

Trinity Covenant Church

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

(An historical statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of The Evangelical Covenant Church.)

“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 in 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 Testaments, 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 principles 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.”

These documents, which are in harmony with the above Preamble are the Constitution and Bylaws of Trinity Covenant Church, Manchester, CT.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this Church shall be Trinity Covenant Church of Manchester, Connecticut.

ARTICLE II

AFFILIATION

This Church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its East Coast Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the Covenant and its decisions and to support its programs, policies, and institutions as determined by congregational meetings.

ARTICLE III

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

ARTICLE IV

MISSION

“A caring and equipping community”

It is the mission of Trinity Covenant Church to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ and glorify God by corporate praise, worship, by ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of those within our congregation and by equipping one another in the power of the Holy Spirit, to do the work of our Lord in our community, in our nation, and in the world; so that individuals may come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow to maturity in Him.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Church is open to anyone who through faith in God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been born again to a living hope; manifested himself/herself as a true Christian, has been baptized; and desires to share in the fellowship and ministry of this Church.

**ARTICLE VI
CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

The congregation, acting at any duly called business meeting, shall be the highest legislative body of the Church, subject to the authority of scripture, this Constitution, and appropriate laws.

**ARTICLE VII
OFFICERS**

The officers of this Church shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Financial Secretary, Administrative Chair, Facilities Chair and a Treasurer. Officers shall be elected by the Church membership. These officers shall be the corporate officers of the Church.

**ARTICLE VIII
GOVERNANCE**

The staff, directed by the Senior Pastor, shall lead the ministries of the church.

The Governance Board is entrusted with the overall well-being and spiritual health of the church and prayerfully works to ensure the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Ministry Plan are in harmony with each other and implemented. In circumstances or where law requires action(s) by "Trustees", this Governance Board shall be known as "The Board of Trustees" and its members as "Trustees."

The Governance Board shall consist of the following officers of the Church; Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary and other members as specified in the Bylaws, including the Senior Pastor.

**ARTICLE IX
BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Section 1. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall be held at a time designated by the Governance Board. The Governance Board shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a written annual report to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2. Annual Congregational Budget Meeting. The Annual Congregational Budget Meeting shall be held within six weeks of the end of the fiscal year. If, in the judgment of the Governance Board the meeting cannot be held within such time, it shall be held as soon thereafter as feasible. The Treasurer shall present a report to the congregation on the financial condition of the church. At the discretion of the Governance Board, the Annual Congregational Budget Meeting may be combined with the Annual Meeting or Semi-Annual Meeting.

**ARTICLE X
CHURCH PROPERTY**

In the event of a schism within the Church, the property of the Church, real and personal, shall remain with those who adhere to this Constitution. Should the Church ever be dissolved, the property of the Church, real and personal, shall become the property of The Evangelical Covenant Church and its East Coast Conference, share and share alike.

**ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Articles of this Constitution can be adopted only by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at an Annual or Semi-Annual business meeting of the Church, provided the amendment has been presented in writing at the preceding Annual or Semi-Annual Meeting.

**ARTICLE XII
BYLAWS**

Bylaws may be adopted or amended (including rescission) at any regularly scheduled congregational business meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting if the proposed bylaw or amendment has been presented in writing at a preceding regularly scheduled congregational business meeting. Bylaws or amendments may not be in conflict with the articles of this Constitution.

BYLAWS

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Definitions:

- Senior Pastor: directly or indirectly oversees all staff
- Senior Ministry Staff: report directly to Senior Pastor (e.g. currently Pastor of Adult Ministries, Pastor of Student Ministries, Director of Worship and Music, Director of Ministry Connection, Pastor of Congregational Care, Director of Children’s Ministries)
 - Pastors: theological training, pastoral duties expected
 - Directors: manage ministries
- Associate Ministry Staff: appointed by Senior Ministry Staff. Could be paid (e.g. Accompanist) or unpaid
- Support Staff: Support Staff fulfill functions necessary to operate the church office and building and are overseen by the Office Manager. (e.g. currently Office Manager, Administrative Assistant, Bookkeeper, Sexton)

Definitions:

- i. A Member is one who regularly attends and supports TCC and has voting privileges.
- ii. An Associate Member is one who is unable to attend TCC due to illness or distance away but desires to maintain their TCC relationship without retaining voting privileges. Associate Members retain the ability to reinstate their active membership at anytime without retaking the Discovering Trinity Class.

1. Responsibilities. The members and associate members of this Church do covenant together by God’s grace to live lives in a manner consistent with the standards of biblical teaching, including the support of this local ministry in attendance, prayer, service, and giving, to live lives in word and deed that are an encouragement to others to know and be like Jesus Christ, to reflect in all our relationships the servant love of our Lord, and to support the broader mission of Christ through the East Coast Conference and the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Section 2. Procedure for Admission. Upon completion of a membership class, applicants shall meet with the Diaconate to give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ and their desire to become a member, accepting the responsibilities of discipleship as expressed in Section 1.

A. Upon completion of such fellowship, the Diaconate shall notify members of the Church of the recommendations. Any member objecting to or having concerns over the granting of membership to an applicant shall communicate in writing such objection or concern to the Diaconate within 10 days after the first publication of the membership candidates.

B. Applicants who are received into membership of the Church shall be welcomed at a worship service, typically on a Communion Sunday, and make public confession of their Christian faith, following the pattern of *The Covenant Book of Worship*.

Section 3. Children of Members. Children of friends and members of the Church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached confirmation age, they shall receive instruction from the Pastor(s) or their designee(s) in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and Church history. Following Discipleship/Confirmation, they may apply for Church membership as outlined under Section 2 of this article.

Section 4. Discipline. Any member or associate member known to err in doctrine [Ref: Preamble of Constitution] or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. If one member *or associate member* seeks to correct another member or associate member, it shall be done in the spirit of Christian love, according to that procedure. If an erring member or associate member of the Church does not heed the counsel of another member or associate member, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Diaconate, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the erring member or associate member.

Section 5. Transfer of Members. Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such request in writing to the Senior Pastor or the Diaconate. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the Senior Pastor.

Section 6. Removal of Members.

A. If a member or associate member remains in gross error of conduct or doctrine after receiving discipline as described in Section 4, the Diaconate may dismiss that member or associate member by a two-thirds vote of all current Diaconate members. Such action may be appealed by the member or associate member to the congregation for consideration at the next congregational meeting.

B. The membership roll shall be reviewed at least annually by the Diaconate. Lapsed members who have willfully neglected their responsibilities of membership shall be admonished to renew their membership commitment by the Diaconate. Those members who do not heed this admonishment or have moved from the area shall be removed from membership by a two-thirds vote of the Diaconate.

Section 7. Recording. The Diaconate shall be responsible to maintain the accuracy of the Church’s membership roll. The names of those joining membership, terminating membership or becoming associate members shall be duly recorded and reported at the Annual Meeting.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Diaconate

A. Membership.

The Diaconate shall hear the testimonies of individuals desiring to become members of the Church. They shall recommend for membership only those individuals meeting the qualifications for membership to the Church. The Diaconate shall maintain the accuracy of the Church’s membership roll.

ARTICLE II – The Governance Board

Section 1. Purpose. The Governance Board is entrusted with the overall well being and spiritual health of the church and prayerfully works to ensure the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Ministry Plan are in harmony with each other and implemented.

Section 2. Composition. The Governance Board will consist of seven men and women including: the Senior Pastor, the Church Chair, the Church Vice-Chair, the Administrative Chair, Church Secretary, and two others at-large.

Section 3. Responsibilities.**Leadership**

- A. Growing together spiritually through the Word.
- B. Developing and maintaining appropriate policies to protect the overall well being and spiritual health of the church.
- C. Overseeing leadership development plans for the Senior Pastor.
- D. Hearing and responding appropriately to concerns of members and Staff concerning the health, functioning and direction of the Church.

Strategic Planning

- A. Collaborating with Senior Pastor and Senior Ministry Staff in developing Strategic Ministry Plan
- B. Approving the Strategic Ministry Plan presented by the Senior Pastor.
- C. Evaluating the achievement of Strategic Ministry Planning goals at end of each year.
- D. Evaluating and approving annual budget submitted by the Finance Team and recommends it to the congregation for final approval.
- E. Updating or developing a profile of the Church which is used by Search Committees.

Personnel

- A. Meet at least once a year without the Senior Pastor present in order to discuss pastoral performance and set compensation for the Senior Pastor.
- B. By a 2/3 vote of the full Governance Board can recommend to the congregation dismissal of the Senior Pastor.
- C. Based on a written recommendation from the Senior Pastor, a 2/3 vote of the Governance Board can terminate a member of the Senior Ministry Staff
- D. Without the Senior Pastor present, meet once per year with each member of the Senior Ministry Staff for the purpose of providing support and encouragement and discussing areas of concern.

Section 4. Qualification. Governance Board members shall have been regular attendees for at least two years, meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders, and have been brought into church membership prior to assuming their role on the Governance Board.

Section 5. Election. Governance Board members shall be nominated by the Nominations Team and elected by a majority vote of those members voting at a regular or special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 6. Terms of Office. All Governance Board members (except the Senior Pastor) shall be elected for terms of two years and shall be elected for no more than three consecutive terms. The term for all leadership positions starts immediately after the Annual Congregational Meeting vote and ends after the vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the final year of the term.

Governance Board positions that remain vacant after the normal congregational elections shall be filled by appointments made by the Governance Board until a vote of the membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 5 above. Positions that are filled in this manner will be considered as partial terms. Partial terms of less than six months will not count toward the maximum term limit of three consecutive terms. Partial terms of greater than six months will count as a full year towards the maximum term limit.

Section 7. Removal from office. A Governance Board member may be removed from office by a majority vote of congregational members voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 8. Quorum. A majority of Governance Board members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE III – Church Officers

Section 1. Purpose. Church officers shall serve as the legal representatives of the Church.

Section 2. Qualification. Church Officers shall have been regular attendees for at least two years, meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders, and have been brought into church membership prior to assuming their role as Church Officers.

Section 3. Election. Church Officers shall be selected by the Nominations Team and elected by a majority vote of those members voting at a regular or special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 4. Terms of Office. Church officers shall be elected for terms of two years and shall be elected for no more than three consecutive terms. The term for all leadership positions starts immediately after the Annual Congregational Meeting vote and ends after the vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the final year of the term.

Church Officer positions that remain vacant after the normal congregational elections shall be filled by appointments made by the Governance Board until a vote of the membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 3 above. Positions that are filled in this manner will be considered as partial terms. Partial terms of less than six months will not count toward the maximum term limit of three consecutive terms. Partial terms of greater than six months will count as a full year towards the maximum term limit.

Section 5. Removal from office. Church Officers may be removed from office by a majority vote of congregational members voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 6. Officer positions

- A. Chair.** The Chair shall schedule, prepare materials and preside at all business meetings of the Church and meetings of the Governance Board. The Chair shall, in consultation with the Senior Pastor and members of the Governance Board, determine the agenda.
- B. Vice-Chair.** The Vice-Chair shall assist in the duties of the Chair and assume those duties in the absence of the Chair.
- C. Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the Church and the Governance Board.
- D. Administrative Chair.** The Chair of the Administrative team shall serve as a member of the Governance Board, is an ex officio member of the Finance Team and the Facilities Team and is responsible for:
 - 1. Overseeing the Administrative Team
 - 2. Reporting to the Governance Board
- E. Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall serve as a member of the Administrative Team and as the chair of the Finance Team. The Treasurer is responsible to supervise:
 - 1. All Church financial procedures.
 - 2. Accounting for all Church income and expenditures.
 - 3. Preparing of financial reports for the Governance Board, the congregation, the Covenant, and Federal and State agencies.
 - 4. Scheduling annual external accounting reviews.
 - 5. Providing Staff compensation research to the Governance Board.
 - 6. Appointing members as necessary to the Finance Team.
- F. Financial Secretary.** The Financial Secretary shall serve as a member of the Administrative Team and the Finance Team. The Financial Secretary is responsible to supervise:
 - 1. All accounting of contribution income to the Church through the activities of the Contributions Teams.
 - 2. Providing income reports to the Treasurer and Administrative Team.
 - 3. Issuing receipts and statements to contributors.
- G. Facilities Chair.** The Chair of the Facilities Team shall be responsible to serve as a member of and be accountable to the Administrative Team. The chair of the Facilities Team shall Supervise the Facilities Team and to make any contracts such as necessary to maintain church facilities and appoint members as necessary to the Facilities Team.

ARTICLE IV – Administrative Team

Section 1. Purpose. The Administrative Team oversees the church's financial and facility needs and the related policies and procedures of the church.

Section 2. Composition. The Administrative Team shall consist of the Administrative Team chair, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Facilities Chair and others according to need. The Senior Pastor (or designee) is an *ex officio* member.

Section 3. Responsibilities

- A. Working in unity/harmony/accord with the Senior Pastor and Governance Board.
- B. Can approve overspending from operating expenses or reallocate up to 3% per year of the approved budget for any unforeseen expenses or capitalizing on unforeseen ministry opportunities specifically recommended by the Senior Pastor.
- C. Determining temporary teams needed to carry out the Administrative Team's responsibilities and appoint appropriate leadership.
- D. Implementing capital stewardship plans.
- E. Managing the property and liability insurance programs of the Church.
- F. Planning and budgeting capital improvements.
- G. Approving use of the Church's facilities in harmony with the strategic plan and with building use policies.

Section 4. Finance Team. The Treasurer is the chair of the Finance Team, which shall also consist of the Financial Secretary and others as appointed by the Treasurer and be responsible for:

- A. Planning and budgeting for capital improvements
- B. Planning and implementing capital stewardship plans.
- C. Defining and maintaining financial policies and procedures.
- D. Accounting for and reporting on all church income and expenditures relative to the budget.
- E. Based on input from the Senior Pastor and the Administrative Team, preparing an annual budget to be submitted to the Governance Board for approval.
- F. Reporting at congregational meetings regarding the budget.
- G. Defining the policies and procedures of the Contributions Team.
- H. Selecting members of Contributions Team.

Section 5. Facilities Team. The Facilities Team shall consist of the Facilities Chair and others as appointed by the Facilities Chair and be responsible for:

- A. Maintaining all Church buildings and grounds.
- B. Maintaining and properly storing all existing equipment for the facility, including business and office equipment.
- C. Recruiting volunteers with appropriate skills to assist with facilities related repairs and maintenance.
- D. Submitting an annual budget proposal to the Administrative Team.
- E. Planning and budgeting for both short and long term facilities maintenance and improvements.
- F. Developing policies and procedures for use of the Church's facilities in harmony with the Strategic Ministry Plan and with building use policies.

ARTICLE V – Ministry Teams

Section 1. Purpose. Ministry Teams are the means by which we implement and manage the various ministries and administrative functions of the Church in accordance with the Strategic Ministry Plan.

Section 2. Support. Ministry Teams shall be supported and overseen by the Senior Ministry Staff.

Section 3. Composition. Each Ministry Team shall consist of individuals with a shared passion and commitment to that ministry.

Section 1. Senior Pastor

- A. Qualifications.** The Senior Pastor of this Church shall be a mature Christian, competent to teach, rebuke, exhort, comfort and manage in accordance with sound doctrine. The Senior Pastor shall be or become ordained with the Evangelical Covenant Church. The Senior Pastor and the Senior Pastor's spouse shall be members of the Church by virtue of the call to serve the Church.
- B. Call.** The Senior Pastor shall be called at a regular or special Church business meeting, the purpose of which shall be made public at least two (2) Sundays in advance, excluding the day of the called meeting, should that meeting be on a Sunday. The Senior Pastor shall be called by closed ballot with a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting. The call shall be for an unspecified period of time.
- C. Cooperation.** A pastor shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Regional Conference, and other Covenant ministers.
- D. Responsibilities.** The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Governance Board and an ex officio member of all ministry teams and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish ministry objectives and strategies in conjunction with the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Ministry Plan of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall fulfill all responsibilities including:

Ministering

- 1. Preaching and teaching the Word of God.
- 2. Administering the Sacraments.
- 3. Providing prayer, Godly counsel, spiritual care, practical support and positive encouragement to members of the congregation and the Staff.

Managing

- 1. Reporting to the Governance Board and the congregation.
- 2. Hearing and responding appropriately to members concerning the direction of the Church.
- 3. Providing guidance for and serve as ex officio member of Search Teams.
- 4. Overseeing and providing direction for the Staff:
 - a. Managing the evaluation of Church Staff with the aid of annual performance reviews.
 - b. Appointing leadership for tasks when necessary.
 - c. Building relationships with Staff members and regularly conduct meetings.
 - d. Assisting Staff in accomplishing their objectives and designing personal development plans.
 - e. Overseeing Staff in the mentoring and development of Church lay leaders.
 - f. Creating Staff job descriptions and changing them as necessary to fulfill the mission of the church.
 - g. Recommending Staff compensation for the annual budget.
 - h. Initiating hiring process for Senior Ministry Staff.
 - i. Providing a written recommendation to the Governance Board to dismiss specific Senior Ministry Staff as needed.
 - j. Overseeing hiring or dismissing of Support Staff as needed.
 - k. Maintaining the Church's personnel organizational chart.

Planning

- 1. In conjunction with Staff and the Governance board, leading the development and maintenance of the Strategic Ministry Plan of the Church.
- 2. Reviewing and modifying the organization of the Church's ministries and staffing alignments in accordance with the Strategic Ministry Plan.
- 3. Providing budget recommendations for Staff and ministry programs to the Finance Team.

E. Termination

- 1. Resignation.** The Senior Pastor may resign upon written eight-week written notice to the Governance Board.
- 2. Removal.** The Senior Pastor can only be removed by a written recommendation of Governance Board followed by a 2/3 vote of the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose with such a purpose being published at least two weeks before the meeting. Causes for removal include failure to perform duties, malfeasance, misfeasance, immorality, indiscretion, unethical behavior, doctrinal error or breach of a fiduciary duty owed to Trinity Covenant Church.
- 3. Permanent Incapacity.** The Governance Board shall develop a policy for determining what constitutes permanent incapacity of the Senior Pastor.
 - 4. Temporary Absence or Disability.** In the event of a temporary absence or temporary disability of the Senior Pastor, the Governance Board shall appoint and determine compensation for an acting Senior Pastor for the duration of the Senior Pastor's temporary absence or disability.

Section 2. Senior Ministry Staff. Senior Ministry Staff report directly to the Senior Pastor.

- A. Qualifications of Pastors.** The Senior Ministry Staff “Pastors” of this Church shall be mature Christians, competent to teach, rebuke, exhort, and comfort and manage in accordance with sound doctrine. These pastors shall be or become ordained, licensed, or commissioned by the Evangelical Covenant Church in accordance with their qualifications and duties. Pastors and any spouses shall be members of the Church by virtue of the call to serve the Church.
- B. Qualifications of Directors.** Senior Ministry Staff “Directors” shall be mature Christians, whose gifts, abilities and training are consistent with the task to which they are called by the church. At the discretion of the Senior Pastor, Directors shall be encouraged to obtain Covenant licensure or commissioning if they do not already possess such credentials. Directors shall become members of the church.
- C. Call.** Senior Ministry Staff shall be called by the congregation at a regular or special Church business meeting, the purpose of which shall be made public at least two (2) Sundays in advance, excluding the day of the called meeting, should that meeting be on a Sunday. Senior Ministry Staff shall be chosen by closed ballot with a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting required for a call. Senior Ministry Staff shall carry out specific areas of ministry according to their Letter of Call and/or their job description. The call shall be for an unspecified period of time.
- D. Cooperation.** Senior Ministry Staff shall work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor according to their Letter of Call and/or their job description or other duties as assigned by the Senior Pastor, including management of various ministry teams.
- E. Responsibilities.** Senior Ministry Staff shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives and strategies in conjunction with the Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Ministry Plan of the Church and assigned tasks may include:

Ministry

1. Preaching and teaching the Word of God.
2. Administering the Sacraments.
3. Providing prayer, Godly counsel, spiritual care, practical support and positive encouragement to members of the congregation.

Managing

1. Organizing, overseeing and supporting Ministry Teams as necessary.
2. Appointing or dismissing Associate Ministry Staff with approval of Senior Pastor.
3. Mentoring and developing Associate Ministry Staff.
4. Hearing and responding appropriately to concerns of members concerning the direction of the Church.
5. Working in unity with the Senior Pastor.

Planning

1. When requested by the Senior Pastor, help the Senior Pastor and Governance Board develop an annual Strategic Ministry Plan for presentation to the congregation.
2. In conjunction with Senior Pastor and the Governance Board, contribute to the maintenance of the Strategic Ministry Plan of the Church.
3. Help the Senior Pastor optimize the organization of the Church’s ministries in accordance with the Mission, Vision, Values and the Strategic Ministry Plan.

F. Termination.

1. **Resignation.** Senior Ministry Staff may resign upon four-week written notice to the Senior Pastor.
2. **Removal.** Removal will be done a 2/3 vote of the full Governance Board.

Section 3. Associate Ministry Staff. Senior Ministry Staff (Pastors and Directors) shall appoint and oversee Associate Ministry Staff leadership to assist in their duties or to take leadership of a ministry. These Associate Ministry Staff positions can be paid or unpaid.

- A. Qualifications.** Associate Ministry Staff shall be mature Christians, whose gifts, abilities and training are consistent with the task to which they are called to assist in their duties or to take leadership of a ministry.
- B. Call.** Associate Ministry Staff may be called to their assignment (appointed) by the Senior Pastor or the Senior Ministry Staff.
- C. Responsibilities.** Associate Ministry Staff will be assigned by the Senior Ministry Staff. The Pastor or Director who appoints them and will be responsible for their oversight.
- D. Removal.** The Senior Pastor or Senior Ministry Staff may remove Associate Ministry Staff.
- E. Resignation.** Associate Ministry Staff may resign upon verbal or written notice to the Senior Pastor or Senior Ministry Staff.

Section 4. Support Staff. Support Staff fulfill functions necessary to operate the church office and building and are overseen by the Office Manager. The Office Manager may appoint or dismiss Support Staff with approval of Senior Pastor.

Section 5. Charges Against Staff. Any charge brought against Staff credentialed by the Evangelical Covenant Church for errors in doctrine or moral conduct shall be referred to the Church Chair who will refer it immediately to the Superintendent of the East Coast Conference. Charges against non-credentialed staff will be handled by the Senior Pastor according to Trinity Covenant Church's misconduct policies.

ARTICLE VII – Diaconate

Section 1. Purpose. The Diaconate, in concert with the Pastoral Staff, serves and cares for the congregation in the areas of Church membership, member disciplinary issues, communion, prayer and counsel, and administration of the Samaritan Benevolence Fund.

Section 2. Composition. The Diaconate shall consist of 8-12 men and women in approximately equal number.

Section 3. Qualification. Deacons shall have been regular attendees for at least two years, meet the Biblical standards of character for church leaders and have been brought into church membership prior to assuming their role as Deacons.

Section 4. Election. A Diaconate member shall be selected by the nominations Team and elected by a majority vote of those members voting at a regular or special meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 5. Term of Office. Diaconate members shall be elected to a term of two years and shall not be elected to more than three consecutive terms. Diaconate members serving an abbreviated term may be elected thereafter to three full consecutive terms.

Section 6. Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy, the Senior Pastor shall appoint a qualified member of the Church to serve the remainder of the term, at which time a normal election will occur. A Diaconate member elected to serve an unexpired term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to three consecutive terms.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Diaconate

- A. Membership.** The Diaconate shall hear the testimonies of individuals desiring to become members of the Church. They shall recommend for membership only those individuals meeting the qualifications for membership to the Church. The Diaconate shall maintain the accuracy of the Church's membership roll.
- B. Discipline.** The Diaconate shall in love admonish members who willfully neglect their responsibilities to the Church or who err in doctrine or conduct in accord with Biblical principles, recognizing that the goal of discipline is always the restoration of relationships with God and others.
- C. Holy Communion.** The members of the Diaconate shall administer the sacrament of Holy Communion to those unable to partake during regular worship due to illness or frailty. They shall also assist in serving communion during worship.
- D. Prayer and Care.** The members of the Diaconate shall be available to pray with individuals and families and provide Godly counsel as appropriate.
- E. Benevolence Fund.** The Diaconate shall administer the Benevolence Fund to help those in need and shall report the income and expenditures to the Treasurer.

Section 8. Removal from Office. A Diaconate member may be removed from office by a majority vote of congregational members voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

ARTICLE VIII – Search Teams**Section 1. Senior Pastor Search Teams**

- A. Purpose.** Senior Pastor Search Teams recommend a qualified candidate to the congregation to fill a vacancy of the Senior Pastor.
- B. Composition.** Senior Pastor Search Teams shall be composed of members recommended by the Governance Board and approved by the congregation at a business meeting. A Search Team shall appoint its own officers.
- C. Responsibilities.** Search Teams shall be guided by instructions from the Governance Board and shall use the following guidelines:
1. Keeping the proceedings of the Search Team confidential except for what has been agreed upon by the team.
 2. Submitting a current profile of the church to the East Coast Conference and to the congregation.
 3. Requesting candidate suggestions from the Superintendent of the East Coast Conference.
 4. Providing timely communication to the Governance board and congregation regarding search process.
 5. Interviewing and thoroughly evaluating potential candidates.
 6. Recommending a qualified candidate for Senior Pastor to be approved by the congregation.

Section 2. Senior Ministry Staff Search Teams

- A. Purpose.** Senior Ministry Staff Search Teams recommend a qualified candidate to the congregation to fill a vacancy of Senior Ministry Staff.
- B. Composition.** Senior Ministry Staff search teams shall be composed of members selected by the Governance Board. The Senior Pastor is an *ex officio* member. A Search Team shall appoint its own officers.
- C. Responsibilities.** Search Teams shall be guided by instructions from the Governance Board and shall use the following guidelines:
1. Keeping the proceedings of the Search Team confidential except for what has been agreed upon by the team.
 2. Providing timely communication to the Governance board and congregation regarding search process.
 3. Interviewing and thoroughly evaluating potential candidates.
 4. Recommending a qualified candidate for Senior Ministry Staff to be approved by the congregation.

ARTICLE IX – Nominations Team

Section 1. Purpose. The Nominations Team nominates members of the congregation to serve in lay leadership positions, specified below.

Section 2. Composition. The Nominations Team shall consist of seven members, including the Church Chair and the Senior Pastor as *ex officio* members. The Nominations Team will select its own chair.

Section 3. Qualifications. All Nominations Team members shall be a member of the Church for at least two years and shall meet the biblical standards of character for Church leaders.

Section 4. Election. The Governance Board shall prepare the ballot for the election of new Nominations Team members. The Nominations Team shall be elected by those members voting at a business meeting of the congregation.

Section 5. Term of Office. Nominations Team members shall be elected to a term of two years and shall not be elected to more than two consecutive terms. The term for Nominating Team positions begins immediately after the mid-year business meeting vote and ends after the vote at the mid-year business meeting of the final year of the term.

Positions that remain vacant after the normal elections shall be filled by appointment of the Governance Board until a vote of the membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 4 above. Positions that are filled in this manner will be considered as partial terms. Partial terms will not count toward the maximum term limit of two consecutive 2-year terms unless the partial term exceeds six months.

Section 6. Removal from Office. A Nominations Team member may be removed from office by a majority vote of congregational members voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 7. Responsibilities. The Nominations Team shall prepare a ballot, subject to approval by the Governance Board, for the annual meeting of the congregation listing one name for each position to be filled. The positions to be selected for ballot are:

- A. Church Officers
- B. Members of the Governance Board

ARTICLE X – Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall be held at a time designated by the Governance Board. The Senior Pastor and each member of the Senior Ministry Staff shall report to the congregation on the state of his/her ministry area, significant events since the previous annual meeting, and plans for the upcoming year. The Senior Pastor shall present the strategic ministry plan. The Governance Board shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a written annual report to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2. Annual Congregational Budget Meeting. The Annual Congregational Budget Meeting shall be held within six weeks of the end of the fiscal year. If, in the judgment of the Governance Board the meeting cannot be held within such time, it shall be held as soon thereafter as feasible. The Treasurer shall present a report to the congregation on the financial condition of the church. The Finance Team shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of the Annual Operating Budget for approval by the congregation. At the discretion of the Governance Board, the Annual Congregational Budget Meeting may be combined with the Annual Meeting or Semi-Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Semi-Annual Meeting. The Semi-Annual Meeting shall be held at a time designated by the Governance Board.

Section 4. Special meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Governance Board or by written request signed by 10% of the membership.

Section 5. Notification of meeting. All meetings shall be announced in writing to the membership of the Church at least two Sundays prior to the meeting date. A written agenda and any related documents (e.g. reports, budgets) shall be made available in print and at the discretion of the Governance Board on the church website at least one week prior to such meeting. The agenda shall include the text of any motions planned to be presented for a vote at such meeting.

Section 6. Conduct of meeting. The Chair of the Church or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair, shall serve as Chair of any meeting of the membership.

Section 7. Voting. Each member, and only members, shall be entitled to cast one vote at any election on any subject at any annual or special meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. Votes shall generally be by secret ballot unless the Chair of a meeting calls for open balloting and no objection is raised.

Section 8. Quorum. Ten percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for any business meeting.

Section 9. Rules of order. All business meetings of the Church and of any other committees or organizations shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 10. Final voice. The congregation reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice.

Change History:

Jan 2017:

-Article I updated to include category of Associate Member

-Article II Section 4, Article III Section 2 and Article VII Section 3 updated to allow regular attenders to serve provided they become members prior to assuming their roles