

**CONSTITUTION
OF
THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**

ARTICLE I - THE NAME

The name of this church shall be: The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Annapolis, Maryland.

ARTICLE II - RELATIONSHIP

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Annapolis, Maryland, being a particular congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America, recognizes that the Book of Church Order of the said denomination, in all of its provisions, is obligatory on it and its members. This Constitution is intended to conform to the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.

ARTICLE III - OBJECT OR POLICY

The purpose of this church is to glorify God through the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians by the teaching of God's Word, the world-wide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, the promotion of Godly worship, the defense of the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints", and cooperation with Christian activity and churches functioning in harmony with God's Holy Word, the Bible, until Christ comes again.

The mission of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Annapolis is to follow Christ and exalt Him as a community of people whose lives are being changed by the power of God's Word both proclaimed and lived in relationship with Him and others.

ARTICLE IV - DOCTRINE

The doctrine of this church shall be that system commonly called "The Reformed Faith" as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section I - Communing members are those persons who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and have been admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table. The children of communing members are, through the covenant and by right of birth, non-communing members of the church. Associate members are those believers, who are

communing members of their home churches, temporarily residing in a location other than their permanent homes, who have been admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table but may not vote in a congregational or corporation meeting, nor hold an office.

Section II - Persons received into communing membership of this church with or without a letter from another church shall be persons:

- a. Who have been baptized in obedience to Christ's command.
- b. Who make a credible profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and who are believed to have been regenerated and whose Christian profession is not contradicted by flagrant sin or false doctrine.
- c. Who are willing to submit themselves to the government of this particular Church and denomination.
- d. Who have received prior instruction as determined by the Session of this Church.
- e. Who give satisfactory answers to reasonable examination by the Session.

Section III - Members are expected to strive conscientiously to live according to the light given to them by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and to support wholeheartedly the services and activities of the church.

Section IV - All members of the church are subject to its discipline for the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal and for correction of continued absence from worship services and the Sacrament of Communion. The Session shall exercise discipline through proper steps of admonition, suspension, excommunication and deposition (of officers). It shall be within the province of the Session to drop from the membership roll any member, or members, who for a significant period of time show themselves to be indifferent, or opposed to the life and work of the church and its doctrinal standards. Any such member, whose whereabouts are known, must be given the opportunity to appear before the Session in person, or by counsel. The name of any person dropped from the roll of the church for any reason shall be reported at the next regularly convened congregational meeting and all such persons shall be notified of such action and the reason therefore.

Section V - All the communing members in good standing on the roll of the church who are 18 years of age or older shall be members of the Corporation.

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT

Section I - The basic principle of Presbyterian Church government is representative and constitutional democracy, and not pure democracy or unlimited majority rule. Therefore, the government of this church shall be vested in its membership but executed through the Session, consisting of Ruling Elders elected by the members, and the Teaching Elders called by the members. The Corporate affairs of the church shall be administered by a Board of Trustees in conformance with the laws of the State of Maryland. All ecclesiastical rights, privileges and powers not expressly designated to these and other officers, boards or courts of the church by the Word of God and by the doctrinal, governmental, or disciplinary standards of this denomination, are reserved to the congregation of this church.

Section II - The Corporation of this church through its duly elected Trustees shall have sole

title to its property, real, personal, or mixed, tangible or intangible and shall be sole owner of any equity it may have in any real estate. No superior court of the church, as such, shall have any claim whatsoever upon any real property or any equity in any real estate, or any fund or property of any kind held by or belonging to this church or any board, society, committee, Sunday School class or branch thereof. The superior courts of the Church may receive monies or property from this church only by free and voluntary action by this church.

Section III - The Pastor of this church shall be a man who has been properly ordained, licensed, and qualified in his office according to the Scriptures as Bishop and overseer of the flock, feeding the Word to the flock as Pastor, serving Christ as a minister, a Presbyter or Elder as he guides the affairs of the church and a Steward as he administers the Sacraments. The Session may establish other pastoral relations in addition to the office of Pastor. An Associate Pastor may be called and elected by the Congregation. An Assistant Pastor may be called by the Session but is not to be considered a member of the Session. The Pastor and Associate Pastor shall be called upon a vote of the Congregation and installed by the Presbytery after the call is approved by them. The candidate shall be selected by a pulpit committee of not less than five nor more than seven members elected by the Congregation at a properly called meeting from the boards of the church and the Congregation as follows: two from the Session, one from the Board of Deacons, and two or more at large. The recommendations of the pulpit committee shall be submitted to the Session for approval, and upon such approval the recommended candidate shall be presented to the Congregation for vote. In the event the Committee cannot agree and produce a candidate within a six-month period of time, it shall give a report of its efforts to the Congregation for its consideration. Pastors shall serve until their pastorate is terminated in orderly process, by resignation or request of the Congregation, in conjunction with the action of the Presbytery. If a Pastor resigns, he shall give a minimum of thirty days notice before termination of his services. In the event that the Congregation votes to terminate the Pastor's services abruptly, the salary shall continue for thirty days.

Section IV - The Pastor shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, the administration of the Sacraments of the church, and ordination and installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons. He shall be an ex-officio member of committees connected with the church and any of its organizations, act as Moderator in the meetings of the Session and Congregation, and shall conscientiously perform such duties as may be arranged between the Session and himself. If at any time his personal belief, preaching, teaching or living be not in full accord with the doctrinal statements and standards of this church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated as soon as possible.

ARTICLE VII - THE SESSION

Section I - The Session is responsible for maintaining the spiritual government of the church, its authority being from Christ as His will is expressed in the Bible. For this purpose it has power to inquire into the knowledge, principles and conduct of the church members under its care; to censure those found delinquent; to see that parents do not neglect to present their children for baptism; to receive members into the communion of the church and to remove them for just cause; to grant letters of dismissal to other churches; to examine, ordain, and install Ruling Elders and Deacons on their election by the Church, and to require these officers

to devote themselves to their work; to examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons; to review and adopt the budget prior to Congregational approval to approve actions of special importance affecting church property as recommended by the Board of Deacons, and to call Congregational meetings when necessary; to establish and control Sunday Schools and Bible classes with special reference to the children of the church; to establish and control all special groups in the church such as Men in the Church, Women in the Church, Young People's organizations and special Bible Study groups; to promote World Missions; to order collections for pious uses; to exercise authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, over all other religious services, over the music in the services, and over the uses to which the church building and associated property may be put; to take the oversight of the singing in the public worship of God; to assemble the people for worship when there is no minister; to determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church and congregation; to observe and carry out the lawful injunctions of the Presbytery and General Assembly; and to appoint Ruling Elder representations to these higher courts, who shall on their return make reports of their diligence. Also, the Session shall handle and consider suggestions, recommendations and grievances upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church.

Section II - The Session of this Church consists of its Pastor and Associate Pastors, together with the Ruling Elders who are members of the Church elected by the Congregation to serve on the Session for the terms specified. The Ruling Elders must possess all qualifications as outlined in the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), being men of wisdom and discretion, sound in the faith, diligent students able to teach others and committed to guarding the purity of the church. The Pastor shall be Moderator of the Session. Associate or Assistant Pastors may substitute for the Pastor as Moderator at the discretion of the Pastor and Session. In the absence of such, if any emergency should arise requiring immediate action, the Session may elect one of its members to preside or invite a minister of the Presbytery to perform this service. If the church should be without a Pastor the Moderator of the Session may be either a minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, with consent of the Session, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion, or one of its own members elected to preside. If there are three or more Ruling Elders, the Pastor and two Ruling Elders shall constitute a quorum. Assistant Pastors, although not members of the Session, may be invited to attend and participate in discussion without vote.

Section III - The Congregation shall have the power to determine the number of Ruling Elders who shall serve on the Session and shall elect them by orderly ballot from the membership of the Congregation. Elders shall serve normally for a three- year term. No Elder shall serve for more than six consecutive years, being eligible for reelection to the Session after the lapse of one year or more. To establish an orderly rotation, three classes shall be established.

Section IV - The Session shall elect annually one of its number to serve as Clerk of the Session who shall keep an accurate record of Session proceedings, which record shall be submitted at least once in every year to the inspection of the Presbytery. The Clerk also shall be responsible for maintaining the church register of baptisms, of communing members, of non-communing members, the marriages and name changes, and of the deaths and dismissals of church members.

Section V - The Session shall hold stated meetings preferably monthly but at least quarterly. Moreover, the Pastor shall have power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested to do so by any two of the active Ruling Elders. The Session shall also convene when directed to do so by the Presbytery. Meetings of the Session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Section VI - The Session shall have the authority to call Congregational meetings for the purpose of recommending such actions as call for a vote of the Congregation, and for the purpose of receiving advice or instruction from the Congregation. Such meetings shall be called upon notice being given to the Congregation at the regular morning worship services on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

Section VII - The Elders (and Deacons) are expected to be in regular attendance at all regularly stated meetings of the church and available for consultation on spiritual matters.

ARTICLE VIII - THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Section I - The Board of Deacons shall be communing members of the church elected to serve on the Board by the Congregation. A Deacon shall possess all the qualifications as outlined in the Scriptures, especially in I Timothy 3:8-13. The office is one of sympathy and service and the men chosen shall be those of spiritual mind, exemplary life, friendly spirit and sound judgment. It is the duty of the Board of Deacons to minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress. It shall have oversight of the preparation of the elements for the Sacrament of Holy Communion and care of the physical needs concurrent with the worship services, including the appointment and oversight of ushers. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the Church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the peoples, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property, office and maintenance personnel of the Church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the Congregation if a budget increase is involved. In the discharge of its duties the Board of Deacons is under the supervision and authority of the Session.

Section II - The Congregation shall have the power to determine the number of Deacons who shall serve on the Board of Deacons and shall elect them by orderly ballot from the membership of the Congregation. Deacons shall serve normally for a three-year term. No Deacon shall serve for more than six consecutive years, being eligible for reelection to the Board after the lapse of one year or more. To establish an orderly rotation three classes shall be established. The Pastor shall be an advisory member. The Board shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary from its number and also a Treasurer from among the communing members to whom shall be entrusted the funds for the current expenses and benevolences of the church.

In the event of a vacancy occurring on the Board of Deacons, the Board shall have the power to appoint a previously ordained man to fill the vacancy until the next election, provided such a man is approved by the Session and the congregation notified. The said officers shall serve a term of one year and are eligible to succeed themselves at the pleasure of the Board of Deacons. The Board shall meet separately preferably monthly, but at least once a quarter and whenever requested by the Session. If there are fifteen or more Deacons, the Chairman and eight Deacons shall constitute a quorum. The Board shall keep a record of its proceedings and of all funds and their distribution and shall submit its minutes and financial reports to the Session regularly and at other times upon request of the Session. They shall work with the Session in the preparation of the annual Budget. The Board of Deacons and the Session shall meet in joint session at least once a quarter to confer on matters of common interest. This shall be considered a Session meeting and minutes prepared. The Session should cooperate with the Deacons in their caring ministry by selecting and appointing godly men and women of the congregation to assist the Deacons in visitation, in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners and others who may be in distress or need.

Section III - There shall be a Deacon's Fund for use by the Board of Deacons in ministering to the needy of the Congregation. Special offerings for this purpose are to be taken regularly at Communion services. Designated gifts may also be received for special purposes approved by the Session.

Section IV - The Board of Deacons shall disburse only those funds which have been budgeted as well as other designated giving accounts which fall under their cognizance. The Treasurer of the Church shall receive and disburse church funds as directed by the Board of Deacons and/or by other appropriate authority. There shall be kept under his direction a ledger showing the cash account of all funds and a balance taken at the close of each month. There shall also be prepared monthly in approved form, under his direction, a financial statement showing current receipts and a record of expenditures compared to the approved budgeted amounts; he shall also prepare an annual statement showing the true status of all funds for the fiscal year, to be made available to the Congregation by March 1. His books shall at any time be available to the Board of Deacons and must be available to audit every 3 years or upon change of the Treasurer or as directed by the Board of Deacons. He shall be a voting ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and of a Budget Committee. He shall also have custody of the legal papers pertaining to the property and finance of the church, e.g. bank books, insurance policies, bonds, notes, abstracts, contracts and deeds which shall be kept in a depository mutually agreed upon by the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees; and any access he may have to this depository shall be made under the direction of the Board of Deacons. In the event the Treasurer is unable to perform his duties, or there is a vacancy in this office, the duties of Treasurer may be taken care of by any person authorized by the Board of Deacons until action is taken by the Board in electing another Treasurer.

Section V - Since the salaries and related benefits of non-ordained church office and maintenance personnel are a sizeable portion of annual budgeted expense, it is incumbent upon the Board of Deacons to maintain constant surveillance of such employees, assuring adequate force, reasonable salaries and benefits, proper supervision and performance. It shall be responsible for hiring and dismissals, but no action may be taken without approval of the Session. The approval of the Congregation is required in the event that any increase in

budgeted amounts are involved.

ARTICLE IX - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section I - Since the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Annapolis, Maryland is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland a Board of Trustees is required. The Board of Trustees shall be adult members of the Church elected to serve on the Board by the Corporation. A Trustee shall be a person of wisdom and discretion, sound in the faith, skilled in the areas of financial management and property administration and responsible for the Corporation in civil matters. The Board of Trustees shall have the power and authority if authorized by the Corporation to buy, sell, or mortgage property for the Church, to accept and execute deeds as such trustees, to hold and defend titles to the same and to manage any permanent special funds entrusted to them for the furtherance of the purposes of the Church, provided that such duties do not infringe upon the powers and duties of the Session or the Board of Deacons. In the fulfillment of their duties, such trustees shall be subject always to the authority, and shall act solely under the instructions of the Corporation. Specifically, in buying, selling and mortgaging real property such officers shall act solely under the authority of the Corporation, granted in a duly constituted meeting of the Corporation.

Section II - The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least six Trustees, including two active Ruling Elders, the Chairman of the Deacons, one active Deacon and two members at large from the communing membership. These shall be elected by the Corporation in a duly constituted meeting of the Corporation. The Pastor and the Treasurer of the church shall be ex-officio voting members. Trustees shall normally serve for a one year term. No Trustee shall serve for more than six consecutive years, being eligible for reelection to the Board only after the lapse of one year or more.

Section III - The Board of Trustees shall meet as a distinct body at least once a year, and at any time as called by the Chairman, the Session, or two or more members of the Board of Trustees. It shall elect its own Chairman from the Session members, Vice Chairman and Secretary, and employ such agents and employees as it deems necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Corporation, within the budgetary limits as established by the Congregation.

Section IV - The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and shall perform all other duties as may be required of him under the laws of the State of Maryland, the Constitution of this Church and the resolutions of the Board of Trustees. He shall sign all documents, deeds, contracts and obligations of the Corporation as directed by the Session and the Diaconate. In addition to the Chairman's signature, that of the Vice Chairman and one other Trustee shall be required.

Section V - The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall keep an accurate record of all the actions of the Board and shall act as Secretary at the meetings of the Corporation.

ARTICLE X - MEETINGS (CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION)

Section I - There shall be one regular meeting of the Congregation\Corporation each year, on the second Thursday in December.

By the end of April a slate of candidates for the offices of Ruling Elder, Deacon, and Trustee shall be presented to the Congregation/Corporation as nominees but no elections held. Public notice shall be given in ample time to allow the congregation to submit names to the Nominating Committee. Nominations may also be accepted from the people, provided such proposed nominees have been approached and indicated acceptance.

The Nominating Committee shall receive all nominations for office from the Congregation and present its report to the Session for concurrence by the end of April.

The Congregation shall have the month of May to consider these names. Any questions as to their ability to serve will be directed to the Session.

Following the month of May the Session shall examine those men nominated for office and require them to pursue a course of study under the Pastor's direction to prepare them to undertake the responsibilities of the office for which they have been nominated unless they already meet the requirements of the course as deemed by the Session. Following the course the Session shall determine those qualified to serve in the particular office and shall prepare a list for submission to the Congregation at the December meeting. Other business properly coming before a duly constituted Congregational meeting may also be transacted at such a meeting as approved by the Session and listed in the notice. Special business initiated by members of the Congregation may also be considered provided it has been submitted to the Session in sufficient time to allow the Session to approve it and meet the requirements of this Constitution to list this business in the notice.

A Nominating Committee shall be nominated at the same time as the officers. The Nominating Committee shall consist of two or three Elders appointed by the Session, two or three Deacons appointed by the Diaconate, and seven members of the Congregation at large. The seven members of the congregation at large are to be nominated and elected at the December meeting. They will take office on January 1 of the following year. The Nominating Committee will have till May 31 of that same year to prepare a list of candidates including another Nominating Committee, for presentation to the congregation. The Nominating Committee shall elect its chairman from among its members with the Pastor as an ex-officio member. A slate of nominations for the members at large for the new Nominating Committee shall be submitted by the outgoing Nominating Committee and, in addition, nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the December meeting, provided such proposed nominees have been approached prior to the meeting, indicated acceptance and approved by Session.

Section II - Elections shall be held at the December meeting of the Congregation for the offices of Ruling Elder, Deacon and nominating committee and at the Corporation meeting following for the office of Trustee. At least two weeks notice of this meeting shall be given from the pulpit and written notice of the same containing proposed business shall be posted in a conspicuous place. All elections shall be based upon the Session's report to the Congregation at this meeting containing the names of the nominees qualifying for election. No new

nominations will be accepted at this meeting for the above-named offices, unless the number standing for election is less than the number of vacancies. In such a case, Elders or Deacons, currently not serving, but having been ordained previously in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod or the Presbyterian Church in America, recommended by the Session, may be nominated for the offices of Elder or Deacon. Also, should such a situation develop in the election of Trustees, nominations will be accepted from the floor for the office of Trustee, at the Corporation meeting.

Section III - All communicant members in good and regular standing in this Church, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of Ruling Elders and Deacons and to participate in the business at Congregational meetings. However, in meetings of the Corporation, to comply with the law of the State of Maryland, only those communicant members of this church who are in good and regular standing and who are 18 years of age or older may vote in the election of Trustees and in other business.

Voting by proxy is not acceptable. The quorum of the Congregation and Corporation meetings shall consist of one-sixth of the eligible resident communing members. A majority vote of eligible members present is required for election and the election shall be by private ballot.

Section IV - The fiscal year of the church shall end on the thirty-first day of December each year. Reports of the Pastor, Clerk of Session, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, Treasurer and all organizations of the church shall along with the church's financial report are to be printed for distribution before March 1. At the December meeting elections shall be held and budget approved for the ensuing year, and all such other business included in the notice shall be transacted.

Section V - The Session shall always call a special Congregation meeting when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth of the resident communing members of the church, and said meeting and its purpose to be announced from the pulpit and notice of the same being posted in a conspicuous place. This meeting shall be convened within three weeks after the request is filed with the Session, to allow for announcement of the meeting, and no business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice. The Trustees shall be empowered to call special meetings of the Corporation whenever in their discretion it is advisable and with the approval of the Session. At least two weeks notice of such meetings and of their purposes shall be given from the pulpit and such a notice posted in a conspicuous place.

Section VI - In the conduct of business matters, any parliamentary questions not covered by this Constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of "Roberts' Rules of Order".

Section VII - The Pastor shall be the Moderator of Congregational meetings by virtue of his office. If it should be impracticable or inexpedient for him to preside, or if there is no pastor,

the Session shall appoint one of its number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the Congregation shall elect its presiding officer who may be a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America, or any male member of the Church. A Clerk shall be elected by the Congregation to serve at that meeting or for a definite period, whose duty shall be to keep correct minutes of the proceedings and of all business transacted and to preserve these minutes in a permanent form, after they have been attested by the Moderator and the Clerk of the meeting. He shall also send a copy of these minutes to the Session for incorporation chronologically into the official book of Session minutes.

Section VIII - The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings of the Corporation. If he is unable to do so, one of the other Session members of the Board shall take the chair. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall keep correct minutes of the proceedings and all business transacted and preserve these minutes in a permanent form after they have been attested by the Chairman and the Secretary.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the communing members in good standing present at any regular or special meeting of the Congregation when the intent to amend has been properly announced in the notice. Such vote is to be expressed by written ballot, provided the proposed amendment has been read to the Congregation, or presented in such form that each member may read it, at each regular church service for the four Sundays preceding said meeting, and provided an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in the church of the four Sundays immediately preceding said meeting, and a copy made available to each member at least three weeks preceding the meeting, due notice having been given to this effect.