

Constitution Update

Proposed Changes to the Northpoint Constitution

July 25, 2021

Our Original Constitution

- Written in 1979
- Reflected a smaller congregation
- Our church as changed over time
- The constitution has not
- An update now reflects who we are
- Holds firm to our core beliefs and values
- Allows processes and procedures for a larger church responding to emerging new ministries

New Approach to Structure

The original constitution's key "Articles" remain unchanged:

- Our name
- Statement of Faith
- Purpose
- Affiliation
- Property Rights
- Period of Duration
- Process for Amendments

One new Article VII is added:

- Establishes "Bylaws" for the regulation of church activities

New Approach to Structure

Constitution

CONSTITUTION OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF CORONA

ARTICLE I

Name

We, the members of the Evangelical Free Church of Corona, in order to set forth our stand on the Word of God and to facilitate the orderly transaction of business, do ordain and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE II

Statement of Faith

- A. We believe the Scriptures both Old and New Testament, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
- B. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
- D. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age, to convict men of sin, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
- E. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
- F. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.
- G. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. These are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.
- H. We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head.

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Foundation of what we believe

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- H. We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head.
- I. We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
- J. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the Head of the Church and that every local church has the right under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.
- K. We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service

Bylaws

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.

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How we are organized and conduct ourselves

The Bylaws

- **Original Article VII Membership** is now Section 1 *Membership*
- **Original Article VIII Leadership** is now Section 2 *Church Leadership and Boards* and includes:
 - Board of Elders, (Old IX)
 - Ancillary Employees, (old XI)
 - Ministry Areas (old XII)
- **Original Article X** is now Section 3 *Pastors*
- **Original Article XIII Finances** is now Section 4 *Finances*
- **Original Article XIV Meetings** is now Section 5 *Meetings*

The Bylaws

Original Article XV “Voting” and “Authority”?

- These are now embedded in the Sections of the Bylaws:
 - Sec. 1. A. 6 and 7: *Voting* in new members
 - Sec. 1. B. Members' privileges include *voting* rights.
 - Sec. 2. A. Authority and *voting*
 - Sec. 2. E. 2. final *authority* of the Members
 - Sec. 3. C. 2. voting for “pastors by secret ballot”
 - Sec. 4. F. “budget by *vote*”
 - Sec. 4. G. Expenditures majority *vote*
- For meetings and voting we follow “Robert’s Rules of Order”
 - Sec. 5. C. 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.*

Membership

- Membership materials may be distributed electronically
- Removing a member
 - Violating Biblical teaching
 - Teaching false doctrine
 - Living a life that brings disrepute on God's church
 - Our goal is love and restoration
 - May present a defense
 - Decision of the Elder Board for discipline or removal

Leadership and Boards

- Section 2 consolidates much material scattered in various Articles in the original constitution
- The original did not contemplate additional pastors or staff and define their participation on the Board
- The new bylaws allows the Board to determine the level of participation of pastors other than the Lead Pastor
- The new bylaws define the roles and responsibilities of elders and pastors

Leadership and Boards

- Qualifications for elders are established in the Bible and are unchanged here
- The nomination and election processes are largely unchanged, but the threshold is defined as 67% for elders
- To encourage the development of new leaders elders may only serve for two consecutive 3-year terms and then must rotate off the Board
- Removal of an elder for conduct unbecoming has been defined and is a decision of the Board

Leadership and Boards

- Duties of elders and pastors were mixed together in the original; they are now separated
- Duties of elders remain largely unchanged
- The original had job descriptions that are outdated and better placed in the employee manual
- Deacons and deaconesses may be organized as the church sees fit and not subject to election, terms or limitations

Pastors

- Material from the original constitution that was split between “Leadership” and “Pastoral Relations” has been consolidated here
- Pastors do not need to be licensed by the EFCA, as this limits our ministry candidates
- The process of ending of a pastor’s service is defined, and pastor cannot be removed by congregational vote

Finances

- This section has not been significantly changed from the original constitution
- Clarity and defining terms have been improved
- Ministry directors do not need pre-approval to conduct fund-raising

Meetings

- This section has been re-organized and consolidated, but with no significant procedural changes
- Both baptism and the Lord's supper are included as ordinances of the Church
- Questions regarding how our meetings are conducted and voting are to use Robert's Rules of Order

One More Issue: Amendments

ARTICLE XVII

Amendments

A. Rules

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any quarterly business meeting by a two-thirds majority of members present when said proposed amendments have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting at least three (3) months prior to the time of its adoption. These amendments must be mailed to all members at least two weeks before the meeting at which action will be taken. Voting shall be done by closed ballot.

B. Exceptions

Articles I, II, III, IV, V, VI and XVII-B cannot be repealed or revised except by 90 percent majority vote of the membership.

One More Issue: Amendments

- I. Name
- II. Statement of Faith
- III. Purpose
- IV. Affiliation
- V. Property Rights
- VI. Period of Duration
- VII. Process for Amendments

- A. Sections other than these: 66.7% members present
- B. Sections I. through VI and VII B: 90% of all members

The Process: Next Steps

1. There is a three-month period for discussion and review before any voting on the changes
2. In late October two questions will be presented:
 - 1) Should we adopt the new Bylaws? Y/N
 - A 66.67% approval of members present is required
 - 2) Should we change the threshold for Articles I – VI and VIII. B. (Amendments) from 90% to 66.67%? Y/N
 - A 90% approval of all members is required
3. Question and answer sessions will be held in October

What Members Will Receive

- A copy of the current constitution
- A copy of the new constitution (Articles I through VIII)
- A copy of the new bylaws (Sections 1 through 5)
- An annotated copy of the new bylaws with comments and references for changes on the side
- A copy of this presentation