

CONSTITUTION OF THE ESTONIAN CHRISTIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Adopted at the annual conference in Tallinn, 28 March, 2015

1. General provisions

1.1 The Church

1.1.1 The Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church is an episcopally structured union of local churches, whose faith and practice is based on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and doctrinally connected to the three major creeds – the Apostolic Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed.

1.1.2. The Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church (ECPC) is the English name of Eesti Kristlik Nelipühi Kirik (EKNK).

1.1.3. The legal address of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church is Tallinn, Republic of Estonia.

1.1.4. The Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church is a legal entity.

1.2 Local Churches

1.2.1 The ECPC is constituted by local churches operating on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and the present Constitution; the local churches are independent legal entities and shall be named (Name) Congregation of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church.

1.2.2. A church of the ECPC is economically independent and owner of its own property.

1.2.3. A local church started by the ECPC or wishing to join the ECPC shall submit an application to the ECPC Board, who shall admit the congregation to the ECPC membership and, after it has been entered into the national registry of religious associations, shall present the local church to the ECPC Annual Conference for dedication.

2. The objectives of the ECPC and the local churches and the means of achieving them

2.1. Objectives:

2.1.1. To proclaim and practice Scriptural faith;

2.1.2. To promote the common work and cooperation of the local churches;

2.1.3. To serve the society through different interdependent areas like culture, media, social care, rehabilitation, education, and youth work.

2.2. Means to achieving the objectives:

2.2.1. Propagation of Christian/Scriptural principles and values;

- 2.2.2. Missionary work in Estonia and other countries;
- 2.2.3. Planting and assisting local churches;
- 2.2.4. Training ministers, church members, and voluntary workers;
- 2.2.5. Charity and social care, rehabilitation, youth work, etc.;
- 2.2.6. Publication and distribution of books and audio-visual materials;
- 2.2.7. Ecumenical activities;
- 2.2.8. Founding subsidiaries and participation in the founding of associations.

3. Forms of worship and church practices

3.1 The forms of worship in the ECPC are: worship service, conference, seminar, meeting, concert, etc.

3.2. Church practices of the ECPC are: believers' baptism, dedication to the church membership, the Lord's Supper, ordaining, betrothal, wedding, dedication of children, praying for the sick (usually by anointing with oil and laying on of hands), intercession, pastoral care, exorcism, confession, dedication service, and burial.

4. Members

4.1. Members of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church

4.1.1. The ECPC is comprised of local churches that have voluntarily joined together and have been registered according to the ECPC Constitution.

4.2. Church members

4.2.1. Members of the local churches shall be persons who are at least 15 years old or else have joined with the permission of their legal custodians and have experienced new birth, undergone baptism and wish to live by the Scriptural standards.

4.2.2. Becoming a church member or dismissal of membership is decided by the pastor of the local church. Records of membership are kept with the Church Board.

4.2.3. A church member can withdraw from membership by submitting an application to that effect to the pastor of the congregation.

4.2.4. The pastor can dismiss a member who will not live by the Scriptural standards and rules of the church and who ignores church discipline or is absent from the work of the church for more than three years.

4.2.5. Church members are not responsible for the liabilities of the church and the church is not responsible for the liabilities of its members. A member who leaves the church or is dismissed of membership cannot reclaim financial or material assets donated to the church.

4.2.6. A person can be member of only one local church at a time.

4.2.7. Rights of a church member

4.2.7.1. Every active member who is at least 18 years of age has the right to take part in the Annual Meeting of the local church and be elected to the Board;

4.2.7.2. Be informed of the activities of the church;

4.2.7.3. With the permission of an ECPC minister, to organize worship services and practices, except for the ordination;

4.2.7.4. Take part in the church practices;

4.2.8. Duties of a church member:

4.2.8.1. To live and act by the Scriptural standards and submit to the rules of the church;

4.2.8.2. Not to damage the reputation of the local church and the ECPC.

5. Ministers

5.1 The orders of sanctification and ordination of the ECPC are: deacon, pastor, and bishop.

5.2. The ECPC ordains ministers according to the qualification requirements of ministry and the rule of ordination.

5.3. The ministerial clothing shall be formal and appropriate to the church practice. A minister can use clothing that is in accordance with general clerical traditions.

6. Government of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church

6.1. Governing bodies of the ECPC shall be Annual Conference, Church Board, and Leader of the Church.

6.2. Annual Conference

6.2.1. The highest governing body of the ECPC is the Annual Conference.

6.2.2. The Annual Conference:

6.2.2.1. Shall define the main courses of the ECPC;

6.2.2.2. Shall discuss and approve the ECPC's principles related to doctrine and the ordination of ministers;

6.2.2.3. Shall adopt the ECPC Constitution and church rule stipulating the rule of ordaining ministers, rules of procedure of the Annual Conference and the

Church Board, and other rules that may be necessary to lay down for the whole Church;

6.2.2.4. Shall approve the Leader of the Church;

6.2.2.5. Shall approve the Church Board;

6.2.2.6. Shall elect the Auditor or members of the Audit Committee;

6.2.2.7. Shall approve Deaneries (praostkonnad);

6.2.2.8. Shall dedicate a local church admitted by the Church Board to the ECPC membership;

6.2.2.9. Shall approve joining other Christian organizations or leaving them;

6.2.2.10. Shall receive and approve reports of the preceding year submitted by officers and organs elected by the Annual Conference;

6.2.2.11. Shall dismiss a local church of the ECPC membership if the church has violated the ECPC Constitution and decisions of the Annual Conference and the Church Board;

6.2.2.12. Shall decide on the dissolution of the ECPC and the related procedures;

6.2.2.13. Shall discuss other matters submitted to the agenda of the Annual Conference.

6.2.3. Local churches shall appoint delegates to the Annual Conference according to their size: a church with up to 50 members shall appoint one (1) delegate, a church with 51 to 100 members shall appoint two (2) delegates; a church with more than 100 members shall appoint one (1) additional delegate for each hundred members or a fraction thereof (e. g. for 748 members, $2+6+1=9$ members).

6.2.4. Every minister ordained as bishop shall be a delegate at the Annual Conference.

6.2.5. Delegates appointed to the Annual Conference must be legally capable church members who are at least 18 years old, or pastors of local churches. The delegates shall represent their churches with the privileges of voice and vote.

6.2.6. The Leader of the Church shall convene a regular Annual Conference at least once a year, announcing the time, venue and agenda to all the local churches and bishops of the ECPC at least one month prior to the event.

6.2.7. In addition to the regular Annual Conference, a special meeting of the conference may be convened if requested by:

6.2.7.1. The Church Board,

6.2.7.2. At least one fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the Local Churches.

6.2.8. If the special meeting of the Annual Conference is not convened by the Church Board, the churches requesting the meeting shall submit an application with the suggested agenda to the Church Board, which is required to convene the special meeting with the suggested agenda. The special meeting of the conference must be convened with one month's notice no later than two months since the reception of the application.

6.2.9. The Annual Conference is able to make decisions if it has been convened according to the Constitution. In cases of deciding on the dissolution of the ECPC and making changes to the Constitution at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of all the appointed and ex-officio delegates is required.

6.2.10. Decisions of the Annual Conference are made in public voting with the absolute majority (more than 50 per cent of the voters must be for a decision to pass). The quorum is constituted by the number of delegates present. In secret ballot votes, the quorum is constituted by the number of ballots given out. Declaration of the results of a vote means a decision has been made.

6.2.10.1. Elections and ratifications of appointments shall take place with the candidate's consent and by secret ballot.

6.2.10.2. For the ratification of the appointment of the Leader of the Church, at least three fourths (¾) of the affirmative votes of the delegates present are required.

6.2.10.3. Dissolution of the ECPC shall be decided by the Annual Conference with at least two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the delegates by secret ballot.

6.2.10.4. Adoption of the Constitution shall be decided by at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the eligible votes of the annual conference by secret ballot.

6.2.11. The Leader of the Church shall invite to the Annual Conference, with the privilege of voice, those members of the Church Board and Audit Committee / the Auditor who are not bishops or appointed as delegates by the local churches. The Annual Conference may accord privileges of participation and voice to other persons.

6.3. Church Board

6.3.1. The Church Board

6.3.1.1. Shall direct the Church in between the Annual Conferences, acting on the decisions of the Annual Conference;

6.3.1.2. Shall adopt or ratify those documents regulating the operation of the Church whose adoption or ratification, according to this Constitution, is not within the competence of the Annual Conference;

6.3.1.3. Shall prepare and adopt the annual budget of the ECPC;

6.3.1.4. Shall ratify the ECPC's annual economic report;

6.3.1.5. Shall present for approval to the Annual Conference the Leader of the Church elected by the Church Board;

6.3.1.6. Shall appoint and recall members of the Ordination Committee, except for bishops.

6.3.2. The ex-officio members of the Church Board are the Leader of the Church, who is also Chairman of the Board, and the Deans (praostid). It is within the competence of the Chairman of the Board to convene and chair the meetings of the Board.

6.3.3. In addition to members mentioned in article 6.3.2. of this Constitution, the Leader of the Church may present to the Annual Conference for approval as members of the Church Board candidates who have been members of an ECPC church for at least one year. The total number of Board members is from three to twelve.

6.3.4. The term of office for the Board members nominated by the Leader of the Church and approved by the Church Board is three years. The Leader of the Church has a right to make a motion to the Annual Conference for the earlier recalling of a board member approved by the Annual Conference.

6.3.5. The Vice-Chairman of the Board, who shall be nominated by the Chairman of the Board and approved by the Board, shall fulfill the duties of the Chairman in the latter's absence.

6.3.6. The Church Board is able to make decisions if at least two thirds (2/3) of its members are present and voting.

6.3.7. The decisions of the Church Board are made by simple majority vote (more members must vote for a decision than against it to pass; in personal elections the candidate who gained more votes shall be elected), in case of the equal distribution of votes, the Leader of the Church has the casting vote. Personal elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.

6.3.8. The Leader of the Church may represent the ECPC in financial and economic transactions on his/her own, the other Board members have the same right of representation when two of them are together, or on their own, if there is a decision of the Board to that effect.

6.4. Leader of the Church

6.4.1. The Leader of the Church directs the ECPC in the periods between the Annual Conference and the meetings of the Church Board.

6.4.2. The Leader of the Church acts on the ECPC Constitution, decisions of the Church Board and other regulations.

6.4.3. The Leader of the Church decides on making contracts with the employees of the ECPC and other matters related to employment contracts.

6.4.4. The Leader of the Church is accountable to the Church Board in all the matters pertaining to his/her ministry.

6.4.5. The Leader of the Church represents the ECPC. In the absence of the Leader of the Church, he will be substituted for in his representative role by the Senior Dean or ministers appointed by the Leader of the Church, except in the meaning of article 6.3.8 of this Constitution.

6.4.6. The Leader of the Church shall be elected with the prior consent of the candidate by the Church Board with the two-thirds (2/3) majority vote and confirmed by the Annual Conference. Should the person elected as Leader of the Church not have bishop's ordination, the Church Board shall submit the application of ordination to the Ordination Committee.

6.5. Senior Dean

6.5.1 The Senior Dean shall represent the ECPC in the absence of the leader of the Church, except in the meaning of article 6.3.8. of this Constitution.

6.5.2. The Senior Dean is subordinated to the Leader of the Church.

6.5.3. The Senior Dean shall be elected by the Church Board from among the deans if the Leader of the Church considers it necessary. The candidate shall be nominated by the Leader of the Church.

6.6. Ordination Committee

6.6.1. The Ordination Committee:

6.6.1.1. Shall make decisions of ordination, based on which ordination services shall be conducted;

6.6.1.2. Shall suspend ordination by its decision;

6.6.1.3. Shall assess the eligibility of the candidates for ordination;

6.6.1.4. Shall organize record-keeping of the ordainees and the ordinations.

6.6.2. The Ordination Committee shall submit the qualification requirements and the order for the ordination of ministers to the Church Board who will submit these for the approval to the Annual Conference.

6.6.3. The Ordination Committee shall be comprised of three to five ministers, including all the ECPC ministers who have been ordained as bishops.

6.6.4. The Church Board shall appoint and recall members of the Ordination Committee, except for the bishops.

6.6.5. The operations of the Ordination Committee shall be directed by the Leader of the Church, in his absence by some other bishop, or in the absence of bishops, by the Senior Dean.

6.7. Auditing

6.7.1. The Auditor or Audit Committee shall present to the regular Annual Conference the report that contains the results of the auditing of the governing bodies and accounting of the ECPC.

6.7.2. For the auditing the Annual Conference shall elect an Auditor or an Audit Committee with up to three members for the period of three years.

6.7.3. The Auditor or members of the Audit Committee may not be members of the Church Board or accountants of the ECPC.

6.8. Subsidiary Organizations

6.8.1. If needed, the Church Board may call into being subsidiary organizations and associations, which may operate as separate legal entities. Directors of the subsidiary organizations and their board members shall be appointed and recalled by the decisions of the Church Board.

7. Deanery

7.1. Churches belonging to the ECPC shall constitute Deaneries. Each local church belongs to a Deanery.

7.2. The establishment and liquidation of Deaneries and the defining of their borders shall be approved by the Annual Conference following the proposal of the Church Board.

7.3. Deans

7.3.1. Each Deanery has a Dean who shall look after the pastors of the Deanery and shall act as their spiritual overseer.

7.3.2. The Dean of a Deanery shall represent the Church Board in his Deanery and the local churches of the Deanery in the Church Board.

7.3.3. At the suggestion of the Dean and in cooperation with the Church Board, the Leader of the Church shall appoint Senior Pastors, Pastors, and Deacons in the local church. The Dean shall dedicate the Pastor into office and will serve the Church during the ministry transitions and other situations where spiritual support is needed.

7.3.4. In cooperation with the Leader of the Church and the Church Board, the Dean or Senior Dean helps to relieve of office church ministers who will not act according to the teaching of the Bible, the ECPC Creed or the ECPC Constitution.

7.3.5. Deans shall be elected with the candidates' consent, in cooperation with the Senior Dean, by the local churches of the Deanery for the period of three years. Each

local church has one vote in the election of the Dean. All local churches shall be invited to take part in the election. The result of the election shall be ratified in writing by the Leader of the Church.

8. Local churches

8.1. The governing organs of the Local Churches are Annual Meeting, Board and Pastor.

8.2. The Annual Meeting of the Local Church

8.2.1. The supreme governing organ of the Local Churches is their Annual Meetings

8.2.2. The Annual Meeting:

8.2.2.1. Shall hear and approve the reports of the working year submitted by the persons and organs elected by the Annual Meeting;

8.2.2.2. At the suggestion of the Pastor, shall approve members of the Board and the order of representing the Local Church according to article 8.4.9. of the Constitution;

8.2.2.3. Shall elect the Auditor or the Audit Committee and shall establish the order of auditing;

8.2.2.4. Shall decide on the winding up of the activities of the Local Church;

8.2.2.5. Shall decide the churches' leaving the membership of the ECPC.

8.2.3. The Annual Meeting shall be convened by the Pastor at least once a year. As an exception, the Annual Meeting shall be convened by the local Church Board if requested by the Church Board or at least one third of the church members.

8.2.4. Church members shall be notified, in writing, of the time, place and agenda of the Annual Meeting at least fifteen (15) days before the event or at least at two (2) regular worship services orally.

8.2.5. The Annual Meeting is competent to make decisions if it has been convened in accordance with the Constitution. In case of deciding on the winding up of the activities of the church or its leaving the ECPC, at least three quarters (3/4) of the church's members must be present.

8.2.6. The decisions of the Annual Meeting shall be made in public voting by the absolute majority vote (more than fifty per cent of those present must vote for the decision for it to take effect). The quorum shall be constituted by the number of the church members present.

8.2.7. Elections into office and ratifications shall take place with the candidate's consent.

8.3. Pastors

8.3.1. Local Churches are led by Pastors. If there are more than one Pastor in a Local Church, the model of governing shall be senior pastor and pastors, or pastor and assistant pastors.

8.3.2. The Pastor is responsible for the Local Church's operation according to the Scriptural standards, the ECPC Creed, and the ECPC Constitution.

8.3.3. The Pastor shall represent the Local Church.

8.3.4. The pastor shall appoint delegates to the ECPC Annual Conference, consulting the Church Board if needed.

8.3.5. The Pastor shall inform the Local Church, the Board, and the Dean of the matters of pastoral ministry.

8.3.6. The Pastor shall be called into office with the candidate's consent by the local Church Board in cooperation with the Dean. The official powers of the Pastor shall begin from the moment of his inauguration by the laying on of hands by the Dean or his representative. The inauguration shall be documented by the Board.

8.3.7. A Pastor is someone who has been ordained as pastor or applies for such ordination. If the Pastor has not been ordained, the Dean will initiate the process of ordination by applying for the ordination.

8.3.8. A Pastor shall submit his voluntary application of resignation to the Church Board and the Dean, at least one month in advance, and shall cooperate in every way in order to hand over his ministry. Pastoral powers shall end with the decision of the Church Board acting on his application, and the Local Church shall be informed thereof.

8.3.9. In the absence of the Pastor, the Church Board in cooperation with the Dean shall make a written decision to appoint an acting pastor.

8.3.10. If necessary, the Pastor shall be supported in organizing the ministry of the Local Church by ordained Deacons who have been dedicated according to the ECPC Constitution and the rule of ordination.

8.4. Local Church Board:

8.4.1. Shall organize the management of the Local Church and be responsible for taking care of the legal and economic issues of the Local Church;

8.4.1.2. Shall draft and approve the annual budget of the Local Church and approve the report on the economic year of the Local Church;

8.4.1.3. In cooperation with the Dean shall organize the calling into office and relieving of office of pastors and other ministers.

8.4.2. The Pastor is the ex officio member of the Church Board.

8.4.3. The Pastor shall submit to the Annual Meeting for approval the candidates of the Board Members and the order of representing the church in accordance with article 8.4.9. of the Constitution. The members of the Board must be members of an ECPC church. The Board members' term of office shall be three years.

8.4.4. The Church Board shall consist of three to fifteen members. The Church Board shall elect its Chairman as soon as it has taken office. It is in the powers of the Chairman of the Board to convene and conduct the meetings of the Board.

8.4.5. The meetings of the Church Board shall take place at least twice a year.

8.4.6. The meeting of the Board is competent to make decisions if at least half of its members are present.

8.4.7. The decisions of the Board are made by simple majority vote (more members must vote for the decision than against it; and the candidate who scores most votes shall win), in the case of the equal distribution of votes, the Pastor shall have the casting vote.

8.4.8. The Church Board may call into existence subsidiary bodies and associations that may exist as separate legal entities. Heads of the subsidiaries, board members will be appointed and relieved of office by decisions of the Board.

8.4.9. In legal and economic transactions the Church can be represented by the Pastor and, at the Pastor's suggestion, by Board members either alone or together, according to the order of representing the Local Church, as adopted by the Annual Meeting of the Local Church. Members of the Board and exceptions in the order of representation shall be entered into the register of the religions associations according to the decision of the Annual Meeting.

8.5. Auditing

8.5.1. The Auditor or the Audit Committee shall submit to the regular Annual Meeting of the Local Church a report on the results of the audit of the economic and accounting activities of the Local Church.

8.5.2. For the task of auditing the Annual Meeting shall elect an Auditor or an Audit Committee with up to three members for the period of three years.

8.5.3. The Auditor or member of the Audit Committee may not at the same time be a member of the Church Board or the accountant.

9. Financial and economic activities

9.1. For the achievement of its constitutional objectives, the ECPC owns real estate and movables, which are divided into fixed assets and current capital and are represented in the balance sheet. The assets accumulate from donations by natural and legal persons, bequests, endowments (gifts), offerings taken at regular worship services and special events, special foundations and other income from both Estonia and abroad. Donations can be nonmonetary.

9.2. To achieve their constitutional objectives, the ECPC and its constituent churches are entitled by the decisions of the Board to:

9.2.1. To engage in economic activities;

9.2.2. To own, to sell, to buy, to expropriate, to donate, to give, to rent and to grant the free use of material assets in their balance sheets;

9.2.3. To award grants.

9.3. The management of assets owned by the ECPC and Local Churches shall be decided by the Board who is financially responsible for their financial and economic activities.

9.4. Local Churches are not financially responsible for the liabilities of the ECPC and the ECPC is not financially responsible for the liabilities of the Local Churches.

10. Dissolution

10.1. Winding up of the operation of the ECPC

10.1.1. Winding up of the operation of the ECPC shall be decided by the Annual Conference of the ECPC by the two-thirds (2/3) majority secret ballot vote.

10.1.2. The Annual Conference shall decide how the winding up shall be conducted and who shall be charged with what tasks.

10.1.3. In the case of the dissolution of the ECPC, the assets of the ECPC shall be used as prescribed by relevant laws.

10.2. Dissolution of Local Churches

10.2.1. For the winding up of the operations of a Local Church and for leaving the ECPC membership, at least two thirds of the members of the Local Church must be present at the Annual Meeting. The decision shall be made by two thirds majority secret ballot vote.

10.2.2. The Local Church who has left the ECPC membership shall return the assets that are in the ECPC balance, unless agreed otherwise in writing.

10.2.3. The Annual Meeting of the Local Church shall appoint the dissolution committee.

10.2.4. In the case of winding up the operation of a Local Church, its assets shall be transferred to the ECPC.

Ago Lilleorg

Leader of the Church