

Faith Evangelical Church

Constitution

02/11/2013

PREAMBLE

We the members of Faith Evangelical Church 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 Faith Evangelical Church

ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION

Authority: The congregation, at its annual and special business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this organization.

Affiliation: This Church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with its North Central District Association (Northern Plains District Association) and shall, whenever possible, send delegates to their conferences, support their Home and Foreign 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 - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

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 premillennial 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. Amen.

ARTICLE IV - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be to glorify God, through the preaching of the Word of God to the mutual edification, instruction and discipline of its members and other believers; the winning of unsaved to Christ; helping the young Christians to develop their spiritual life; instruct the children in the Word of God; the furtherance of the Gospel work on the mission field at home and abroad; and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable and benevolent work as the constitution and by-laws of this organization may determine.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

1. Admission to Membership

This church shall consider for membership individuals who with repentant hearts profess a sincere faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, whose lives exhibit the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, and who are in agreement with the purpose and doctrinal statement of this church.

2. Termination of Membership.

Church membership shall be terminated:

- a. Joining another church
- b. Upon death of the individual
- c. At the request of the individual
- d. If any person has been absent for twelve months and no communication has been made with the church. The church shall attempt to contact the individual, but if no contact is made, the individual shall be dismissed from membership at a business meeting.
- e. By the church as the final step of discipline.

3. Discipline

This church shall have the right and responsibility to carry out church discipline in accordance with its understanding of Scripture. The goal of discipline is repentance and restoration; therefore upon genuine repentance the individual shall be restored to membership.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be: The Pastor, Elders, Deacons/Deaconesses, Trustees and Treasurer.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

The Annual Business Meeting of the church shall be held during the 5th or 6th week of each year, unless otherwise decided by the church. At this meeting annual reports shall be received, officers and Board elected and other necessary business transacted. The fiscal year shall end on December 31st.

Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, by the vote of the church, or by any Board of the church. Notice of such special meetings shall be given either by announcement at the regular Sunday Services of the church at least two Sundays previous to the date of the meeting; or by written notice mailed in time to reach all resident members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any business session of the church by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, when said proposed amendments have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting, at least two months prior to the time of its adoption.

ARTICLE IX - PROVISION FOR BY-LAWS

A supplement to this constitution known as By-Laws shall embody the stated qualifications for Pastor and officers and their duties, conditions for membership, method by which members, pastor and officers are received and /or dismissed, parliamentary rules and regulations for the activities of the church.

ARTICLE X - PROPERTY

1. This church shall have the right to buy, receive by gift, own, sell, or otherwise dispose of all such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the state of North Dakota and is deemed necessary for the business of the church.

2. If division occurs in the church, the name and all property shall be retained by those adhering to the constitution. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, the property shall be transferred to the Northern Plains District Association of the Evangelical Free Church of America to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further gospel enterprises.

By-laws

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership requirements

1. Profess Jesus as Lord and Savior
2. Instruction in a membership class
3. Evidence of obedience to the Word
4. Agree with the statement of faith and abide with the constitution

B. Application

1. Applicants shall notify the Pastor or other church leadership of their desire to become a member.
2. The church leadership shall hear the applicant's profession of faith in Christ and acceptance of the churches constitution. They shall also interview the person on his/her Christian life, spiritual growth, and reasons for wanting to become a member.
3. The church leadership shall recommend to the congregation applicants whom they prayerfully determine meet the requirements for membership as stated in the constitution and by-laws.
4. The names of applicants shall be posted two weeks prior to the meeting in which their application is to be decided by a vote of the congregation. Any member of the congregation who has Biblical concerns that an applicant is not qualified for membership shall present that concern to the church leadership in writing immediately so that they may take appropriate action.
5. At a duly called business meeting, members shall hear the recommendation of the church leadership and the personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ from the applicant who shall be accepted into membership with an 80% positive vote.

C. Associate membership

1. Associate members are:
 - a. those who move away and plan to return.
 - b. those who are under 18 years of age.
 - c. those who are unable to participate in regular ministry.
2. Requirements of associate membership
 - a. Must be requested.
 - b. Must follow requirements of membership.
 - c. Do not have voting rights.
3. Upon reaching 18 may request full membership.

D. Removal from membership

A member may be removed from membership for any of the following:

- a. Joining another church
- b. Death
- c. Requesting removal of name
- d. Absence from church for a year and shows no interest in the church through attendance, support, or communications.
- e. Any former member who has withdrawn or has been discharged has no right in any business session of the church or in its property.
- f. Discipline

E. Discipline

1. Shall be in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.
 - a. The person shall be confronted by the party who was sinned against.
 - b. If reconciliation does not occur, then bring a third or fourth person to act as a mediator and witness.
 - c. If the conflict is not resolved, then the matter shall be brought before the Elders.
 - d. If the conflict is not resolved before the Elders, then it shall be brought before the congregation for a vote of removal.
2. The removal of membership and fellowship occurs when a member is:
 - a. living disobediently to the Word of God.
 - b. unrepentant after the counsel of the Elders according to Matthew 18: 15-17 and Galatians 6:1.
 - c. recommended by the Elders.
 - d. Approved by 75% vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting.

F. Covenant of membership

As a member of Faith Evangelical Church, I covenant before God and these believers:

- a. To walk in holiness and Christian love by the aid of the Holy Spirit; to encourage the spirituality of other Christians and to sustain the worship, evangelism, teaching, fellowship, and the doctrine of the Church. (I Peter 1:13-22; Galatians 5:16-26; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42)
- b. To cultivate my spiritual life with Christ; to endeavor to bring my family to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and to assist and promote the spiritual growth of my family. (John 15:1-10; I Peter 3:1-7; Colossians 3:18-21)
- c. To serve and love the fellow believers of this church; to help and aid them in

times of need or distress; to speak to them with courtesy and gentleness; to comfort and encourage them; to strive for peace and always be ready for reconciliation. (Galatians 5:13; 6:10; Ephesians 4:32)

d. To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the church as God prospers me. (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6,12)

e. To witness faithfully to the saving and keeping power of Jesus Christ through my words and life so that I may bring men, women, and children to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; 5:13-16; Acts 1:8)

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of Faith Evangelical Church are expected to:

1. Strive toward a personal goal of being a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 3:12)
2. Participate in the ministry activities that are designed to help contribute to Christian disciple making such as: worship, cell groups, Christian education, giving, prayer, evangelism, congregational meetings, and an area of gifted service. (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25)
3. Submit to the spiritual authority of the church leaders. (Hebrews 13:17)
4. Resolve conflicts within the church in a biblical manner. (Romans 12:18; Galatians 5:14,15)

ARTICLE III - PASTOR AND CHURCH OFFICERS

1. Pastor

a. Call:

A search committee shall be composed of at least one Elder and others so elected by the congregation. The search committee must seek candidacy with perspective Pastors and make recommendation to the Elder Board. The Elder Board must approve the candidate by unanimous vote. The candidate must be approved by the congregation by at least an 85% affirmative vote.

b. Responsibilities:

The Pastor and his wife, in harmony with the membership covenant, shall become members of the church and assume all duties and responsibilities of members and its leadership. The Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board. The Pastor shall devote himself to the congregation continually in prayer and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). He shall delegate authority, where necessary, to others that they may share in the Lord's service and ease his burden (Acts 6:1). He shall shepherd the flock by example, willingly, with humility (I Peter 5:2,3). The Pastor shall be encouraged to communicate difficult issues concerning baptism, marriage, divorce and any other issues

affecting the spiritual life of the congregation with the Elder Board and seek their counsel and spiritual insight (Proverbs 11:14).

c. Regulation:

A two month written notice of termination is required of both the Pastor and church unless changed by mutual consent.

d. Accountability:

1. The Pastor shall be directly responsible to the Elder Board.
2. Accusations against the Pastor shall not be considered unless submitted to the Elder Board in writing and supported by two or three witnesses in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20.
3. Should it be proven that the Pastor has erred in doctrine or conduct, he shall be charitably admonished by the Elder Board with the goal of restoration. If repentance does not occur, a resolution on his dismissal shall be brought before a congregational meeting. The Pastor shall be dismissed immediately following the approval of a dismissal resolution by 75% of the voting members in a closed ballot. Severance pay may be granted, not exceeding a period of one month following the dismissal.

2. Elders

a. Name

The New Testament uses the terms elder, pastor-teacher, overseers and bishop interchangeably. For the purpose of this Constitution these officers shall be called Elders (1 Peter 5:1-5; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:28; and Philippians 1:1). In keeping with their Biblical calling as overseers, the Elders shall make up the governing Board of the church. They shall provide overall direction for the Body by planning, authorizing implementation of the ministries, and evaluating the general effectiveness of the properties and ministries. The Board shall present a formalized budget to the Congregation for their approval at the annual meeting and shall provide the Congregation with an annual report of the ministries and the future plans/visions of the church. The Board shall choose one from the group who shall act as the Church Chairman for a period of one year. The Church Chairman shall preside over all meetings and present the agenda for discussion. Each year the Board shall choose one from the group who shall act as the Secretary and maintain minutes of the Elder Board and Congregational business meetings.

b. Responsibilities

1. To shepherd the flock.

The Elder Board shall purpose to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28), by being on guard for them, presenting God's Word, praying regularly for their needs and illnesses (James 5:14-15), being a godly example (1 Peter

5:3), and listening to the desires of their hearts for the local church.

2. To Maintain General Oversight of the Church Ministries (Titus 1:7), seeking to remain focused on our church's purpose and mission statement.
3. The Elder Board shall meet monthly or as deemed necessary.

c. Qualifications

An Elder shall meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-10, Titus 1:6-9 and 1Peter 5:1-5.

d. Selection

When a man is observed to be doing the work of an Elder, and seems to meet the qualifications listed above, he shall be considered for the office by the Elder Board. After interviewing him and examining his life, testimony and desire to serve, his name shall be brought before the Congregation for a vote to confirm God's calling for him to be an Elder in the church. He shall serve for a three year term. At the end of that term, the rest of the Elder Board shall meet with the man to evaluate his ministry and see about his desire to continue as an Elder. After this, if the Lord is leading to have him continue, the Congregation shall evaluate his ministry and have the opportunity to reaffirm him as an Elder.

e. Terms

There shall be a minimum of three Elders unless the elder board deems that there are not enough qualified candidates at which point they can request to proceed until the next annual congregational business meeting with less than the minimum given a two thirds majority vote by the members of the congregation. An Elder may request a sabbatical leave during his term of service upon the approval of the Elder Board.

3. Deacons/Deaconesses

1. Election

Deacons and Deaconesses shall be elected for a three year term at the annual congregational meeting. Deacons & Deaconesses shall be elected so that approximately one-third of the terms expire each year. There shall be a minimum of three Deacons or Deaconesses. All Deacons & Deaconesses shall meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3 and shall be church members. The chairman of the Diaconate Board shall be a Deacon, and will also serve as church vice-chairman.

2. Duties

In cooperation with the church, the Diaconate Board shall see that sufficient funds are raised and shall have general supervision over all financial matters of the church. The Board shall keep a current set of minutes and shall file a copy with the church office.

The Diaconate Board shall be responsible for the general well being of the congregation, oversee prayer ministries, minister to the physical needs of the body through coordination of group activities, social functions and other necessary fellowship activities. They shall be responsible for preparing and/or serving communion and administering the Benevolence fund. They shall be responsible for the ministry of ushering for church services, and coordinate use of church facilities.

In addition, the Deacons shall be responsible for the financial matters of the congregation and shall supervise all church property. They shall be responsible for upkeep and maintenance of all church buildings and property; shall purchase and maintain all church equipment and furnishings; shall assist with planning and construction of any new facilities; oversee any facility remodeling; purchase, oversee, and maintain all church vehicles; arrange for proper insurance coverage for all church property; oversee all financial policies of the church; encourage proper stewardship teaching and emphasis in the congregation; oversee the purchasing of needed supplies and take inventory annually of all church and other valuable papers of the church; develop and recommend the church's preliminary general fund budget to the Elder Board; oversee the approved general fund budget and monitor all income and expenditures of money; and oversee any unforeseen expenditures of money, not to exceed 3% of the general fund budget.

4. Trustees

The Diaconate Board shall serve as the trustees of the church corporation.

5. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected by the congregation and shall serve a two year term. The Treasurer shall be a member in good standing of the congregation. The Treasurer is responsible to evaluate the church's financial condition and bring a financial report as specified by the Elder or Diaconate Board. The treasurer is responsible to work with the appropriate church officers in the preparation of the annual budget and presentation at the annual congregational meeting. The church books shall be audited annually by someone other than the treasurer.

6. Removal from office of elected officers

Elected church officers may be removed from office for reasons related to doctrine or conduct only after the proper exercise of church discipline in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and/or 1 Timothy 5:19-20. A three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a congregational business meeting is required to dismiss an elected officer when the issue is before the church. No accusation shall be made by the congregation nor entertained by the Elders against elected officers except by written complaint of at least two witnesses.

7. Vacated Positions

Any elected officer position that is vacated shall be filled by an appointment by the Elder Board until the next annual congregational meeting.

ARTICLE IV THE CONGREGATION

Congregational responsibilities

- a. The congregation shall respect and heed the Pastor and other spiritual leaders as ones who must give to God an account for their actions. Prayer and encouragement should be made for the Pastor, Elders and Deacons or Deaconesses and their families that their work shall be in joy and not grief. (Hebrews 13:17,18)
- b. The congregation at a properly called business meeting shall prayerfully find the mind of Christ in regard to:
 1. Selection and review of all Elders and officers
 2. Calling of pastoral staff
 3. Removal of pastoral staff
 4. Approval of new members
 5. Discipline of members
 6. Purchase or sale of property
 7. New building programs
 8. Annual budget

ARTICLE V BUSINESS MEETINGS

Quorum

- a. Twenty-five percent of voting members shall constitute a quorum for congregational meetings.
- b. Fifty percent of members of the Elder or Diaconate Board shall constitute a quorum for Board meetings.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

The Elder Board may appoint committees as necessary to carry out various functions.

ARTICLE VII CHARTER OFFICERS

The members of Alexander Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Church of Underwood shall each elect an Elder and a Deacon/Deaconess to form a charter leadership Board for interim service until a formal business meeting can be held to elect officers. These charter officers shall also serve as trustees of the new corporation until new officers are elected at a formal business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII CHARTER MEMBERS

All members of Alexander Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Church of Underwood may become charter members upon written request if their request is received by February 28, 2005. Any other persons who are not currently members of Alexander Presbyterian Church and First Baptist Church of Underwood may become charter members upon written request if their request is received within 30 days of the first official congregational business meeting and by meeting the membership requirements in Article I of these by-laws.

ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Amendments to these by-laws may be made at any business session of the church by a two-thirds majority of votes cast, when said proposed amendments have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting, at least thirty days prior to the time of its adoption.