

# Constitution First Covenant Church Omaha, Nebraska

Adopted January 30, 2011

## PREAMBLE

(An historical statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church as adopted by the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2002.)

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

The Evangelical Covenant Church adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Bible. It confesses that the Holy Scripture, the Old and 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 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 guard 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 the distinctive spirit. The Evangelical Covenant church is committed to reaching across boundaries of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, and status in the cultivations of communities of life and service.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of First Evangelical Covenant Church of Omaha, Nebraska.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Name**

The name of this church shall be FIRST EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH of Omaha, Nebraska.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Affiliation**

The church is a member of The Evangelical Covenant Church and its Midwest Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the denomination and conference.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Confession of Faith**

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

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Purpose**

We covenant to cultivate a community of worship committed to prayer, preaching and study of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments, and fellowship across gender, race, age, culture, and class. In so doing, we covenant to equip loving, giving, growing Christians to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ – evangelizing the lost, ministering to those in need, and seeking justice for the oppressed.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Membership**

Membership in the church is granted as provided in the Bylaws 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 the church and to share its fellowship and obligations.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Officers**

The officers of the church shall be a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary, and a financial officer. All officers shall be members of the Lead Team.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Governance**

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

## **ARTICLE VII Property**

### Section 1

In order to accomplish the purposes of the church (Article IV), the church shall own and control such property as shall be deemed necessary, and shall also have power and authority to accept and convey title to property, both real and personal, and to receive donations, devises or bequests of real or personal property for the promotion of its work.

### Section 2

In the event of schism within the church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, the title of all church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group that abides by the constitution, as determined by the executive board of the conference. In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Midwest Conference.

## **ARTICLE IX Amendment**

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and the Model Constitutions for Local Covenant Churches and not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the congregation, providing that proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. Articles VIII and IX may be amended only with the approval of the executive board of the regional conference.

## **ARTICLE X Congregational Meetings**

An Annual Meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the Annual Meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor(s), ministry staff, officers, and ministry teams. Reports on a review of financial records shall be submitted by the Financial Officer for the church and each of its supporting organizations. Election of offices shall be held. The church budget shall be submitted for action.

Additional congregational meetings shall be held not less that semiannually. Items as required by the Constitution and Bylaws shall be submitted for congregational action.