CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

(A historical statement from the Preamble of the Constitution and Bylaws 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 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 traditionally practiced the baptism of infants, in conformity with its principle of freedom it has also recognized the practice of believer baptism. 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 Harvest Ridge Covenant Church of Shawnee, Kansas.

ARTICLE I
Name

The name of this church shall be Harvest Ridge Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II
Affiliation

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

ARTICLE III
Confession of Faith

The church believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and 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 this 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, to serve one another, this community, and the world 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 shall be granted on application to those who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope, have been baptized according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to live a Christian life, and promise to support the total ministry of the church and to share its fellowship and obligations.

ARTICLE VI
Officers

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

ARTICLE VII
Leadership Team

Section 1. The general administration of the church shall be vested in a body known as the Leadership Team. In circumstances or where law requires action(s) by "trustees" the team shall be known as "the board of trustees" and the members of it as "trustees." The Leadership Team shall also serve to supervise the spiritual life of the church, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 2. The Leadership Team shall consist of the officers of the church (chair, vice-chair, and secretary) and other members as specified in the bylaws. The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Leadership Team.

Section 3. The Leadership Team shall organize itself in a manner specified in the bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII
Congregational Business Meetings

Section 1. Congregational business meetings shall be held as outlined in the Bylaws.

Section 2. Notice of all congregational business meetings shall be mailed to members not less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting and shall include the date, time of the meeting, and an annotated agenda of business to be transacted.

ARTICLE IX
Property

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

ARTICLE X
Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and the Model Constitutions for Local Covenant Churches and not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the congregation, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the executive board of the regional conference.

BYLAWS

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:

- The **congregation** is comprised of those who have been received into membership. It is the *governing authority* of the church. 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.
- 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.
- The **Pastor** contributes spiritual and executive servant leadership.
- A **Ministry Team Leader** is the leader of a particular Ministry Team.

CORE VALUES

The principles of church life we affirm

1. Full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer.
2. Lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.
3. The church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.
4. All of Christ's followers should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth.
5. Anointed teaching is a catalyst for transformation in individuals' lives and in the church.
6. A church should operate as a unified community of servants stewarding their spiritual gifts.
7. Churches should be led by those with leadership gifts.
8. Loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life and should be demonstrated by exercising Holy Manners.
9. Life-change often happens best in small groups.
10. Excellence honors God and inspires people.
11. It is God's intent that His church should grow. Sharing in the planting of new churches and ministries is one way in which we can participate in His plans.
12. Both men and women are gifted and called to the leadership of the local church.

References: (1) Matthew 22:37; (2) John 3:16-17, Luke 15:1-2; (3) Acts 17:16-20; (4) Hebrews 12:1-3, Colossians 1:9-12; (5) Acts 1:8, Titus 2:7-8; (6) Romans 12; (7) Romans 12:8; (8) John 15:12-13; (9) Hebrews 10:23-25; (10) Colossians 3:23; (11) Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20

ARTICLE I
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. Members will seek to live in selfless, loving relationships as evidenced by Jesus' example in John 15:9-17. Members shall encourage others to know and be like Jesus Christ, to reflect in all relationships the servant love of our Lord, and to support the broader mission of Christ through the Midwest Covenant Conference and denomination.

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

Section 3. Children of Church 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 church 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 church members. Any church 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 church member remaining in gross error in doctrine or conduct may result by a two-thirds (2/3) 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 church members. Any church 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

Section 1. Composition. The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not less than six (6) nor more than twelve (12) members, one of whom shall be the Senior Pastor (ex officio).

Section 2. Qualification. A Leadership Team member shall be a member of the church and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders as presented in I Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-9. Prior to affirmation they should have completed a course on spiritual gift discernment.

Section 3. Affirmation. Leadership Team members shall be affirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those church members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose. A slate of officers consisting of a chair, vice chair, and secretary, along with additional at-large members, shall be presented by the nominating committee to serve staggered terms. Nominations may be received from the congregation provided that those nominees and a member of the nominating committee have been contacted four weeks prior to the meeting. The nominating committee then will present the nominee if affirmed by them and nominee agrees to serve.

Section 4. Term of Office. Leadership Team officers and at-large members shall be approved for a term of 2 years and be re-affirmed by congregational vote, peer evaluation by the Leadership Team (including the pastor), and evaluation by the nominating committee. There will be no limit to the number of terms, but rather appraisals to confirm each member's effectiveness as a Godly decision-maker and team member in moving Harvest Ridge toward our goal of being a healthy, missional church.

Section 5. Vacancies. A Leadership Team member may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of church members voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose. Vacancies created by removal or resignation shall be filled by a vote of the church membership in the same manner as set forth in Section 3 above.

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 church 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 Leadership Team officers shall be responsible for the following:
   1. **Chair.** The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Leadership Team. The chair shall confer with the 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.

2. **Vice-chair.** The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence, and assist in the chair's duties.

3. Secretary. The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of 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 church 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 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:

1. Annual appraisal of the ministry of the senior pastor and the ministry of the other staff, and provide Godly counsel or discipline as required. Two additional members of the congregation shall be enlisted to serve in this appraisal, one of whom will be chosen by the Leadership Team without the pastor's input, and the other chosen by the pastor.

2. 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.

3. Establishment of personnel policies.

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

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

6. Hiring of support staff.

7. Appraisal of Leadership Team officers and at-large members up for renewal.

F. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for reviewing applications for membership prior to submitting them to the congregation for acceptance.

G. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for dealing with church members who neglect their duties to the church and who err in doctrine and conduct. They 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 (2) or more witnesses.

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

I. I. The Leadership Team shall determine Ministry Teams needed to carry out the church's mission and appoint appropriate leadership.

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.

ARTICLE III
Ministry Teams

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

Section 2. Organization. Ministry Teams shall be chartered by the Leadership Team to implement specific ministries. The charter for a Ministry Team shall include: the statement of purpose; strategies; leadership structure; and qualifications for ministry. The list of Ministry Teams shall be determined annually by the Leadership Team, upon recommendation of the ministry staff, in accord with the church's purpose, strategies, objectives, and as dictated by organizational and functional effectiveness.

Section 3. Duties. The duties of Ministry Teams 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 Ministry Team shall normally have at least one (1) Leadership Team member as an ex-officio member.

Section 4. Leadership.

A. The leader of a Ministry Team shall be approved by the Leadership Team in consultation with the pastor(s). The team leader will serve as liaison to the Leadership Team.
B. Ministry Team members may be selected by the Ministry Team leader in accord with guidelines in its ministry charter.
C. Each Ministry Team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.
D. The Ministry Team leader shall be a member of the church.

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 be encouraged to 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 (2) 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 (5) to nine (9) 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 (2/3) vote of church members present required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time with a minimum of six (6) 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 (2/3) vote of a congregational business meeting upon recommendation of the Leadership Team. The congregation may by a two-thirds (2/3) vote delegate authority to call other ministers to the Leadership Team acting unanimously. In such a case, the Leadership Team shall give notice to the congregation of their recommendation of a candidate fourteen (14) 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 a minister'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 regional 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. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Leadership Team and an ex officio member of all ministry teams and committees 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 Ministry Teams.

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). The Leadership Team may, at its discretion, appoint a sub-committee to investigate the charges and present a recommendation to the Leadership Team. If in the judgment of the Leadership Team 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 (2) 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. However, any minister who fails to become

licensed with the Evangelical Covenant Church within ninety (90) days of beginning service or who loses a license may be dismissed at any time without prior notice by the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE V
Nominating Committee

Section 1. Composition. The nominating committee shall consist of one (1) Leadership Team member designated by the Leadership Team, the Senior Pastor, and at least two (2) church members at-large elected by a majority of the church members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. The Leadership Team shall designate one (1) of the committee members to serve as Chair of the nominating committee.

Section 2. Term. The terms of the member from the Leadership Team shall be at the pleasure of the Leadership Team. The at-large members of the nominating committee may serve two (3) year terms. The terms of the at-large members shall be staggered so that there will not be a complete turnover of members in any given year.

Section 3. Quorum. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the nominating committee.

Section 4. Responsibilities. The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the offices of Leadership Team, the at-large members of the nominating committee, and any other positions assigned to it either by the Leadership Team or congregation. Each committee member is required to attend at least one Leadership Team meeting each year to understand what is required of those nominated, and attendance at other meetings as required by the Leadership Team.

Section 5. Nominating procedure. One or more candidates for the office of Leadership Team 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.

Section 6. 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
Business Meetings

Section 1. Annual meetings. The annual meeting shall be held within one (1) month 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. Special meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Leadership Team or by written request signed by ten percent (10%) of the membership.

Section 3. Notification of meeting. Notice of all congregational business meetings shall be communicated to members not less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting and shall include the date,

time of the meeting, and an annotated agenda of business to be transacted. A sample ballot (if any) shall also be included in this mailing.

Section 4. 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 church membership.

Section 5. Voting. Each church member, and only church members, shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote at any election on any subject at any annual or special meeting of the church 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 6. Quorum. Ten percent (10%) of the church membership shall constitute a quorum for any special meeting. Twenty percent (20%) of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting.

Section 7. Rules of order. All business meetings of the church and of any other committees or organizations shall be conducted in a way that acknowledges that all we do is part of our worship of God. Discernment of God's will is our goal in all decisions. Action will be taken using the variety of models that appear in scripture such as consensus, guidance of the Holy Spirit or the wisdom of a "sage." (Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 2:1-4) At the Chair's discretion, Robert's Rules of Order may be used to facilitate decision making.

Section 8. Final voice. The congregation reserves for itself final authority in any matter of its choice.

ARTICLE VII
Amendments

Section 1. Procedure. These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the church members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the church members at the meeting not less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on bylaws changes.