



## Proposed Standing Rules of Order for the 136<sup>th</sup> Covenant Annual Meeting

*The Annual Meeting Agenda Committee recommends the adoption of the following proposed standing rules of order for the 136th Covenant Annual Meeting.*

### INTRODUCTION

The written documents that govern the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church are the Illinois Not For Profit Act, the Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Evangelical Covenant Church Constitution and Bylaws, the Rules for the Ordered Ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Covenant Pension Plan, and the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order (henceforth will be called Robert’s Rules for purposes of this document). Robert’s Rules provides that a convention or assembly of delegates such as the Covenant Annual Meeting may adopt its own standing rules to supplement the provisions of Robert’s Rules and of its own documents. The Standing Rules provide guidance for this 136th Annual Meeting, setting out how items are dealt with generally. The Standing Rules require a two-thirds majority for adoption or suspension.

That the business of deliberative assemblies may be conducted by electronic means is given sanction in Robert’s Rules most recent edition (the 12th ed., published in 2020, see Section 9, paragraphs 30-36). Procedures for establishing delegate credentials, obtaining the floor, discussion, and voting, have been devised with due diligence to the spirit and letter of the Evangelical Covenant Church’s governing documents, to Robert’s Rules, and to the tradition of the Covenant Annual Meeting as a participatory and deliberative assembly.

### STANDING RULES OF ORDER FOR THE 2022 COVENANT ANNUAL MEETING

#### **1. The Business Meeting Shall Be Conducted in Hybrid Format – both with Online and Onsite capabilities.**

- a. All delegates, whether attending online or onsite, are expected to have reliable means for participation and are credentialed according to the principle of “one delegate, one login IP

address.”

- b. All delegates, whether attending online or onsite, are responsible for their own personal technological connectivity and tools; for elements related to engaging with the voting platform, delegates may pursue assistance with the vendor platform’s tech support team; a delegate’s personal technology failure does not constitute a point of order, of information, or of privilege to be addressed to the whole meeting.
- c. Quorum is determined by the ratio of the number of delegates attending online who are logged in plus the number of onsite delegates who are logged in to the number of registered delegates.
- d. All individuals called upon to present to the delegates on an agenda item must appear in person or via a pre-recorded video.

## **2. Obtaining the Floor**

- a. Only those who have been credentialed as delegates, advisors, or resource persons can request the privilege to address the entire assembly, including on points of order, of information, and of personal privilege.

## **3. Voting**

- a. All voting, whether delegates are attending online or onsite, is conducted electronically for this meeting, and meets the requirements stipulated in Robert’s Rules for a secret ballot.
- b. All delegates will need a personal device (desktop, laptop, or mobile device) and an internet connection. For those attending onsite, an internet connection will be provided for you.
- c. Onsite or online delegates who are logged in but who do not vote on a question will be tallied as abstentions.

## **4. Debate**

- a. Recognizing that delegates will be engaging online and onsite, every effort will be made to ensure the experience is similar for a delegate regardless of the mode of participation. Within the limits of technology and/or delegate’s connectivity, our hope is that no preference or priority will be given to either category of delegate. Customarily, Annual Meetings have attempted to organize debate alternating between speeches in favor and against, following the mic sequence. Seeking to uphold that custom while recognizing the differences in delegate participation, we will ensure online delegates have similar opportunities to engage as to onsite participants.

## **5. Time Limits**

- a. Reports that contain no proposal for action by the meeting shall be limited to ten (10) minutes, including the question period, with the exception of the president's report, the treasurer's report, and items specified in the agenda to extend beyond the 10-minute time limit.
- b. Debate on any main motion, including its subsidiary motions, shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes, except as otherwise specified in these standing rules and the agenda. No amendment or other subsidiary motion to a main motion shall be allowed until debate on the main motion has ceased or ten (10) minutes have passed.
- c. No speech in debate may exceed three (3) minutes unless this period is extended by a majority vote at the request of the speaker.
- d. Time limits may be extended for a specific period by a two-thirds vote.
- e. Unless otherwise indicated on the schedule as a lunch or dinner break, any breaks called by the Moderator will be thirty (30) minutes long.

## **6. Action on Involuntary Removals**

Credentialed ministers have the right to object to his or her removal of credentials as recommended by the Board of Ordered Ministry and approved by the Covenant Ministerium as provided in Section 10.3.e. of the Rules of the Ordered Ministry. At this Annual Meeting, this matter may come before us for action. To address these matters in a fair and sensitive fashion, the Annual Meeting will proceed as follows:

- a. A credentialed minister objecting to his/her removal of credentials from the ordered ministry shall have up to ten (10) minutes to speak on why he or she should not have their credentials removed. The Board of the Ordered Ministry shall have up to ten (10) minutes to respond through its designated representatives.
- b. As these matters pertain to membership, it is appropriate for these matters to be taken up in Executive Session upon the appropriate motion to that effect. Only delegates and approved resource personnel may witness and participate in Executive Session.
- c. On each of these actions, debate that follows the presentations shall proceed according to these Standing Rules, Section 4) Debate, and Section 5) Time Limits b), c), d).

## **7. Submission of Motions in Writing**

All main motions and subsidiary motions shall be submitted electronically via the voting platform using the "Type a Question" feature and addressing the Annual Meeting secretary or via email

([governance@covchurch.org](mailto:governance@covchurch.org)) and addressing the Annual Meeting secretary.

#### **8. Items of Business Not on the Agenda**

The Bylaws provide in Section 7.8.a.ii that “Items of business that are not on the agenda may be submitted in writing by a delegate to the moderator. If the item submitted is in order, a majority vote of the delegates present and voting shall be required to place that item on the agenda.” It is further strongly requested that such items be submitted electronically by delegates to the moderator at [governance@covchurch.org](mailto:governance@covchurch.org) prior to the start of the 136th Covenant Annual Meeting.

#### **9. Consent Agenda**

Items on the Consent Agenda are routine, procedural, informational, self-explanatory non-controversial items that require action but generally do not require discussion or debate. Acting on these items moves the meeting along, allowing for more time for substantive issues.

- a. Items on the Consent Agenda may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of any two delegates.
- b. Items removed from the Consent Agenda shall be acted upon by the assembly at a place in the agenda determined by the moderator.
- c. If the Consent Agenda is not adopted as a single motion, then each of the items on the Consent Agenda shall be acted upon by the assembly as a separate motion at a place in the agenda determined by the moderator.

#### **10. Contested election procedures for President and Executive Ministers**

- a. *Nominations from the Floor.* A nomination from the floor shall be accepted only if the person nominated has agreed to have his or her name placed in nomination.
- b. Delegates desiring to make nominations for a second candidate shall electronically submit to the moderator via the voting platform using the “Type a Question” feature or via email ([governance@covchurch.org](mailto:governance@covchurch.org)), the nominator’s name, the church or entity the nominator represents, the name of the potential candidate with an affirmation that the potential candidate satisfies the particular requirements of the office as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws, and descriptive information regarding the potential candidate similar in scope and content to that provided to the Annual Meeting by a nominating board or committee.
- c. If a second candidate is nominated and immediately following the close of nominations, the moderator will provide a sixty (60) minute recess for a candidate forum during which each candidate will have five (5) minutes to make an opening statement. Thereafter for thirty (30) minutes, each candidate will respond to questions relating to their vision for the future

of our denomination. For the remaining twenty (20) minutes candidates will answer questions submitted electronically from delegates via the voting platform using the “Type a Question” feature or via email ([governance@covchurch.org](mailto:governance@covchurch.org)). Parliamentarian Eric Filkin will moderate the candidate forum.

- d. Following the candidate forum, a motion will be heard to add the second candidate to the ballot. If more than one candidate is nominated from the floor, delegates will determine by ballot which candidate will be added as the second candidate to the ballot. Once the ballot has been approved, delegates will vote.

### **11. Runoff Elections**

In the case of an election with three or more candidates, if no candidate receives a majority of votes after two rounds of voting, then beginning with the third round, the candidate with the lowest number of votes in that round will be eliminated. In the event of a tie among the lowest vote-getters, those tied will not be eliminated in that round. A candidate may withdraw at any point. Voting rounds will continue until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

### **12. Modification of Agenda Order**

The moderator shall have the discretion to revise the order of agenda items to accommodate scheduling needs.

#### **Annual Meeting Officers**

Moderator: Elizabeth Jensen

Vice Moderator: Rick Lindholtz

Secretary: Nilwona Nowlin

Parliamentarian: Eric Filkin

President: John Wenrich

Secretary of the Covenant: Rebecca Gonzalez