confirmation Classes.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Membership.

The members of the Church by God's grace commit to live in a manner consistent with biblical teaching. This includes supporting the Church in attendance, prayer, service and giving, encouraging others to know and be like Jesus, reflecting the servant love of our Lord and supporting the broader mission of Christ through the Covenant and the Conference.

Section 6. Discipline.

- A. Members who neglect their duties as described in Article I, Section 5, shall be counseled by a Pastor, the Executive Committee or its designees.
- B. Members who 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 brother or sister. If he or she fails to heed the counsel of the Executive Committee or its designees, discipline shall then be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the Church.
- C. Any action to dismiss a member must be acted on by the Congregation, upon a 90 day written notice to the member. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting is necessary for such action.

- D. A member who has been properly dismissed from the Church or has withdrawn his or her membership, has forfeited all rights and privileges of membership in the Church.

Section 7. Change in Membership Status.

- A. Application for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to a Pastor, who shall issue a letter of transfer to the Church with which a member is joining. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through a Pastor to the next Congregational Meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record.
- B. Request for withdrawal from membership in the Church shall be made in writing to a Pastor, the Executive Committee or its designees. After careful consideration, a Pastor shall report the withdrawal to a Congregational Meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record.
- C. Members who move out of the area with no reasonable expectation of returning shall remain a member for a period of one year. After that time, they will be contacted to see if they have a valid reason, as determined by the Executive Committee, for retaining membership. If they do not their membership will be withdrawn.
- D. A member who moves out of the area due to retirement and wishes to retain affiliation with Faith Covenant Church will be considered a Member Emeritus. They are welcome to participate in the life of the Church as they are able to, but are not eligible to vote in Congregational meetings.

Section 8. Nonmember Friends.

Nonmember friends shall be included as part of the Church's life. They shall be encouraged to consider this as their Church home. They shall be encouraged to pursue membership.

ARTICLE II

Pastor(s)

Section 1. Qualifications.

The Pastor(s) of the Church shall meet the New Testament requirements of their office (1 Timothy 3:2-7) and be members of the Covenant Ministerium and follow the Rules and Regulations of the Board of the Ordered Ministry. Those called to full time ministry shall by virtue of call be members of the Church.

Section 2. Duties.

The Pastor(s) shall devote themselves to the service of the Church. This includes preaching and teaching the Bible, administering the sacraments, leadership as to the direction of the Church's ministry and pastoral work. They shall provide the Church with an annual written report of their Pastoral activities at a Congregational Meeting. They shall practice good administrative procedures and cooperate with the Church Boards and Ministry Commissions. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee and all Ministry Commissions. All other pastors shall be members of the Church Board and ex-officio members of the Ministry Commissions to which they are assigned.

Section 3. Cooperation.

The Pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the Conference and other Covenant Ministers.

Section 4. Pastoral Search Committee

- A. Call of Lead Pastor. A Pastoral Search Committee shall be appointed by the Church Board and shall consist of five to nine members of the Congregation. It shall work closely with the Conference Superintendent. The committee shall report the results of its search to the Church Board. The committee shall recommend a candidate to the Congregation. The Lead Pastor shall be called at a Congregational Meeting, where voting shall be by secret ballot. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting shall be required for a call to be extended.
- B. Call of Other Pastors. Other pastors may be called upon an 80% vote of the Church Board following a search process established and implemented by the Church Board.

Section 5. Conclusion of Ministry.

- A. The ministry of the Lead Pastor may be concluded by resignation or by the Church with a minimum six weeks written notice.
- B. The ministry of other pastors may be concluded by resignation or by the Church Board upon such notice as the Board may deem appropriate.

Section 6. Charges against a Pastor.

Charges against a Pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee, charging a Pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Covenant (Matthew 18:15-18). If in the judgment of the Executive Committee there is substance to the charges, the case shall be referred to the Church Board. If the Church Board deems there is substance to the charges, the charges shall be referred to The Conference Superintendent who shall confer with the Covenant 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 and Regulations of the Board of the Ordered Ministry of the Covenant regarding discipline, prior to further action by the Church.

ARTICLE III

Officers and Auditors

Section 1. Designation of Officers

The Officers of the Church shall be its Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2. Confirmation and Tenure.

- A. At the Spring Congregational Meeting, the Church Chair, Vice-Chair, and two Auditors shall be confirmed. They may serve for no more than two consecutive three-year terms.
- B. The Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary and Treasurer will be appointed to three year terms by the Church Board. They may serve for no more than two consecutive three year terms.

Section 3. Qualifications.

Officers and Auditors of the Church shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the ministry of the Church.

Section 4. Duties.

- A. Church Chair - The Chair shall preside at all Congregational Meetings of the Church and meetings of the Executive Committee. He or she shall confer with the Lead Pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall heed the counsel of the Pastor. The Chair shall be an ex-officio member of the Nominating Committee and all Ministry Commissions. The Chair shall be responsible for leadership of the Church services in the absence of the Pastor(s).
- B. Church Vice-Chair - The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair, and during his or her absence assume that office and its duties. He or she shall also have liaison responsibilities for certain Ministry Commissions, as determined by the Executive Committee.
- C. Recording Secretary - The Recording Secretary shall keep and deliver the minutes of all Congregational Meetings of the Church and meetings of the Church Board, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated to the Recording Secretary.
- D. Financial Secretary - The Financial Secretary shall receive a record of all funds contributed to the Church, reconcile this record to a listing of contributors, and provide tax information to contributors on a timely basis. The Financial Secretary shall also serve as an ex-officio member of the Finance Commission or its equivalent Commission.
- E. Treasurer - The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds committed to him or her and make all authorized disbursements. A report of all receipts and expenditures shall be presented to each regular meeting of the Church Board and to each Congregational Meeting. Written financial statements, comprised of a balance sheet and statement of receipts and expenditures, shall be prepared at each fiscal year end and presented at the Winter Congregational Meeting. The Treasurer shall also be an ex-officio member of the Finance Commission or its equivalent Commission.
- F. Auditors - The Auditors shall conduct an annual financial review of Church funds and submit the report to the Winter Congregational Meeting.

ARTICLE IV

Executive Committee

Section 1. Membership.

The Executive Committee shall consist of five Elders, two of whom are the Church Chair and the Vice-Chair. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex-officio member. All members of the Executive Committee shall be committed to Jesus Christ and His Church and shall have demonstrated the qualities of faith, mind and spirit required to fulfill the responsibilities of this high office (I Timothy 3:1-13). They shall have had previous experience on a Board, Committee or Commission.

Section 2. Responsibility.

The Executive Committee shall oversee the general administration, spiritual welfare and ministry of the Church, and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Church Board. It shall meet monthly for prayer and discussion regarding the Church's ministry.

Section 3. Trustee Function.

Where circumstances warrant, or where the law requires action(s) by Trustees, the Executive Committee shall be known as the Board of Trustees and its members as Trustees.

Section 4. Confirmation and Tenure of Elders.

In addition to the Church Chair and Vice-Chair, the other three Elders shall be confirmed at the Spring Congregational Meeting, and may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

Section 5. Organization.

Following the Spring Congregational Meeting, the Executive Committee shall convene to organize itself to discharge its duties, which include, but are not limited to the following functions and responsibilities:

- A. Provide direction and help to establish long-range planning goals for the main emphasis of the Church's ministry; work closely with members of the pastoral staff, other Church staff, the Ministry Commissions and the Church Board in initiating those plans; and serve in an advisory capacity to the Church Board.
- B. At the beginning of each year, the Elders shall determine among themselves appropriate Ministry Commission liaison responsibilities, the purpose of which shall be to provide coordination, communication and oversight for the whole work of the Church.
- C. Act in emergency situations for which no current Commission guidelines exist and/or which are not covered in the Constitution and Bylaws. Any such action shall be reported to the Church Board for the purpose of ratification no later than the next scheduled meeting of the Board.
- D. Appoint ad hoc Committees or Task Forces as may be required. The Executive Committee shall provide specific instructions for each ad hoc Committee or Task Force formed.
- E. Act as the Pastoral Relations Committee as described in Article IX, Section 1.
- F. Act as legal officials of the congregation. The Church Chair shall chair the meetings of the Executive Committee, who shall select from among themselves a Secretary to take all Executive Committee minutes and serve as Corporate Secretary, thereby assuming responsibility for the official seal and documents of the Church. Four members are necessary for a quorum.
- G. Annually submit its budget needs to the Finance Commission for the purpose of budget preparation.
- H. Study possible changes and/or additions to the Constitution and these Bylaws and submit recommendations to the Church Board and the congregation.
- I. In addition to its ultimate responsibility to the congregation, the Church Chair shall make a report on behalf of the Executive Committee at each scheduled meeting of the Church Board.
- J. Provide direction and supervision for the planning and conducting of meetings and activities of the organizations of the Church.
- K. In regard to non-budgeted expenses, it may approve expenditures of up to Ten-Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars without congregational approval.

ARTICLE V

Church Board

The Church Board shall consist of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), the Elders, the Recording Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and all Chairs of the Ministry Commissions. The Church Board shall meet monthly for at least 11 months of the year. It shall prayerfully seek God's leading in all matters, and conduct its affairs consistent with the Constitution and these Bylaws of the Church, which shall include the following:

- A. Conduct overviews of the Church's ministry to determine if matters are in harmony with the Church values and the Mission Statement.
- B. Develop recommendations for presentation to the Congregation.
- C. Receive all reports submitted by the Pastoral staff, Ministry Commissions and Executive Committee.
- D. Consider the addition or discontinuance of Ministry Commissions and their stated functions and authority.
- E. Consult with the Executive Committee in prayerful consideration for the calling of Commission members and assist the Board in its liaison relationship with the Ministry Commissions.

ARTICLE VI

Ministry Commissions

Section 1. Purpose and Designation of Ministry Commissions.

The Church Board shall establish and maintain Ministry Commissions. The implementation or termination of a Ministry Commission shall first be reported at a Winter or Spring Congregational Meeting and formalized effective the following Winter or Spring Congregational Meeting. In the interim, the Church Board may informally establish a Ministry Commission, pending Congregational approval.

The Ministry Commissions shall serve to involve members and friends in obedience to the call of God in their lives, in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, interests and preferences in the Church's ministry of sharing the gospel inside and outside of the Church. Each Ministry Commission shall be led by a Ministry Commission Chair.

- A. Policies and programs established by the Congregation or Church Board shall be accomplished through Ministry Commissions. A list of the current commissions should be kept by the Recording Secretary and be publicized to the congregation.
- B. The Women Ministries Commission shall maintain its affiliation with the Women Ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- C. At any Winter or Spring Congregational Meeting by majority vote of those present and voting, the congregation may veto the implementation or termination of any Ministry Commission or any portion or all of the guidelines proposed by the Church Board for a particular Ministry Commission.
- D. Each Ministry Commission shall have a Chair who is confirmed by the congregation at a Spring Congregational Meeting. Co-Chairs may be confirmed, but only one may vote at any Church Board Meeting. They shall serve for terms of three (3) years in such a manner that the terms of

approximately 1/3 of the Chairs shall expire each year. They may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.

Section 2. Duties.

- A. The Ministry Commissions shall function according to guidelines established by the Church Board. They shall meet as often as required to carry out their duties but no less than quarterly.
- B. The Ministry Commissions shall keep minutes of each meeting and submit the minutes to the Church office within one week after the meeting.

Section 3. Rules.

- A. Members of a Ministry Commission, with the exception of its Chair, shall serve one-year terms that may be renewed annually.
- B. Following the Spring Congregational Meeting, the Church Board shall recommend new members to each Ministry Commission. Until then, the incumbent Ministry Commission members shall continue to serve.
- C. Apart from the Chair of a Ministry Commission, who must be a Church member, non-member friends of the Church may serve on Ministry Commissions. Commissions serving the functions of Finance and Worship, Prayer & Music must consist only of Church members. A majority of the members of all other Ministry Commissions must be Church members.
- D. All Ministry Commission Members who are non members of the Church must profess and affirm the Christian faith.
- E. A vacancy on a Ministry Commission shall be filled by that Ministry Commission.
- F. A vacancy in a Ministry Commission Chair shall be filled by the Executive Committee. Such appointee shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VII

Delegates to Great Lakes Conference and Covenant Annual Meetings

The Church shall be represented by members at the annual meetings of the Great Lakes Conference and the Covenant.

- A. The delegates to each of the annual meetings shall not exceed the number authorized by the Great Lakes Conference and the Covenant.
- B. Delegates shall serve for a one-year term. That term shall begin with the commencement of the annual meeting to which they are elected.
- C. Delegates shall be confirmed at the Winter Congregational Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Nominating Committee

Section 1. Composition, Election and Tenure.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six Church members. They shall serve for three-year terms with two members elected at each Spring Congregational Meeting, to assure a sequence of two new members each year.

Section 2. Organization.

After being convened by the Church Chair, Committee members shall elect their own Chair and Secretary and otherwise organize itself. One of the members in the last year of their term shall serve as Chair.

Section 3. Function and Responsibilities.

The committee shall prayerfully determine the qualifications and willingness of each candidate and delegate to serve, before presenting his or her name to the congregation. It shall:

- A. Recommend persons to be confirmed by the congregation for vacant Church Board positions.
- B. Recommend persons to serve as delegates to the Great Lakes Conference and Covenant annual meetings to be confirmed at the Winter Congregational Meeting.
- C. Prepare a ballot for the election of Nominating Committee members to be presented at the Spring Congregational Meeting. It is preferred that two candidates be nominated for each position.
- D. Periodically convene for the purpose of discussing, reviewing and maintaining an inventory of the spiritual gifts, skills and interests of Church members and friends for future considerations as prospective candidates for offices and Commissions to which they may be nominated and confirmed.

Section 4. Service on Ministry Commissions.

Members of the Nominating Committee may also serve as members but not Chair of a Ministry Commission.

ARTICLE IX

Other Committees

Section 1. Pastoral Relations Committee.

The Executive Committee shall constitute the Pastoral Relations Committee. It shall formally meet in this capacity at least once a year for the purpose of evaluating and encouraging the Lead Pastor. Where deemed necessary or desirable, it may conduct reviews of other pastoral staff members. It shall annually review salary packages and make recommendations to the Finance Commission for the purpose of budget preparation.

Section 2. Special Committees and Task Forces.

Special Committees or Task Forces for specific purposes and durations may be appointed by the Congregation, the Church Board, or the Executive Committee according to need.

ARTICLE X

**Discipline of Church Board, Commission
and Committee Members**

If any person serving as a member of the Church Board, Ministry Commission, Nominating Committee or other committees neglects his or her duties or fails to fulfill the responsibilities established by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church, he or she shall be admonished first by the Executive Committee, and if necessary, by the Church Board. If he or she fails to heed such counsel, he or she may be removed by 2/3 vote of the Church Board members present and voting.

ARTICLE XI

Services and Sacraments

Section 1. Public Services.

Public services shall be conducted regularly on Sundays and, when deemed appropriate, on weekdays for worship, with the preaching and teaching of God's Word and prayer.

Section 2. Celebrating the Sacraments.

- A. The sacrament of Holy Communion shall be celebrated at least monthly. Any Church member may serve Holy Communion or otherwise assist the pastor.
- B. The sacrament of Baptism shall be celebrated in keeping with the Bible and Covenant policies.

ARTICLE XII

Congregational Meetings and Fiscal Year

Section 1. Congregational Meetings.

- A. At the Winter Congregational Meeting, a reviewed financial report shall be submitted by the Treasurer for the Church and each of its organizations. Delegates to the Great Lakes Conference and Covenant annual meetings shall be confirmed and the Church budget shall also be submitted for action. At the Spring Congregational Meeting, Church leaders shall be chosen in a manner prescribed in the Bylaws.
- B. Congregational Meetings may be called other than the Winter and Spring Congregational Meetings, as specified in Article V of the Constitution. Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the Chair in consultation with the Lead Pastor, the Executive Committee or by 10% of the members of the Church.
- C. All Congregational Meetings shall open and close with prayer.

Section 2. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

Section 3. Absentee Ballots.

Unless prohibited by the Constitution or these Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall have the authority to arrange for absentee ballots for elections and confirmations, when in the judgment of the Committee it is in the best interest of the Church. An absentee ballot may be obtained from the Church office.

Section 4. Agenda, Minutes and Decisions.

- A. The Agenda shall be prepared by the Church Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- B. Items introduced at the meeting but not related to the agenda may be discussed but not decided until the next Congregational Meeting.
- C. The Minutes of all Congregational Meetings shall be approved by the Church. Decisions shall go into effect at the time the decision is made, unless otherwise specified.

Section 5. Majority Decisions.

Actions taken at a Congregational Meeting shall be by simple majority vote of the members present and voting, unless otherwise required by the Constitution or these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws not in conflict with the Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, at any Congregational Meeting or Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose, providing that such amendments have been presented in writing to the Church Board and at a preceding Congregational Meeting.