



Oakdale Covenant
Church

P R E A M B L E

(A Historical Statement from the Preamble of the
Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical
Covenant Church as Revised in 1957)

"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 the 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 given room to divergent views. 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 the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community."

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the constitution and by-laws of the Oakdale Evangelical Covenant Church of Chicago, Illinois.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be the Oakdale Evangelical Church of Chicago, Illinois; for the sake of convenience, known as Oakdale Covenant Church.

ARTICLE II

Affiliation

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

ARTICLE III

Confession of Faith

This church 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 IV

Purpose

The purpose of this church is to unite believers in fellowship for spiritual edification, for the winning of sinners to Christ and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, through home and foreign missions. In order to achieve this purpose, this church, in 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 this church is open to anyone who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been born again to a living hope, has been baptized according to the scriptures and desires to share in the fellowship and ministry of this church.

ARTICLE VI

Officers and Board

The officers of this Church shall be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Director of Christian Education, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

The Church Board shall consist of the pastor, chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, financial secretary, assistant financial, secretary, treasurer, assistant Treasurer, director of christian education, two youth representatives and the chairman or representative of all the other organizations of the church, providing that the chairman or representative shall be a member of this church.

ARTICLE VII

Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held at stated intervals as well as an annual business meeting, as near to January 1st, as may be found practical. At the annual business meeting, written reports shall be submitted by the pastor and the departments of the church. Financial reports shall be submitted by the treasurer and financial secretary and each of the other organizations. Officers for the ensuing year shall be elected at the last congregational business meeting of the year and shall assume their duties on January 1st; elections to be by secret ballot.

Notice of all congregational business meetings shall be announced to the members not less than two weeks prior to the meeting and shall include the date, time of meeting and an agenda of business to be transacted.

ARTICLE VIII

Property

In case of dissension, the title to all church property, real and personal, shall remain with that group abiding by this constitution; and upon dissolution, the property and all assets of the church shall become the property of The Evangelical Covenant Church and The Central Conference.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and not in conflict with Covenant principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the church, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. When this church receives appropriation aid from the Central Conference and/or the denomination through subsidy or loans, such proposed amendments must also be approved by the Central Conference Board and the Executive Secretary of Church Growth and Evangelism.

B.Y-L A W S

ARTICLE I

Section I

Membership

(a) Admission of Members

Any person shall be admitted as a member of this church who comes forth and makes a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. We strongly urge each new member to take advantage of our instruction classes.

(b) Transfer of Membership

Members of other churches recognized as evangelical, may become members upon presenting a letter of transfer, within six months from the date of letter. Their names shall be recorded at the next business meeting of the church. All new members shall be welcomed into fellowship of the church, at the next communion service.

Section II

(a) Responsibility of Members

Every member shall consider the responsibilities and the obligations placed upon him by the Word of God and the church. He shall in all things conduct himself as behooves a Christian. He shall be considerate of his fellow-members and by word and deed encourage them to love and to do good deeds.

Section III

Discipline

(a) Negligent Members

Members who willfully neglect their duties and have not attended a service or contributed to the support of the church for a period of one year, shall have a letter recommended from the deacon board, sent by the pastor, informing them of their obligations to God and the church. If no response is forthcoming from the letter sent, then, their names will be placed on the inactive membership list.

(b) Erring Members

A member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be admonished according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. A fellow member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore him. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the church board, who shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the member. If he or she fails to heed the counsel of the church board, his or her error shall be brought before a business meeting of the church. Discipline shall then be administered in the spirit of Christ, which due regard for the welfare of the individual, as well as the church.

(c) Dismissal

Dismissal of members under paragraph a. and b. of this section must be acted upon by the church, which alone has the authority. A two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a congregational business meeting is necessary for such action.

Section IV

Transfer of Members

A member who moves to another community should, soon thereafter, identify himself with the local Covenant Church. If there is not a Covenant Church, he or she should identify himself with some other evangelical Christian church. Application for transfer of membership shall be made in writing to the pastor, who shall issue the transfer to the church with which a member is uniting. Withdrawal of said membership shall be reported through the church board to the next business meeting, where it shall be made a matter of record.

Section V

Removal of Membership

Request for withdrawal from membership in the church shall be made in writing to the pastor, or the church board. After careful consideration, the church board may present a recommendation for withdrawal to a business meeting of the church.

Section VI

Forfeiture of Property Rights

A member who has been properly dismissed from the church or has withdrawn his membership has forfeited all rights to any and all property of the church.

Section VII

Non-member Friends

Non-member parish friends shall be enrolled by the church as part of its total constituency. The church and pastor shall serve them in all their spiritual needs, and they shall be encouraged to consider this as their church home. They shall be kept informed of the activities of the church.

ARTICLE II

Pastor

Section I Qualifications

The pastor of the church should be without reproach, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, and apt to teach. He shall be a member of the church and ex-official member of the Church Board and all other boards of the church.

Section II Duties

It shall be the duty of the pastor to devote himself and his time to the service of the church, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments. He shall watch over

himself and his flock, visiting, as far as his time permits, all the members of his church his church, especially the sick and the poor. He shall instruct the children and youth of his parish in the Holy Scriptures. He shall keep an adequate church record and present a written report to the church, at the annual business meeting. He shall practice good administrative procedures and cooperate with the church board.

Section III Cooperation

The pastor shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the Evangelical Covenant Church of and the Central Conference, seeking to enlist support of all its enterprises and to work in harmony with his fellow ministers. He shall seek, always, the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

Section IV Call

The pastor shall be called at a regular or special church business meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced at least two Sundays in advance. He shall be chosen by closed ballot with a two-thirds plurality 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, for termination of his pastoral duties. When this church receives aid from the Central Conference and/or denomination through subsidy or loans, a call to the pastor shall be extended jointly by the Church and the Central Conference, subject to approval by the Executive Secretary of Church Growth and Evangelism.

Section V Charges Against the Pastor

Charges against the pastor shall be submitted in writing and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of three witnesses. If in the judgement of the church he errs in doctrine or conduct, the case shall be referred to the committee on ministerial standing and discipline of the Central Conference, prior to further action by the church.

ARTICLE III

Officers and Boards

Section I Chairman

The Chairman of the Church Board shall be an ex-official member of the Trustee Board. The chairman shall preside at all business meetings and church board meetings. He shall confer with the pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings and shall utilize the counsel that the pastor may give by virtue of his training, experience and calling. The chairman shall be responsible for leadership of the church service in the absence of the pastor, or pastor's direction.

Section II Vice-Chairman

The Vice-chairman shall assume the duties of the chairman in the absence of the latter.

Section III Secretary

The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of the church board. He shall conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated to him. He shall also be responsible for the official seal and documents of the church, which shall be kept in the office of the church.

Section IV Assistant Secretary

The assistant secretary shall assume the duties of the secretary, in the absence of the latter.

Section V Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall receive, record and transmit to the church treasurer all funds contributed to the church, and shall present a written report to each regular church board meeting and congregational business meeting of the church. He shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section VI Assistant Financial Secretary

The assistant financial secretary shall assume the duties of financial secretary, in the absence of the latter.

Section VII Treasurer

The treasurer shall receive from the financial secretary all funds of the church, and accept the responsibility of the funds committed to him. He shall make disbursements as authorized by the church or the church Board of Trustees. The treasurer shall also present

a written report of the receipts and expenditures to each regular meeting of the church board and to each regular business meeting of the church. At the end of each year, both the records of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall be audited at the direction of the church board. He shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section VIII Assistant Treasurer

The assistant treasurer shall assume the duties of the treasurer in the absence of the latter.

Section IX Director of Christian Education

The director of christian education shall supervise the work of the Sunday School and the Youth and Adult Education program of the church. He shall serve as chairman of the Board of Christian Education and will, together with that Board, call all meetings of the Sunday School staff, be responsible for the selection and implementation of the Sunday School curriculum, and recruit and train the teachers and youth counselors. He shall also be responsible for the creation of the yearly Christian Education budget, which is to be presented to the Trustee Board for final approval and inclusion in the proposed comprehensive church budget for each year. He will be elected for a one year term of office.

Section X Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons and deaconesses shall be six or more in number and shall serve for five years. No deacon or deaconess shall be permitted to succeed himself or herself, but may be elected after the lapse of one year. The deacons and deaconesses, along with the pastor, shall supervise the spiritual work of the church and its benevolence. They shall assist the pastor in administering the communion service, and in their character should reflect the requirements stated in Acts 6:3 and in I Timothy 3:12, 13.

Section XI Trustees

The trustees shall be six or more in number and shall serve for five years. No trustee shall be permitted to succeed himself, but may be elected after the lapse of one year.

The trustees shall direct the financial needs of the church, exercise proper supervision over church properties, arrange for payment of salaries, count and transmit all collections to the financial secretary and submit an inventory of all church properties to the annual meeting of the church. The trustees are not permitted to make disposition of any church property, nor purchase any property for the church except as directed by the church, at a business meeting, with at the approval of the Central Conference and the Executive Secretary of Church Growth and Evangelism. Smaller repairs and other disbursements not exceeding one hundred dollars in cost may be decided by the Trustees.

Section XII The Board of Christian Education

The board of christian education will serve to effect and coordinate the educational ministry of the church. Their chairman shall be the director of christian education and together with him, they shall call all meetings of the Sunday School staff, be responsible for the selection and implementation of Sunday School curriculum, the recruitment and training of teachers and youth counselors and the creation of a yearly christian education budget to be presented to the trustee board for final approval and inclusion in the proposed comprehensive church budget for each year. The board of christian education shall consist of members of the christian education agencies, and their Secretary shall be elected by the Christian Education Board.

Section XIII Vacancies

In case of any vacancies among the officers or any members of the various boards, the church board shall appoint the person or persons to fill the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IV

Meetings

Section I Public Services

Public service shall be conducted regularly on Sunday and weekdays for worship, preaching, teaching the Word of God and prayer.

Section II Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held during the month of January, the exact time to be determined by the preceding regular business meeting.

Section III Business Meeting

Church business meeting shall be held each April, July and October. Special business meetings may be called by the chairman of the church, or a majority of the church board, or by request of any ten members of the church.

Section IV Church Board

The church board shall meet regularly in each month, during which there is no regular business meeting of the church.

Section V Organizations

Meeting and activities of the organizations of the church shall be planned and conducted regularly under the direction and supervision of the pastor and/or church board.

ARTICLE V

General Provisions

Section I Quorum

Ten percent or not less than ten members including two officers of the membership attending a business meeting properly called, shall constitute a quorum.

Section II Tenure

The chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, financial secretary, assistant financial secretary, treasurer and the assistant treasurer of the church shall be elected for a term of two years, and may succeed themselves for one term, after a lapse of a period of one year.

Section III Rules or Order

All business meetings of the church and of the boards and organizations of the church shall be conducted according to the latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order."

ARTICLE VI

Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws not in conflict with the constitution may be adopted at any regular business meeting or at a special business meeting called for that purpose by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting providing that such amendments have been presented in writing to the church board and at a preceding regular business meeting. When this church receives aid from the Central Conference and/or the denomination through subsidy or loans, such proposed amendments must also be approved by the Central Conference Board and the Executive Secretary of Church Growth and Evangelism.

ARTICLE VII

SCHOOL BOARD

Section I - School Board

To implement formal Christian education, a School Board existing of at least four members shall be elected by the Church. Nominations for the positions of the School Board shall be made by the Church Board. Positions of the School Board shall be chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer. The Chairman shall be elected by the Church to that position. The other positions shall be determined by; the School Board itself. The Pastor of the Church shall be a voting Ex-official Member of the School Board. The tenure of the aforementioned positions shall be four years each. Except in the first election, two positions shall be for two years so that the four year terms shall be staggered thereafter. The qualifications to serve as a member of the School Board will be membership in Oakdale Covenant Church, and a person not less than twenty five (25) years of age.

Section II - Responsibility of School Board

The School Board will be responsible for the annual budget and the hiring and managing of Director who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of either a Day Care Center or a Private School or both.

Section III - Funding

Funding for both the Day Care Center or Private School shall be separate and independent from each other, and both shall be separate and independent from the funding

and operation of Oakdale Covenant Church. The School Board shall maintain separate bank accounts and financial records for any and each program identified in Section II above. Both the Day Care Center and the Private School shall be self-supporting.

Section IV - Budget

The School Board shall prepare an annual budget for submission for initial approval by the Trustee Board of the Church. Once the Trustee Board approves the proposed budget, it will be submitted to the church for final approval at the annual business meeting.

Section V - Financial Reports

The School Board shall submit monthly financial reports to the Trustee Board showing revenue generated, all itemized expenses, and available funds.

Section VI - Chairman

The Chairman of the School Board shall be a member of the Church Board.
