

**COVENANT BETWEEN**  
**EVERGREEN PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRIES, INC.**  
**AND**  
**THE SYNOD OF THE SUN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

I. THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT

This covenant defines the relationship of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc., to the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is a covenant made voluntarily by each party. It is an agreement for each to be accountable to the other in areas of mutual concern. Based on God's faithfulness to us, we are making a commitment to be faithful to God in service to others. It is a commitment for the future based upon our past and present ministry together.

II. PARTIES TO THE COVENANT

Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc., 2101 Hwy. 80, Haughton, Louisiana 71037, is a service agency of the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The parties relate to each other through the Synod's Connecting Committee and through the Synod's designated liaison.

A. The History of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc.

In May 1959, the Synod of Louisiana adopted as its child care program the establishment and operation of a vocational training school for young men with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and emotional problems. They appointed a commission, designated funds and approved a special offering. The Commission leased, and later purchased, the physical plant of Evergreen School, which had been closed by the Webster Parish School Board.

Evergreen School, subsequently called Evergreen Developmental Center, grew into an institution that served 240 individuals with disabilities in the early 1980's. In 1980, Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries began to direct its attention to the development of community homes serving six individuals in typical middle class neighborhoods. The next years saw an increase in the number of homes and apartments located in the community serving Evergreen's clients and a subsequent decline in the number of people served in institutional settings.

Finally, by mid-1994, the Evergreen Developmental Center was closed and there were no more clients served in institutional settings. This closure occurred because the ministry became convinced that its clients could be served better in the smaller, more homelike environments in the community. The closure was supported by the changes in State/Federal funding patterns. Evergreen had become 100% community-based, offering services in all four states of the Synod including Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. In 1998, Evergreen began

serving clients in Tennessee and in 2008, expanded services into Kentucky. In 2013, Evergreen began a social enterprise, HEAVENDROPT, in Florida.

Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries began in 1959 serving four men in northwest Louisiana. Today, Evergreen serves over 1,100 individuals in seven states - Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Florida. Much has changed in the last sixty years; however, Evergreen continues to fulfill its mission by the grace of God and the hard work of individuals served and their family members. Some of the key factors to Evergreen's success include its faith-based orientation, a dedicated Board of Directors and Trustees, committed staff and generous donors who support Evergreen's mission.

B. The Purpose of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc.

The mission of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc., is to serve, provide for and champion individuals with disabilities. Evergreen services and supports are designed to enable people to grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially in a manner which leads to full inclusion in society. Evergreen respects and promotes the rights and dignity of individuals while enhancing independence through responsibility. Evergreen is characterized by Christian concern and employee competence.

C. The History of the Synod of the Sun as it relates to Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc.

The Synod of the Sun is the governing body which is the successor to the Synod of Red River, which was the successor to the Synod of Louisiana. The latter established Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. in 1959.

D. The Purpose of the Synod of the Sun

The Synod of the Sun, a mid council of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., serves Christ by connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the bounds of its 11 presbyteries and their congregations in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The Synod maintains a covenantal relationship with its institutions and agencies.

E. Expansion Beyond The Synod of the Sun

Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries' efforts expanded beyond the bounds of the Synod of the Sun when it grew beyond its original four-state area. Evergreen was given permission by the Synod of the Sun to labor outside the bounds of the Synod, and likewise, permission from the Synod of Living Waters to labor within their bounds was granted when those states were added.

### III. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The affairs of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries are governed and managed by a Board of Directors composed of up to thirty-two (32) Directors approved by the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The thirty-two (32) Directors shall be elected in three year staggered terms as established by the Board of Directors. No elected member of the Board of Directors shall be eligible to serve on the Board for a period of one year after having served six (6) consecutive years, unless serving in an officer position. After fulfilling the officer position, the member will not be eligible to serve on the Board for a period of one year. The Synod will be asked to approve those nominees after their election by the Board and approval will not be withheld without good cause. All nominations will be made in accordance with the principles of representation and inclusiveness found in the BOOK OF ORDER (F-1.0403)

#### IV. COMMITMENTS

##### A. Evergreen's Commitment to Synod of the Sun

1. Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. is committed to initiating and maintaining programs to further its purpose as stated in its Mission Statement.
2. Evergreen is committed to developing new and innovative programs for ministry to those with functional disabilities or similar needs.
3. Evergreen is committed to providing opportunities for individuals from a variety of institutions to develop expertise in working with persons with functional disabilities. Evergreen will work with seminarians, pastors, youth groups, international students, and social work and psychology interns.
4. Evergreen is committed to providing spiritual enrichment to clients and staff. Evergreen will work with local churches, providing opportunities for them to be involved in the spiritual life of Evergreen's clients.
5. Evergreen commits itself to reporting annually to the Synod.

##### B. Synod's Commitment to Evergreen

1. The Synod of the Sun is committed to supporting Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. through prayer.
2. The Synod is committed to encourage financial support by consideration of fundraising campaigns throughout the Synod.
3. The Synod commits itself to interpreting Evergreen's work and financial needs to the membership of the congregations within its

bounds and encouraging responsible stewardship on its behalf.

4. The Synod is committed to educating the Church about developmental disabilities, encouraging congregations within its bounds to extend Christ's hospitality to people with disabilities, and to providing Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. the opportunity to do so.
5. The Synod is committed to recommend informed and concerned persons to the Board of Directors of Evergreen.
6. Synod will provide a liaison to Evergreen. Can we please define this (by bylaws, perhaps)?

#### V. REVIEW OF THIS COVENANT

This covenant has no end date. Rather, at the request of either party, a review may be initiated for any reason. A Covenant Review Team shall be composed of at least two persons nominated by the Board of Directors of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc., and at least two persons nominated by the Synod. The Board of Directors will appoint one of these persons as moderator. This team will review the current covenant and may recommend amendments. The Covenant Review Team will report to the Synod and to the Board of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc.

#### VI. APPROVAL

This covenant becomes effective when approved by the Board of Directors of Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. and by the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

PREPARED BY COVENANT REVIEW TEAM ON:

August 16, 2021

TEAM COMPOSED OF:

ON BEHALF OF THE SYNOD:

Rev. Ernest Higginbotham, Dallas, TX  
Rev. David Watson, Metairie, LA  
Valerie L. Young, Dallas, TX

ON BEHALF OF EVERGREEN:

Mr. Frank C. Davis, III, Dallas, TX  
Stephen Holland, Flower Mound, TX  
R. Lewis Smith, Shreveport, LA  
Dr. Sue Buchholtz, Lakeland, FL  
Yvone Kight, Shreveport, LA

<b>APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EVERGREEN PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRIES, INC.</b>
<b>Moderator</b>
<b>Date</b>

<b>APPROVED BY THE SYNOD OF THE SUN, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)</b>
<b>Moderator</b>
<b>Date</b>