

BYLAWS OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF CORONA

Section 1 – Membership

No person shall be eligible for membership in this church unless that person has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior and has acknowledged agreement with the Statement of Faith, the Constitution, and its Bylaws. In addition, members must be at least 18 years of age.

A. Membership Process:

1. Application for membership shall be made to the Board of Elders (hereinafter “Board”) by submitting an application to the church office.
2. All applicants for membership shall be examined by a member of the Board designated for that purpose by said Board. The examination shall include the individual's verbal testimony regarding his or her salvation, whether the applicant agrees with the statement of faith contained within the church’s constitution and whether the applicant is willing to abide by the church’s constitution. An applicant shall not be granted membership unless he or she indicates his or her agreement with the statement of faith and willingness to abide by the church’s constitution.
3. Instruction on the statement of faith shall be a regular part of a new members' class available to all prospective members which they are required to attend. All applicants for membership shall be provided a copy of the church’s constitution and bylaws. Said copies may be provided electronically.
4. Any member of the Board objecting to the admission of an applicant for scriptural and/or constitutional reasons shall state the reason to that Board.
5. Any applicant not recommended for membership by the Board shall be notified within one week of the Board’s decision to decline such recommendation by two or more Board members as to the reason they are not being recommended for membership and shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Board to clarify his or her position.
6. The names of the individuals recommended for membership shall be announced in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which they are to be voted upon. Any member of the congregation objecting to the admission of an individual for scriptural and/or constitutional reasons is encouraged to present the evidence to the Board at the earliest possible time.
7. Individuals recommended for membership by the Board shall be admitted by majority vote of the members present at any regularly scheduled or specially called congregational meeting.

Commented [ET1]: Membership leads off here as Article 1 of the Bylaws; in the original Constitution, it was Article VII

The preamble here merely adds the age stipulation that was in Article XVI “Voting” in the original.

Commented [ET2]: An appropriate addition...to reflect improvement in technology.

Commented [ET3]: Minor improvements in word choice and grammar but no substantive changes in 1 through 7 above.

Section 1 – Membership *Continued*

B. Exhortation to Members

The members of this congregation are encouraged to live a life in submission to and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Members are additionally expected to support the church with their regular attendance, faithful financial contributions, and active involvement in ministry of the church according to their gifts and abilities. Members' privileges include voting rights.

Commented [ET4]: No substantive changes

C. Termination of Membership

1. Any member who absents himself from all church services for one year or more, without interruption, shall automatically cease to be a member of this church and shall be advised in writing of the termination of his or her membership.

Exceptions: Any member who is absent for one year or more with the written permission of the Board and any member who is absent due to illness, work requirements or temporary absence from the community shall be exempted from the termination of membership rule set forth above.

2. Any member desiring to withdraw from membership in order to become a member of another congregation shall receive, upon written request a letter stating his/her status as a member of this congregation.

Commented [ET5]: The process here is largely unchanged except that the removal of a member as described in C. 1 and 2 no longer requires a vote of the membership at a church meeting. The language here is self-executing.

D. Discipline, Dismissal and Restoration of Members

1. Conduct Expectations: All members of this church are expected to live in accordance with this church's statement of faith and lead a lifestyle that is exemplary of a Christ-follower as presented in scripture.
2. Violations of the Conduct Expectations: In the event that a member begins to live in a way that brings disrepute upon him/herself and the church, violates Biblical teachings, or teaches a doctrine contrary to the church's statement of faith, that member shall be advised of the alleged violation by members of the Board designated for that purpose. The restoration of the erring member shall be the single purpose, and love the motivating force, in this process.
3. Imposition of Discipline: If the erring member should choose to continue in his unrepentant condition, he or she may have his or her membership revoked by majority vote of the Board upon the testimony of two or more witnesses. The Board may also choose a lesser form of discipline. Prior to any revocation of membership, the member shall have the right to appear before the Board and present a defense.

Commented [ET6]: This section has been significantly revised. The original seemed to suggest a public meeting and a "recommendation" for removal by the board. It also included a complex notice and time to be "faced by his accusers". In this revision we maintain an opportunity for one to defend themselves before the board, but the decision is made by the Board, which retains discretion for a "lesser form of discipline".

E. Membership Records

An accurate record of the current and prior members of this church shall be kept.

Section 2 – Church Leadership and Boards

A. The Board of Elders

The Board of Elders (Board) is the leadership group authorized to plan, organize, lead, and direct the ministries of the Church as defined by these Bylaws and where said authority has not expressly been reserved to a vote of Church Members.

The Board shall consist of Pastors and Lay Elders:

1. Elders are elected by the Members and serve terms according to Section 4 (below).
2. The Lead Pastor is automatically a member of the Board of Elders and is called to his position according to Section 3, paragraph B of these Bylaws. The Lead Pastor serves an indeterminate term as defined by Section 3, paragraph D of these Bylaws or the end of his services according to the provisions in Section 3, paragraph F.
3. Other ministry staff employed by the Church and called to the position of Pastor may participate in a non-voting capacity in meetings of the Board as invited and determined by the Board at its discretion based on their role and experience.
4. The Board may call for a meeting of an “Executive Session” limited to Lay Elders to discuss personnel, compensation, or other issues. The calling of Executive Session and the invitation of the Lead Pastor to participate is at the discretion of the Chair or Vice-chair.

For usage and the purposes of these Bylaws the words “Elder” and “Pastor” refer to roles and responsibilities as defined below and are not synonymous. The Board of Elders may also be referred to as the Leadership Team.

B. Qualifications of Elders

All Elders of the Church are to be men of demonstrated faithfulness to the Lord, with experience and giftedness in the particular areas of service to which they devote their leadership roles. Their manner of living should not detract from their service but should demonstrate commitment to and harmony with God’s Word and this Church.

In addition to the qualifications above, all Elders shall meet the scriptural qualifications referenced below and agree to follow the terms of these Bylaws and Statement of Faith contained in Article II of the Constitution.

1. Scriptural requirements: Elders must meet the qualifications for Godly leaders set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:6-9.
2. Elders: In addition to the requirements in 1.A. (above) an Elder must be a member in good standing of the Church.

Commented [ET7]: This new Section 2 replaces old Article VIII “Leadership” and carries the bulk of all the changes, both in its content and in the grafting in of Articles from the original constitution that could easily be consolidated here. This creates a more readable and concise document where all relevant issues are covered in one section.

Section 2 and includes Board of Elders, (Old IX); Ancillary Employees, (old XI); and Ministry Areas (old XII, now Sec 2, E. 3.)

At the same time, the original contained content here that related to Pastors and is best removed and inserted there.

Commented [ET8]: This is new...please note the emphasis on allowing the board to determine participation.

Commented [ET9]: The old constitution did not recognize or address the issues of additional pastors and their relationship to the Board; it seemed to only envision one lead pastor. The paragraph is new and attempts to allow the Board to decide how to include pastors.

Commented [ET10]: This is new as the need for executive session is important but not defined in the original.

Commented [ET11]: This is new and attempts to define what was not clearly defined in the original.

Commented [ET12]: These qualifications are largely unchanged from the original.

Section 2 – Church Leadership and Boards *Continued*

C. Election of Elders

1. The Board shall consist of a minimum of five (5) elected Members and may be increased in size as determined by the Board following the nomination and election process defined in these Bylaws. Once increased, the size of the Board may be reduced as long as the minimum of five (5) is maintained.
2. Elders shall be nominated as Elder Candidates by the Nominating Committee for election by the Members.
3. The Nominating Committee shall consist of two (2) members from the existing Board and three (3) other Members who are elected annually. The Nominating Committee shall select their own chair. The Committee shall obtain the names of Members qualified to serve as elders and seek approval from those men to be considered before their identities are revealed publicly.
4. Upon nomination, Elder Candidates shall be submitted for approval to the Members for a single term of three (3) years at the next Member meeting. Elder Candidates who receive at least 67% of the vote of the Members present at that meeting shall be approved.

Commented [ET13]: This Section 2. C. is largely lifted from the original Article IX "Board of Elders" Sections 1, 2 and 4 and and then consolidated here.

Commented [ET14]: This section has been improved and clarified the process.

Commented [ET15]: Consistent with the original but clarified the term and % vote needed.

D. Terms of Service

1. Elder term of service shall be three (3) years, and pending affirmation by at least 67% of the Members, may be extended for another three (3) year term.
2. In the event an Elder is unable to complete his term of service, the Nominating Committee shall nominate an Elder to serve the balance of the term, if deemed necessary by the Board.
3. Individual Elders may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms or six (6) consecutive years, whichever is greater.
4. Former Elders are eligible to be reelected as Elders two (2) years after expiration of their last term of service. Election of former Elders shall be in accordance with paragraph C (above).
5. An Elder may be removed from office for conduct unbecoming or failure to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause. The Elder shall be advised and admonished regarding the alleged misconduct. The Board has the sole authority and discretion to request the resignation or removal of an Elder for conduct unbecoming.

Commented [ET16]: This is a new section that introduces "term limits" or as we prefer to say "Leadership Rotation", which was in the original constitution and taken out in the late 90's. It has broad support now to be re-introduced.

This gives us the opportunity to develop and grow new leaders on a regular basis, and allow elders who have completed their terms to serve in other ministries.

Commented [ET17]: This has been revised to remove a requirement from the original Article IX, Section 2, which place ultimate "ratification" of removing an elder on the "membership" with no clear definition of the % required or how this would be conducted.

It is now the sole discretion of the Elder Board.

Section 2 – Church Leadership and Boards *Continued*

E. Duties of Elders

1. Following the Annual Meeting of Members the Board will meet to organize itself. Each Elder should, but is not required to, oversee one or more ministry areas based on experience and giftedness. In addition, the Board shall designate the following officers:
 - a. The Chair of the Board, who works with the Lead Pastor as a co-worker in the ministry to plan, organize and lead meetings and work of the Board. The Chair is the spokesperson for the Board, and he or his designate shall preside over congregational meetings. He shall have power to call meetings of the Board, and to call special congregational meetings at the direction of the Board as defined in Section 5, paragraph C. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - b. Vice-chair of the Board, who works with and supports the Chair and fulfills the role of the Chair in his absence or when designated by the Chair.
 - c. Secretary of the Board, who is the legally appointed Secretary of the Corporation and is authorized to certify actions of the Board or the Members. The Secretary or their designate is responsible for recording the actions and decisions of the Board. The Secretary may execute documents and legal records on behalf of the Church as a Corporation as necessary.
 - d. Treasurer of the Church, who is the Board member responsible for overseeing the financial record-keeping, accounting, budget, cash balances and uses of the Church funds.
2. The Board shall review and report its decisions to the Members on a monthly basis.
3. Ministry Directors, Staff and Volunteer Ministry **Leaders**
 - a. The Board may employ ministry directors, staff leaders and other employees as defined in the Employee Policy Manual.
 - b. The Board may appoint or designate volunteer leaders as necessary to fulfill the leadership of the ministries of the church. The responsible primary leader of any ministry organization of the Church must be a Member in good standing.
 - c. Deacons and Deaconesses are servants or servant-leaders who organize, support, and perform various ministries of the church. The qualifications and character required for their roles are defined and described in I Timothy 3:8-13. The roles, terms and specific duties of Deacons and Deaconesses are varied and are not subject to election, affirmation, terms, or limitations.

Commented [ET18]: This is a significant re-write of the original Article VIII, Section 3. "Duties of Church Leaders". The duties of the "Pastor(s)" has been moved to a separate section below on pastors, see Section 3.

Duties of Elders here retains much of the content from the original Constitution but updates it to reflect offices, employees and volunteers as we actually conduct ourselves now.

Commented [ET19]: In the original we had references to a "Children's Ministry Coordinator" and "Music Coordinator" which we have not used in some time. Also, there was a "Deaconess Committee" and we have revised that to reflect our current understanding and allow the Board to organize servants (deacons and deaconesses) as seems fitting.

Commented [ET20]: This Section 3 takes material that had been found in the original Article VIII and Article X called "Pastoral Relations" and creates a consolidated new Section for "Pastors".

All issues that address pastors are now consolidated here.

Section 3 – PASTORS

A. Qualification of Pastors:

Pastors shall be men who are sympathetic and cooperative with the Evangelical Free Church of America, and who subscribe to this Constitution and the Statement of Faith herein. Pastors shall meet the qualifications for godly men set forth in 1 Timothy: 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Pastors shall be men of demonstrated faithfulness to the Lord, with experience and giftedness in their areas of service. Their manner of living should be such so as not detract from their service but demonstrate commitment to and harmony with God's Word and the Church.

B. Duties of Pastors:

Pastors shall fulfill their divine calling by preaching the Word of God, coordinating the public services, administering the ordinances of the New Testament, watching over the spiritual welfare of the fellowship, and building the Body of Christ (Constitution – Article III). Pastors shall be responsible for ensuring the Church has an effective counseling and visitation ministry.

The Lead Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all other boards, committees, and organizations of the Church. He shall work closely with the other pastors and the Board to establish and maintain a culture of preaching and worship that honors God and edifies the **body**.

Commented [ET21]: The material in A. and B. here have not been significantly changed from the original.

C. Calling a Pastor:

1. Pulpit Committee: When it becomes necessary to call a Pastor, a representative Pulpit Committee, consisting of four (4) Members of the Board and three (3) Members at large, shall be named by the Board and approved by the Members.

It shall be the duty of the Pulpit committee to take the necessary steps to secure a candidate. The Pulpit Committee shall investigate the merits of every candidate under consideration in regards to his agreement with the Statement of Faith, the Constitution, and these Bylaws, his personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining his fitness to be a Pastor.

When a suitable man has been found, the Pulpit Committee shall recommend him to the Board, who shall make its recommendation to the Members for their consideration. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Members at a time.

2. The proposed call of a pastor shall come before the Members at a special congregational meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays. A vote of 85% of the Members present shall be necessary to extend a call. The vote shall be by secret **ballot**.

Commented [ET22]: This section C. on "Calling a Pastor" has not been significantly revised EXCEPT for the removal of a requirement for licensure by the EFCA.

Commented [ET23]: No change from original.

D. Terms of Service: All Pastors shall serve an indeterminate **term**.

E. Pastoral Salaries: The terms of a Pastors' salaries and benefits shall be established by the Board and reviewed **annually**.

Commented [ET24]: See original Article X Sec 3; this has been shortened and simplified considerably, included references to attending conferences. The most significant change is removing a requirement that all pastoral salaries must be confirmed by a vote of the congregation every time they are changed. This is now at the discretion of the Elder Board.

Section 3 – Pastors *Continued*

F. Ministry Review: The Board shall meet annually with each Pastor to review the Pastor’s ministry during the previous year.

Commented [ET25]: No change from Original.

1. Ending of Pastorate by Resignation or Separation

- a. Resignation – The term of this office may be ended upon thirty (30) days notification in writing on the part of the Pastor. A Pastor shall first give his resignation to the Board before the Pastor’s notification is presented to the Members.
- b. Separation – Concerns regarding the ongoing effectiveness of a Pastor’s ministries for whatever reason are to be communicated in written form to the Board for resolution or action. If no resolution a Pastor may be terminated at the sole discretion of the Board.

Commented [ET26]: No significant changes to this section on voluntary resignation.

Commented [ET27]: This is a significant change; see original Article X, Section 5. Original required that concerns are brought first to the Board, and then brought to the congregation in a special business meeting or “whatever form it deems appropriate” for “consultation and resolution”.

Section 4 - Finances

The Church shall operate as a 501 (c)(3) corporation registered with the Internal Revenue Service, exempt from income tax and tax filing, and eligible to receive tax deductible contributions in accordance with Code Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Commented [ET28]: See original Article XIII Finances.

A. Income:

Commented [ET29]: This is new and was added for clarity of our status.

- 1. Necessary finances for conducting the church, its programs and missionary outreach, shall be obtained through voluntary tithes and offerings. Additional offerings or free-will gifts may be taken as deemed advisable by the Board.
- 2. Fundraising activities may be held at the discretion of a ministry director under the supervision of the Board.
- 3. Political fundraising events shall not be held or approved.
- 4. This corporation shall not afford financial gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its Members or those who attend.

Commented [ET30]: This Section is consistent with the original but cleaned up for clarity and allowing for “supervision” of fundraising by ministry directors instead of “pre-approval”.

B. Liability:

No member, officer, director, or other associates of this corporation shall be personally liable for any corporate obligations.

Commented [ET31]: No significant changes to Sections B, C and D.

C. Enrichment:

This corporation shall not allow Members or those who attend the Church to use the Church or its facilities to promote or engage in solicitation of private business activities.

D. Stock:

This corporation shall have no capital stock.

Section 4 – Finances *Continued*

E. Year end:

The Church shall operate on a fiscal year beginning August 1 and ending July 31. Financial statements shall be available to any regular attender upon request after the fiscal year end completion of closing accounting entries.

Commented [ET32]: Consolidated from original where this was under "meetings".

Commented [ET33]: This is new.

F. Budget:

A budget shall be prepared by the Board for the next fiscal year and presented for approval by majority vote of the members present at the annual year-end congregational meeting.

Commented [ET34]: An annual budget is referred to in the original but its approval is not clearly defined.

G. Expenditures:

1. Every conveyance, sale, or mortgage of church property, real or personal in excess of 5% of the church's annual general fund budget, must be ratified by the Membership.
2. Expenditures not provided for in the budget and greater than 5% of the church's annual general fund budget for one item in any one fiscal year shall be made only with the approval of the Membership. This approval will be obtained at a congregational meeting and requires a majority vote of the Members present.

Commented [ET35]: This section is largely unchanged.

H. Restricted and Designated Funds:

The Board may establish special funds to accept donations restricted by donors as to time and purpose.

Commented [ET36]: This Section H expands on "restricted" and "designated" funds to clarify and bring us in line with IRS requirements. This has been an area of uncertainty over the years.

1. **After due diligence to identify any individual donors has proven unsuccessful,** monies may be permanently transferred from a donor restricted fund to another fund only with 85% authorization of voting members present at a congregational meeting. Temporary transfers must be approved by the Board and reported to the congregation at the next business meeting explaining the reason for the transfer and plan to restore the donor restricted funds.
2. The Board may designate funds for a special purpose without member approval, but at the next membership meeting will explain the purpose of these designated funds to the Members.
3. The Board (or its designee) may approve use of funds for financial assistance to those in need. No membership approval is required for use of these restricted funds.

Commented [ET37]: This section is not new. We have always had a provision for the emergency transfer of funds from one fund to another with the approval vote of the membership.

Individual donors who because of the size and timing of their contribution can be identified should be contacted.

It should be noted that this clause has rarely been used and was only done in extreme financial circumstances.

Section 5 – Meetings

A. Public Services:

Regular public worship services shall be conducted every Sunday.

1. Other public services may be arranged by the Board.
2. The Board or its designee shall have the right to remove any person(s) causing a disruption or an unsafe situation from any meeting using all lawful means.

B. Christian Ordinances:

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed as part of public worship. The frequency of the observances shall be as deemed appropriate by the Board. All believers present shall be invited to participate.
2. Baptism shall be observed as part of public worship. The times and places shall be determined by the Board. Baptism shall be offered to those making a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

C. Congregational Meetings:

1. Congregational Meetings for the conducting of church business shall be scheduled separately from regular worship services. Congregational meetings shall be public. Voting on church matters shall be restricted to current Members.
2. The Chair of the Board or a designated Elder shall moderate at all Congregational Meetings.
3. Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be the parliamentary manual of the church for the conduct of meetings and voting except where it may be contrary to the Scripture or this Constitution.
4. A simple majority of Members present shall decide every issue except when otherwise stipulated by this Constitution and Bylaws.
5. Regular Congregational Meetings
 - a. A Congregational Meeting shall be scheduled prior to the end of the fiscal year (see Section 4 [Finances]) for the presentation and adoption of the annual budget and other matters as appropriate.
 - b. A second Congregational Meeting shall be scheduled as close to mid fiscal year as practicable for a budgetary update and other matters as appropriate.
6. Special Congregational Meetings:

Additional Congregational Meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Board. Such meetings must be announced at all Sunday morning public services for at least two

Commented [ET38]: See original Article XIV. This has been re-organized and the language improved, but with no significant procedural changes.

Commented [ET39]: This is new and was added in light of events at other churches and organizations.

Commented [ET40]: Added baptism as only the Lord's supper was mentioned in the original.

Commented [ET41]: Sections C and D are reformatted and the language improved for consistency. While no significant changes are made, it now reflects our current practices for meetings.

Commented [ET42]: This insertion provides for both the conduct of congregational meetings and voting, which includes provisions for proxy voting only for the election of officers, as described in Robert's Rules of Order

Sundays prior to the meeting and shall specify the purpose(s) for which the meeting is being called.

D. Non-Public Meetings:

1. The Board may delegate to various Boards, Committees, and Ministry groups (such as staff, worship, counseling, Pastoral Search, outreach, etc.) the right to conduct meetings in private for the purposes of confidentiality and open communication within the group.
2. The Lead Pastor and Chair of the Board (or his designate), as de facto members of all Boards and Committees, shall have the right to attend any meeting so delegated.
3. Others may be invited to attend at the invitation of the Leadership of the group or the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Elders as listed above.