

Constitution & Bylaws



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Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville
Constitution and Bylaws

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the members of The Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville, in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

Article I

Name

The name of this organization shall be “The Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville, Illinois.”

Article II

Authority and Affiliation

Authority: The congregation, at its Annual, Regular and Special Membership Meetings, is the legislative body of this organization. The minimum age for voting members is 18 years.

Affiliation: This church shall be affiliated with The Evangelical Free Church of America through its Great Lakes District Conference and shall send delegates to their conferences, support their Home and Overseas missions and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the Church itself may officially decide.

Article III

Purpose

The purpose of The Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville is to glorify God by bringing our lives into harmony with Him and with one another through worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and service. This purpose statement is based on the teaching of the Bible, which we recognize as the standard of truth.

Article IV

Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith of this organization shall be the same as that of the Great Lakes District Conference and The Evangelical Free Church of America which reads as follows:

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in

the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He

regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true Church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true Church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known

only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.

Article V

Membership

This Church will receive into active membership those who have a living faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and have been born again into a new and living hope through faith, living worthy of this high calling, being willing to adjust their lives to the precepts of the Bible.

Article VI

Leadership

An Elder Board will provide spiritual oversight and organizational governance for this church. The elders will be accountable to the congregation and will hold the Senior Pastor accountable for providing directional leadership. The church's various ministries will be led by hired staff or deacons. In accordance with Ephesians 4:11-16, the leadership of this

church will equip God's people for the work of ministry.

Article VII

Property Rights

Section 1. This Church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and as is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the Church.

Section 2. In case of division in the Church, the name and all property are retained by those adhering to the Constitution. If both factions adhere to the Constitution, the Great Lakes District Conference of The Evangelical Free Church of America will select a panel of not less than three ministers who shall review the dispute and make a decision binding to both factions. In case of dissolution of the Church organization, the property shall be assigned to the Great Lakes District Conference of The Evangelical Free Church of America to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The Church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the Church has not held an Annual Membership Meeting for three years or when less than six members remain.

Article VIII

Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and presented as a preliminary step at a duly called Membership Meeting at least 90 days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. At the succeeding Annual Membership Meeting they can be acted upon, but for adoption must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership present and voting.

Bylaws

Article I Members

Section 1. Membership Procedure

The procedure for becoming a member of The Evangelical Free Church of Libertyville will be as follows:

- 1) Persons desiring membership will express their intentions to the pastors or members of the Membership/Mobilization Team, who will provide them with a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws, a Church Covenant, and Membership Application.
- 2) The Membership/Mobilization Team will hear a personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, and certify that the applicant is willing to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws. A prospective member will affirm their willingness to maintain the unity of the body, and their support for the ministry through the exercise of spiritual gifts, and regular financial support.
- 3) The Membership/Mobilization Team will recommend the qualified applicant to the membership for approval.
- 4) The accepted applicant will be welcomed into membership in a public worship service.
- 5) Full and part-time pastoral and ministry staff and their spouses, by virtue of their position, will automatically be members of the Church.

Section 2. Changes in Membership Status

- 1) Any person may withdraw from membership by submitting a written request to the Elder Board.
- 2) Any member absent from all services for one year, showing no interest, and giving no response to a letter of inquiry will be removed from membership by the Membership/Mobilization Team upon notification to the Membership.

Section 3. Discipline

- 1) Members will endeavor to maintain the unity of the body in the bond of peace by submitting to one another in love and by respecting the authority of spiritual leadership.
- 2) No accusation will be taken up by the Church against any member of the Church except upon the complaint of at least two or three witnesses.
- 3) If a member of the Church is found to be living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith of this Church, he or she will be admonished in love by the Elder Board. If there is no repentance, exclusion from the Church will follow, according to Matthew 18:15-18; I Corinthians. 5; II Corinthians 2:5-11; and Galatians 6:1-2. The method of exclusion will be by a three-fourths vote of the Elder Board and a simple majority vote of the membership at a duly called Membership Meeting.
- 4) Restoration to the church may take place after one year if a spirit of contrition and complete repentance is manifested. Where others have been offended by the member under

discipline, a full and complete restitution must have been attempted. Conditions for restoration will be verified by the Elder Board which recommends reinstatement to the Membership.

Section 4. Membership Meetings

- 1) The Annual Membership Meeting will be held during the month of May for the purpose of electing elders, deacons, and Nominating Committee members, reporting to the members, and transaction of such business as may come before the meeting.
- 2) Other Regular Membership Meetings will be held during the months of October and January for the purpose of approving the Annual Budget, reporting to the members, and transaction of such business as may come before the meeting.
- 3) Special Membership Meetings may be called by the Elder Board or by one-fifth of the membership.
- 4) Minutes of all Membership Meetings will be kept.

Section 5. Notice of Meetings

Written notice stating place, date and time of Membership Meetings, and in the case of a Special Membership Meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, will be delivered not less than five nor more than forty days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail at the direction of the Elder Board or the persons calling the meeting, to each member entitled to vote at such a meeting.

Section 6. Voting

Each member of the Church 18 years or older will be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote at any duly called Membership Meeting. If a member is unable to attend a Membership Meeting he or she may request an absentee ballot. A list of the names and addresses of members will be available for inspection by any member at any meeting of the members, and at any other reasonable time.

Section 7. Proxies

At any Membership Meeting, a member may vote by proxy executed in writing by the member through the Chair. No proxy will be valid except as to the particular meeting, or any adjournments thereof from time to time, for which it was executed.

Section 8. Quorum

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any duly called Membership Meeting. If a quorum is present, the vote of the majority of the members in attendance, members represented by proxy, and absentee ballots will be the act of the members, unless the vote of a greater number is required by the Not for Profit Corporation Act, the Article of Incorporation, or these Bylaws.

Article II Leadership Structure

Section 1. Elder Board

1) The Elder Board will shepherd the flock by providing spiritual oversight and organizational governance (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2). The Elder Board will consist of the Senior Pastor and men from the church's membership who meet the biblical qualifications and are elected by the church's membership. The qualifications for elders are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elder Board members must accept the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

2) The Elder Board is accountable to the congregation. In the event of a serious, unresolved disagreement between the congregation and the Elder Board, the leadership of the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America will be asked to mediate the conflict. An official request to this district to provide mediation will be issued by a two-thirds majority vote of the members voting at any duly called Membership Meeting.

3) The Elder Board will protect the church and provide spiritual oversight in the manner prescribed by the Scriptures. This includes teaching the Scriptures, devoting themselves to prayer, guarding the church against false teaching, resolving conflict, helping the weak, praying for the sick, passing on the gospel of Jesus Christ to present and future generations, modeling godliness, and providing direction in moral and ethical dilemmas.

4) The Elder Board will provide organizational governance by establishing and defining Guiding Principles within which the Senior Pastor will operate. These Guiding Principles will

communicate values and set boundaries. The Elder Board will pray for, advise, monitor, empower and hold accountable the Senior Pastor as he leads the church. Furthermore, the Elder Board will ensure that the church is being well-led and well-managed in alignment with its mission.

5) The Elder Board shall appoint from within its members the Church Chairman and Church Secretary. The Chairman will preside at all Elder Board meetings and Membership Meetings. The Secretary will keep minutes of Elder Board meetings and Membership Meetings. He will also maintain all official documents and records of the church. He will work with the Membership/Mobilization Team to review and update the church membership list on a regular basis. The Elder Board may appoint additional officers for up to three-year terms as needed to fulfill the legal requirements for existence as a non-profit corporation.

Section 2. Senior Pastor

1) The Senior Pastor will shepherd the flock primarily by (1) preaching the Word of God and administering the ordinances of the church; (2) overseeing and supervising all staff; (3) casting, communicating and executing the vision of the church, and (4) overseeing the development of a new generation of leaders. The Senior Pastor will help the church stay true to its mission (see Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:28-29). He will keep the church's mission statement before the congregation and will, if necessary, revise the statement from time to time in order to communicate the unchanging mission in a fresh way.

2) The Senior Pastor will be a man who meets the qualifications for an elder listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He must

accept the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Elder Board. To preserve this accountability, he will not vote on the Guiding Principles or on decisions made by the Elder Board about him, including but not limited to matters such as compensation or removal. He will work within the Guiding Principles and will look to his fellow elders for counsel. The Senior Pastor will receive an annual review from the Elder Board based on prior criteria established and reviewed by both the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board.

3) The Senior Pastor may, at his discretion and with the approval of the Elder Board, establish a Senior Management Team to handle the day-to-day operations of the church. He is also responsible to oversee the hiring and supervision of an operations (office) staff.

Section 3. Pastoral and Ministry Staff

1) Pastoral and ministry staff may be hired to manage the ministries of the church, seeing that ministry is done properly and effectively. Staff members who meet the qualifications for elders will be designated as “pastoral staff.” They will function as elders in teaching and providing spiritual oversight, but they will not serve as members of the Elder Board. Staff members who meet the qualifications for deacons will be designated as “ministry staff.” Both pastoral and ministry staff members must accept the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

2) Pastoral and ministry staff are accountable to the Senior Pastor. They will report to him directly or to a supervisor he appoints. Each staff person will receive an annual review from

the Senior Pastor or the supervisor he appoints. This review will be based on prior criteria established and reviewed by all parties.

Section 4. Deacons

1) Deacons will serve the church by leading or managing specific areas of the church's ministry. Their ministry will allow the Elder Board to focus on spiritual oversight. While the deacons will not constitute a board or decision-making body, the Senior Pastor will ensure that they meet in various settings for encouragement, training, and alignment.

2) The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Elder Board, will determine which ministry areas will be led or managed by a Deacon.

3) Deacons will be men and women from the church's membership who meet the biblical qualifications and are elected by the church's membership. The qualifications for Deacons are listed in I Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons must accept the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

4) Deacons will be accountable to the Senior Pastor or a supervisor put in place by the Senior Pastor. This supervisor will typically be a member of the pastoral or ministry staff.

Section 5. Congregation

1) The role of the congregation is to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12).

2) The following actions may be taken with the approval of the

membership of this church as spelled out elsewhere in the church's constitution and bylaws:

- The calling of a Senior Pastor
- The calling of full-time pastoral and ministerial staff
- The election of elders, deacons, and the Nominating Committee
- The amendment of the church's constitution and bylaws
- The establishment of an annual budget
- The borrowing of funds in excess of 5% of the annual budget

Article III Leadership Appointments

Section 1. Elder Board

1) Elders shall be elected for three-year terms. Elders may serve up to two consecutive terms – six consecutive years – if so elected. After two consecutive terms – six consecutive years – an elder must take off a year before being eligible to serve again as an elder. To maintain continuity, the objective is that the terms of no more than one-third of the elders expire at the end of each year. To meet this objective, an elder's term may be extended an additional year upon approval of the membership.

2) An elder may be removed from office by: 1) his own decision communicated in writing to the Elder Board or 2) a unanimous decision of the other Elder Board members which is approved by a simple majority vote of the members at any duly called

Membership Meeting. Any decision to remove an elder must be based on his failure to meet the biblical qualifications or to discharge effectively his duties. Accusations against elders and their discipline must be handled according to I Timothy 5:19-21.

3) The size of the Elder Board will be determined by need and available, qualified men. However, the minimum number of elders shall be six, plus the Senior Pastor.

4) The Elder Board will hold monthly meetings to pray for the church, evaluate the church's spiritual condition in light of the Scriptures, review the church's progress in fulfilling her mission, and assess the Senior Pastor's performance and alignment with the Guiding Principles. Two-thirds of the elected elders must be present at an elder meeting to conduct official business. Minutes of all meetings will be kept, and the congregation will be informed of decisions as soon as appropriate. Requests by members to see minutes of any meeting will be granted as long as personal confidentiality standards are not violated and as long as the request does not interfere with the timing of planned communications from the Elder Board to the church.

Section 2. Senior Pastor

1) The Senior Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period by at least a two-thirds majority 'yes-no' vote of the members voting by secret ballot at a duly called Membership Meeting of the church. A Senior Pastor candidate will be presented to the congregation for consideration by a Senior Pastor Search Team. This nine member team will consist of members of the Elder Board and a minimum of three members from the congregation at large. The search team will present only one candidate to the congregation for consideration. If the

congregation does not call a particular candidate, then the search team will continue their search process and present another candidate.

2) If the Senior Pastor decides to resign from his position, he is required to communicate this decision to the Elder Board in writing at least 30 days prior to stepping down. Whether the Senior Pastor performs his duties in the interim time between submitting his resignation and actually stepping down shall be determined by the Elder Board.

3) The Senior Pastor may be removed upon recommendation of the Elder Board and at least a two-thirds majority “yes-no” vote of the members voting by secret ballot at a duly called Membership Meeting. Any decision to remove the Senior Pastor must be based on his failure to meet the biblical qualifications or to discharge effectively his duties. The church will pay salary and benefits for 30 days following the termination. The Elder Board may at their discretion extend salary and benefits beyond 30 days.

Section 3. Pastoral and Ministry Staff

1) Full-time pastoral and ministry staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board and at least a two-thirds majority “yes-no” vote of the members voting by secret ballot at any duly called Membership Meeting of the church.

2) Part-time pastoral and ministry staff may be called for an indefinite period of time by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board.

3) Pastoral and ministry staff who decide to resign are required to communicate their decision to the Senior Pastor in writing at least 30 days prior to stepping down. Whether the staff member performs his or her duties in the interim time between submitting a resignation and actually stepping down shall be determined by the Senior Pastor.

4) Full-time pastoral and ministry staff may be removed upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board and at least a two-thirds majority “yes-no” vote of the members voting by secret ballot at a duly called Membership Meeting. Part-time pastoral and ministry staff may be removed by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board. The church will pay salary and benefits for 30 days following termination. The Elder Board may at their discretion extend salary and benefits beyond 30 days.

Section 4. Deacons

1) Deacons shall be elected for three-year terms.

2) A Deacon may be removed from office by: 1) his or her own decision communicated in writing to the Elder Board; 2) a unanimous decision of the Elder Board which is approved by a simple majority vote of the members at a duly called Membership Meeting of the church. Any decision to remove a deacon must be based on his or her failure to meet the biblical qualifications or to discharge effectively his or her duties.

Section 5. Nominating Committee

1) Nominating Committee Purpose: The role of the Nominating

Committee is to present a slate of candidates for open Elder Board, Deacon, and Nominating Committee positions for election at the Annual Membership Meeting.

2) Nominating Committee Structure: The Nominating Committee shall consist of six individuals from the membership, one individual from the Elder Board, and the Senior Pastor as an ex-officio member. A Nominating Committee member must be of good reputation; must exemplify strict morality, self-control, and sound judgment; must be orderly; must be friendly to strangers; and must have a propensity to exhort others in doctrine and practical Christian living. They should not be a quarrelsome person, but a person with forbearing, a gentle, peaceable spirit. The Nominating Committee will meet regularly throughout the year to identify and evaluate individuals for the slate of candidates for Elder Board and Deacon positions. One of the six members of the Nominating Committee will be chosen by the Nominating Committee to serve as the chairperson.

3) Nominating Committee Election: The congregation will vote for Nominating Committee members at the Annual Membership Meeting. Nominating Committee members are elected for a single two-year term, and begin serving on June 1st. The Nominating Committee will announce all openings for the Nominating Committee at the October Membership Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall endeavor to present at least five names on the ballot to run for the three open positions on the Nominating Committee. The proposed names to fill the positions will be announced to the membership at least four Sundays prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. After the above announcement the membership may suggest further names to the Nominating Committee to be considered for

nomination to fill one of the three slots on the Nominating Committee. A person may be nominated from the floor if they meet the qualifications for the Nominating Committee and have agreed beforehand to serve if elected. The three Nominating Committee candidates with the largest number of votes shall fill the vacating Nominating Committee positions.

4) Nominating Committee Candidacy: Nominating Committee members may not be elected to consecutive terms. The Nominating Committee may not nominate any member of the Nominating Committee nor a Committee member's spouse to the Elder Board, except for a re-election to the Elder Board. Because of this restriction, it needs to be made clear to all Nominating Committee candidates they, or their spouse, will not be eligible to stand for election to an Elder Board position during the full tenure of their service on the Nominating Committee (two years).

5) Elder Board and Deacon Election: The Nominating Committee will announce all openings for the Elder Board and Deacon positions at the October Membership Meeting, and will have a committee meeting open to any interested member shortly thereafter to encourage input from the membership. The slate of candidates for the Elder Board and Deacon positions will be made available prior to and confirmed individually by the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting by secret ballot. An individual must receive at least a two-thirds confirmation vote of the votes cast to be elected to the Elder Board and Deacon positions. Names cannot be added to the Elder Board and Deacon position slate at the congregational meeting.

6) Elder Board and Deacon Term: The newly elected elder(s) and deacon(s) will begin serving upon election, with the official term beginning September 1, and lasting for three years.

Section 6. Vacancies

1) Elder Board vacancies may be filled through the Nominating Committee process and confirmed by the membership at any duly called Membership Meeting.

2) Deacon vacancies may be filled by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board until the next Annual Membership Meeting.

3) Nominating Committee vacancies may be filled by unanimous vote of all current Nominating Committee members until the next Annual Membership Meeting.

Article IV Finance

1) A church treasurer and financial secretary will be appointed by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Elder Board and the deacon in charge of finance. The church treasurer and financial secretary will be accountable to the deacon in charge of finance. Depending on the need, these roles may be either voluntary or paid staff positions. If the role is voluntary, then the appointment will be made for two years. If the role is a paid staff position, then the term of service will be indefinite.

2) The church treasurer will be responsible to disperse funds, pay bills, and maintain and report the expenditure records of the church. The treasurer will assure that the expenditures are done in accordance with the approved church budget. The

church treasurer must be a church member

3) The financial secretary will be responsible to oversee the receipt of, initial recording of, and deposit of contributions. The financial secretary must be a church member.

4) The deacon in charge of finance will ensure that 1) stewardship records are maintained 2) church monies are deposited and invested properly, and 3) accurate giving summaries are reported to the congregation annually.

5) An annual budget will be submitted to the membership for approval at the October Membership Meeting. This budget will be submitted by the deacon in charge of finance with the approval of the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board.

6) Any borrowing of funds in excess of 5% of the annual budget must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members voting at any duly called Membership Meeting.

Article V

Elected Year/Fiscal Year

The terms for elders and deacons will begin on September 1 and end on August 31. The fiscal year of the Church will begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Article VI

Amendments

These Bylaws shall be reviewed regularly by the Elder Board

and may be altered, amended, or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members at any duly called Membership Meeting.

May 31, 2009 Revision

