



CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

“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 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 the 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. In conformity with its principle of freedom, the denomination has given room for divergent views of baptism. Similarly, although the church has no gender restrictions for its leadership, the church recognizes that some believe that such restrictions should exist. In the face of such differences in belief, members are free to vote their consciences in such matters, and agree to accept and comply with outcomes determined by a majority vote of the congregation. This should never be understood as a compromise of personal conviction, but as a part of the essential give and take of living in harmony as a diverse people within the one Body of Christ our Lord. 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 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 Harbor Covenant Church of Gig Harbor, Washington.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be the Harbor Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

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

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

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 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 upon application to those who give witness that, through faith in God's Son our Lord Jesus Christ, they 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. The entire membership of the church constitutes the congregation.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

The officers of the church shall be a chair, a vice chair, a secretary, and a financial officer.

ARTICLE VII

Leadership Team

Ultimate earthly authority for the government of this church is vested in its membership acting at and through congregational meetings as delineated in the Bylaws. The administration and oversight of all business and spiritual affairs is delegated by the congregation to the Leadership Team as delineated in the Bylaws. The congregation may review, reverse, or modify any action or decision of the Leadership Team. Where the law requires action by “trustees,” the Leadership Team shall be known as the “Board of Trustees” and the members of it as “trustees.”

ARTICLE VIII Business Meetings

Section 1. An annual meeting shall be held as near to 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. Election for offices shall be held. The church budget shall be submitted for action. Additional congregational meetings shall be held not less than semiannually. Items as required by the Constitution and By-laws shall be submitted for congregational action.

Section 2. Written notice of all congregational business meetings shall be published not less than two weeks prior to the meeting, and shall include the date, time and place of meeting, an agenda of business to be transacted, and the text of all motions to be acted upon.

Section 3. The rules of conduct for all congregational business meetings shall be as prescribed in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX Property

In the event of schism within the church, from which we earnestly pray to 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 to this constitution, not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies, may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting in an annual of the church, providing that a quorum is present (as defined in the Bylaws), and providing the proposed amendment was presented and distributed in written form at the preceding annual meeting.

Harbor Covenant Church Bylaws

ARTICLE I Membership

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of membership is to join with other followers of Christ in building 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, ethnicity, age, culture, and class. In so doing, the membership covenants together to equip loving, giving, growing Christians to reach out, locally and globally, with the good news of Jesus Christ – evangelizing the lost, ministering to those in need, and seeking justice for the oppressed.

Section 2. 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 congregation in attendance, prayer, service, and financial 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 both locally and globally.

Section 3. Admission into Membership

- a) **Application for Membership:** Written applications for membership will be placed with the Lead pastor or with the Leadership Team. Applicants should complete a membership class series or undergo an alternative introductory process as prescribed by the Leadership Team, after which they shall appear before members of the Leadership Team to confess their Christian faith, according to Article V of the Constitution. After reviewing the application and hearing their faith stories, the Leadership Team shall take action on their application for membership, with a two-thirds (2/3) vote required for approval. Names of applicants shall be published at least one week prior to the Leadership Team meeting at which the applications are to be acted upon.
- b) **Reception of New Members:** Applicants who are voted into the membership of the church shall be welcomed at a public service of worship and shall make public confession of their Christian faith. Any person who accepts a call by the congregation to be a member of the pastoral staff shall be deemed to have applied for membership in the church and shall automatically become a member upon beginning the person's ministry to the church.

Section 4. Discipline of Members

- a) **Erring Members:** A member known to seriously err in doctrine or conduct shall be dealt with 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 the erring member from that member's error. If the erring member does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Leadership Team, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek restoration of the member from such error. If the erring member fails to heed the counsel of the Leadership Team, the error shall be brought before a business meeting of the congregation. Discipline shall then be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the church.
- b) **Dismissal of Members:** Dismissal of a member must be acted upon by the congregation, which alone has this authority. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those active members present and voting at a congregational business meeting is necessary for such dismissal.

Section 5. Change of Membership Categories

- a) **Active Members:** Active members are those who attend Sunday services in person or online, support the church financially and strive to uphold the responsibilities of membership (Article I, Section 2)
- b) **Inactive Members:**
 - 1. **Determination:** In cases where members have neither attended Sunday services nor supported the church financially for more than a year, the Leadership Team may, upon review, deem such members to be inactive. The names of members deemed to be inactive shall be reported at the next congregational business meeting. Inactive members are not eligible to vote at congregational business meetings.
 - 2. **Reactivation:** When ready to reactivate, inactive members must submit a letter to the Leadership Team requesting reinstatement, complete a church reorientation class or alternative reentry process as prescribed by the Leadership Team, and meet with the Leadership Team to discuss their plan for fulfilling the responsibilities of membership as identified in Bylaw Article I, Section 2. The Leadership Team will determine reactivation and inform the congregation of reactivated members at the next congregational business meeting.
- c) **Transfer or Withdrawal from Membership:** Members who wish to withdraw from membership or transfer membership to another congregation may do so by requesting withdrawal or a letter of transfer from the Leadership Team. A report of the withdrawal or transfer shall be presented at the next congregational business meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record.

Section 6. Forfeiture of Property Rights

Members who have been properly dismissed from the church (Article I, Section 4) or have withdrawn their memberships (Article I, Section 5) have forfeited all rights to any and all property of the church.

Section 7. Powers of the Congregation

The congregation consists of the entire membership of the church. Ultimate earthly authority and responsibility for the church decisions reside in the congregation, acting in a lawful business meeting. The congregation may review, reverse, or modify any action or decision of the Leadership Team, or any ministry team, task force, or officer of the church. The congregation shall have sole authority to:

- a) Adopt and amend the church budget.
- b) Incur or authorize the incurring of indebtedness on the part of the church. When such action will not cause the church to incur an indebtedness, the Leadership Team may approve unforeseen expenditures not provided for in the budget.
- c) Dismiss or remove members from membership pursuant to Article I, Section 4
- d) Elect Leadership Team members.
- e) Call or dismiss members of the pastoral staff.
- f) Dispose of church real property or interest therein.
- g) Amend the Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE II
Pastoral Staff

Section 1. Members of Staff

- a) Members of the pastoral staff will include the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors and Directors of Ministry.
- b) **Qualifications:** Pastors of the church shall meet the qualifications for character, giftedness, and call set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The Lead Pastor shall be an ordained pastor in good standing with the Evangelical Covenant Church. Other pastors shall be credentialed by the Evangelical Covenant Church in accordance with their qualifications and duties. A pastor shall be a member of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

Section 2. Lead Pastor

- a) **Duties:** The Lead Pastor shall be devoted to the service of the church, preaching, and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully performing pastoral work. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Leadership Team, and of all ministry teams and committees. The Lead Pastor shall be responsible for directing the operations of the church and staff, including the hiring and termination of non-pastoral staff employees, and shall be responsible for reporting on their performance to the Leadership Team. The Lead Pastor shall provide a written report of the Lead Pastor's pastoral activities at the church annual meeting. In case of emergency or a crisis situation, where the leadership team cannot be convened, the Lead Pastor, in collaboration with the Church Chair, is authorized to make decisions in the best interests of the Church. The Leadership Team must be informed as soon as practical after any emergency decision is made. In any such case, the Leadership Team, at the next Leadership Team meeting, may ratify, amend, or rescind the action.
- b) **Cooperation:** The Lead Pastor shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference, and fellow ministers.
- c) **Call:** The Lead Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced in advance. The Lead Pastor shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. The Lead Pastor shall be chosen by quorum ballot with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those active members present and voting required for a call. The Lead Pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time, with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the pastor for termination of the Lead Pastor's duties.

Section 3. Associate Pastors and Directors of Ministries

- a) **Call:** In addition to the Lead Pastor, the pastoral staff shall consist of associate pastors and directors of ministries the congregation calls to carry on the ministries of the church. Upon recommendation of the Lead Pastor or the Leadership Team, the congregation shall call, and may terminate the services of, associate pastors and directors of ministries.
- b) **Duties:** The Lead Pastor and the Leadership Team shall determine the duties of associate pastors and directors of ministries subject to review by the congregation. The associate pastors and directors of ministries may be assigned to work with ministry teams where they shall initiate and develop ministries and programs.
- c) **Supervision:** The activities of members of the pastoral staff shall be directed and supervised by the Lead Pastor.
- d) **Evaluation:** The performance of other members of the pastoral staff shall be reviewed by the Lead pastor in consultation with appropriate ministry teams, who shall report on such performance to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Charges Against a Credentialed Pastor

Charges against a credentialed pastor alleging indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Evangelical Covenant Church must be submitted in writing to the Leadership Team. If in the judgment of the Leadership Team there is substance to the charges, the matter shall be referred to the Regional Conference Superintendent or to the Executive Minister of Develop Leaders for assignment of respective responsibilities of the Evangelical Covenant Church and Harbor Covenant Church in pursuing the matter prior to further action by the church. Pending response to such referral, the church shall not be precluded, however, from taking immediate, reasonable, and appropriate, temporary action, such as suspending or reassigning the pastor, or from any action required by law.

**ARTICLE III
The Leadership Team**

Section 1. Purpose

The Leadership Team shall be responsible for building, maintaining, and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the congregation and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church.

Section 2. Composition

The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than ten nor more than thirteen active members, one of whom shall be the Lead Pastor (ex officio). Other pastoral staff members may serve as non-voting advisory members of the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Qualification

Any active member of the church meeting biblical standards of character and giftedness may be nominated and elected to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Election

Leadership Team members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by a majority vote of those active members voting at a congregational business meeting called for that purpose. In addition to the nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee, three active congregation members may nominate and place on the ballot the name of a candidate who is qualified and has consented to serve. The name of the nominee must be submitted to the Nominating Committee for inclusion on the ballot three weeks prior to the election.

Section 5. Term of Office

Leadership Team members shall be elected for a term of three years. A Leadership Team member may be elected to multiple terms but may not serve more than two such terms consecutively. Terms of office begin at the start of the fiscal year.

Section 6. Vacancies and Removal

A Leadership Team member may resign. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of active members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose. In the case of a vacancy occurring during a term, the Nominating Committee shall present to the congregation candidate(s) to fill the vacancy.

A Leadership Team member so elected to serve an unexpired term of less than 18 months shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to two full consecutive terms.

Section 7. Meetings and Quorum

The Leadership Team shall be authorized to meet in person, via telephone conference call or through any available electronic technology, such as video conference, so long as all members can simultaneously hear and participate in the meeting in real time. A Leadership Team member may participate and vote via electronic means so long as members can simultaneously hear and participate in the meeting. A majority of Leadership Team members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 8. Action taken without a Meeting

In addition to voting at a duly constituted meeting, the Leadership Team may take action without a meeting, including voting via telephone or using available electronic technology if that action has the unanimous support of the Leadership Team. In any such case, all Leadership Team members shall, at the next Leadership Team meeting, ratify the action taken by executing a consent in the form of a record, setting forth the action taken.

Section 9. Decisions

The Leadership Team shall strive for unanimity. Matters shall be determined by a majority vote of a Leadership Team quorum.

Section 10. Organization

The Leadership Team shall annually elect from among themselves the officers of the church: a chair, a vice chair, a secretary, and a financial officer. Officers of the church shall be elected for terms of one year. Officers may succeed themselves.

- a) **Chair:** The chair shall preside at all congregational business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team, and in consultation with the Lead Pastor shall prepare the agenda for such meetings. In the event that the position of Lead Pastor is vacant and in the absence of available pastoral leadership, the chair shall supervise the church office and staff, be responsible for conducting public worship services, and generally assume the other responsibilities required of the Lead Pastor as prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws. It is the chair's responsibility to be a faithful ambassador to the congregation on behalf of the Lead Pastor and the Leadership Team, and reciprocally a faithful representative of the congregation to the Leadership Team and Lead Pastor.
- b) **Vice Chair:** The vice chair shall assist with the chair's duties and chair the Nominating Committee. In the chair's absence, the vice chair shall assume the duties of the chair.
- c) **Secretary:** The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team, conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated, and be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church.
- d) **Financial Officer:** The financial officer shall ensure proper policies, processes, reporting, and reviewing of all matters related to the finances of the church, including the submission of monthly financial reports to the Leadership Team. The treasurer and financial secretary report to the financial officer.

Section 11. Responsibilities of the Leadership Team

- a) Present annual mission and ministry objectives to the congregation.
- b) Determine ministry teams needed to carry out the church's mission and ministry and appoint appropriate leadership for the ministry teams.
- c) Approve church policies.
- d) Be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the membership for approval.
 1. Upon approval of the budget by the active membership, the Leadership Team shall be responsible for seeing that the budget is carried out as approved.

2. The Leadership Team shall have the authority to appropriately adjust budget items and amounts where ministry objectives necessitate but in no event shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget without prior notification and approval of the active membership.

3. The Leadership Team shall appoint an active 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 church purposes in accordance with standard accounting procedures for Washington state non-profit organizations.

4. The Leadership Team shall at appropriate intervals appoint an independent review of the financial records of the church and report such findings to the congregation.

5. Neither the treasurer nor financial secretary shall serve more than three consecutive years.

- e) Hear and respond appropriately to vision and concerns of members and staff.
- f) Be responsible for church discipline.
- g) Act as the trustees of the church for the advancement and protection of its assets. The Leadership Team 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. The list of designees will be reviewed annually by the Lead Pastor and Church Chair and approved by the Leadership Team.
- h) Be responsible for action on applications for membership.
- i) Appoint and maintain, as needed, the Pastoral Relations Team which will work to support and encourage the Lead Pastor and mediate disputes between members of the congregation and members of the pastoral staff. The Pastoral Relations Team shall have between three and five members.
- j) Evaluate the performance of the Lead Pastor.

Section 12. 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.

ARTICLE IV Ministry Teams

Section 1. Purpose

Ministry teams shall be formed as required to implement the varied ministries of the church.

Section 2. Establishment

Ministry teams shall be established by the Leadership Team to implement specific ministries. The configuration of ministry teams shall be reviewed regularly by the Leadership Team in accord with the church's purpose, strategies, and objectives for mission and ministry.

Section 3. Duties

The duties of ministry teams shall be to:

- a) Meet as needed to plan and execute the specific mission and ministry objectives assigned by the Leadership Team.
- b) Recruit and train ministry team members.
- 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 and manage consistent with approved budgets.
- e) Report as requested to the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Leadership

- a) The Leadership Team is responsible for the direction and supervision of the ministry teams and may appoint one of its members to be an ex officio member of any ministry team, who may also serve as that ministry team's leader.
- b) The leader of a ministry team shall be approved by the Leadership Team. The team leader will serve as liaison to the Leadership Team to provide reports and information when requested, and to forward requests to the Leadership Team when necessary.
- c) Ministry team members may be selected by the ministry team leader. The Leadership Team may remove a ministry team member.
- d) Each ministry team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.

ARTICLE V

Committees or Task Forces

Section 1. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of not less than five active members who shall be elected annually at a congregational business meeting held during the first quarter of the calendar year. Nominations of candidates to serve on the Nominating Committee may be put forward by any active member or pastoral staff member. The Lead Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the committee. The vice chair shall convene and chair the Nominating Committee. The responsibilities of the committee shall include the following:

- a) Preparing a ballot for a business meeting scheduled for this purpose, listing at least one qualified candidate for each position to be filled.
- b) Confirming the willingness of each listed candidate to serve.
- c) Presenting a complete ballot (Article III, Section 4) at a congregational business meeting scheduled for this purpose.
- d) In the case of a vacancy occurring during a term on the Leadership Team, the Nominating Committee shall present to the congregation candidate(s) to fill the vacancy. (See Article III, Section 6)

Section 2. Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee shall be elected by the active members of the congregation. The Leadership Team and active members of the congregation may nominate members in good standing for election to the committee. The committee shall have no fewer than five and no more than nine members. At least two members of the committee shall be members of the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Other Committees and/or Task Forces

The Leadership Team, pursuant to its responsibilities of directing the general affairs of the church, shall provide for, and supervise, such committees and task forces as are on occasion deemed useful for the furtherance of the church's mission.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section 1. Public Services

Public services shall be conducted at least weekly 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 the pastoral staff. The sacrament of baptism shall be conducted in keeping with Covenant principles and according to the needs of the constituency.

Section 3. Business Meetings

The annual meeting shall be held as close to the beginning of the fiscal year as is possible. At least one other congregational business meeting shall be held during the year. These meetings may be held in person or via telephone conference call or through any available electronic technology, such as video conference, so long as all members can simultaneously hear and participate in the meeting in real time. Special congregational business meetings may be called by the church chair in consultation with the Lead Pastor, or by the Leadership Team or by written petition of not less than 25 percent of the active membership of the church. Any active member of the congregation is eligible to cast a vote on any action item whether they are present or not, provided that the absentee vote is cast in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII General Provisions

Section 1. Quorum

Ten percent of the active membership, present and voting at a congregational business meeting properly called, shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Rules of Order

All congregational business meetings of the church shall be conducted in general accordance with Roberts' Rules of Order, except where specifically addressed by provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws.

Modest latitude and discretion is granted to the chair in the conduct of the meetings.

Section 3. Voting

- a) An active member may participate and vote via electronic means so long as all members can simultaneously hear and participate in the meeting.
- b) Any vote at a business meeting shall be conducted by secret ballot upon the request of any active member.
- c) All active members of the congregation who are present at a given business meeting are entitled to cast a vote on any item acted upon at such meetings.
- d) Additionally, active members of the congregation who are not present at a given congregational business meeting may avail themselves of the opportunity to cast their ballot as absentees, in accord with the following provisions/restrictions:
Two weeks in advance of the business meeting, the church secretary shall make available by both electronic format and hardcopy the proposed text of all items for which ballot action is anticipated at the upcoming meeting.
Those active members who will not be present at a given business meeting may register their vote on any/all such action items by either hardcopy or electronic correspondence, provided that such absentee votes are submitted to the church office prior to the start time of the given business meeting. Members who desire to cast a vote using an absentee ballot are required to attend an informational meeting prior to the congregational business meeting except when voting for Leadership Team members. Any such absentee vote must be accompanied by the name of the member submitting the vote. No provision is made available for absentee members to vote on items which, during the course of the meeting itself, undergo modification or amendment prior to final action (and thus differ from the proposed text as previously published by the church secretary). Such loss of enfranchisement is a pragmatic consequence borne by the absentee.
- e) Motions require a simple majority to pass unless specifically addressed elsewhere in these bylaws.

Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws not in conflict with the Constitution may be adopted at any congregational business meeting, or at a special congregational business meeting called for that purpose, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present and voting, providing that such amendments have been presented in writing to the congregation at the preceding congregational business meeting.