CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
FOR THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH OF SIMI VALLEY

PREAMBLE…Historical Statement (from Constitution 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 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 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 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.

The Covenant Church, in order to accomplish its objectives, has formulated and adopted a Constitution and Bylaws. This document seeks to clarify and interpret the derivation of rights and responsibilities and the proper exercise thereof, and sets forth the name, confession, membership, objectives, officers, administration, and meetings of the Covenant. The Constitution recognized that the highest constituted authority of the Covenant is the general assembly known as the Annual Meeting of the Covenant, which assembly alone can adopt and amend the Constitution and Bylaws. Together, the Articles of Incorporation of the Covenant, the laws of the State of Illinois, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Covenant shall constitute the law governing The Evangelical Covenant Church.

ARTICLE I NAME
The name of this church shall be the Evangelical Covenant Church of Simi Valley, Simi Valley, California, for the sake of convenience known as Simi Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II AFFILIATION
This church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its Pacific Southwest Conference and is pledged to work in harmony with the denomination and its decisions and to support its program, policies, and institutions.

ARTICLE III CONFESSION OF FAITH
This church believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct.

ARTICLE IV PURPOSE
The purpose of this church is 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 missions, and the institution conducted by the Evangelical Covenant Church and its local regional conference.

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In order to achieve this purpose, this 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 this church is granted upon application to those who through the faith of 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 this church, and to share its fellowship and obligations.

ARTICLE VI  CHURCH BOARDS
The administration of the church shall be governed by the church board as outlined in the bylaws. All members of these boards shall be members of the church.

ARTICLE VII  BUSINESS MEETINGS
Regular business meetings shall be held at stated intervals, at least twice a year. The annual business meeting shall be held as near the beginning of the fiscal year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written reports shall be submitted by the pastors, ministers and organizations of the church. Financial reports shall be submitted by the treasurer of the church and each of its organizations. Officers for the ensuing year shall be elected by secret ballot.

ARTICLE VIII  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 and personal shall remain with the group, which abides by this constitution. 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 Pacific Southwest Conference.

ARTICLE IX  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. Articles II, III, VIII, and IX cannot be changed.
BYLAWS – Leadership Team Model

Introduction

These Bylaws contain the delineation of responsibilities in the church and serve to outline our organizational procedure. The following is offered by way of summary:

A. The congregation is the governing authority of this organization. In particular, it selects leadership in accordance with these Bylaws, calls the Senior Pastor, approves annual budgets and objectives for the church, approves major purchases and indebtedness, and reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice. It operates through duly called congregational meetings.

B. The Leadership Team is delegated governing responsibility by the congregation as specified in these Bylaws. It acts for the congregation in all matters not reserved for the congregation in this Constitution and Bylaws.

C. The Pastor contributes spiritual and executive servant leadership.

D. A Task Force Leader is the leader of a particular Task Force.

E. Pastoral Staff are those who have been called by the congregation to serve as pastors (for example, the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor).

F. Ministerial Staff are those employed by the church to lead special ministries as defined by the Leadership Team (for example, Worship Leader and Minister of Christian Education and Administration).

G. Support Staff are those employed by the church to support the church and the Pastoral and Ministerial Staff (for example Church Secretary and Bookkeeper).

H. The Pastoral Relations Committee works to ensure a vital, healthy, mutually beneficial relationship between the congregation and members of the pastoral staff. It stands in the gap to facilitate communication and mediate between the pastors and the church members.
BYLAWS – Leadership Team Model

ARTICLE 1

Membership

Section 1. Responsibilities. The 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 regional Conference and Covenant.

Section 2. Procedure for Admission.

A. Persons desiring to apply for membership shall submit their application to the pastor or to the Leadership Team. Membership classes will normally precede the application.

B. Upon completion of the membership class, applicants shall be interviewed by a committee appointed by the Leadership Team. Upon completion of such interviews, the committee shall submit their recommendations on the applications to the Leadership Team who 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 Leadership Team within 10 days after notification by the Leadership Team.

C. Final action of approval or denial on applications for membership shall be taken by the Leadership Team within sixty (60) days of receiving the recommendations of the interview committee.

D. Applicants who are voted into membership of the church by the Leadership Team are considered full members of the Church.

E. New members shall be welcomed at a service of Holy Communion and make public confession of their Christian faith, as outlined in The Covenant Book of Worship.

Section 3. Children of Members. Children of members of the church and its constituency shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached Confirmation age, they shall receive instruction from the pastor(s) in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church, using the Confirmation material of the Covenant Church. Following confirmation, they may apply for church membership as outlined under Section 2 of this article.

Section 4. Discipline.

A. Discipline of members. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for admonishing members who willfully neglect their duties to the church or who err in doctrine or conduct.

B. Erring members. Any 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. Any member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore the erring member. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Leadership Team, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the member.

C. Dismissal of a member remaining in gross error in doctrine or conduct may result by a two-thirds vote of all current Leadership Team members. Such action may be appealed by the member to the congregation for consideration at the next congregational meeting.
Section 5. Transfer of members. Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such request in writing to the Pastor or Leadership Team. Letters of transfer shall be issued by the Pastor.

Section 6. Recording. The names of those joining and terminating membership shall be duly recorded and reported to the congregational meeting following action.

ARTICLE II

The Leadership Team (Church Board)

Section 1. Composition. The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than eight nor more than eleven Leadership Team members, one of whom shall be the Chair and one of whom shall be the Senior Pastor (ex officio). The chair of the School Board shall serve as an advisory member with voting privileges in matters concerning the school.

Section 2. Qualification. A Leadership Team member shall be a member of the church for at least 11 months and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders (1 Tim 3:1-7). The chair shall have previously served at least one full two-year term on the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Election. Leadership Team members including the chair shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

Section 4. Term of Office. Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of two years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. The terms of the Leadership Team members shall be staggered years. The Church Chair shall be elected for a term of one year and may not be elected for more than three consecutive terms.

Section 5. Vacancies. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by removal or resignation shall be filled by a vote of the membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 3 above if the number of LT members falls below the minimum number in Article II, Section I. A Leadership Team member elected to serve an unexpired term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to two full consecutive terms.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of Leadership Team members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Leadership Team.

A. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the local body and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church. They shall present yearly ministry goals and objectives to the congregation.

B. The Leadership Team shall act as the trustees of the church and its assets. They shall designate those Leadership Team members and any other members of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.

C. The congregation shall elect the chair, and the Leadership Team shall elect among themselves a vice chair and a secretary.

i. Chair. The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the board. The chair shall confer with senior pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor can give by virtue of his or her training, experience, and calling. The chair shall be responsible for leadership of the church services in the absence of the pastor.

ii. Vice-chair. The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair’s absence, and assist in the chair’s duties.
iii. Secretary. The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and the Leadership Team, and shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated and shall be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.

D. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the membership for approval. Upon approval of the budget by the membership, the Leadership Team shall be responsible for seeing that the budget is carried out as approved. The Leadership Team shall have the authority to adjust budget items and amounts where necessary but in no event shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget or available funds without prior approval of the membership. The Leadership Team shall appoint a member of the church as financial secretary (not necessarily a Leadership Team member) who shall be authorized to receive monies on behalf of the church and shall appoint a treasurer (not necessarily a Leadership Team member) to disburse funds for the church purposes in accordance with established policy. The Leadership Team shall annually appoint auditors to audit the financial records of the church and report such findings to the congregation.

E. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships including:

i. Periodic appraisal of the ministry of the Senior Pastor as defined in the Personnel Manual and provide Godly counsel or discipline as required. Status of the reviews and review process shall be reported to the congregation at all congregational meetings. The Pastoral Relations Committee may perform certain aspects of the appraisals as determined by the Leadership Team.

ii. Annual review and approval of staff compensation and approval of compensation for new staff; approval of other personnel expenses for any staff member or activity, all subject to overall budget approval.

iii. Establishment of personnel policies and a written Personnel Manual.

iv. Establishment of Pastoral Relations Committee Guidelines in a written manual

v. Approval of changes in staff job descriptions and approval of job descriptions for new staff positions.

vi. Maintenance of current job descriptions for all staff members.

vii. Hiring of support staff.

F. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for approving or rejecting applications for membership.

G. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for dealing with members who neglect their duties to the church and who err in doctrine and conduct, and shall do so in such a manner as to restore such members to full and complete fellowship, if possible, and if not possible, to take such action as may be appropriate under the Holy Scriptures and the Constitution and Bylaws of the church, including expulsion from membership. Discipline shall be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual disciplined as well as the welfare of the church. The Leadership Team shall not consider any grievance against a member unless such grievance is submitted in writing and supported by the evidence of two or more witnesses.

H. The Leadership Team shall hear and respond appropriately to concerns of members.

I. The Leadership Team shall determine Task Forces needed to carry out the church’s mission and appoint appropriate leadership.
J. The Leadership Team shall document their meetings and publish non-confidential minutes for the benefit of the congregation. Confidential information shall be indicated.

K. The Leadership Team shall review the Constitution, Bylaws and Personal Policies at the beginning of every fiscal year.

Section 8. Unity. Action by the Leadership Team shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Section 9. Other Organizational Boards

School Board

A. The School Board shall consist of a sufficient number of members as determined by the Leadership Team but shall not be less than three members. The Leadership Team Chair, the Senior Pastor, and the School Director(s) shall serve as ex-officio members of the School Board. All members of the School Board shall be members of the church.

B. The congregation at the Annual Meeting will elect the chair of the School Board, and School Board members. School Board members shall be elected for a term of two years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms.

C. The Board shall immediately after the annual meeting elect from their number a vice-chairperson, a secretary, and other officers as deemed necessary to carry out the responsibilities of their Board.

D. The School Board shall be responsible for the Simi Covenant Preschool and day care program offered by the congregation as an outreach to the community in conformance with the Confession of Faith (ARTICLE III) and Purpose (ARTICLE IV) of the Constitution of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Simi Valley and in conformance with applicable laws of the State of California governing such activities. They shall be expressly responsible for curriculum content and program emphasis and for finding and recommending a qualified director to the congregation, which alone shall approve a call to serve. With the approval of the director, they shall hire qualified teachers and support staff, establish fees, and prepare an annual budget for approval in January of each year. The budget shall be presented to the congregation for approval in January of each year. The School Board and the director shall conduct school business in accordance with written procedures approved annually by the congregation and written procedures approved by the School Board. The board and director shall see to it that these policies and procedures are maintained in writing and kept on file in the church office and with such public agencies as required by law.

ARTICLE III

Task Forces

Section 1. Purpose. Task Forces shall be formed as required to implement the varied ministries of the church.

Section 2. Organization. Task Forces shall be chartered by the Leadership Team to implement specific ministries. The charter for a Task Force shall include: the statement of purpose; strategies; leadership structure; qualifications for ministry; and a provision that the Task Force shall terminate fifteen months from the most recent Leadership Team review. The list of Task Forces shall be determined annually by the board, upon recommendation of the church staff, in accord with the church’s purpose, strategies, objectives, and as dictated by organizational and functional effectiveness.

Section 3. Duties. The duties of Task Forces shall be to:
A. Develop and annually review its charter for submission to the Leadership Team.
B. Recruit and train ministry personnel.
C. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
D. Submit annually to the Leadership Team proposed budgets and objectives for the forthcoming year.
E. Meet as required to plan and execute specific ministry objectives.
F. Review and provide a written report, at least semiannually, of progress against objectives to the ministry staff and Leadership Team.
G. Each Task Force shall normally have at least one Leadership Team members as an ex-officio member.

Section 4. Leadership.

A. The leader of a Task Force shall be approved by the Leadership Team (in consultation with the pastors). The task force leader will serve as liaison to the Leadership Team.
B. The Task Force leader in accord with guidelines in its ministry charter may select Task Force members.
C. Each Task Force shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.

ARTICLE IV

Pastors

Section 1. Qualifications. Pastors of the church shall meet the qualifications set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained pastor in good standing with the Evangelical Covenant Church. Other pastors shall become ordained, licensed, or commissioned by the Evangelical Covenant Church in accordance with their qualifications and duties for pastoral office, staff ministry or lay ministry. A pastor shall be a member of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 2. Call of Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. The Senior pastor shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. This committee shall be elected by a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine members, including the Leadership Team chair. It shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent. The Senior Pastor shall be called by ballot with a 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 Senior Pastor for termination of pastoral duties except as provided in Section 7.

Section 3. Call of other pastors. Other pastors may be called by a two-thirds vote of a congregational business meeting upon recommendation of the Leadership Team. The congregation may by a two-thirds vote, delegate authority to call other pastors, to the Leadership Team acting unanimously. In such a case, the board shall give notice to the congregation of the recommendation for pastor 10 days prior to the Leadership Team issuing a call. If the Leadership Team receives written objection or concerns, the recommendation shall be submitted to a congregational business meeting. The duration of pastor’s tenure and the notice required for termination of service shall be set forth in the letter of call.

Section 4. Cooperation. The pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the Pacific Southwest Conference, and other Covenant ministers.

Section 5. Duties of Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God, administer the sacraments, and faithfully carry out pastoral work. The Senior Pastor shall direct the church staff, providing counsel, encouragement, and Christian discipline so as to assist in the accomplishment of objectives for each staff member. All staff are responsible to the Senior Pastor and are reviewed by the Senior Pastor per the Personnel Manual. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Leadership Team and an ex officio member of all other Boards, Task Forces and committees except the Pastoral Relations
Committee and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives and strategies in conjunction with the mission and purpose of the church.

**Section 6. Other pastors.** Other pastors shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor. They may be designated by the Leadership Team to be the leader or member of one or more Task Forces.

**Section 7. Charges against a pastor.** Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the Leadership Team, 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 Leadership Team of the church there is substance to the charges, the case shall be referred to the regional conference superintendent. The superintendent shall confer with the Covenant executive secretary of the 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 Ministry of the Covenant regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church.

**ARTICLE V**

**Nominating Committee**

**Section 1. Composition.** The nominating committee shall consist of one Leadership Team member designated by the Leadership Team, the Senior Pastor, and at least two members at large elected by a majority of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. The Leadership Team shall designate one of the committee members to serve as Chair of the nominating committee.

**Section 2. Qualification.** A Nominating Committee member shall be a member of the church and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders.

**Section 3: Election.** Nominating Committee members shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

**Section 4. Term of Office.** The terms of the member from the Leadership Team shall be at the pleasure of the Leadership Team. The at-large members shall serve two-year terms. The initial terms of the at-large members shall be staggered so that at least one at-large member shall be elected each year.

**Section 5. Vacancies.** A Nominating Committee member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by removal or resignation shall be filled by a vote of the membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 1 above if the total number of Nominating Committee members would fall under two.

**Section 6. Quorum.** A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the nominating committee.

**Section 7. Responsibilities.** The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the offices of Leadership Team, the School Board, the at-large members of the nominating committee, and any other positions assigned to it either by the Leadership Team or congregation.

**Section 8. Nominating procedure.** One or more candidates for the office of Leadership Team, and the School Board shall be nominated by the nominating committee. One or more candidates for the office of at large members of the nominating committee shall be nominated. Any member of appropriate character, giftedness, and call may be considered for any position unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

**Section 9. Unity.** Actions by the nominating committee shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
ARTICLE VI
Pastoral Relations Committee

Section 1. Composition. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of at least 5 members: 2 members at-large appointed by the Leadership, one member shall be selected by each Pastoral Staff, two members shall be appointed from the Leadership Team including the Chair of the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall designate one of the committee members to serve as Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee except the chair shall not be one of the members selected by the Pastoral Staff.

Section 2. Qualification. A Pastoral Relations Committee member shall be a member of the church and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders.

Section 3. Appointment. Pastoral Relations Committee members shall be appointed per Section 1.

Section 4. Term of Office. The terms of the member from the Leadership Team shall be at the pleasure of the Leadership Team. The terms of the member(s) from the Pastoral Staff shall be at the pleasure of the Pastoral Staff. The at-large members shall be appointed each year.

Section 5. Vacancies. A Pastoral Relations Committee member may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Leadership Team.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the Pastoral Relations Committees.

Section 7. Responsibilities. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall perform those functions specified in the Personnel Manual and the Pastoral Relations Committee Manual.

Section 8. Unity. Actions by the Pastoral Relations Committee shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

ARTICLE VII
Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Annual Congregational Meeting. The annual congregational meeting shall be held within sixty days of the end of the fiscal year. If in the judgment of the Leadership Team the meeting cannot be held within such time it shall be held as soon thereafter as feasible. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a written annual report to the membership at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Mid-year Congregational Meeting. The mid-year congregational meeting will be held around the mid-point of the fiscal year.

Section 3. Special congregational meetings. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by 10% of the membership.

Section 4. Notification of congregational meeting. All congregational meetings shall be announced in writing to the membership of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Section 5. Conduct of meeting. The Chair of the Leadership Team or such other person as may be designated by the Leadership Team in his or her absence shall serve as Chair of any meeting of the membership.

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Section 6. Voting. Each member, and only members, shall be entitled to cast one vote at any election on any subject at any annual or special congregational meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. All votes shall be by secret ballot. The Chair of a meeting may call for open balloting where no objection is raised.

Section 7. Quorum. Ten percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for any congregational meeting.

Section 8. 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.


ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

Section 1. Procedure. These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the members at the meeting not less than 30 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on Bylaws changes.