

CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST COVENANT CHURCH of Iron Mountain, Michigan

January, 2018 (amended January, 2022)

ARTICLE I - NAME

The legal name of this church shall be: First Covenant Church of Iron Mountain, Michigan and is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and its Central Conference.

ARTICLE II - CONFESSION

This church believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, creed and conduct.

Psalm 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* [NIV]

I Peter 1:19-21 *but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.* [NIV]

II Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* [NIV]

Galatians 1:8 *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!* [NIV]

Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.* [NIV]

ARTICLE III – VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Section 1 Vision Statement: Our vision is to bring glory and honor to God.

Section 2 Mission Statement: Our mission is to be a **GROW**ing church.

God-centered, inspiring worship

Relational Fellowship

Opportunities for Biblical Discipleship

Working out our faith through service and evangelism

God-centered, inspiring worship:

It is a privilege and responsibility of every believer to bring glory and honor to God in the experience of worship. Worship is our unique opportunity by which we, God's family, are able to encounter God and express love to him. Worship becomes meaningful when we submit ourselves to God in passionate worship.

Scripture references: Romans 12:1,2; Luke 4:8; Revelation 4:11; Hebrews 12:28,29

Relational fellowship:

An important part of being a Christian is spending time with our Christian family. By eating, playing, praying and studying together we provide opportunities to nurture one another and mature in our personal relationship with God and our relationships with each other.

Scripture reference: Acts 2:42-47

Opportunities for Biblical discipleship:

It is difficult to grow our faith in isolation. We need each other and to be accountable to each other. Our model for discipleship is that of Christ Jesus and his ministry with the twelve disciples. God's design for discipleship is that we will ultimately "make disciples".

Scripture references: Matthew 28:19,20; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Proverbs 13:20, 27:17; Philippians 3:12-14

Working out our faith through service and evangelism:

It is not enough that we have only faith, but that we also take practical steps to live out our faith in our community and the world. We are to put our faith into action through acts of service and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world.

Scripture references: Ephesians 4:11-16; Matthew 25:35-46; Philippians 1:27-30; Mark 16:15; James 2:14-26

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Only such persons, who by their profession and conduct, manifest true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptized in the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and have accepted the Constitution of this Church, can be admitted as members of this Church.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS AND CHURCH BOARD

Section 1 The church shall select and call a pastor, elect deacons, deaconesses, trustees, and other officers in accordance with the Word of God and the need of the church.

Section 2 The board of directors of the church shall consist of the pastor, associate pastor, chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, vice-secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, deacons,

deaconesses, trustees, Sunday school superintendent, the president of women's ministries, choir director, members of the board of Christian education, and the chairman of the Mission/Outreach Committee. Each and every officer must be a member of the church.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

Section 1 The fiscal year of the Church shall be on a calendar year basis, January 1st through December 31st; and the Annual Meeting of the congregation shall be held in two parts.
Part I - The officers for the ensuing year shall be elected the first week of December.
Part II - All other business is to be transacted in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church some time within the month of January.

Section 2 Regular and special business meetings shall be held in accordance with the rules and regulations in the By-Laws of the Church.

ARTICLE VII - THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 In case of strife or discord leading to a division in the Church, from which we earnestly pray God to spare us, the property of the Church, real and personal, shall belong to those who adhere to the Constitution of the Church.

Section 2 Should the membership ever be reduced to five or fewer, the Church shall be considered dissolved; and in case of dissolution for any reason, the property of the Church, real and personal, shall become the property of The Evangelical Covenant Church and its Central Conference.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Amendments to this constitution must be introduced at a Church business meeting not later than the Quarterly Meeting previous to the Annual Meeting, but cannot be acted upon until the Annual Meeting, and for adoption, must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Section 2 Articles II, IV and Section 1 of Article VII shall not be amended or annulled.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

Section 1 Membership

(a) Application for membership shall be placed with the pastor or a member of the board of deacons. After the applicants have completed the inquirers classes, they shall appear before the board of deacons to give a confession of Christian faith, according to Article IV of this constitution. When the board of deacons has reviewed their applications and received their testimonies favorably, they shall submit the applications to the next congregational business meeting for approval.

(b) Transfer of membership. Applicants from other Covenant churches shall submit letters of transfer, when available, to the pastor and/or board of deacons, who shall act upon each application according to the requirements of the preceding paragraph.

(c) Reception of new members. Applicants who are voted into membership of the church shall be welcomed at the next service of Holy Communion and make public confession of their Christian faith, as outlined in the Covenant Book of Worship.

Section 2 Responsibility of Members

(a) Every member shall fulfill, by God's grace, the responsibilities and the obligations placed upon him by the Word of God. He shall in all things conduct himself as behooves a Christian. He shall show concern for his fellow members by word and deed.

(b) It is the duty and privilege of every member to take part in the business and devotional meetings of the church and to exercise their spiritual gifts for mutual edification. Every member is entitled to voice and vote at all church business meetings.

Section 3 Negligent Members

If a member is considered negligent by the deacon board and cannot be won to responsible membership within one year, the church board shall bring a recommendation to the church that his membership be terminated.

Section 4 Erring Members

If a member errs in Christian faith and conduct, it is the duty of the member who has that knowledge to warn and correct him in love. If he does not heed this warning, the deacon board shall be notified, and also shall admonish him to repent. If he still continues in his course, the deacon board shall report the case to a business meeting of the church board which shall then act according to Matthew 18:15-18: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." [NIV] The exclusion of members must be acted upon by the church, which alone has that authority.

Section 5 Removal of Members

If a member wishes to withdraw from the church for other reasons than relocation, he shall apply to the pastor or the board of deacons, who shall then investigate as to the cause for such request; and after the pastor and deacon board have carefully considered the matter, they shall present it to the church for decision.

Section 6 No person who has been expelled from the membership of the church, or who, on his own request, has withdrawn from the church, shall have any claim to the property of the church.

Section 7 The church should organize and arrange the activities according to its need, but no member or group of members has the right or authority to organize, for any purpose or reason whatsoever, any society within the church without the expressed consent of the church.

Section 8 Relocation of Members

(a) Any member who moves to another community shall notify the pastor who, upon request, shall issue him a letter of transfer.

(b) Any member who moves away without giving notice, or otherwise withdraws from the fellowship of the church, shall be contacted by the deacon board before forfeiting his membership.

ARTICLE II - THE PASTORS

Section 1 Qualifications

The pastor(s) of the church shall meet the New Testament requirements of the office (I Timothy 3:2-7) and be members of the Covenant Ministerium and follow the rules and regulations of the Board of Ministry. They shall, by virtue of call, be members of the church.

Section 2 Duties

The pastor(s) shall devote themselves to the service of the church, preaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully giving themselves to pastoral work. They shall provide the church with an accurate record of their pastoral acts and present a written report to the congregational annual business meeting. They shall practice good administrative procedures and cooperate with the church boards. The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church. Regular evaluations shall be made of the pastoral staff by the pastoral relations committee at least semi-annually.

Section 3 Cooperation

The pastor(s) shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Covenant, the regional conference and other Covenant ministers.

Section 4 Call

The pastor(s) shall be called at a regular or special congregational business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. The pastor(s) shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. This committee shall be appointed by the church chairman at a congregational business meeting. It shall be representative of the congregation and have 5 to 9 members and shall work closely with the regional conference Superintendent. The pastor(s) shall be called by ballot with a two-thirds vote required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time with a minimum of six weeks' notice required by the church or the pastor(s) for termination of pastoral duties.

Section 5 Charges against a pastor

Charges against a pastor shall be submitted in writing to the executive board, charging a pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Covenant (Matthew 18:15-18). If, in the judgment of the executive board of the church, there is substance to the charges, the case shall be referred to the regional conference superintendent. The superintendent shall confer with the Covenant Executive Minister of the Board of Ordered Ministry. These two officers shall confer and determine the order of responsibility in pursuing the matter according to the rules and regulations of the Board of Ordered Ministry regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church.

ARTICLE III – THE OFFICERS

Section 1 Qualifications

Officers of the church shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the total ministry of the church – financially and otherwise.

Section 2 Chairman

It is his duty to supervise and watch over the work of the church as a whole. He shall preside at all business meetings of the board of directors and of the church. He has the right to call the board of directors together for consultation and decision and to appoint committees whenever matters require it. In the event the pastor is absent, the chairman, together with the deacons, shall be responsible for and have charge of the devotional services of the church. The chairman shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and boards. In the event an officer is unable to complete his term of office, the chairman shall appoint a successor.

Section 3 Vice-chairman

The vice-chairman shall assume the duties of the chairman in his or her absence and assist in the chairman's duties.

Section 4 Secretary

The secretary shall keep correct minutes of the proceedings at all business meetings of the board of directors and of the church. He/she shall at every church business meeting read the minutes from the previous meetings, have the same approved by the church, and shall conduct the necessary correspondence of the church and file all communications received by the church.

Section 5 Vice-secretary

The vice-secretary shall take the place of the secretary in the absence of the latter and assist the secretary when necessary.

Section 6 Financial secretary

The financial secretary shall record monetary contributions made to the church. He shall also submit a record of giving to all contributors at the end of the year.

Section 7 Treasurer

The treasurer shall be responsible for all funds of the church and shall also present a written report of the receipts and expenditures at each regular business meeting of the church board and congregational business meetings.

ARTICLE IV – BOARDS

Section 1 Qualifications

The church board shall be comprised of members of all boards and shall be members in good standing who are active in the support of the total ministry of the church, financially and otherwise.

Section 2 Church Board

The board of directors shall meet once a month for the sake of transacting the business of the church and, in the more important matters on which it prefers not to decide, submit recommendations to the quarterly congregational business meeting to be decided then. The board is further authorized to determine and pay the compensation of visiting or temporary ministers in accordance with such rules as have been adopted by the church. Fifty percent of the board membership shall constitute a quorum of that board.

Section 3 Board of Trustees

In accordance with the state laws, the trustees must be no fewer than three members, but as many as the board deems necessary. They shall elect a chairman from among their number. The treasurer, who shall be responsible to the trustees, shall be an elected position, with a term of office and qualifications the same as a trustee. It is their duty to exercise proper supervision over church properties, arrange for adequate insurance coverage for all church properties for possible liabilities, and set salaries and wages for church employees. They shall have charge of all the legal papers and instruments of value and when occasion requires it, affix their signature and, when necessary, the corporate seal to such papers in accordance with the decision of the church. They are not authorized to loan, pawn, encumber or sell any property of the church or to conclude any business transaction in its name unless it is so decided by the church. They shall have authority, however, to make minor repairs and other expenditures at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.00. They shall be responsible jointly and severally to the church. At the close of the year, they shall present a budget to be voted on for the coming year.

Section 4 Board of Deacons and Deaconesses

The board of deacons shall consist of no fewer than three men and three women, but as many as the board deems necessary. They shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church. They shall assist the pastor(s) in administering the sacraments and, in the absence of the pastor(s), together with the chairman of the church, be responsible for the devotional meetings and services of the church. They shall see that no corruption of doctrines or morals enter therein. They shall be authorized to receive and administer benevolences and care for the sick and the needy. They shall also examine all applicants for church membership. They shall, from among their number, elect a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer.

Section 5 Board of Christian Education

The board of Christian education shall consist of no fewer than 3 members, but as many as the board deems necessary. The members should have a real interest in the field of Christian education. They shall determine the policies and plan the total program for all the educational functions of the church. They shall be responsible for direction and supervision of all the educational activities for the church. Ex-officio members of the board shall be the Sunday school superintendent and the associate pastor.

Section 6 Voting

Only members present at their respective board meetings may vote.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

Section 1 Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, financial secretary, chairman of the board of deacons and deaconesses, chairman of the board of trustees, treasurer, chairman of the board of Christian education, chairperson of missions, and the pastor.

Section 2 Pastoral Relations Committee

The pastoral relations committee shall consist of the church chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, chairmen of the board of deacons, trustees, board of Christian education, and missions, the pastor, pastor's advocate, and a member of the congregation - at-large appointed by the chairman. The pastoral relations committee's duties will be listed in a document made available to the congregation.

Section 3 Nominating Committee

(a) Definition of Nominating Committee – A temporary group of seven church members with the sole purpose of filling leadership positions.

(b) At a special congregational meeting in September, the church shall elect a nominating committee consisting of seven members, at least two men and two women. Four of the members shall be elected from the church membership, and three shall be from the church board. No member of the nominating committee shall succeed themselves.

(c) The nominating committee shall present at least two weeks prior to Part 1 of the annual meeting a printed list of nominations for each office/board. The guidelines for the nominating committee to follow will be listed in a document made available to the congregation. Members must be present to vote.

Section 4 Missions/Outreach Committee

The missions/outreach committee shall consist of a minimum of four members. The committee shall promote and encourage interest in and support of various missions projects of the church. It shall be responsible for the administration of monies directed to missions. The chairman of the missions/outreach committee shall be an elected member of the board of directors. Committee members shall be approved by the church board.

Section 5 Auditors

The chairman shall annually appoint no less than two auditors to examine all the accounts of the church and other church organizations and to report their findings to the annual meeting. The appointees shall be approved by the church board.

Section 6 Special Committees

Committees for specific purposes may be appointed at any constituted business meeting of the congregation or church board according to need but shall be automatically terminated at the next annual meeting unless specifically extended by said annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTIONS

Section 1 All the officers are to be elected for a term of one year with the exception of the boards of deacons, trustees (including the treasurer), and Christian education. Members of these boards are elected for three years in such manner that, as nearly as possible, one-third of the number is retired every year. No member of the deacon, trustee, or Christian education board can immediately succeed himself. All officers who are elected for one year are eligible to hold office only three terms. Exceptions to these rules can be made to apply to the Sunday school superintendent only at the annual meeting by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. However, his term of office shall not exceed five consecutive years. Any officer serving an unexpired term is eligible for re-election to a full term upon the expiration of the un-expired term. No officer in the church can hold more than one office at a time. All officers shall have a mandatory year off after serving their maximum term of office before being re-elected to the board.

Section 2 Officers to be elected at Part 1 of the annual meeting are the following: chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, vice-secretary, financial secretary, deacon, trustee, treasurer, Christian education board members, Sunday school superintendent and any other required positions. Those candidates who receive the highest number of votes are elected.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Section 1 The Church shall assemble for public worship every Sunday, when the Word of God shall be proclaimed. There shall also be held other devotional services, prayer meetings and other gatherings for spiritual edification, as well as meetings for the admittance of new members, as the circumstances require and the church may determine.

Section 2 As a rule, the church shall gather to observe the Lord's Supper at least every two months.

Section 3 Church quarterly business meetings are to be held every quarter in April, July, and October with the annual meeting taking the place of the January Meeting. Special meetings may be called by the chairman whenever urgent matters make it necessary.

Section 4 All church business meetings shall be opened with the reading of the Scriptures and prayer. After which the order of business shall be as follows:

- (a) Minutes of the previous meeting read, adjusted and accepted.
- (b) Reports received.
- (c) Unfinished business.
- (d) New business.

Section 5 No question shall be taken up unless a motion to the effect is first carried.

Section 6 After a question is taken up for consideration, no new question may be discussed until the question before the house is disposed of. Exception may be made, however, of a motion to table a question or a motion to adjourn.

Section 7 All questions are to be decided by vote and a majority vote prevails unless otherwise provided in the constitution or by-laws. The vote may be taken by the raising of hands or, in less important matters, by voice. If the meeting so decides, the vote can be taken by closed ballot.

Section 8 The proceedings and decisions of the church business meetings and also of the board of directors' meetings shall be governed by and conducted according to the latest edition of "Roberts' Rules of Order", except as otherwise provided in the constitution or by-laws.

Section 9 The minutes of the church board of directors' and congregational meetings shall be displayed on a church bulletin board by the following Sunday after the meetings have taken place or as soon as possible.

Section 10 Every church member is permitted to make a presentation, ask a question(s) or approach any board with a concern. All meetings are accessible to members and participation is encouraged. All board meetings are open to members but exclusion will apply to voting. The member should contact any board chairman who will decide the proper chain of command, scheduling and time allotted. It is the chairman's responsibility to allocate a reasonable amount of time at the meeting for the member to make a statement after which the member will leave and the board will act on the matter.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCIAL REPORT

All organizations of the church are under its supervision and each one is required to submit a financial report to the auditors of the church at the close of the organization's fiscal year.

ARTICLE IX – QUORUM

Ten percent of the members of the church, including two officers, shall constitute a quorum of the church.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these by-laws must be introduced at a church business meeting not later than the quarterly meeting previous to the annual meeting, but cannot be acted upon until the annual meeting, and for adoption must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

ARTICLE XI – VOTING

If in any situation where voting is required and the decision is not completed on the first vote, further voting shall be in accordance with the decision of the meeting.

ARTICLE XII – MARRIAGE STATEMENT

According to the teachings of Scripture, First Covenant Church believes marriage to be the union of one woman to one man. Pastors of First Covenant Church shall hold to the teachings of Scripture and function in the fulfillment of their duties in accord with the beliefs of First Covenant Church. They may not teach or preach against or engage in any activities which may be contrary to or contradict those stated beliefs. I Corinthians 7:2

<h2>ADDENDUM</h2>

The following current documents shall be made available in the church office:

Church Constitution and By-Laws

Church Annual Report

Board of Director's Job Descriptions

Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee
Duties and Responsibilities of the Pastoral Relations Committee
Guidelines for the Pastoral Selection Committee
Guidelines for the Nominating Committee
Guidelines for the Constitution Review Committee
Covenant Affirmations
Covenant Distinctives
“Welcome to Our Church” Brochure

Constitution / By-Laws Clarifications

The word “Church” is capitalized when it refers to First Covenant Church.

All references to the offices of secretary and vice-secretary in these documents refer to the church board secretary and vice-secretary, respectively, and should not be confused with the church office secretary.

In general, all references to the word “he” (in reference to members) applies to both men and women.