**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION**

**OF THE GREAT LAKES COVENANT CONFERENCE**

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**(2009)**

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this association shall be the Ministerial Association of the Great Lakes Covenant Conference of The Evangelical Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II - CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

ARTICLE III - AFFILIATION

The Ministerial Association shall work in cooperation and harmony with the Ministerium of the Evangelical Covenant Church by supporting its endeavors and conforming in all matters of ministerial standing and discipline with its Constitution and Bylaws, and with the Rules for the Ordered Ministry of The Evangelical Covenant Church.

ARTICLE IV - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Association shall be:

 Section 1 To consider and supervise all matters of ministerial standing within the Great Lakes Conference, including recommendations for licensure and ordination.

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 Section 2 To seek all means within its power to raise the spiritual and professional standards of the Great Lakes Conference ministry.

 Section 3 To strengthen the bounds of Christian fellowship among Great Lakes Conference ministers.

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 Section 4 To render help to Great Lakes Conference ministers in times of special physical, emotional, or spiritual need.

 Section 5 To assist in the recruiting and selection of proper candidates for the Christian ministry; to work with North Park Seminary in the matriculation of students in the seminary.

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ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

 Section 1 **Definition** - Membership in this Ministerial Association shall consist of all active and retired ministers and missionaries who are ordained, commissioned, or hold ministerial license in The Evangelical Covenant Church who are serving and/or living within the boundaries of the Great Lakes Conference. Military chaplains and missionaries serving abroad may also hold membership if this is their home conference.

 Section 2 Membership of this association shall be of three kinds:

 A. Full membership, in which both voting privileges and holding office are accorded.

 1. Ministers who hold ordination in the Evangelical Covenant Church.

 2. Ministers who hold commissioning in the Evangelical Covenant Church.

 3. Ministers who hold ministerial license in the Evangelical Covenant church.

 4. Ministers whose transfer of ordination has been approved but not yet finalized.

 5. Ministers who serve as consecrated missionaries within the Evangelical Covenant Church.

 B. Associate membership, in which voting privileges and the holding of office is not accorded:

 1. Licensed theological students.

 2. Licensed lay ministers.

 3. Ordained ministers in the inactive category.

 4. Ministers serving Evangelical Covenant Churches but who do not hold Covenant credentials.

 C. Honorary membership, in which both voting privileges and holding office are accorded but which are exempt from membership dues and attendance.

 1. A member entering retirement and thus no longer in active ministry.

 2. A member forced to leave active ministry due to illness.

ARTICLE VI – DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES

 Section 1 Every member shall be present at the Annual Meeting of the Association unless circumstances make this impossible.

 Section 2 Members prevented from attending the Annual Meeting shall send a written greeting to the Secretary.

 Section 3 Members who are absent from the Annual Meeting for two consecutive years, and fail to notify the Secretary, shall be reported to the next Annual Meeting and may be dropped, unless that meeting should decide otherwise. If a lapse of membership occurs, the member may be reinstated by making amends satisfactory to the Committee on the Ministry.

 Section 4 Annual dues shall be paid by all full members of the Association to the Treasurer of the Association, the amount to be determined by the Annual Meeting of the Association.

ARTICLE VII – DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary procedure shall be administered in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Covenant Board of Ordered Ministry.

ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS

 Section 1 Any ordained or commissioned minister, or any person holding a ministry license for at least five years who has completed Covenant Orientation, shall be eligible to serve as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Association. All officers must be in good standing.

 Section 2 The officers of this organization shall be Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Vice Secretary, and Treasurer, which shall comprise the Executive Committee.

 Section 3 The Executive Committee will represent the interests of the organization between the regular meetings of the association, and will coordinate the work of the association’s committees.

 Section 4 These officers shall be elected by secret ballot for a term of three years. They shall not serve more than one consecutive term.

 Section 5 Officers shall assume office on June 1, following their election.

 Section 6 If an office becomes vacant, the Executive Committee may appoint a successor to fulfill the remaining term of office.

ARTICLE IX-MEETINGS

 Section 1 This Association shall hold an Annual Meeting at such time and place as shall be designated by the Executive Committee. A quorum shall consist of twenty-five percent of those registered who are full members.

 Section 2 The Executive Committee may call special meetings when circumstances warrant with at least two weeks written notification to all members. A quorum at special meetings shall consist of not less than twenty-five percent of the membership actively serving in the geographic Conference.

ARTICLE X- AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by two-thirds (2*/*3) affirmative vote at any Annual Meeting, provided that the amendment has been presented in writing to the previous Annual Meeting.

**BY-LAWS**

ARTICLE I - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

 Section 1 The **Chairperson** shall:

 A. Preside over all regular and special meetings of the Ministerial Association and the Executive Committee.

 B. Represent the Conference Ministerial Association on the Executive Committee of the Covenant Ministerium.

 C. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Conference Committee on Ministerial Standing.

 D. Serve as advisory representative to the Conference Executive Board.

 Section 2 The **Vice-Chairperson** shall:

 A. Assume the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence.

 B. Be available for any other assignments designated by the Chairperson.

 Section 3 The **Secretary** shall:

 A. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the Ministerial Association and Executive Committee.

 B. Preserve all correspondence and records of the work of the Ministerial Association.

 Section 4 **The Vice-Secretary** shall:

 A. Assume the duties of the Secretary in his or her absence.

 B. Be responsible for the publicity and registration materials for Ministerial Association retreats, Annual Meetings, and other activities.

 C. Be available for other assignments designated by the Chairperson.

 Section 5 **The Treasurer** shall:

 A. Receive all funds of the Ministerial Association and make disbursements authorized by the Ministerial Association and/or the Executive Committee.

 B. Submit a written report of the receipts, disbursements, and balances to each meeting of the Executive Committee and to the Annual Meeting of the Ministerial Association.

 C. Receive and record all dues, maintaining an accurate list of those who have paid. This list with proper payment of dues for the Covenant Ministerium shall be forwarded to the Treasurer of that organization.

 D. Assist with the registration at Retreats and Annual Meetings.

 E. Present the financial records to be reviewed annually by someone chosen by the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Association.

ARTICLE II – COMMITTEES

 Section 1 Nominating Committee

 The Executive Committee shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three members at least 60 days in advance of the Annual Meeting. This Committee shall present a ballot for each office.

 Section 2 Committee on the Ministerial Standing

 A. Membership

 This Committee shall consist of no less than six members. Any ordained or commissioned minister, or any person holding a ministry license for at least five years who has completed Covenant Orientation, shall be eligible to serve on COMS. At least half of the members of the committee must be ordained. All members must be in good standing. The Conference Superintendent and Association Chairperson shall be ex-officio members. Conference representatives on the Covenant Board of Ordered Ministry shall be advisory members.

 B. Election & Tenure

 Members of this Committee shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a five-year term of office. They shall be elected in such a manner that no less than one and no more than two member's terms shall expire each year. They may not succeed themselves.

 C. Organization

 The Committee shall select one of its members as Chairperson and one as Secretary.

 D. Responsibilities of the Committee

 1. Standing

 This committee shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to ordination and licensure.

 2. Care

 This Committee shall be responsible for matters pertaining to the care of ministers.

 a. Being accessible for ministers who request help in dealing with situations and relationship in their church, with other ministers, with the Great Lakes Conference and its officials.

 b. Initiating contact with ministers who are experiencing personal and or vocational crises.

 c. Any member of the Great Lakes Conference Ministerial Association may request a meeting with the committee for reflection and counsel on any of the issues stated above.

 d. Members of the Committee may excuse themselves in matters of personal conflict with the issue at hand or be excused if requested by the person(s) with whom the Committee is dealing.

 3. Advocacy (In the Credentialing Process)

 a. This committee may serve as an advocate on behalf of a candidate in the credentialing process to the Covenant Board of Ordered Ministry or the Executive Committee of the Board of the Ordered Ministry or the Executive Secretary of the Ordered Ministry. This would pertain but not be limited to support for ordination, under the rule of exception," negotiation of reasonable orientation, and/or support for a conference recommended candidate who was denied by the Covenant Board of the Ordered Ministry.

 b. Advocacy can also be initiated and sought by any member of the Ministerial Association or the candidate.

 4. Counsel

 This Committee shall respond to the request of the Conference Superintendent and the Covenant Board of Ordered Ministry in matters relating to care and discipline.

 E. Policies and Procedures

 This Committee shall follow the Rules and Regulations of the Covenant Board of Ordered Ministry.

 F. Responsibilities of the Officers

 1. Chairperson

 The Chairperson shall convene all meetings of this Committee. The Chairperson shall also be responsible to communicate meeting times and expectations to those involved in the ordination and licensing process.

 2. Secretary

 The Secretary shall keep a permanent record of all proceedings and keep duplicate copies of all correspondence and have same on file, accessible to the Committee and the Executive Committee.

Section 3 Clergy Care Giving Committee

 A. Membership

 This Committee shall consist of six licensed, commissioned, or ordained ministers. Conference staff members who are credentialed ministers may be invited to consult with this committee.

 B. Election and Tenure

 Members of this committee shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the ministerial association for a three-year term of office so that two members are replaced each year, and four members continue. Members should represent the districts of the conference as possible.

 C. Organization

 The committee shall select one of its members as chairperson and one as secretary.

 D. Responsibilities of the Committee

 1. Be familiar with the manual to Initiate a Ministry of Care for Covenant Pastors.

 2. Recruitment and replacement of care givers.

 3. Training of care givers.

 4. Inform ministers coming into the conference of this ministry.

 5. Assignment of care givers to each member of the ministerial association.

 6. Regular evaluation of care giving ministry.

 7. Request and manage any budget allocated from the ministerial association.

 E. Report to annual meeting of the Association on the ministry of this committee.

 Section 4 Pastor's Crisis Fund Committee

 This Committee shall maintain and administer a fund for the benefit of ministers and spouses in special need. This Committee shall consist of the Chairperson and Treasurer of the Ministerial Association, and the Conference Superintendent.

 Section 5 The Annual Meeting shall elect, or have appointed, any other committees deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the affairs of the Association.

 Section 6 The Executive Committee of the Association may appoint a successor to serve until the next annual meeting of the Conference Ministerial Association in the event that an office of any committee becomes vacant during the year. The elected person shall serve the remaining term of office.

ARTICLE III - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these by-laws shall be submitted in writing at an Annual Meeting and must have a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting for adoption.

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