

ADVOCATES FOR COVENANT CLERGY WOMEN

HISTORICAL STATEMENT

In 1976, at the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) Annual Meeting, the delegates voted to ordain women to ministry. A task force on Women in Pastoral Ministry was formed and since that time, gifted women have been called to serve as pastors of local congregations, executive ministries of denominational departments and clergy in a variety of diverse ministries.

The Association For Covenant Clergy Women (ACCW) was formed in November 1998 as an organized body of women and men, clergy and lay, who affirm and support collaborative efforts within the ECC to provide women clergy with opportunities to serve in their call. ACCW is committed to finding and implementing strategies that broaden the opportunities for women to use the gifts God has given them “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:12) in the ECC. In 2012, ACCW changed its name to Advocates For Covenant Clergy Women, recognizing the beneficial partnership of men and women working together in ministry.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be Advocates For Covenant Clergy Women (ACCW). It is a specialized ministry association of the Ministerium of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), in accordance with Article II, Section 2.1 of the bylaws of the Covenant Ministerium constitution. ACCW is a recognized association in the denomination, Article XV, Section 15.4 of the bylaws of the ECC constitution.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of ACCW shall be to provide an organized body to address the unique concerns of clergy women, ordained, commissioned, or licensed, and those women who are responding to a call in vocational ministry in the ECC. The purpose shall be accomplished through the following means:

- a) Advocacy:
To promote the calling of women ministers to leadership positions throughout the ECC by working with ECC leaders, conference superintendents, and local congregations.
- b) Fellowship:
To support women called and gifted by God for ministry by providing fellowship, encouragement, and mentoring to clergy women, and to women who are considering entering professional ministry in the ECC.
- c) Resources:
To provide resources for educating Covenanters at the denominational, conference, regional, and local levels regarding issues directly related to clergy women.
- d) Education:
To provide opportunities for continuing education for the membership.

ARTICLE III Partnership

Partnership in ACCW is granted annually to those who support the purposes of ACCW listed in Article II with their presence, participation, and payment of annual partnership donation.

Full partnership in ACCW is open to any ordained or licensed minister, commissioned staff minister, or consecrated missionary of the ECC.

Student partnership in ACCW is open to students preparing for ministry through enrollment in a degree program offered by an accredited theological institution.

Associate partnership in ACCW is open to any interested person who is not in the above categories.

ARTICLE IV Governance

The authority of the government of ACCW is vested in its partners acting through its annual meeting. The management, administration and oversight of the ACCW are delegated by the partners to the Board as delineated in the Bylaws. All elected leadership specified in the Bylaws shall be current partners of ACCW.

The Board shall consist of 9–15 voting partners: a president, vice president, a secretary, a financial officer, and a liaison from each of at least 6 of the 11 ECC conferences and the seminary. Board members must be partners of ACCW. Officers must full partners.

ARTICLE V Meetings

A denominational annual meeting shall be held during or adjacent to the ECC Midwinter Conference. The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to provide opportunity for fellowship, support, celebration, continuing education and the transaction of business. Election of Board members shall be held. The budget shall be submitted for action.

ACCW will also hold a denominational meeting during the ECC Annual Meeting in June. The purpose of this meeting will be fellowship, support, celebration, and the transaction of business if needed.

ACCW will hold a fellowship meeting during the Triennial event of Women Ministries of the ECC.

ACCW will facilitate gatherings at the conference level for conferences with an elected liaison. The purpose of these meetings is primarily fellowship. These shall include, but are not limited to, gatherings during conference annual meetings, conference pastor's retreats, and conference women ministries retreats.

ARTICLE VI Dissolution

Upon dissolution of ACCW, no partner shall be entitled to any distribution or division of ACCW's remaining money and property, or the proceeds thereof, and the Board shall, after paying or making provisions for payment of all debts and obligations of ACCW, distribute all remaining money and property to the Minister's Crisis Fund for of the ECC, to be distributed to women who make requests of the Fund.

ARTICLE VII

Office

The principle office of ACCW shall be at such a place within the United States of America or Canada as the Board shall from time to time determine. The location of this office (and pertinent contact information) shall be reported to the President of the Covenant Ministerium, the Executive Director of the Ordered Ministry, the Vice President of administration of the ECC, and the President of the ECC.

ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

Amendments in harmony with this constitution and not in conflict with ECC principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those partners present and voting in an annual meeting of ACCW, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

Partnership

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of partnership in the ACCW is to participate in organized and informal advocacy, fellowship, resourcing, and education around the issue of women in ministry.

Section 2. Standing. Partnership is granted annually upon payment of the partnership donation. Partnership is from annual meeting to annual meeting.

Section 3. Donations. The amount of the annual partnership donation shall be set by ACCW partners at its annual meeting. The Board has the discretion to waive the requirement of making a donation for good cause, and to grant a one-year partnership to anyone who meets other requirements.

Section 4. Voting. All classes of partners shall have the right to vote at business meetings for one year following their most recent donation.

ARTICLE II

Board

Section 1. Purpose. The Board shall be responsible for advancing the purposes of the ACCW through planned events and personal interactions.

Section 2. Composition. The Board shall be elected with not less than 9 nor more than 15 voting partners, four of whom are elected as officers. Every effort will be made to represent all 11 conferences in the ECC and the seminary. The Board may invite an ex officio representative from World Mission to serve on as liaison to women serving as missionaries. The Board may appoint non-voting advisors, and may remove the same.

Section 3. Qualification. Any partner of ACCW may be nominated and elected to the Board. Officers must be full partners.

Section 4. Election. Board members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by a majority of partners voting at an ACCW annual meeting.

Section 5. Term of Office. Board members shall be elected for a term of up to 3 years and shall not be elected for more than two consecutive terms. After at least one year off, a person may be eligible for subsequent service.

Section 6. Staggering of Elections. The terms of the officers shall be staggered to provide for continuity in leadership. The Liaisons shall be divided into three groups and elected to 3-year terms, so that their turnover is staggered as well.

Section 6. Vacancies and Removal. A Board member may resign. A Board member may be removed from office by a majority vote at an ACCW annual meeting. Vacancies created by resignation or removal may be filled by appointment through a majority vote of the Board. A Board member appointed to serve an unexpired term of less than half the remaining term shall not be precluded from being elected thereafter to two full consecutive terms.

Section 7. Notification of Meetings. All Board members shall receive a minimum 3-day advance notification of any conference call or meeting, including how to participate in the meeting.

Section 8. Quorum. A majority of Board members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9. Decisions. The Board shall strive for unanimity. Matters shall be determined by a majority vote of a Board quorum.

Section 10. Responsibilities of the Board.

The Board shall commit to attend ACCW annual meetings at Midwinter, a spring planning meeting, their conference ACCW gatherings, and participate in conference calls up to monthly. The Team shall strive to attend ACCW meetings at ECC annual meeting, ACCW meeting during Triennial, and any other planned ACCW events. Board members shall undertake to hear and respond to concerns of ACCW partners.

The Board includes the following positions, elected to these specific duties:

- 1. President.** The president shall be the principle executive officer of ACCW and shall preside at all denominational meetings and meetings of the Board. The president shall prepare the agenda for such meetings. The president shall annually convene a committee to prepare a budget for adoption by the Board and the ACCW partners. The President shall serve ex officio on the Biblical Gender Equality Commission of the ECC, and the Ministerium Executive Committee, according to the invitation of those Committee chairs.
- 2. Vice President.** The vice president shall assist the president, presiding at or attending meetings as needed. The vice president shall also oversee communication with and care for the liaisons.
- 3. Secretary.** The secretary shall keep and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of ACCW and of the Board, conduct and preserve all official correspondence as shall be delegated, and be responsible for the documents of ACCW. The secretary shall notify the Board of upcoming meetings, and the partners of upcoming denominational meetings. Electronic notification is acceptable.
- 4. Financial Officer.** The financial officer shall ensure proper policies, processes, reporting, and reviewing of all matters related to the finances of ACCW, including the submission of an annual financial report to the ACCW partners at its annual meeting. (The Financial Officer may perform the duties of either Treasurer or Financial Secretary as noted below, but not both.)
- 5. Liaisons.** Board members who are not officers are Liaisons, elected to represent a specific regional conference of the ECC or the students North Park Theological Seminary. Liaisons shall facilitate at least three conference gatherings of ACCW partners annually.

The Board will assign the following duties to specific Board members. The Financial Officer may fill one but not both of these functions.

1. Treasurer – to disburse funds for ACCW in accordance with standard accounting procedures for non-profit organizations.
2. Financial Secretary – to receive and record monies on behalf of ACCW

In addition, the Board may assign the following duties among its partners according to giftedness. If these gifts do not exist within the Board, they may be assigned to other ACCW partners in an advisory capacity:

- Newsletter Editor – producing ACCW’s written communication
- Webmaster – to maintain ACCW’s web page
- Photographer – to document ACCW events

ARTICLE III Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee.

- a. **Composition.** The nominating committee shall be chaired by a Board member designated by the Board. In consultation with the Board, the chair shall recruit at least two committee members who are full partners of ACCW.
- b. **Responsibilities.** The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the expiring Board officers and liaison positions.
- c. **Nominating procedure.** Any partner of appropriate character, giftedness, and call may be considered for any position. The nominating committee shall present to the annual meeting of ACCW a ballot in printed form with at least one candidate for each position to be filled. Additional nominations for any of the positions specified may be made from the floor, provided that consent has been given by the potential candidate(s). When there are more than two nominees for any position, and no candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall stand as candidates on the subsequent ballot.

Section 2. Special Committees. The Board may establish a committee to address a specific task. The committee shall terminate upon the completion of its task.

ARTICLE IV Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting shall be held during or adjacent to the ECC Midwinter Conference. At the annual meeting, a report shall be submitted by the Board, including a financial report. Election for Board positions shall be held. The budget shall be submitted for action.

Section 2. Other meetings. ACCW meets denominationally at the ECC Annual Meeting and during the Women Ministries’ Triennial event. Denomination-wide meetings of ACCW may be called by the president, the Board, or by not less than 20% of the partners. ACCW meets regionally during the conference annual meetings, conference pastor’s retreats, and conference women’s retreats. Regional fellowship meetings may be called by the Liaison Board member from that conference, or held by any gathering of partners.

Section 3. Notification of meeting. All meetings shall be announced by written communication to the partners at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. Electronic notification is acceptable.

Section 4. Conduct of meeting. The President or Vice President of the Board shall serve as Chair of any meeting of the partners.

Section 5. Voting. Each partner, and only partners, shall be entitled to cast one vote on any matter at hand at any denominational meeting of the partners. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. All votes shall be by written ballot, unless no objection is raised to taking a voice vote.

Section 6. Quorum. All partners in good standing who are present in a duly called business session of ACCW shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Rules of order. Business meetings shall be conducted according to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V Amendments

Amendments in harmony with these bylaws, this constitution and not in conflict with ECC principles and policies may be adopted by a majority vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of ACCW, providing the proposed amendment was made available in writing to the partners for perusal at least 30 days prior to the meeting.