

CONSTITUTION

Article I. NAME

The name of this church shall be the Evangelical Free Church of the Conejo Valley.

Article II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

As members of this church, we believe in the following statement of faith:

- A. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the 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 of all Christian faith and life. (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21, Acts 20:32, Hebrews 4:12))
- B. In one God, Creator of all things infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:1; Matt. 3:16-17, Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; I Peter 1:2, John 10:30)
- C. 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 is now our High priest and Advocate. (Matt. 1:18-24; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5; Phil. 2:5-8; I John 2:1-2)
- D. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age, to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service. (John 16:7-15)
- E. That man was created by God in His image, but that man fell into sin and thereby incurred to himself and his posterity, not only physical death, but also spiritual death. As a result, all human beings are born “dead in trespasses and sins”, with a sin nature, and under the just condemnation of God. (Gen. 1:27; Ezek. 18:20, Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23, Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:1-3)
- F. That the perfect sinless life of Jesus Christ, His shed blood, and His resurrection provide the only basis for the justification and salvation for all who believe, and that only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Spirit and thus become the children of God. (John 1:12; John 3:16, Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24, II Cor. 5:21)
- G. That water baptism soon after receiving Christ as Savior and Lord is a testimony of death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and that the Lord’s Supper is a memorial service setting forth in sacred and symbolic manner, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; that all true believers, and only true believers, should share in it. (Matt. 28:29; 1 Cor. 11:23-30)
- H. That all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:12-13) of which Christ is the Head. (Eph.1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18)

- I. That the Church will be manifested by local assemblies as defined in the New Testament Scriptures. That believers are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies.(Hebrews 10:23-25)
- J. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs. (Eph. 5:23; Acts 6:1-5, Acts 15:22)
- K. In the personal and pre-millennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this Blessed Hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. (Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:28 – 3:3)
- L. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; Rev. 20)

Article III. PURPOSE

The purposes of this church are and shall be:

- A. To glorify the Lord and enjoy Him in worship.
- B. To maintain the unity of the Spirit of God in fellowship with one another.
- C. To encourage growth toward spiritual maturity and to equip the saints for Christian ministries.
- D. To be witnesses of Christ both here and in the Conejo Valley and, through missions, in the entire world
- E. To participate in ministries of compassion.
- F. The only guideline that we have for the accomplishment of these purposes is the Word of God. Therefore, all that we do to accomplish these purposes shall be in submission to God's Word.

Article IV. ADDITIONAL PURPOSE

As an additional purpose, this church may establish, operate, manage, maintain, administer, and conduct a formal educational program consisting of a Christian preschool, a Christian elementary school, a Christian high school, and any other ancillary Christian schools and related facilities and activities required for their implementation and operation. Any formal educational programs begun by the Evangelical Free Church of the Conejo Valley will admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletics and other programs.

Article V. AFFILIATION

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with the Southwest District Conference of said denomination. While being a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America, it shall be independent, self-governed, and its own authority under God.

Article VI. MEMBERSHIP

This church shall receive as members, applicants who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and are manifesting an obedient Christian life. All applicants must be in agreement with the church statement of faith, comply with all procedures, and meet all prerequisites for admission to membership.

Article VII. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be October 1-September 30. The Annual Meeting shall be held during the month of September.

Article VIII. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Congregation

Ultimate authority in the church shall reside in the members of the congregation in the sense that they shall annually approve Elders. Once this approval is given, the authority of the congregation will be considered delegated to the Elders except for:

- Changing the Constitution
- Dismissing or calling the Senior Pastor
- Acquisitions of or additions to church real property
- Approval of or changes to the annual budget
- Any other items the Elder Board may deem necessary to bring to the congregation

Section 2. Elder Board

For all practical purposes, the church shall be governed by a group of godly men called Elders. Authority for the day to day ministry matters shall reside in their hands. The specific responsibilities of this board will be specified in the by-laws.

Article IX. PROPERTY RIGHTS

The church shall have power to buy, own, and sell real property in its own name. If a division occurs in the church, the name and all the property shall be retained by those adhering to the Constitution. If the church ceases to function and its organization dissolved, the property shall automatically become the property of the Evangelical Free Church, Southwest District.

Article X. PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The principal office for the transaction of business of the church shall be located in the county of Ventura in the state of California.

Article XI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any business meeting by two-thirds of the votes cast, after said proposed amendments have been presented in written form to the Board of Elders for consideration and approval and after one business meeting of the congregation for discussion prior to the vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Articles II and XI cannot be repealed or revised.

BY-LAWS

Article I. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility for Membership

Any person who professes personal faith in Jesus Christ shall be eligible for membership in this local assembly.

Section 2. Admission to Membership

The following procedure shall be used to admit new members:

- 2.1 A membership class shall be offered for all those who are interested in membership.
- 2.2 Those who desire membership shall indicate their desire by attending a membership class.
- 2.3 At the membership class, the individual shall be given the application for membership, the Constitution and By-Laws. He shall read through these documents, fill out the application for membership, and turn it in to the Church Office.
- 2.4 Selected Elder Board members or those whom the Elder Board designates shall hear the applicant's personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and of his present relationship with Christ.
- 2.5 The Elder Board shall then decide on the admission of the applicant to membership.

Section 3. Discipline of Members

All members in this fellowship are expected to conduct their lives according to the standard set forth in the Scriptures. Such conduct involves moral purity (I Cor. 6:18-20; I Thess. 4:1-8), personal honesty (Eph. 4:25), and biblical fidelity (Jude 20, 21; II Tim. 3:14-17). Our lives are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as we walk in the light (I John 1:7), emulating the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:15-21; II Peter 1:2-8).

Should any member willfully depart from this scriptural standard and engaged in conduct which conflicts with biblical principles of holiness, the steps of discipline outlined in Matthew 18:16-17 shall be followed. If, after these steps of reproof are taken, there is no repentance, the person shall be removed from the membership and fellowship of this church in accordance with Article I, Section 4, of the By-Laws.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

- 4.1 **Absence.** Any member who indicates a lack of interest in the ministry of the church for a period of one year may have his membership terminated by the Board of Elders.
- 4.2 **Discipline.** Any member who is found guilty of conduct unbecoming a Christian and refuses to respond appropriately to discipline as outlined in Article I, Section 3, of the By-Laws shall have his membership terminated. Such termination shall be decided by the Board of Elders after due consideration and prayer. The reason for the termination shall be stated in a pastoral letter to the terminated member, sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. Should a member, during the discipline process, seek to withdraw their membership to avoid the process, the Elder Board shall proceed lovingly with the discipline process in accordance with scripture.
- 4.3 **Voluntary Termination.** Any member may voluntarily withdraw his membership by making written request to the Church Office, except in the case where a member is undergoing Church discipline

Section 5. Membership requirement for Positions of Responsibility

Church membership shall be required for all officers, teachers, or any other position of responsibility with the church or its organizations. The Elders may make temporary exceptions to fill positions within the area of Christian Education, provided that those individuals have signed the statement of faith and have agreed to submit to the authority of the Board of Elders.

Section 6. Membership Record

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for maintaining a membership record containing the name and address of each member, date of membership, and date of termination of membership, if applicable.

Article II. BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held in September. Time and place shall be determined by the Board of Elders, and notice shall be given according to Article II, Section 4 hereunder.

Section 2. Other Regular Meetings

During the year, the Board of Elders may call for a church forum meeting, other than the annual business meeting, where members and interested individuals may discuss goals and plans for the church.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

Special Business Meetings may be called by action of the Board of Elders.

Section 4. Notice of Business Meetings

Notice of all business meetings shall be by announcement in regularly scheduled services on two consecutive weekends and by written consent.

Section 5. Business Meeting Protocol

All matters in regular and special business meetings shall be decided by two-thirds vote, unless otherwise specified herein. Election of officers, amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, and the calling of a Senior Pastor shall be decided by secret ballot. When requested by a voting member, any other issues shall also be decided by secret ballot.

Section 6. Quorums

A quorum at any church business meeting shall consist of 40% of the voting membership. In the event that a quorum is not present, those members present shall discuss the issues that were to be voted on and a consensus taken. This consensus shall be forwarded to the Board of Elders as a recommendation. The Board of Elders shall then make the final decision on those matters.

Section 7. Voting Rights

Only those members 18 years of age or older shall be eligible to vote.

Article III. THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1. Qualifications

The Elders shall be mature, godly men who manifest the qualifications stipulated by the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). All Elders shall be members of the Evangelical Free Church of the Conejo Valley.

Section 2. Selection

Actually, it is the Holy Spirit who must select men for leadership. Only He knows the hearts and motives of men. His choices, however, must be expressed through human agency.

The following process will be used:

Selection will be made solely on the basis of scriptural qualifications. Prior to the annual meeting, the Board of Elders will ask the members of the congregation to contact them if the member wants to be considered for the Board of Elders. Then the Board will prayerfully evaluate and screen these men according to the qualifications of an Elder. They will then recommend potential Elders to the congregation for approval. Each Elder, both current and proposed, will be voted on by secret ballot as specified in Article II, section 7. In order to be approved, each Elder candidate must receive at least two-thirds of the votes cast. If the Board of Elders feels that new or additional Elders are needed, it may call for a special election. The same process will be used with the exception that current Elders shall not be re-approved during a special election.

Section 3. Number of Elders

The number of men on the Board of Elders shall be determined by the Board of Elders annually based on the number of qualified men available and the need of the church.

Section 4. Term of Service

Each Elder must be approved by the congregation on an annual basis, but there shall be no limit to the number of years an Elder may serve, if he serves well and does not disqualify himself.

Section 5. Evaluation and Discipline

Each year, the Board of Elders shall evaluate itself and its members. The Board of Elders shall also be a self-disciplining board according to Matthew 18:15-18; Thessalonians 3:14-15; I Timothy 5:19-20. Any decision regarding the discipline of an Elder shall be by a unanimous decision of the remaining Elders.

Section 6. Function

The Elders have the responsibility of the spiritual oversight of the congregation. This involves feeding the flock of God, refutation of error, and administration of discipline. They shall oversee the entire ministry of the church (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2-3). This involves assessing the needs of the body and planning to meet those needs.

Section 7. Meetings

The Elders shall meet as often as is necessary to adequately govern the church. They shall meet with the church body as often as necessary to communicate and interact with the body.

Section 8. Accountability

The Elders are directly accountable to the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, for all their actions (Hebrews 13:17). They are also accountable to the congregation. Individual Elders are accountable to the Board of Elders.

Section 9. Organization

The Board of Elders shall be self-organizing. That is, the various functions which are the responsibility of the Board of Elders shall be parceled out among the Board Members on an annual basis. A Chairman of the Board of Elders, other than the Pastor shall be selected each year by the Board of Elders. The Chairman shall call meetings and preside over both Elder Board Meetings and Congregational meetings.

Section 10. Decision-Making Process

The Elders shall approach decision in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit. They shall make decisions on the basis of unanimity of spirit. If there is initial disagreement on an issue and subsequent discussion does not resolve the disagreement, the Elders shall postpone the decision, study more, and pray until they come to full agreement. Such agreement will be determined either by open or closed ballot, at the discretion of the chairman.

Article IV. OFFICERS

The three officers of the church shall be:

- The Chairman of the Board of Elders (also church moderator)
- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer

Each officer shall be in submission to the authority of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may, from time to time, establish additional offices when necessary to aid in the accomplishment of the goals and purposes of the church.

Section 1. Chairman of the Board of Elders

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be annually elected by the Board of Elders. In addition to presiding at all meetings of the Board of Elders, he shall also function as Church Moderator at all Business meetings, special meetings, and Church Forums as provided for herein.

Section 2. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be appointed annually by the Board of Elders. The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for the counting, processing, and deposit of all funds received; and for the keeping of a confidential giving record for each member. As soon as possible after the end of the calendar year, the Financial Secretary shall send a record of annual giving to each member.

Section 3. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Board of Elders. The duties of the Treasurer shall be to make all disbursements according to the provisions of the annual budget and to submit financial statements to the Board of Elders.

Article V. THE SENIOR PASTOR

The Senior Pastor shall be a man of true Christian experience and established character. He shall qualify for his office according to the standards of I Timothy 3:2-7. He shall become a member of the church and be in full accord with its statement of faith. He shall be a member of the Board of Elders and, by virtue of his office, shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

The election of a Senior Pastor may take place at any regular or special business meeting. A Senior Pastor must receive two-thirds of the votes cast at such meeting and shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

No accusation shall be brought against the Senior Pastor except on the basis of at least two witnesses (I Timothy 5:19-21). The matter shall then be taken to the Board of Elders for investigation and resolution.

If the Senior Pastor desires to resign or the Congregation desires his termination, one month's notice shall be given in writing. The termination of the Senior Pastor's ministry shall be decided by two-thirds of the votes cast by members present at a regular or special business meeting. In the event that the Congregation desires the Senior Pastor's termination, normal compensation shall be continued for two months following his termination, unless waived by the Senior Pastor's acceptance of other employment.

Article VI. PULPIT COMMITTEE

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders shall immediately appoint a Pulpit Committee consisting of three Elders and two members at large. The Committee shall interview and then make recommendation to the Board of Elders who shall then make recommendation to the Congregation.

Article VII. AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Amendments to the By-Laws may be made at any regular business meetings by two thirds of the votes cast, after said proposed amendments have been presented in written form to the Board of Elders for consideration and approval and after one business meeting of the congregation for discussion prior to the vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot.