

June, 2001

MONROE COVENANT CHURCH
MONROE, WASHINGTON

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

(Historical Statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America as revised in 1957.)

"The Evangelical Covenant Church of America 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 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 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 the Monroe Evangelical Covenant Church of Monroe, Washington.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be the Monroe Evangelical Covenant Church of Monroe, Washington.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

The church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church of America and its North Pacific Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the Covenant and its decisions and to support its programs, policies, and institutions.

ARTICLE III

Confession of Faith

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

ARTICLE IV

Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of the church shall be to unite Christians in fellowship for spiritual development, for the winning of persons to Christ, and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through Christian education, home and world mission, and the institutions conducted by the Evangelical Covenant Church of America and its local regional conferences.

Section 2. In order to achieve this purpose, the church, 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.

ARTICLE V

Membership

Membership in the church 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 the church and to share its fellowship and obligations.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

The officers of the church shall be a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, a financial secretary, and a treasurer.

ARTICLE VII

Church Council

Section 1. The general administration of the Church shall be vested in a body known as the Church Council. In circumstances, or where law requires action(s) by "Trustees" the Council shall be known as "the Board of Trustees" and the members of it as "Trustees." The Council shall also serve as a diaconate or appoint a diaconate to supervise the spiritual life of the Church, as stated in I Timothy 3:8-13. The Council shall report at least bimonthly its actions or items of interest to the congregation.

Section 2. The council shall consist of six (6) or more members, as specified in the bylaws, including the

pastor, who shall be an ex officio member of the council.

Section 3. The Council shall organize itself including the election of church officers in a manner specified in the bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII

Business Meetings

Section 1. Regular business meetings shall be held as necessary, but not less than annually. The annual business meeting shall be held as near the first of the calendar year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor and each committee of the Church. Audited financial reports shall be submitted by the treasurer of the Church and each of its organizations. Council members for vacancies or expired terms shall be elected.

Section 2. Public and written notice of all congregational business meetings shall be made not less than two weeks prior to any meeting.

ARTICLE IX

Property

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 which abides by this constitution, as determined by the executive board of the North Pacific 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 North Pacific Conference.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the church, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. When the church receives appropriation aid from the regional conference and/or the Covenant through subsidy or loans, proposed amendments must also be approved by the regional conference board and the executive secretary of Covenant Home Mission.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

Membership

Section 1. Admission into membership

a) Application for membership

Persons who are 16 or older and are seeking membership shall attend inquirer's classes that will give necessary information about the Evangelical Covenant Church and the responsibilities of membership. An official application shall be placed with the pastor or enlistment chairperson. The council will review the application according to Article V of the Constitution. Upon approval, the council shall make a recommendation to a meeting of the congregation. The names shall be posted at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting, and any known breach of Article V that escaped the council should be brought immediately to the church leadership prior to the congregational meeting. The council will determine the course of their recommendation.

b) Transfer of membership

Applicants from other Christian churches shall submit letters of transfer when available, in place of written membership application (part "a" above).

c) Reception of new members

At a meeting of the congregation the recommended applicant will offer a confession of Christian faith. The rite for the "Reception of New Members" from The Covenant Book of Worship shall be administered and the right hand of fellowship shall be extended

Section 2. Responsibility of membership

Every member shall assume the responsibility and obligations placed on them by the Word of God and the church. They shall through witness of life and word, consecrated service, prayer, financial support and attendance of worship, further the cause of Christ in the local church and in the larger Covenant Church.

Section 3. Discipline

a) Negligent members

A member who willfully neglects his or her duties or fails to attend services of the church regularly or to contribute to its support according to his means shall be admonished by the council. If this admonition is not heeded, he shall be dealt with as an erring member.

b) Erring members

A member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. A fellow member having knowledge of such error shall in the spirit of Christian love seek to restore him. If he does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the council, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore him. If he fails to heed the counsel of the church, his error shall be brought before a business meeting of the church. 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) Dismissal of members

Dismissal of a member under paragraphs a) and b) of this section must be acted on by the church, which alone has the authority. A two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a congregational meeting is necessary for such action.

Section 4. Transfers of members

A member who moves to another community shall in reasonable time identify with another church, and a request for transfer of membership shall be made to the pastor, who will submit a letter of transfer to the new church. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through the council to the next business meeting where it shall be made a matter of record.

Section 5. Removal of membership

Request for withdrawal from membership in the church shall be made in writing to the pastor or the council. After careful consideration the council may present a recommendation for withdrawal to a business meeting of the church.

Section 6. Forfeiture of property rights

A member who has been properly dismissed from the church or has withdrawn his membership has forfeited all rights to any and all property of the church.

Section 7. Nonmember friends

Nonmember parish friends, including children, youth, and adults of all ages shall be served by the church as part of its total constituency. The church and its pastor shall minister to them in all their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider this their church home. They shall be kept informed of the activities of the church.

Section 8. Inactive Members

Any member inactive as to attendance and general support may be designated as inactive by a two-thirds vote of congregation after pastoral contact and recommendation by the church Council. A member may request inactive status, and have it confirmed by the same procedure.

ARTICLE II

Pastor

Section 1. Qualifications

The pastor of the church shall meet the New Testament requirements of his office (I Timothy 3:2-7) and shall be a member in good standing in the Covenant Ministerium. He shall by virtue of his call be a member of the church and an ex officio member of the council and the boards of all organizations within the church.

Section 2. Duties

The pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully giving himself to pastoral work. He shall provide the church with an accurate record of his pastoral acts and present a written report to the church annual business meeting. He shall practice good administrative procedures and cooperate with the council.

Section 3. Cooperation

The pastor shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference, and his fellow ministers.

Section 4. Call

The pastor shall be called at a regular or special church business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced in advance. He shall be chosen by closed ballot with two-thirds vote required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time, with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the pastor for termination of his pastoral duties. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or the Covenant through subsidy or loans, a call to the pastor shall be extended jointly by the church and the local regional conference, subject to approval by the executive secretary of Covenant home mission.

Section 5. Charges against the pastor

Charges against the pastor shall be submitted in writing and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of three witnesses. If in the judgment of the church he erred in doctrine or conduct, the case shall be referred to the committee on ministerial standing and discipline of the local regional conference prior to further action by the church.

ARTICLE III

Officers

Section 1. Chairman

The chairman shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the council. He shall confer with the pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor may give by virtue of his training, experience, and calling. The chairman shall be responsible for leadership of the church services in the absence of the pastor.

Section 2. Vice-chairman

The vice-chairman shall assume the duties of the chairman in his absence, and assist him in his duties.

Section 3. Secretary

The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the council. He shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated to him. He shall also be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.

Section 4. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall receive, record, and transmit to the church treasurer all funds contributed to the church.

Section 5. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be responsible for all funds committed to him and shall make disbursements as authorized by the church or the council. The treasurer shall also present a written report of the receipts and expenditures to each regular meeting of the council and to each regular business meeting of the church.

ARTICLE IV

Church Council

Section 1. Size and tenure

The Council shall consist of six or more members (except when the church membership exceeds 150 members, the Council shall consist of at least nine members), who shall be duly nominated and elected from the membership of the church, except for the pastor, who shall serve in an ex-officio capacity. Members elected to the council shall serve for terms of three years in such a manner that the terms of approximately one-third of the members shall expire each year. A council member may succeed himself only once.

Section 2. Organization

Following the annual meeting of the church, the council shall convene to select from its own number a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, a financial secretary, and a treasurer, and such other officers as the council, church business meeting, or these bylaws may specify. These officers shall be the corporate officers of the church.

Section 3. Council duties

The council in its administrative responsibility in cooperation with the pastor shall fulfill the functions defined by the constitution and bylaws, including the following:

- a) Supervise church membership, including recommendations relative to reception or removal of members.
- b) Assist the pastor in nurturing the spiritual life of the church and in the service of communion as planned by the pastor, in cooperation with the worship chairman.
- c) Establish administrative and program policies in conformity with the spirit of the church constitution.
- d) Evaluate the total church program on a continuing basis.
- e) Plan and recommend the annual budget, and stewardship opportunities for the church.
- f) Review and approve the schedule of the church activities and personnel.
- g) Appoint administrative committee members and church workers as defined by the bylaws for the administrative committees, as the council may deem appropriate.

Section 4. Administrative committees

Implementation of policies and programs established by the congregation or council will be accomplished through administrative committees.

A council member shall serve as liaison and may serve as chairman of the committee to which he is appointed and assume responsibility for directing all congregational activities which fall within that functional category, in cooperation with the pastor.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1. Executive Committee

The executive committee, consisting of the church chairman, the secretary, and the treasurer, together with the pastor of the church, shall strive to promote effective working relations and communication in the church. The committee shall have no legislative power, but shall function in an advisory capacity to the council, unless specific responsibilities shall have been assigned to it by the council or the church.

Section 2. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall consist of not less than three (3) members who shall be appointed by the chairman after consultation with the Council; said committee members shall be appointed at least three (3) months prior to the annual meeting. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The responsibility of the committee shall include the following:

- a) Prepare a ballot for the annual meeting of the congregation listing at least one qualified and committed candidate for each Council position identified by the Council as requiring election.
- b) Present the completed ballot to the annual meeting of the congregation.

Section 3. Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of the members of the Executive Committee and shall meet at least semiannually in keeping with the program and purpose of the Covenant Commission on Pastoral Relations as adopted by the Annual Meeting.

Section 4. Special committees and task forces

Special committees or task forces for specific purposes may be appointed by any duly constituted business meeting of the congregation or by the council according to need, but shall be automatically terminated at the next Annual Meeting unless specifically extended by said Annual Meeting.

Section 5. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee shall consist of the treasurer and the financial secretary and at least one other non-Council member, and shall prepare for Council approval a budget for submission to the Annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section 1. Public services

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

Section 2. Conducting sacraments

The sacrament of Holy Communion shall be conducted regularly as determined by vote of the church. The sacrament of baptism shall be conducted in keeping with Covenant principles and according to the needs of the

constituency.

Section 3. Business meetings

Church business meetings shall be held regularly not less than semiannually as specified in Article VIII of the constitution. Special business meetings may be called by the chairman of the church in consultation with the pastor or by the council.

Section 4. Church council and administrative committee meetings

Regular meetings of the Council shall be held not less than ten times a year. Administrative committees, special committees, and task forces shall meet as required or at a frequency specified by the Council. Special meetings of the Council, the Executive Committee, the administrative committees, and any task forces may be called by their respective chairpersons.

Section 5. Organization meetings

Meetings and activities of the organizations of the church shall be planned and conducted regularly under the direction and supervision of the council.

ARTICLE VII

General Provisions

Section 1. Quorum

- a) Twenty percent of active membership of church or twenty (20) members, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum of the congregation.
- b) The quorum for the council, committee, and task force meetings shall be a majority of its membership.

Section 2. Tenure

Officers of the church shall be elected for terms of one year. They may not succeed themselves more than three successive terms.

Section 3. Rules of order

All business meetings of the church and of the boards, committees, and organizations of the church shall be conducted according to the Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 4. Gender

Whenever the masculine gender is used, it includes the feminine, and vice versa.

ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws not in conflict with the constitution may be adopted at any regular business meeting or at a special business meeting called for that purpose, by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, providing that such amendments have been presented in writing to the council and at a preceding regular

business meeting. When the church receives aid from the regional conference and/or the Covenant through subsidy or loans, proposed amendments must also be approved by the regional conference board and the executive secretary of the Covenant Home Mission.