

**CONSTITUTION of the MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST COAST CONFERENCE
of THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH**
Proposed for Consideration 2024

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Ministerial Association of the East Coast Conference of The Evangelical Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II: CONFESSION OF FAITH

This Ministerial Association believes in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, as the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of this Ministerial Association shall be to work in harmony with the Covenant Ministerium as outlined in its Constitution and Bylaws, and with the Rules of the Ordered Ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Section 2. The purpose of this Ministerial Association shall be

- a) To consider and supervise all matters of ministerial standing within the Conference, including the licensure, ordination, commissioning care and discipline of ministers, in accordance with the rules of the Ordered Ministry and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- b) To seek by all means within its power to raise the spiritual, ethical and professional standards and effectiveness of the Conference Ministerial Association.
- c) To strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship among Covenant ministers.
- d) To render any help possible to Covenant ministers, especially in times of physical, personal, emotional or spiritual need.
- e) To assist in the recruiting and selection of suitable candidates for the Christian ministry; to work with North Park Theological Seminary in the matriculation of students; to provide guidance and support to seminary students affiliated with the ECC who are studying or serving their internships within the Conference.

ARTICLE IV: TERRITORY

The boundaries of the Ministerial Association shall be the same as that of the East Coast Conference.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Ministerial Association of the East Coast Conference is a part of the Covenant Ministerium. Membership in this Ministerial Association shall consist of all clergy and missionaries who are ordained, commissioned or hold ministerial licenses in the Evangelical Covenant Church, and who reside within the boundaries of the East Coast Conference, or whose church or other ministry is located where the East Coast Conference Ministerial Association is the nearest or most accessible regional ministerial association.

Section 2. Membership in this association shall be of two kinds:

a.) Full membership, in which all privileges shall be accorded:

1. Ministers who hold Ordination to Word and Sacrament, Ordination to Word and Service, or Commissioned Staff Minister standing in the ECC.
2. Consecrated missionaries
3. Ministers whose transfer of ordination has been approved but not yet finalized.
4. Ministers who hold ministerial license (ML, BVL) in the ECC.
5. Ordained/Commissioned Ministers and Consecrated missionaries who have retired from active service.

b.) Associate membership, in which privilege of the floor in discussion is accorded but voting privileges and holding of office are not accorded:

~~1. Licensed theological students (LTS);~~

1. Ministers ordained to Word and Sacrament, ministers ordained to Word and Service and Commissioned Staff Ministers in the inactive category.
2. Consecrated missionaries in the inactive category
3. Ministers serving ECC churches but who do not hold ECC credentials.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES

Section 1. It shall be the duty, as well as the privilege, of every member to attend the Annual Meetings of the Ministerial Association, as well as any special meeting.

Section 2. Any member who shall be prevented from attending the Annual Meeting shall forward to the Secretary a written greeting, which shall be reported to the meeting. Any member absent from two consecutive Annual Meetings or who fails to communicate, in writing, to the Secretary shall be reported by the Secretary to the Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS) for action regarding the delinquent member's status. If a loss of standing occurs, the member may be reinstated by making amends satisfactory to the Committee on Ministerial Standing and approved by the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VII: CARE AND DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The goal of care and discipline is to foster the health and wholeness of the minister, and to strengthen the Body of Christ.

Section 2. A minister may be charged with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, or disloyalty to the Covenant.

Section 3. Any matters relating to ministerial discipline shall be referred to the Committee on Ministerial Standing, and where deemed appropriate, to the Covenant Board of the Ordered Ministry and/or to the Executive Minister of the Department of Serve Clergy, for consideration before discussion or decision in the matter is possible by the Ministerial Association.

Section 4. The decisions of the Committee on Ministerial Standing relating to care and discipline, where referral to the Covenant Board of the Ordered Ministry is not necessary, shall be submitted to the Ministerial Association at its Annual Meeting for approval. Matters not approved by the Ministerial Association shall be resubmitted to the committee for further consideration.

Section 5. Any matters for care shall be submitted to the Committee on Ministerial Standing and may be referred to the Covenant Board of the Ordered Ministry for consideration before discussion or decision in the matter is possible by the Ministerial Association. A minister may be involuntarily brought under the care of the Committee on Ministerial Standing, and, where necessary, under the Covenant Board of the Ordered Ministry, where in the judgment of the Conference Superintendent and the Executive Minister of Serve Clergy, acute mental health, family crisis, personal health or a crisis in life circumstances create a situation where a minister is deemed temporarily unfit for the duties and demands of ministry.

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Ministerium shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Vice-Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Vice-Treasurer. Only ordained ministers in good standing shall serve as officers.

Section 2. These officers, together with the Conference Superintendent, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Association, and shall function from the close of the Annual Meeting at which they were elected to the close of the next Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS

Section 1. The Annual Meeting shall be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the East Coast Conference.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called, when required, by the Chair, in concurrence with the Executive Committee, or by a majority of the members of the Executive Committee. Notice of a special meeting, stating time, place, and purpose of such meeting, shall be communicated in writing, either electronically or via surface mail by the Secretary to all members of the Ministerial Association at least thirty days prior to the date of the special meeting.

Section 3. Business sessions shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise stated in the constitution.

Section 4. Fifteen members present shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any Annual Meeting, provided that a motion to this effect shall have been introduced in writing at the previous Annual Meeting. For adoption, motion to amend must receive two-thirds majority vote of the members present. Amendments deemed by 2/3rds of the members to be solely editorial in nature, proposed in order to update terminology to match approved and current ECC use of language for named credentials and their categories, may be adopted upon two-thirds majority vote of the members present, provided that a motion to this effect shall have been introduced in writing to the Ministerial Association with the prior approval of the Executive Committee at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting.

**BY LAWS of the MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION of THE EAST COAST CONFERENCE of
THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH**

Adopted May 1, 2009 – Updated April 2016

Proposed for Consideration 2024

ARTICLE I: ELECTIONS

Section 1. The officers shall be elected by closed ballot at the Annual Meeting for a term of three years, and shall not be eligible for re-election to the same office. A simple majority vote is required to elect. Vacancies may be filled by the appointment of the Executive Committee to serve until the next Annual Meeting. A person elected to fill an uncompleted term may stand for election to a full term.

ARTICLE II: COMMITTEES

Section 1. A Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS) consisting of no less than nine or more than thirteen members shall be elected. Each committee member shall be elected for a three-year term. They shall be eligible to succeed themselves for only one additional term. The election shall be arranged in such a way that the terms of one-third of the members expire each year. The committee should include representation from each permanent credential of the ECC. The Chair of the Ministerial Association, the Secretary of the Ministerial Association, the Vice-Secretary of the Ministerial Association, the Conference Superintendent, Associate Superintendent(s) and any members of the Board of the Ordered Ministry residing in the Conference shall be ex-officio members of the Committee. The Secretary or the Vice-Secretary of the Ministerial Association shall serve as the Secretary of the Committee, and the Committee shall elect its own chair. All matters of ordination and licensure shall be referred to this Committee for action and recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Ministerial Association. Care and Discipline of ministers shall be handled as directed by the Covenant Department of ~~the Ordered Ministry~~, Serve Clergy, in accordance with the Rules of the Ordered Ministry.

Section 2. A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by January 15 each year to consist of three members and shall be appointed by the Chairperson who will also serve as an ex-officio member. The nominating process shall begin at least ninety days before the Annual Meeting. The ballot is to be finalized and communicated to the Ministerial Association at least thirty days before the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. The officers shall constitute the Program Committee for the Ministerial Association.

Section 4: A Committee on Resolutions shall consist of three members and shall be appointed by the Chairperson at least thirty days before the Annual Meeting.

Section 5. An Auditors Committee of two persons, and all other committees not otherwise herein provided for shall be appointed by the Chair as required.

Section 6. A Committee for Continuing Education & Retreats (CERE) consisting of no less than six nor more than twelve members shall be elected. Each committee member shall be elected for a three-year term. They shall be eligible to succeed themselves for only one additional term. The election shall be arranged in such a way that the terms of one-third of the members expire each year. The committee should include representation from the diversity of the association – regional, gender, ethnic, and ministry context. The Vice-Chair of the Ministerial Association, and the Conference Superintendent, shall be ex-officio members of the Committee. The Committee's primary charge is to plan and provide Continuing Education and Formational experiences for the Association, including the Fall Ashram/Minister's Retreat and for the Spring Association Annual Meeting. They will collaborate with and report to the Executive Committee in terms of budget and management of event income and expenditures. The Committee shall organize and elect from within its ranks a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary, and appoint teams to plan and implement its various events.

ARTICLE III: STANDING

Section 1. Membership in the Ministerial Association shall be of two kinds:

a) Full Membership, in which all privileges shall be accorded:

1. Ministers who hold ordination or commissioning in the Evangelical Covenant Church.
2. Ministers whose transfer of ordination has been approved but not yet finalized.
3. Ministers who hold ministerial license (ML or BVL) in the Evangelical Covenant Church.
4. Ministers who hold ordination, commissioning or ministerial license in the Evangelical Covenant Church, and who are retired; those in this category shall be exempt from paying dues.

b) Associate Membership, in which neither voting privileges nor the holding of office shall be accorded:

~~1. Licensed theological students (LTS).~~

1. Ordained or commissioned ministers in the inactive category.
2. Ministers serving Covenant churches or agencies but who do not hold credentials in the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Section 2. The Secretary of the Ministerial Association, in cooperation with the Covenant Department of ~~Ordered Ministry~~ Serve Clergy and the Conference Office shall keep the official roster of the Ministerial Association.

Section 3. The procedure for application for either Full or Associate Membership on the part of those whose credentials have not yet been established shall be as follows:

a) Applications are generated and processed through the Conference Office. The Committee on Ministerial Standing shall receive the application for membership before the Annual Meeting of the Ministerial Association.

b) The Committee on Ministerial Standing shall interview the applicants, examine their credentials and make recommendation to the Ministerial Association in session.

c) Decisions by the Ministerial Association shall be submitted by the Secretary to the Board of the Ordered Ministry through the administration of the Conference Office and the Department of ~~the~~ Serve Clergy of the ECC.

d) The Committee on Ministerial Standing shall follow procedures in accordance with the procedures of the Department of ~~the~~ Serve Clergy and in keeping with the Rules of the Board of the Ordered Ministry.

Section 4. The Secretary shall maintain communication with the Covenant Department of ~~the Ordered Ministry~~ Serve Clergy and the Conference Office, which handles all transfers of standing.

ARTICLE IV: DUES

Section 1. The Ministerial Association at its Annual Meeting shall establish yearly dues. All members holding full membership in the Association as defined in Article V, Section 2 a.) of the Constitution shall pay dues annually to remain in good standing.

Section 2. Exemption from payment of dues is given to those members who have retired or are in an inactive status, to theological students (i.e., those pursuing M. Div. or equivalent degrees) and to missionaries, as well as to others whose circumstances, in the judgment of the Executive Committee, necessitate exemption. Any other requests for exemption from Conference dues must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Those ministers who are required to pay dues and are not current on the date of the Annual Meeting will not be accorded voice or vote at the business sessions of the Ministerial Association, unless arrangements for payment have been made with the Treasurer of the Ministerial Association.

ARTICLE V: POLICY OF DISBURSEMENTS

The Executive Committee of the Ministerial Association is empowered to disburse from the general fund up to \$500 per unbudgeted request from available funds. The total sum disbursed shall not exceed 50% of available funds.

ARTICLE VI: MINISTER'S AID FUND

Section 1. The Ministerial Association shall share with the Conference in maintaining a Minister's Aid Fund for the benefit of all those members holding Covenant ministerial credentials, their families, and spouses of deceased ministers, in special need. A committee on which the Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Superintendent of the East Coast Conference shall serve shall administer the Fund. The Treasurer of the Ministerial Association shall be the Treasurer of the Fund.

Section 2. The Committee is empowered to disburse up to \$500.00 per special request for assistance from available funds. The total sum shall not exceed fifty percent of available funds. Additional requests beyond the \$500.00 limit, by any one person, must be brought to the full Executive Committee ~~Board~~.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these Bylaws, not in conflict with the Constitution, may be made at any Annual Meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided the proposed amendments have been received in writing by the Chairperson at least sixty days prior to the Annual Meeting. Proposed amendments must be sent via electronic medium or surface mail to all members of the Ministerial Association at least thirty days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting.