

# Rolling Hills Covenant Church

## Constitution and By-Laws

### PREAMBLE

(Historical Statement adopted by Covenant Annual Meeting 1957)

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. While the denomination has 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 By-laws. 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 recognizes 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 By-Laws. Together, the Articles of Incorporation of the Covenant, the laws of the State of Illinois, and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Covenant shall constitute the law governing The Evangelical Covenant Church.

## CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I

#### Name

The name of this Church shall be the Rolling Hills Covenant Church.

### ARTICLE II

#### Affiliation

This Church is affiliated with The Evangelical Covenant Church and its Pacific Southwest Conference and is pledged to support the program, policies and institutions in this fellowship.

### ARTICLE III

#### Confession of Faith

This Church believes that the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine and conduct.

## ARTICLE IV

### Objectives

The purpose of this Church is to unite believers in Christ in fellowship for spiritual development, to persuade others through the life, work and testimony of our fellowship to accept Christ as Savior and Lord, to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Word of God and the program of Christian Education, Home and World Missions as carried on through The Evangelical Covenant Church at home and abroad. In order to realize these objectives, this Church, in the unity of the Spirit, shall use the gifts and talents that God has bestowed, and the means of grace which God has placed at its disposal, namely, the Word of God, Baptism and the Holy Communion.

## ARTICLE V

### Membership

Membership in this Church is granted to anyone who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been born anew to a living hope, desires to live a Christian life according to the Holy Scriptures, promises to support the total ministry of this Church, and to share its fellowship and obligations. It is recommended that each be baptized.

## ARTICLE VI

### Church Organization

#### Section 1. Scriptural Basis

- A. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church universal of which this Church is a part. The Body of believers which constitute this Church herein is called the Congregation. The Church (Congregation) seeks Christ's will in all church matters and submits itself to His authority as revealed in the Scriptures (Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:15-20).
- B. Under Christ's direction, the Congregation is the final authority in all matters concerning the operation of this Church.
- C. The Congregation selects its leaders from its membership (Acts 6:2-6).
  - (1) The leaders of this Church who are primarily responsible for overseeing its operation are called Elders. Elders shall meet the New Testament expectations for their office (Acts 14:23; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:4-9; 1 Peter 5:1-11).
  - (2) The leaders of this Church who are primarily responsible for rendering service and/or ministering to the needs of others are called the Diaconate. The Diaconate consists of Deacons and Diaconesses who shall meet the New Testament expectations for their office (John 12:26; Acts 6:1-7; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- D. The Elders and the Diaconate shall possess and exhibit spiritual character qualities consistent with the Scriptures (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 12:1-21; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-21).
- E. The Congregation submits itself to the leadership of the Elders and Diaconate in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 and Hebrews 13:17.

#### Section 2. General Administration

The general administration of the Church shall be vested in a body known as the Church Council (Council of Elders). The Council is the primary planning and control body for the Church, responsible for overseeing and directing its activities. In circumstances where the civil law requires action(s) by "Trustees", the Church Council shall be known as the "Board of Trustees" and the Elders shall be known as "Trustees".

#### Section 3. Church Council (Council of Elders)

Members of the Church Council shall be known as the Elders of the Church. The Church Council shall be comprised of:

- A. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Church elected by the Congregation.
  - B. The Senior Pastor, and additional Pastors called (hired) by the Congregation and designated in the By-Laws.
  - C. Additional members of the Congregation specified in the By-Laws, elected to the office of Elder.
- The Council shall have at least ten (10) Elders and no more than 24. No more than 20% of the Council shall be Pastors of the Church. The Council shall organize itself in a manner specified in the By-Laws.

Section 4. Commissions

The Church Council delegates authority and responsibility for particular Church ministries to working bodies known as Commissions. The Commissions are to design and implement policy and programs for their own particular area of responsibility, but are accountable to the Church Council.

Section 5. Commission Organization

Each Commission shall consist of the Elder Chairman and at least three (3) other members elected from the Congregation who shall be known as Deacons and Deaconesses of the Church. Additional working members may be appointed for specific duties by the Chairman of each Commission with the approval of the Church Council but shall not be voting members of the Commission.

Section 6. Membership Requirement

Elected or called (hired) members of the Church Council and the Commissions shall be members of Rolling Hills Covenant Church.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**Congregational Business Meeting**

Regular business meetings shall be held once each quarter. Only members who are eighteen years of age and over shall be eligible to vote. The annual business meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written reports shall be submitted by the Pastor and each organization of the Church. Audited 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 case of dissension and/or schism, from which we pray the Lord to spare us, the title to all church property, real and personal, shall remain with those members who uphold and adhere to this Constitution. In the event of dissolution, the property and all assets of the Church shall become the property of the Pacific Southwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. In the event of the dissolution of the Pacific Southwest Conference, the property, and all assets of the church shall become the property of the Evangelical Covenant Church with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.

**ARTICLE IX**  
**Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting in an annual business 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.

**ARTICLE X**  
**By-Laws**

By-Laws not in conflict with this Constitution may be adopted at any Quarterly Business Meeting by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting provided that such By-Laws shall have been presented in writing to the Congregation at a preceding Quarterly Business Meeting.

BY-LAWS  
**ARTICLE I**  
**Membership**

Section 1. Admission into Membership

- A. Application for membership shall be placed with a Pastor, or a member of the Church Council. The applicant shall meet with two or more representatives of either the Pastoral Staff or Council to give a confession of faith according to ARTICLES III, IV AND V of this Constitution. A member of the Pastoral Staff may, at his discretion, meet alone with an applicant who is known to have demonstrated the required faith. If the Pastoral Staff and Elder Council have reviewed the application and received the applicant's testimony favorably, then, the applicant shall be recommended to the next Congregational Business Meeting for membership. A unanimous vote of those members present and voting shall be required for acceptance into membership, except as noted in Section 1., paragraph B. The vote of acceptance shall be taken in the absence of the applicant.
- B. If one or more votes are cast against an applicant, it becomes the duty of the member bringing the objection to retire immediately with the Pastoral Staff and Elder Council and give reason for the objection. In the event that the Pastoral Staff and Elder Council members present (including the Elder Chairman) unanimously decide that the reason is not valid, they shall so report to the Church Chairman who shall then declare the applicant a member.
- C. It is recommended that all applicants attend the Church Information Class which presents the tenets of the Christian faith, the opportunities for, responsibilities of, and governing policies of Church membership; and presents the history of Rolling Hills Covenant Church and the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- D. Applicants from other Christian Churches shall submit letters of transfer, when available, to a Pastor or a member of the Elder Council. This Council shall act upon the application according to the requirements of paragraph A. of this section.
- E. Applicants who are voted into membership shall be welcomed at a regular worship service.

Section 2. Minimum Age for Membership

It is recommended that membership be restricted to those 12 years of age or older. When that member reaches age 18, he shall become eligible to vote. Applicants between the ages of 12 and 18 are encouraged to attend the Confirmation Class.

Section 3. Associate Membership

- A. Associate membership is available to applicants who desire to retain membership in another Christian Church while temporarily residing in this community for reasons such as study, employment, or health. Applicants shall qualify for membership under ARTICLES III, IV and V of the Constitution and ARTICLE I, Section 1, of these By-Laws. These members shall be accorded all privileges of membership except that of voting.
- B. Any member who moves to another community and desires to maintain an official relationship with Rolling Hills Covenant Church may request a change from regular membership to associate membership.

Section 4. Responsibilities of Membership

All members shall assume the responsibilities and obligations placed upon them by the Word of God. They shall, through their witness by life and word, consecrated service, prayer and financial support, further the cause of Christ in this Church and the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Section 5. Discipline

- A. Negligent Members  
Any member who willfully ceases to attend regular worship services shall, after a period of one (1) year, be considered a negligent member. A Pastor or Elder shall be vested with the responsibility of investigating the status of that member and bringing its recommendation to the Congregation for action.
- B. Erring Members  
A member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be admonished 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 this counsel is rejected, the matter shall be brought to the attention of a Pastor and Elder, who shall send two (2) or more representatives, in meekness and gentleness, to seek to restore the erring one. If he fails to heed the admonition of the representatives, his

response shall be reported to the Church Council who shall also seek to restore him. If he fails to heed this admonition, the Council may report the matter to the Congregation and may recommend disciplinary action. Appropriate 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. Forms of Discipline

Discipline of erring members may take a variety of forms. The most drastic discipline is dismissal from membership in this Church. Dismissal of members under paragraphs A. and B. of this section must be acted upon by the Congregation which alone has that authority. A two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a regular Congregational business meeting is necessary for such action. Other forms of discipline shall be the province of the Church Council.

Section 6. Transfer of Members

When a member wishes to transfer his membership to another Church, application for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to a Pastor and the Elder Council who shall issue the transfer to the Church with which the member is uniting. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through a pastoral staff representative at the next regular Congregational Business Meeting where it shall be made a matter of record.

Section 7. Removal of Membership

Request for withdrawal from membership shall be made in writing to a Staff Pastor or the Elder Council. The Pastor or Council shall present a recommendation concerning withdrawal to a regular Congregational Business Meeting.

Section 8. Non-member Friends

Non-member friends who participate regularly in the Church activities shall be considered a part of its total constituency. The Church and its Ministerial Staff shall serve these friends in their spiritual needs. They shall be encouraged to consider Rolling Hills Covenant Church as their Church home.

Section 9. Instruction for Children

Children within the fellowship of the Church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. When they have reached age 12, they shall be encouraged to attend the Confirmation Class to receive special instruction in the Word of God, Christian doctrine, and the history of the Church.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **The Ministerial Staff**

The Congregation shall call (hire) the Ministerial Staff (Pastors) to perform the duties contained herein and in the job descriptions maintained by the Personnel Commission.

Section 1. Definition

Each Pastor is called (hired) by the Congregation. Assisting the Pastors on the Ministerial Staff are others who may be known as: Directors, Interns, Assistants, or other appropriate titles.

Section 2. Qualifications

The Pastors of the Church shall meet the New Testament expectations of this office including those spiritual qualifications enumerated in ARTICLE VI, Section 1 of this Constitution. Each Pastor shall be acceptable to the Covenant Ministerium, and by virtue of the office the Pastor (and spouse) shall be members of this Church.

Section 3. Duties

The Pastors shall be devoted to the service of the Church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the Sacraments, and faithfully giving themselves to pastoral work. Each Pastor shall perform his responsibilities in accordance with his letter of call and job description. Any significant revisions of the job description shall be submitted by the Church Council to the Congregation for action. The Senior Pastor and additional Pastors designated in ARTICLE IV of these By-Laws shall be members of the Church Council. The Senior Pastor or his designee(s) shall be ex-officio members of all Commissions, Committees and Organizations within the Church.

#### Section 4. Cooperation

The Pastors shall, both in work and precept, work in harmony with the Evangelical Covenant Church.

#### Section 5. Call

Each Pastor shall be recommended by a Ministerial Search Committee or a Ministerial Confirmation Committee when the Church Council recommends a current staff member be considered for a Pastoral call, and shall be called at a regular or special Congregational Business Meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two (2) Sundays in advance. The Pastor shall be chosen by secret ballot with a two-thirds vote required for a call. Unless otherwise stated the call for each Pastor shall be for an indefinite period.

#### Section 6. Charges Against a Pastor

Charges against a Pastor shall be submitted to the Personnel Commission and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses. The Personnel Commission shall meet with the Pastor in question to discuss and evaluate the charges in the spirit of Christian love. If, in the judgment of the Personnel Commission, the Pastor has erred in doctrine or conduct, the case shall be reported to the Church Council who in meekness and gentleness shall admonish and seek to restore the erring one according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. If the Pastor continues in error, the Council shall refer the charges to either the Committee on Ministerial Standing and Discipline of the Pacific Southwest Conference or the Ordination and Commissioning Committee prior to further action. If in the judgment of this Committee, the Pastor is indeed in error, the matter shall be reported to the Congregation by the Church Council for disciplinary action (1 Timothy 5:20). Appropriate discipline shall be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the Church.

#### Section 7. Termination of the Call

Each Pastor shall retain the office as long as the Congregation desires, or until the Pastor wishes to leave, but not without one (1) month written notice from either party. The Pastor will be given at least thirty (30) days severance pay in addition to accrued vacation pay. In the case of disciplinary action, however, severance pay may be withheld and termination may be immediate.

## ARTICLE III

### Officers

The Congregation shall elect Officers to perform the specific duties contained herein and in the job descriptions maintained by the Personnel Commission. Officers are elected for specified terms.

#### Section 1. Church Chairman

- A. The Church Chairman shall be a member and the Chairman of the Church Council (Council of Elders), and the President of the Church Corporation.
- B. The Chairman shall preside at all business meetings of the Congregation and of the Church Council. He will work closely with the Senior Pastor in Church matters, including the preparation of agendas for business and council meetings.
- C. The Chairman shall be responsible for convening the Church Council to determine the leadership for Worship services when the Senior Pastor is unable to do so. When the position of Senior Pastor is vacant, the Church Chairman, with the concurrence of the Church Council shall appoint the Pastors that serve on the Council.
- D. The Chairman shall be an ex-officio member of each Commission and Committee of the Church, with the exception of the Nominating Committee.
- E. The Chairman shall convene special Church Council meetings at his discretion.
- F. The Chairman shall serve for a term of two (2) years and may succeed himself twice, i.e., a maximum continuous term of six (6) years.

#### Section 2. Church Vice-Chairman

- A. The Church Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Church Chairman in his absence and assist him in his duties. He shall be a member and the Vice-Chairman of the Church Council (Council of Elders), and

- a Vice-President of the Church Corporation.
- B. The Vice-Chairman shall assume special assignments given him by the Church Council.
- C. The Vice-Chairman becomes Church Chairman in the event that office becomes vacant. The Nominating Committee shall convene within two (2) weeks to select a ballot of candidates for the office of Vice-Chairman. The Congregation shall elect a new Vice-Chairman at a regular or special business meeting within three (3) months.
- D. The Vice-Chairman shall serve for a term of two (2) years and may succeed himself twice, i.e., a maximum continuous term of six (6) years.

#### Section 3. Chief Financial Officer

- A. The Chairman (Elder) of the Finance and Property Commission shall be, by virtue of his office, the Chief Financial Officer of the Church. He shall be a member of the Church Council (Council of Elders) and is a Vice President of the Church Corporation.
- B. The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer of the Church shall be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer.
- C. His term of office shall be in accordance with the requirements established for all Elders in ARTICLE IV of these By-Laws.

#### Section 4. Financial Secretary

- A. The Financial Secretary shall have the standing of Deacon/Deaconess and be an elected member of the Finance and Property Commission. He shall be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer. He shall serve for a term of two (2) years, and may succeed himself twice.
- B. The Financial Secretary shall receive, record, and transfer to the Church Treasurer all funds contributed to the Church. At the close of each fiscal year, he shall report to the Treasurer the total contributions for that year.
- C. He shall maintain confidential records for each identifiable regular donor. At the end of each calendar quarter he shall inform each donor of his total contributions for that quarter and year.

#### Section 5. Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall have the standing of Deacon/Deaconess and be an elected member of the Finance and Property Commission. He shall be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer.
- B. The Treasurer shall be responsible as a fiduciary for all funds committed to him and shall make disbursements as authorized by the Congregation, operating through the Finance and Property Commission. He may delegate the making of disbursements to the Business Administrator up to a limit established by the Finance and Property Commission and as approved by the Church Council.
- C. The Treasurer shall present a written report of the receipts and disbursements to each regular meeting of the Church Council, and to each regular Congregation Business Meeting.
- D. He shall serve for a term of two (2) years and may succeed himself twice.

#### Section 6. Business Administrator

- A. The Business Administrator shall be hired by the Church Council to administer the daily business operations of the Church. He shall report to the Finance and Property Commission and work closely with the Ministerial Staff and Personnel Commission in all business matters, and manage staff members to assist him with his responsibilities.

#### Section 7. Secretary to the Council

- A. The Secretary to the Council shall record and distribute minutes of all business meetings of the Congregation and of the Church Council and shall transmit such minutes to the Business Administrator for preservation.
- B. The Secretary to the Council shall serve for a term of two (2) years and may succeed himself twice. If he is absent or that office becomes vacant, the Church Chairman shall appoint a suitable replacement to conduct his duties. He is a non-voting member of the Council.

#### Section 8. Board of Directors of the Church Corporation

The Church Chairman, the Church Vice-Chairman, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Business Administrator shall constitute the Board of Directors of the Church Corporation.

# ARTICLE IV

## Church Council

### (Council of Elders)

The Church Council (Council of Elders) is the primary planning and control body for the Church and is responsible for overseeing its operation and directing its activities. The Council delegates authority and responsibility for particular Church ministries to working bodies known as Commissions, which are in turn accountable to the Council. The Ministerial Staff is also accountable to the Church Council for the performance of their duties (See ARTICLE II of these By-Laws).

#### Section 1. Organization of the Council

- A. Members of the Council shall be known as the Elders of the Church. The Church Council shall consist of the Church Chairman, Church Vice-Chairman and the Chairmen of the Commissions specified in ARTICLE V of these By-Laws. These Elders shall be duly nominated and elected from the membership of the Church. The Senior Pastor, and additional Pastor(s) designated by the Senior Pastor according to the number of commissions specified in ARTICLE V of these By-Laws and the following table, shall serve as members of the Council.  
*6-10 Commissions--the Senior Pastor plus one (1) additional Pastor*  
*11-15 Commissions--the Senior Pastor plus two (2) additional Pastors*  
*16-18 Commissions--the Senior Pastor plus three (3) additional Pastors*
- B. Elders elected to the Council shall serve for terms of three (3) years in such a manner that the terms of approximately one-third of the members shall expire each year. They may succeed themselves only once, i.e., a maximum continuous term of six (6) years.
- C. Following the annual meeting of the Congregation, the Church Chairman in consultation with the Senior Pastor shall recommend the appointment of the Elders to chair specific Commissions. The Church Council for the coming year shall convene within two (2) weeks to act on approving the appointment of persons to any positions that the Council, the Congregation, or these By-Laws may specify.
- D. Until the newly elected Officers and Elders are duly installed, the current Church Council shall be responsible for the on-going operation and activities of the Church.
- E. Adding or deleting individual Commissions shall be accomplished by amending these By-Laws in accordance with ARTICLE VIII.

#### Section 2. Qualifications of Council Members

The Elders shall meet the New Testament expectations for their office including the spiritual qualifications enumerated in ARTICLE VI, Section 1. of this Constitution.

#### Section 3. Responsibilities of the Council

- A. Oversees Commissions that conduct the work of the Church and reviews their policies and programs to assure conformity with the directives of the Congregation, and the spirit of the Church Constitution. Takes corrective action when necessary.
- B. Assists the Pastor in nurturing the spiritual life of the Church.
- C. Supervises Church membership through delegation to appropriate Commission(s), including recommendations relative to reception or removal of members.
- D. Evaluates the total Church program on a continuing basis, and develops long range goals and strategies for ministry as well as major policies. Short-term plans and policies relating to particular ministries are the responsibility of the individual Commissions and Ministerial Staff.
- E. Recommends to the Congregation, at the annual business meeting, a plan of ministry and the budget for the ensuing year. This plan is based on the consolidation of proposed activities and budgetary requirements submitted to the Council by the individual Commissions.
- F. Reviews and approves the annual Church calendar, and resolves conflicts in scheduled activities.
- G. Upon recommendation of the Personnel Commission, reviews and approves performance evaluations, salary adjustments and any job descriptions as deemed necessary. Has the responsibility for identifying any changes in Ministerial Staff job descriptions that need to be taken to the Congregation for approval.
- H. Approves the appointments of Elders to chair specific Commissions.
- I. Approves the appointments of non-elected Commission members to serve specific Commissions.
- J. Has the authority to request reports from the Ministerial Staff, the Church Officers, and the Commissions.
- K. Approves policies for the use of Church facilities.
- L. Takes such action on behalf of the Congregation as deemed necessary in cases of emergency.

- M. Attempts to resolve any conflicts that may arise between Commissions and/or staff/lay leadership that cannot be resolved by the parties involved. Brings unresolved conflicts to the Personnel Commission and ultimately to the Congregation for resolution.

#### Section 4. Meetings

Council members are to attend both their individual Commission meetings and Council meetings. Attendance records shall be maintained. Members are responsible to notify the Church Chairman in advance of an expected absence. If absence from any three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled Council meetings, or any four (4) meetings during the year, occurs without reasonable notification or explanation, the Council shall review the matter with the individual and has the right to declare the office vacated.

#### Section 5. Vacancies

- A. A resignation by any of the Elders of the Church Council shall be submitted in writing to the Church Chairman. The Chairman shall inform the Council of the vacancy and the letter of resignation shall be read to and acted upon by the Congregation at the next regular Congregational Business Meeting.
- B. If a vacancy is created by any other reason, and there is no letter of resignation, the Church Chairman shall inform the Council of the vacancy and notify the Congregation at the next Congregational Business Meeting.
- C. The Church Chairman, with the approval of the Council, shall appoint a member of the Congregation to serve the vacated position for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- D. In the event the vacancy covers a period longer than the remainder of the current fiscal year, the Nominating Committee shall include the unexpired term as a nomination on the next Annual Ballot.

#### Section 6. Charges Against An Elder

Charges against an Elder shall be submitted to the Church Council and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses. The Council shall meet with the elder in question to discuss and evaluate the charges in the spirit of Christian love. If, in the judgment of the Church Council, the Elder has erred in doctrine or conduct, the Council shall in meekness and gentleness admonish and seek to restore the erring one according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. Appropriate discipline shall be administered in the spirit of Christ with due regard for the welfare of the individual as well as the Church. If the Elder continues in error, the Council shall submit its recommendation for discipline to the Congregation for action at the next business meeting (1 Timothy 5:20).

## ARTICLE V

### Commissions

The Commissions are the working bodies through which particular Church ministries are designed and implemented. The Commissions are accountable to the Church Council which delegates authority and responsibility to the Commissions.

#### Section 1. Commission Organization

- A. Each Commission shall consist of the Chairman who is an Elder on the Church Council, at least three (3) elected Deacons/Deaconesses, and as many appointed members as may be determined necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
- B. Elders shall be appointed annually to chair each Commission.
- C. Deacons/Deaconesses elected to each Commission shall serve for terms of three (3) years in such a manner that the term of approximately one-third of the elected members shall expire each year. An elected Deacon/Deaconess may succeed himself only once, i.e., a maximum continuous term of six (6) years.
- D. Each Commission may make as many appointments as deemed necessary to perform its function. Appointments to the Commissions shall be approved initially, and reviewed annually, by the Church Council. Each Commission shall recommend the addition or deletion of members at any time according to need. There shall be no limit as to the number of years a member may be reappointed to serve on a Commission.
- E. Each Commission Chairman shall convene its respective elected Deacons/Deaconesses within two (2) weeks after the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Church Council for the purpose of recommending additions or deletions of appointed members.
- F. Adding or deleting individual Commissions shall be accomplished by amending these By-Laws in accordance with ARTICLE VIII.

Section 2. Qualifications of Commission Members

All Commission members (elected and/or appointed) shall meet the New Testament expectations for their office including the spiritual qualifications enumerated in ARTICLE VI, Section 1. of this Constitution.

Section 3. Number and Purposes of the Commissions

There shall be eleven (11) Commissions with scope and purpose as enumerated below.

- A. **WORSHIP ARTS COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing and conducting regular and special worship services and music/arts programs that support worship and other ministries of the Church.
- B. **LOCAL OUTREACH COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing and conducting outreach and discipleship programs designed for those who come in contact with our Church, those considering Church membership, and new members during their first year in the Church.
- C. **CONNECT & EQUIP COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church as one of the three (3) RHCC Discipleship Pathway Commissions with Life Groups and Congregational Care Commissions. The goal of the Connect & Equip Commission is (1) to develop and implement ministries to help guide new and disconnected congregants into greater participation into the life of the church. (2) To edify and equip the congregation for ministry and service by mobilizing and affirming volunteers, overseeing “first touch” ministry teams and providing equipping and training for members.
- D. **GLOBAL OUTREACH COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing and overseeing the Church's local and foreign missionary programs.
- E. **STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing and conducting stewardship programs that 1) encourage congregational giving that provides the resources for all RHCC associated ministries, 2) evaluate RHCC resource utilization in advancing the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and, 3) encourage spiritual growth in the management of God’s resources and gifts.
- F. **PERSONNEL COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by ministering to the needs of all employees, and overseeing all employment-related concerns. To ensure that job descriptions are developed and maintained for all employees, to oversee the establishing of job performance objectives, and to oversee the establishing of appropriate compensation.
- G. **FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by the management of all financial matters in accordance with the annual budget, financial policies of the Church, and other fiscal decisions made by the Congregation. To plan for, maintain and supervise all Church buildings, grounds, vehicles and equipment.
- H. **CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church as one of the three (3) RHCC Discipleship Pathway Commissions with Life Group and Connect & Equip Commissions. The goal of the Congregational Care Commission is to coordinate and oversee the pastoral care ministries of the church, working to ensure that people are cared for and helping the church to function as the body of Christ.
- I. **STUDENT COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing and overseeing the Spiritual Formation and small group ministries designed for Junior High, High School and College students, and young adults.
- J. **CHILDREN'S COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church by planning, developing, and overseeing Christian Education programs and small group ministries designed for children from birth through sixth grade.
- K. **LIFE GROUP COMMISSION**  
To serve Jesus Christ through His Body at Rolling Hills Covenant Church as one of the three (3) Discipleship Pathway Commissions with Connect & Equip and Congregational Care Commissions. The goal of the Life Group Commission is to coordinate, plan, develop, and oversee the church’s Life Group

ministries and to train and shepherd Life Group Leaders for service. This commission working in cooperation with the other discipleship pathway commissions will also implement and oversee other ministries vital to the RHCC discipleship pathway.

#### Section 4. Meetings

Commission members are expected to attend their meetings. Attendance records shall be maintained. Members are responsible to notify the Commission Chairman in advance of an expected absence. If absence from any three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled Commission, or any four (4) meetings during the year, occurs without reasonable notification or explanation, the Chairman shall review the matter with the individual, with the approval of the Church Council.

#### Section 5. Vacancies (Deacon/Deaconess)

- A. A resignation by a Deacon/Deaconess from a Commission shall be submitted in writing to the Church Chairman with a copy to the Chairman of that Commission. The Church Chairman shall inform the Council and the Commission Chairman shall inform the Commission. The letter of resignation shall be read to and acted upon by the Congregation at the next regular Congregational Business Meeting.
- B. If a vacancy is created by any other reason, and there is no letter of resignation, the Church Chairman shall inform the Council and the appropriate Commission of the vacancy, and notify the Congregation in the next Congregational Business Meeting.
- C. The Church Chairman, with the approval of the Council, shall appoint a member of the Congregation to serve the vacated position for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- D. In the event the vacancy covers a period longer than the remainder of the current fiscal year, the Nominating Committee shall include that unexpired term as a nomination on the next Annual Ballot.

#### Section 6. Vacancies (Appointed Members)

The resignation by an appointed member of a Commission shall be submitted in writing to the Chairman of that Commission who shall, in turn, notify the Church Council. Vacancies for other reasons shall be reported to the Church Council by the Chairman of the Commission. The position may be left vacant or filled by another appointee depending on the need.

#### Section 7. Charges Against Commission Members

- A. Charges against a Deacon/Deaconess shall be submitted to the Church Council and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses. The Council shall meet with the Deacon/Deaconess in question to discuss and evaluate the charges in the spirit of Christian love. If, in the judgment of the Church Council, the Deacon/Deaconess has erred in doctrine or conduct, the Council shall in meekness and gentleness admonish and seek to restore the erring one according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. Appropriate discipline shall be administered in the individual as well as the Church. If the Deacon/Deaconess continues in error, the Council shall submit its recommendation for discipline to the Congregation for action at the next business meeting (1 Timothy 5:20).
- B. Charges against an appointed member shall be submitted to the Commission Chairman and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses. If, in the judgment of the Chairman, the member has erred in doctrine or conduct, the Chairman shall refer the matter to the Church Council for action in accordance with the spirit of paragraph A. above.

## ARTICLE VI Committees

#### Section 1. Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee of seven (7) members will prepare and present at the Congregational Business Meeting prior to the Annual Business Meeting a ballot for each elected office with provisions for candidates to be nominated from the floor. This will allow the Nominating Committee time to review the candidates nominated from the floor prior to the election. This Committee shall consist of three (3) members elected by the Church Council and four (4) members elected by the Congregation at the first Quarterly Business Meeting of the Congregation. Within one (1) month of the election, the Church Chairman shall convene this committee at which time the committee will organize itself and select its own Chairman.

### Section 2. Ministerial Search Committee

Whenever a need for a full-time Ministerial staff member exists, a Ministerial Search Committee or a Ministerial Confirmation Committee shall be established to search for or evaluate and recommend to the Congregation a person to fill that vacancy. These Committees shall consist of three (3) members elected by the Church Council, and four (4) members elected by the Congregation at the next Congregational Business Meeting.

### Section 3. Special and Standing Committees

Special Committees for specific purposes, other than those enumerated in Sections 1. and 2. above, may be appointed by the Church Chairman at any duly constituted business meeting of the Congregation, or by the Church Council according to need. The Church Chairman may appoint annual standing Committees with the concurrence of the Church Council. Typical Committees shall consist of from three (3) to seven (7) members.

## ARTICLE VII Meetings and Activities

### Section 1.

- A. Public services shall be conducted regularly on Sundays and on designated weekdays for worship, the preaching and teaching of God's Word, prayer and fellowship.
- B. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be conducted regularly as determined by the Worship Commission. The Sacrament of Baptism shall be conducted in keeping with Covenant principles and according to the needs of the constituency.

### Section 2.

Congregational Business Meetings will be held regularly as stipulated in this Constitution, ARTICLE VII. Special Congregational Business Meetings shall be called by the Church Chairman at his own discretion, or at the request of the Church Council. The Congregation shall be notified at the weekend worship services on two (2) consecutive weekends prior to the meeting.

### Section 3.

The Church Council and each Commission, will meet monthly, if possible, but at least ten (10) times each year.

### Section 4.

An auxiliary organization is one that represents itself as part of the ministry of Rolling Hills Covenant Church. The leader of each auxiliary organization shall be a member of the Church. Activities of any auxiliary organization not in harmony with the aims and objectives of the Congregation may be suspended by the Church Council.

### Section 5.

- A. Quorum. A quorum for any Congregational Business Meeting which has been properly called, with each agenda item properly publicized at the weekend worship services on two (2) consecutive weekends prior to the meeting, shall consist of those members present and eligible to vote.  
In the event that an item of new business is raised, it may be acted on at that meeting. If any concern is expressed from those in attendance concerning the item of new business, it will then be postponed to the next Congregational business meeting. The quorum for all Council, Commission, and Committee meetings shall be fifty (50) percent of its elected members.
- B. Rules of Order. All business meetings of the Congregation, the Council, the Commissions and Committees of the Church shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order when not governed by this Constitution or these By-Laws.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws, not in conflict with this Constitution, may be adopted at any Quarterly Business Meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting provided that such amendments have been presented in writing to the Congregation at a preceding Quarterly Business Meeting.

## ARTICLE IX

### Ordination and Commissioning of Ministers

#### Section 1. Authority.

The authority to determine whether a candidate for ordination or commissioning shall be ordained or commissioned as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be held by the Church Council.

#### Section 2. Ordination and Commissioning Committee.

A committee shall be appointed by the Church Council of this corporation which shall be known as the "Ordination and Commissioning Committee" (hereinafter "Committee"). Application for ordination or commissioning as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be made to said Committee by the candidate.

#### Section 3. Approval or Disapproval of Candidate for Ordination or Commissioning.

The candidate's application shall be reviewed by the Committee and the decision of the Committee with regard to the application, either affirmative or negative, shall be presented to the Church Council. The Church Council shall approve or disapprove the recommendation of the Committee concerning the ordination or commissioning of the candidate.

#### Section 4. Written Notification.

Following the approval or disapproval of the candidate's application for ordination or commissioning by the Church Council, the candidate shall be notified of the Church Council's decision by means of a Letter of Call or a letter informing the candidate of disapproval of ordination or commissioning.

#### Section 5. Ordination.

Following the approval by the Church Council of the candidate's application for ordination or commissioning, the candidate shall be ordained or commissioned as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by way of a formalized ceremony. The ordination or commissioning of the candidate by way of said ceremony shall be memorialized by the presentation of a letter to the candidate by the Church Council evidencing formal status as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; a copy of this letter shall be retained by the corporation for inclusion in its corporate records.

#### Section 6. Authorization.

Subject to the control of, and discipline by, the Church Council, an individual ordained or commissioned by this corporation shall be authorized to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to administer the rites, ceremonies and ordinances of public worship and to perform the sacerdotal and other religious functions as outlined in the Letter of Call as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The only distinction between an ordained and a commissioned minister is that an ordained minister has completed a formal ordination examination process.