

**(Church Name)**  
Affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America  
In (City, State)

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS**

A. Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who believes the Bible is the holy, infallible, and inspired Word of God, and whose character, conduct and reputation is in accord with their confession, who subscribes to the above confession of faith, who accepts the Constitution of this organization, and who is willing to support the church in attendance, prayers, tithes, and ministry service may become a member of this church.

**SECTION 2. ADMISSION**

- A. All inquiries for membership shall be made to a member of the Leadership Community.
- B. A person seeking church membership must faithfully attend church worship services for at least (3) three months.
- C. Each applicant for membership shall complete (Membership Class name). However, instruction may be waived in the event of a transferal from another Evangelical Free church.
- D. The Leadership Community shall review all applications and interview each applicant.
- E. Upon approval by the Leadership Community, the applicant can be received and welcomed into the membership during a regular Sunday worship service.

**SECTION 3. MEMBERSHIP STATUS**

- A. Active Members. All persons [18] eighteen years of age or older who have been admitted into membership, according to Sections 1 and 2 of Article 1, shall be active members. The pastoral staff and their spouses shall automatically become active members upon their employment by the church and completion of (Membership Class Name...i.e. 101).
- B. Associate Members. Any member, who by geographic location or through physical limitation is unable to actively participate in the ministry of the church, shall be an associate member. An associate member may not vote or hold a ministry office.

- C. Inactive Members. Any member who, without adequate reason, does not regularly participate in the ministries of the local church for a period of (6) six months will be contacted by the Leadership Community concerning their intentions regarding their membership. If no interest is shown in three months, written notice will be given that their membership has been forfeited.

#### **SECTION 4. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the membership (NAME OF CHURCH), we do sincerely and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another seeking to live in harmony with God's calling as His children.

We purpose to be thoroughly followers of Christ by: Acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and giving Him first place in our lives and as Head of the Church; Living together in Christian love; Caring for one another's troubles with genuine compassion; Remembering each other in prayer; Being slow to take offense but always ready when offended, to forgive and pursue full reconciliation; Promoting the spiritual growth of our church community as we recognize our inevitable influence on one another and the surrounding community; Supporting our church's worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine; Tithing and contributing obediently, cheerfully, and regularly to the financial support of our church's ministries; Pursuing regular personal devotions; Teaching our children by action and word the greatness of the truths of the faith; Seeking to outreach with the penetrating love of Christ to our family members, friends and community; Living with godly wisdom in this world with its worldly values and practices while seeking not to be isolationists, but to be penetrators in our culture with the Gospel; Being just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our efforts to bring our sovereign God glory, honor and praise.

It is the practice and belief of this church membership, in the light of our modern day experience, to affirm that the mature Christian, and especially an Elder, Teacher, Small Group Leader, and Ministry Team Leader shall live a prayerful Christian life, attend the regular services of this church as consistently as health and work permit, and avoid practices harmful to himself or herself that could be offensive to fellow believers or hinder our witness in the community around us. (*Ephesians 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 2 Peter 1:3-10*)

#### **SECTION 5. DISCIPLINE**

- A. Responsibility to discipline rests upon the church as given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 18:15-17). Discipline is to be a healing process and not a judgmental adherence of the law. The offense observed should be dealt with in a loving manner, "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

Reasons for discipline are any action or sustained/unrepentant conduct which:

Tends to bring the Lord and/or the church into disrepute.

Is hostile and/or offensive toward other members or leaders of the church.

Sows divisiveness in the church.

Is contrary to the qualifications and conduct prescribed for members by Sections 1 and 4 of Article 1.

**B. Process of Discipline as Defined by (NAME OF CHURCH):**

1. If any member shall conduct himself in a manner as indicated above (Section 5) and does not show evidence of repentance, they shall be counseled by an elder or one of the pastoral staff after the manner indicated by Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17).
2. If the member continues to show no evidence of repentance, the pastoral staff member shall ask one or more members of the Leadership Community to go with him to confront the erring member in love.
3. If the member should choose to continue in their unrepentant condition, the chairman of the Leadership Community shall bring it to the other elders and, after prayer and consensus, the Leadership Community shall remove them from membership and inform the membership at the annual membership meeting. *(Consider a specially called meeting with proper advanced notice to the congregation)*

**C. Process of Restoration:**

1. When a repentant person wishes to be restored to membership, they must inform the Senior Pastor of their desire. The Senior Pastor shall inform the Leadership Community and the person shall be reinstated in the spirit of love contained in Scripture (Galatians 6:1) after completing the process of membership in Section 2.

## **ARTICLE II LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. The legislative body of the church shall be the Membership and shall consist of voting members of the congregation.
- B. The Membership shall elect and/or affirm its Elder Leadership Community, the call and dismissal of its Senior Pastor, approve the annual budget of the church, vote on the sale or purchase of property or the taking on of debt and affirm any changes in the Constitution or By-laws.

### **SECTION 2. THE LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY**

**A. THE ELDERS:**

1. An Elder is:

A man of noble character, the husband of one wife, who manages his family well, who is respected and obeyed by his believing children. He is not a new convert and maintains a good reputation. He is worthy of honor and can be imitated in his life and faith. He meets biblical qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6. An Elder offers his time, talents, financial support, abilities and spiritual gifts for the benefit of the local body, the church. He watches over the church as a shepherd does his flock. He is dedicated to the ministry of prayer and the Word of God.

2. Elders lead by:

Elders have the God-given responsibility to oversee the church. They lead by example and by being servants. Their public ministry to the church flows from their private lives and their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Elders' decisions will be made in the spirit of unity. That is, they will be of one mind. This will involve prayer and careful searching of God's Word and weighing their own motives. The elders will lead in a spirit of love being on guard for the congregation and themselves. The elders should actively teach and live by the Word of God, exhorting the congregation in sound biblical doctrine and correcting those who contradict or do not understand it.

To accomplish their ministry, the elders will work closely with each Ministry Team Coordinator.

3. Number and selection:

The number of active elders serving shall be at least (3) three and no more than (9) nine. The Senior Pastor will also serve as an active voting elder with the Leadership Community.

The Leadership Community will be diligent in seeking prospective elders and shall come alongside and disciple men before bringing them to the membership for affirmation.

After a vote of 2/3 agreement by the membership, the elder(s) will be confirmed by the laying on of hands and prayer.

The active elders on the Leadership Community shall serve (4) four-year rotating terms, with a (1) one-year sabbatical after (2) two terms.

An active elder may be asked to remove himself from the Leadership Community for personal reasons or if it is found that he is not living the biblical mandates for an elder. (Article 1, Section 5 C)

Each year the chairman of the Leadership Community shall be selected by the elders and will serve in conducting the meetings of the Leadership Community along with the Senior Pastor. The chairman shall request a member of the elders to fill in for him should he be absent from a meeting. The chairman of the Leadership Community will also come alongside the Senior Pastor in conducting all membership meetings.

Each year the Leadership Community shall select a recording secretary from their members to keep minutes of the Leadership Community meetings and the membership meetings.

4. Responsibilities:

- a. This Leadership Community shall serve by attending to the spiritual, physical, and financial needs of the church and its people.
- b. Shall administer all church ministries, so as to assure that they are effective, meaningful, balanced and Scriptural in intent and in practice.
- c. Shall be the official body in dealing and corresponding with other churches and outside organizations.
- d. Shall authorize expenditures up to \$7,500.00 that are not in the budget. This amount may be exceeded only in an emergency.
- e. Shall represent the church in all legal matters.
- f. Shall appoint all Ministries Team Coordinators.
- g. Shall review the membership roll annually.
- h. Shall interview prospective members.
- i. Shall handle discipline matters as outlined in Article I, Section 5.

### **SECTION 3. MINISTRY TEAM COORDINATORS**

A. Expectations and Commitment:

Candidates for Ministry Team Coordinator shall be members of the church in good standing and agree to the following commitments:

Attend the regular Ministry Team meetings as well as the yearly Leadership Community planning meeting.

Consistently support the church financially through the giving of a tithe.

Support and carry out the mission and vision of the church.

Be involved in the life of the church by attending worship services and other ministry events.

Live and serve in a way that reflects and represents a follower of Christ.

B. Composition:

The Ministry Team Coordinators shall be appointed by the Leadership Community.

C. Responsibilities:

Shall coordinate and oversee the day-to-day function of the Ministry Team on which they serve.

Each year each Ministry Team Coordinator shall select a recording secretary from each of their ministry teams to keep minutes of their meetings to report quarterly to the Leadership Community.

#### **SECTION 4. THE CHURCH TREASURER**

A. Election and term of office:

The Treasurer will be a member and shall be elected to a (4) four-year term by the membership and will not be a voting member of the Leadership Community.

B. Responsibilities:

To maintain a record of all receipts by donor, by fund or the church organization for which it was intended and deposit such funds to the account of the church.

To pay all obligations as authorized by the Leadership Community and submit a quarterly financial statement.

To submit the financial records for a yearly audit, as required.

To present an annual financial statement to the membership.

To maintain a set of permanent records.

#### **SECTION 5. FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

A. Election and term of office:

The Financial Secretary will be a member and shall be elected to a (4) four-year term by the membership.

B. Responsibilities:

To, with the assistance of a member of the Leadership Community or a confirmed and approved church member, count all the monies given to the work of the Lord during worship services of the church and to give to the treasurer the monies for deposit or to deposit the monies.

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary shall assume the duties of the Treasurer.

## **ARTICLE III MINISTRY TEAMS**

### **SECTION 1. MEMBERS**

#### **A. Appointment and Composition:**

1. Team members shall be appointed by the Ministry Team Coordinator and should be a Christian but do not have to be a member of the church.
2. Shall consist of the coordinator and the number the coordinator considers necessary to fulfill its function.

#### **B. Listing:**

Could consist of but are not limited to:

- 1) Acts / 2:42 Small Group Ministry
- 2) Community Impact Ministry
- 3) Embrace Ministry (Assimilation of Visitors)
- 4) Kid's Ministry (Children 0 – 5th grade)
- 5) Men's Ministry
- 6) Missions Ministry
- 7) New Beginnings Ministry
- 8) 24/7 Prayer Army (Prayer Ministry)
- 9) Women's Ministry
- 10) Worship Ministry
- 11) Youth Ministry (Middle School / Sr. High)

Additional ministry teams may be established as required or needed and the duties defined by the Leadership Community.

#### **C. Responsibilities:**

1. Shall function as the ministry facilitators in the everyday life of the church.
2. Shall be responsible to the people of the church and to the Leadership Community and staff in fulfilling the duties which are required in their specific area of ministry.

## **ARTICLE IV SENIOR PASTOR AND STAFF**

### **SECTION 1. SENIOR PASTOR**

#### **A. Calling the Senior Pastor:**

1. A pastoral search shall be conducted by the Leadership Community and Search Committee with the assistance of the District Superintendent.
2. The initial call of the senior pastor shall, upon recommendation by the Leadership Community, be approved by the Membership at its annual meeting or at a special Membership meeting by a (3/4) three-fourths majority of all votes cast.

#### **B. Duties of the Senior Pastor:**

The Senior Pastor should be a man of prayer for the church. He shall serve as an elder on the Leadership Community and supervise the day to day work of the pastoral staff and all other staff members. He shall be responsible for oversight, direction, vision and of the spiritual welfare of the church.

#### **C. Terms of Call:**

Shall be determined by mutual agreement between the Leadership Community, the Senior Pastor and be approved by the membership.

#### **D. Termination of Pastoral Relationship:**

The Leadership Community has the right to call for a pastoral vote of affirmation of dismissal should it be deemed necessary. Should the Membership by a 3/4 vote determine that the Senior Pastor is either: 1) not fulfilling the duties of his office, 2) not providing adequate spiritual direction or has, 3) exhausted his leadership capabilities, the church may require his dismissal for an agreed on time by the Leadership Community. In such an instance, the Senior Pastor shall be compensated (3) three-month's salary and benefits. In case of moral failure, termination can be immediate and no severance pay may be given, which will be determined by the Leadership Community.

## **SECTION 2. THE PASTORAL STAFF**

### **A. Calling the Pastoral Staff:**

For a need or a vacancy, a search shall be conducted by the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor.

The pastoral staff member shall, upon recommendation by the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor, be approved by the membership at its annual meeting or at a special Membership meeting by a (3/4) three-fourth's majority of all votes cast.

Salary, benefits, and other terms of employment shall be determined by the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor and approved by the membership.

### **B. Duties of the Pastoral Staff:**

The duties of the pastors on the Pastoral Staff will be determined by the position filled, the Senior Pastor, and the Leadership Community.

### **C. Terms of Call:**

Shall be determined by mutual agreement between the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor.

### **D. Termination of Pastoral Staff Personnel:**

In the event that the Senior Pastor determines that a member of the Pastoral Staff is: (1) not fulfilling the duties of their position, or (2) not providing adequate spiritual direction, or (3) has exhausted their leadership capabilities, the Senior Pastor shall report to the Leadership Community. If the elders agree and the member has had adequate time to correct the problem, that member shall be asked to resign. If the member refuses, the elders shall terminate and give (1) one-month's severance pay. In the event of moral failure, no severance pay may be given, which will be determined by the Leadership Community.

## **SECTION 3. OTHER STAFF**

### **A. Employment.**

All other staff shall be hired upon mutual consent of the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor.

Their duties shall be determined by the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor.

Salary, benefits, and other terms of employment shall be determined by the Leadership Community and the Senior Pastor and approved by the membership.

## B. Termination of other staff:

In the event that the Senior Pastor determines that a member of the staff is: (1) not fulfilling the duties of their position, or (2) not providing adequate spiritual direction, or (3) has exhausted their leadership capabilities, the Senior Pastor shall report to the Leadership Community. If the elders agree and the member has had adequate time to correct the problem, that member shall be asked to resign. If the member refuses, the elders shall terminate and give (2) two weeks severance pay. In the event of moral failure, no severance pay may be given which will be determined by the Leadership Community.

## **ARTICLE V ELECTIONS**

### **SECTION 1. TIME OF ELECTIONS:**

Will be held in the first month of the year, and at which the annual election of officers shall be held by the Membership of the church.

### **SECTION 2. VOTING PRIVILEGES:**

Only active members of the church as defined in this Constitution and By-laws shall be eligible to vote. No proxy or absentee voting allowed.

### **SECTION 3. QUORUM:**

(30%) Thirty percent of all present active members shall constitute a quorum. A majority of such persons present at any regular or special membership meeting shall be sufficient to decide any question presented unless otherwise stated and provided by the By-laws.

### **SECTION 4. PROCEDURES:**

The Leadership Community shall present to the church the names of the nominees at least (2) two Sunday morning services prior to the election.

The nominee shall be a member in good standing and shall have given prior consent to the nomination.

The nominee shall have demonstrated the gifts and spiritual maturity necessary for the position to which they have been nominated.

### **SECTION 5. VACANCIES OF OFFICE:**

In the event of a vacancy in an elected office or position, the Leadership Community shall have the responsibility of filling the office or position until the next scheduled annual membership meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

At the annual membership meetings held in the first month of each year the membership shall elect and/or affirm its Elders, Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, approve the annual budget of the church and any other business that is deemed necessary by the Leadership Community and the Membership.

Notification for any and all membership meetings must be published in the weekly bulletin and otherwise communicated and posted at least 2 Sundays prior to said meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these By-Laws may be presented at the annual membership meeting for a vote when said proposed amendments have been reviewed and approved by the Leadership Community and presented to the membership in writing and posted for their review at least one year prior to the membership meeting. A two-thirds majority is required for passage.

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These By-Laws were officially adopted by the membership of (NAME OF CHURCH, CITY, STATE)