

# BYLAWS OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF CORONA

## Section 1 – Membership

No person shall be eligible for membership in the Evangelical Free Church of Corona (dba Northpoint) (hereinafter “church”) unless that person has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior and has acknowledged agreement with its Constitution and these 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 Constitution, and whether the applicant is committed to abide by the Constitution and these Bylaws. An applicant shall not be granted membership unless he or she indicates his or her agreement with the Statement of Faith and commitment to abide by the Constitution and these Bylaws.
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 Constitution and Bylaws. These 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 the Board.
5. Any applicant not recommended for membership by the Board shall be notified by two or more members of the Board within one week of the Board's decision. The reason/reasons that they are not being recommended shall be identified and the applicant 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.

**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.

**C. Termination of Membership**

1. Any member who absents himself/herself from all church services, live-streaming or in-person for one year or more, without interruption, shall automatically cease to be a member of this church and shall be advised in writing by letter and/or email to the last known address, indicating an observation of the member's absence, and noting that they will be dropped from the membership in 30 days if no contact is made with an explanation.
2. Exceptions: Any member who is absent for one year or more with the written permission of the Board, or any member who is faced with extreme circumstances due to illness, work requirements or temporary absence from the community shall be exempted from the termination of membership rule set forth above.
3. Any member desiring to withdraw from membership in order to become a member of another congregation shall receive, upon written request, a letter affirming his/her status as a member of this congregation.

**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 himself/herself and the church, violates Biblical teachings (i.e., by persistent, serious or unrepentant sin), 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 in accordance with the pattern of discipline set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. 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 be notified in writing at least fifteen days prior to the Board meeting and have the right to appear before the Board and present a defense.

**Section 1 – Membership *Continued***

4. The Board may communicate the course of discipline or dismissal to members for the purpose of prayer and the hope of repentance and restoration at a time, place and manner consistent with Scripture and appropriate to the circumstances.

**E. Membership Records**

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

**Section 2 – Board of Elders****A. The Board of Elders**

The 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.

1. The Board shall consist of Pastors and Lay Elders. For usage and the purposes of these Bylaws the words “Elder” and “Pastor” refer to roles and responsibilities as identified in Sections 2 and 3 of these Bylaws and are not synonymous.
  - a. Elders are elected by the members of the church and serve terms according to paragraphs C and D of this Section.
  - b. A Pastor is called to his position and serves according to Section 3 of these Bylaws.
  - c. Elected Elders and called Pastors are full members of the Board and have equal voting rights in decisions before the Board, except as stipulated in Section 2.A.3, below.
2. 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.
  - a. Elected Elders should always make up a majority of the Board to the extent possible.
3. The Board may call for a meeting of an “Executive Session” limited to Lay Elders to discuss personnel, compensation, or other issues.
  - a. The calling of Executive Session and the invitation to any Pastor to participate is at the discretion of the Chair, Vice-chair, or a majority of the Board.

**Section 2 – Board of Elders Continued**

- b. The Lay Elders present in an Executive Session shall serve as a quorum for voting but voting thresholds defined in these Bylaws will remain based on the total number of Board members.

**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 described in the paragraph above, all Elders shall meet the scriptural qualifications referenced below and agree to follow the terms of these Bylaws and the 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. An Elder must be a member in good standing of the church.

**C. Election of Elders**

1. Elders shall be nominated as Elder candidates by the Nominating Committee for election by the members.
2. The Nominating Committee shall be a standing committee of the church and 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 and the Board before their identities are revealed publicly.
3. Upon nomination, Elder candidates shall be submitted for approval to the members for a single term of three (3) years at the next Congregational Meeting. Elder nominations shall be published at least two Sundays prior to the Congregational Meeting where the approval will occur. Elder candidates who receive at least 67% of the vote of the members present at that meeting shall be approved.

**D. Terms of Service**

1. The term of service for an Elder shall be three (3) years and it may be extended for another three (3) year term upon the approval of at least 67% of the members present at a Congregational Meeting.
2. In the event an Elder is unable to complete his term of service, the Nominating Committee shall nominate an Elder candidate to serve the balance of the term, if deemed necessary by the Board. The Elder candidate shall be affirmed to complete the term by at least 67% of the members present at a Congregational Meeting, and will be eligible to serve an additional three (3) year term if affirmed per D.1., above.



**Section 2 – Board of Elders Continued**

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 Section 2.C (above).
5. An Elder may be removed from office for conduct unbecoming an Elder as determined by the Board or failure to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause. Notice of such conduct may come from direct observation by a member of the Board, by communication from a church member, or by other sources. The Elder shall be advised and admonished regarding the alleged misconduct in accordance with the pattern of discipline set forth in I Timothy 5:19-20.
6. The Board has the sole authority and discretion to request the resignation or removal of an Elder for conduct unbecoming an Elder based on a two-thirds vote of the Board. The Board will advise the members of the removal or resignation of an Elder at a time, place and manner it determines to be consistent with Scripture and appropriate to the circumstances.

**E. Duties of Elders**

1. The primary duty of an Elder is to be a shepherd to the congregation, as characterized by speaking God's Word into their lives, actively participating in various ministries, being an example of Christ-likeness and demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit amongst those who attend the church.
2. Following the end of the fiscal year Congregational Meeting, 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. When this organization has been completed, the Board will make an organizational chart or table available to members for their information.
3. 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 pursuant to the Special Congregational Meetings requirements contained in Section 5. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - b. The 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. The 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.

**Section 2 – Board of Elders Continued**

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. The Treasurer of the Church, who is the Board member responsible for overseeing the financial record-keeping, annual preparations by a CPA, accounting, budget, cash balances and uses of the church funds. The actual activities and work of the Treasurer may be delegated in whole or part to staff, deacons, or a sub-committee.
4. The Board shall review and report its decisions to the members on a monthly basis.
  5. The Board shall provide for the leadership of all church ministries.
    - 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. The Board may appoint or designate Deacons and Deaconesses who 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.
    - d. The Board shall appoint a member as the church Parliamentarian to create and maintain files that contain all of the Constitution and Bylaws documentation, including previous editions and revision records. This member shall also act in an advisory role to the Board to ensure that actions taken are in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws.

**Section 3 – PASTORS****A. Qualification of Pastors:**

1. Pastors shall be men who are sympathetic and cooperative with the Evangelical Free Church of America, and who subscribe to the Constitution, the Statement of Faith therein, and these Bylaws. Pastors shall meet the qualifications for godly men set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
2. 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 so as not to detract from their service but demonstrate commitment to and harmony with God's Word and the Church.

**Section 3 – Pastors Continued****B. Duties of Pastors:**

1. 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.
2. 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.

**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.
  - a. 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 Constitution, the Statement of Faith therein, and these Bylaws, his personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining his fitness to be a Pastor.
  - b. 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.

**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.

**F. Ministry Review:**

The Board shall meet annually with each Pastor to review the Pastor's ministry during the

previous year.

### **Section 3 – Pastors Continued**

#### **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 by members to the Board for resolution or action. Prior to the termination of a Pastor the matter shall be brought before the members only in a Special Congregational Meeting. If no resolution of the matter is reached, a Pastor may be terminated at the sole discretion of the Board.

## **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.

### **A. Income:**

1. Necessary finances for conducting church business, 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.

### **B. Liability:**

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

### **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. 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.

**Section 4 – Finances Continued****E. 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 fiscal year-end Congregational Meeting.

**F. 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 \$25,000 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.

**G. Restricted and Designated Funds:**

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

1. If, after 90 days of effort to identify any individual donors has proven unsuccessful, monies may be permanently transferred from a donor restricted fund to another fund only with 85% approval of voting members present at a Congregational Meeting. Temporary transfers must be approved by the Board and reported to the congregation at the next Congregational 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 Congregational 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.

**Section 5 – Meetings****A. Public Services:**

1. Regular public worship services shall be conducted every Sunday.
2. Other public services (i.e. weddings, funerals, concerts, church ministry meetings, etc.) may be arranged by the Board or by ministry leaders authorized by the Board per Section 2.E.4 above.

3. 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.

### **Section 5 – Meetings Continued**

#### **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 public worship services. Congregational Meetings shall be public. Voting on church matters shall be restricted to current members. All church members are encouraged to attend all Congregational Meetings in order to hear, and have an opportunity to participate in, discussions of the matters before the members.
2. Regular Congregational Meetings
  - a. A Congregational Meeting shall be scheduled prior to the end of the fiscal year (see Section 4.D) 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.
3. Additional/Special Congregational Meetings:
  - a. Additional Congregational Meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Board. Such meetings must be announced at all Sunday morning public worship services for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting and specify the purpose(s) for which the meeting is being called.
  - b. A Special Congregational Meeting limited to members only may be called at the discretion of the Board.
4. The Chair of the Board or a designated Elder shall moderate at all Congregational Meetings.
5. 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 Scripture, the Constitution, or these Bylaws.
6. A simple majority of members present shall decide every issue except when otherwise stipulated by the Constitution and these Bylaws.

**Section 5 – Meetings Continued**

7. Absentee Voting.

- a. For good cause shown, and only for matters requiring a ballot vote, a member may be permitted to vote by absentee ballot. Such permission shall be granted at the discretion of the Board.
- b. The request for an absentee ballot shall be submitted at least 10 days before the vote will be taken.
- c. The completed absentee ballot must be submitted to the church office on or before the date the vote will be taken.
- d. All members granted permission to submit an absentee ballot shall be deemed present within the meaning of Section 5.C.6.

**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 shall have the right to attend any non-public meeting, except as otherwise provided for by these Bylaws.
3. The leadership of the group holding the non-public meeting, the Lead Pastor, and the Chair of the Board may invite others to attend the meeting, except as otherwise provided for by these Bylaws.