

January 31, 2016

the
CONSTITUTION

Adopted June 18, 1892



**First Evangelical
Free Church**
of Moline

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a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

November 24, 2013

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(Amended January 31, 2016)

This Constitution & By-laws supersedes all previous Constitutions & By-laws.

Introduction

The Church is the Body of Christ, to which only believers in Jesus Christ belong (Colossians 1:18). It is called to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13, 14). That all things may be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40), and we may more readily help each other in our Christian service (Romans 12:10-12), as members of this Church, we adopt the following Constitution.

ARTICLE I

Corporate Name

The legal, incorporated name of this Church is The First Evangelical Free Church of Moline, Illinois.

ARTICLE II

Creed

This Church accepts only the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures as the rule and standard for its faith, doctrine, and conduct.

ARTICLE III

Statement of Faith

As members of this church, we believe:

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.
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.

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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

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.

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 the First Evangelical Free Church of Moline is to bring honor and glory to God in the name of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling the body of Christ, according to the Scriptures. This purpose will be manifested in worshiping God; teaching the Word of God; caring for and nurturing one another in fellowship unto maturity in Christ; and making Christ known by all means in our families, community, nation, and throughout the world.

ARTICLE V

Polity and Government

This Church is, as the name implies, “free”; that is, independent, with a self-governing, congregational form of government. It may not join any synod, covenant, or other Christian denomination except by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting.

The Church shall provide by-laws for its government. They shall not conflict with the Word of God or this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI

Affiliation

The First Evangelical Free Church of Moline is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with the Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

ARTICLE VII

Property

The membership shall have, in the corporate name, the right to own, buy and sell real property. Decisions to buy or sell real property must be approved by two-thirds of the voting membership at a duly called congregational meeting. In case of dissolution, the property shall be transferred to the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. In case of a division of the membership, the ownership of property shall remain with those members abiding by this constitution as determined by the executive board of the Great Lakes District.

ARTICLE VIII

Article VIII - Position Statements

The Lead/Senior Pastor and Board of Elders may, from time to time, produce position papers which faithfully interpret and apply the Word of God to matters of faith and practice. These position papers will be ratified in accordance with the criteria established for the adoption of amendments to the By-laws of this church. These position papers shall be entitled, "Position Statements", and a copy shall be made available, without charge, to members.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments

Any article or section of the Constitution may be amended, repealed, or revised by a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum, which shall consist of not less than 30% of the membership. Written notice of proposed action on such amendment must be postmarked for mailing to all active members at least thirty days prior to said meeting. At no time shall any amendment be adopted that is contrary to historic Evangelical Free Church of America beliefs and practice.

A motion to amend the Constitution shall be presented in writing and discussed at a business meeting. An amendment may not be acted on at the meeting at which it is first presented. It will be acted on at a later business meeting, which shall be announced at church services on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.

BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the First Evangelical Free Church of Moline, IL (First Free), in order to carry out more effectively the commissions given by Jesus Christ to His church (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 10:2, Luke 24:44-52, John 20:21-22, and Acts 1:8), do establish the following By-Laws to which we voluntarily agree to adhere, according to the Word of God; honoring Jesus Christ as a unified body of believers.

ARTICLE ONE

GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY

The governance of this church is vested in its members. The Elder Board represents the members as servant-leaders, overseeing all matters necessary for the effectual accomplishment of the church's ministry and vision. The Elder Board serves as the church's visionaries for its future and as the custodian of its physical assets. Execution of the day-to-day ministry, teaching and training to accomplish the vision, is vested in the Senior Pastor, using the gifts and leadership of the ministry staff and the various ministry teams.

ARTICLE TWO

MEMBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS:

To become a member, individuals must meet the following criteria:

1. Confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their only Savior, having been born again to a living hope and whose conduct gives evidence of the fruit of faith;
2. Subscribe to the Statement of Faith; and
3. Agree to abide by the Constitution, By-Laws and Covenant of Membership of this church.

B. ADMISSION:

For admission to membership individuals must:

1. Complete the Church Information Class, conducted by the Elder Board. This class will include the history, doctrines, and mission of the church. After completion of the class, the applicant will be given a copy of the Constitution, By-Laws and Covenant of Membership;
2. Submit an application for membership to the Elder Board;
3. Participate in a personal interview with an Elder or Elders;
4. Upon recommendation by the Elder Board, be accepted by a majority vote of those members present at a business meeting.
5. Upon hiring, full-time pastoral staff/directors and their spouses are recognized as members of this church and shall assume all duties and responsibilities of such membership.

C. CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP:

1. Active members have full voting privileges. These members are at least sixteen years of age and are actively fulfilling membership responsibilities.
2. Associate members do not have voting privileges. These members, due to life circumstances, have not attended regularly, or are less than sixteen years of age.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Members will be responsible to:

1. Support the church in attendance, prayer, tithes and offerings, and the exercise of spiritual gifts;
2. Pray for and submit to the spiritual leadership of the church;
3. Affirm and dismiss the Elders and others holding elected positions;
4. Call and dismiss the Senior Pastor;

5. Call additional full-time ministry positions;
6. Approve new members;
7. Approve the annual budget;
8. Approve acquisition and disposition of real property;
9. Approve capital investment improvement projects that exceed more than five percent of the fiscal year's budget;
10. Approve any amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws and revisions of the same and;
11. Approve dissolution if ever necessary.

E. DISCIPLINE, ABSENCE and WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERS:

1. Discipline will be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Elder Board and as referenced in Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-18, II Corinthians 2:5-11, and finally, if necessary, I Corinthians 5:11-13.
2. The Elder Board shall determine the procedures by which they shall provide for the removal of members who fail to fulfill membership responsibilities. Any member, failing to fulfill membership responsibilities for a period of six months and from whom the church has received no communication, shall be referred to the Elder Board for appropriate action. If individuals are unwilling to fulfill their membership responsibilities or membership is no longer desired, or if attempts to contact them are unsuccessful, the individual may be removed by the Elders from membership. Notice of those members removed will be provided at the next congregational meeting.
3. An individual may voluntarily withdraw their membership at any time, preferably in writing, to the Senior Pastor or Elder Board.

ARTICLE THREE

PASTORS

The congregation shall call as pastors, men who are known to the church, or who are recommended by other recognized churches or individuals. It shall be required that they are, or shall become, credentialed by the EFCA.

A. **QUALIFICATIONS:**

The Senior Pastor will:

1. Be a man of true and established Christian character as set out in 1Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, and 1Peter 5:1-4;
2. Affirm the Constitution, By-Laws and Covenant of Membership of First Free.

B. **PASTORAL CALL:**

Upon the recommendation of the Elder Board, the Senior Pastor shall be called by a 90% majority ballot vote cast by those members present at a duly called congregational membership meeting (see Article 7). Associate pastors shall be called by three-fourths (75%) majority ballot vote cast by those members present at a duly called congregational membership meeting (see Article 7). The quorum for these votes shall be thirty (30) percent of the active members of the church.

C. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Senior Pastor will:

1. Be accountable to the Elder Board for:
 - a. the faithful preaching of the Word of God;
 - b. ensuring the proper administration of the ordinances of the church and;
 - c. communicating and executing the mission / vision of the church within the guidelines established by the Elder Board.

2. Be a full voting member of the Elder Board on all matters except those concerning his employment and compensation.
3. With the approval of the Elder Board:
 - a. personally, or through his designee, discipline or dismiss all other church staff;
 - b. personally, or through his designee, hire part-time staff and:
 - c. personally, or through his designee, oversee and review all church staff and ministry directors, excluding the Treasurer and Operations Team Director.

D. RESIGNATION, DISCIPLINE and REMOVAL

1. Unless otherwise agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board, the Pastor will give the Board notice of his resignation at least sixty (60) days prior to the last date of employment.
2. Should an issue of correction arise concerning the Senior Pastor as to the fulfillment of his responsibilities, or failure thereof, or as to his qualifications, the Elder Board shall be responsible for the assessment and implementation of appropriate disciplinary action, if any.
3. Should there arise doctrinal or moral error that would justify a suspension or revocation of EFCA ministry credentials, the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastors may be suspended by the Elder Board. The Elder Board may recommend to the church membership dismissal of the Senior Pastor, but final approval of his termination requires a three-fourths majority ballot vote cast by those members present at a duly called meeting. The quorum for this vote shall be thirty (30) percent of the active members.

E. ASSOCIATE PASTORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL STAFF

In addition to the Senior Pastor, the Church shall have any number of full-time ministry staff, as the Congregation shall approve. Congregational approval is not required for interim or part-time staff. Job descriptions for all staff shall be approved by the Elder Board. All associates, assistants and office staff shall be responsible to and work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor or his designee.

ARTICLE FOUR

ELDERS / ELDER BOARD

A. QUALIFICATIONS:

An individual considered for elder service must:

1. Be a male who has been an active lay member of the church for at least two (2) years and;
2. Be a man of true and established Christian character as set out in 1Timothy 3:1- 7, Titus 1:5-11, and 1Peter 5:1-4.

B. SELECTION:

The nominating committee will search out, evaluate, and select elder candidates for presentation to the congregation and affirmation by active church members. A seventy-five percent majority ballot vote cast for nominees by those members present shall be required for affirmation.

C. UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

In unusual circumstances, the Board of Elders may add an additional number of Elders to the Board. These additional Elders shall serve for a term not to exceed 6 months. These additional Elders will be affirmed by the congregation in the same manner as set forth in Article 6. This term may be extended for an additional 6 months upon affirmation by the congregation.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Elders will:

1. Provide missional/visionary leadership by establishing a strategic plan with annual goals and objectives for the church;
2. Assess and strengthen the spiritual health and shepherding of the church;
3. Protect Biblical truth;
4. Provide oversight by establishing broad ministry, operational and financial policies; then designate and empower staff members and/or others to carry them out;

5. Establish, manage, and oversee church finances to include the preparation of an annual budget to be submitted for congregational approval at the annual meeting;
6. Oversee church membership procedures and policies;
7. Appoint search and nominating committees as needed;
8. Manage the church's physical assets;
9. Advise and assist the Senior Pastor in matters of discipline or dismissal of ministry staff;
10. Administer an annual performance review of the Senior Pastor through an Elder Board review committee, which includes the Chairman;
11. Conduct church business meetings and other meetings as needed.
12. Provide oversight by analyzing and evaluating ministries as issues arise, to make certain each is in step with God in fulfilling the vision and mission of the church.
13. Serve on one or more Ministry Teams, thus being its liaison to the Elder Board.
14. The Elders will oversee and review the Treasurer and Operations Team Director.

E. RESIGNATION and REMOVAL:

An Elder may voluntarily resign from office at any time. Additionally, upon recommendation from the Elder Board, an Elder may be removed at any time by a two-thirds majority vote cast by those church members present at a duly called meeting.

F. ELDER BOARD ORGANIZATION:

1. The Elder Board will consist of up to six (6) lay men in addition to the Senior Pastor.
2. Terms of office, which begin January 1, are three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms. One year must be taken off prior to any additional service on the board. Terms will be staggered so that two Elders are

affirmed annually for the three year term.

3. The Board will meet twice a month, one for the purpose of studying God's word and to pray, and the other to conduct business.
4. The Board will select from among its members, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.
5. The Chairman will:
 - a. chair the Elder Board meetings;
 - b. moderate the congregational business meetings;
 - c. make an annual report to the church membership and;
 - d. serve as the church corporation President.
6. The Vice-Chairman will:
 - a. assist the Elder Board Chairman as necessary;
 - b. fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman should he be unable or unavailable to do so;
 - c. chair the Advisory Council and;
 - d. serve as the church corporation Vice President.
7. The Secretary will:
 - a. be responsible to take minutes at the Elder Board meetings;
 - b. be responsible to take minutes at the congregational business meetings;
 - c. fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman should he and the Vice-Chairman be unable or unavailable to do so and;

- d. serve as the church corporation Secretary.
8. The Board may remove any individual from any church corporation officer position and/or fill any such position vacancy at any time.

G. CHURCH CORPORATION OFFICERS:

The following members will represent the church in legal matters as necessary:

1. President – position held by current Chairman.
2. Vice President – position held by current Vice-Chairman.
3. Secretary – position filled by current recording secretary.
4. Treasurer – position filled by current church treasurer.

ARTICLE FIVE

MINISTRY TEAMS

- A. There may be any number of Ministry Teams. They shall be responsible for implementing the Church's purpose of bringing honor and glory to God by producing maturing, growing, reproducing disciples of Jesus Christ.
- B. The Elder Board shall establish each Ministry Team and provide the Team with a Charter and a list of responsibilities. These responsibilities may be changed by the Elder Board at any time.
- C. The Ministry Teams will be accountable to the Elder Board by reporting to the Elder Board in writing at least bi-monthly.
- D. Ministry Teams shall be single focused, but with the responsibility of accomplishing a variety of tasks.
- E. Ministry Teams will be led by either a full or part-time staff member or by an elected lay leader, who will be called a Ministry Director.
- F. In addition to other Ministry Teams, there will be an Operations Committee

and a Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will be lead by the Treasurer and include the Financial Secretary. The Operations Committee will be headed by an elected Chairperson.

- G. Ministry Directors and Committee Chairpersons will be deacon-qualified individuals that are active members. (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Romans 16:1,2)
- H. Each Ministry Team and committee will prepare a budget in accordance with guidelines and procedures set forth by the Elder Board.
- I. An Advisory Council, co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Elder Board and the Senior Pastor, will meet on a recurring basis to coordinate ministry and programs. The Council will consist of all Ministry Staff, Ministry Directors, Ministry Team Leaders, the Operations Director, the Treasurer, the Senior Pastor and the Elders.
- J. The Senior Pastor and Elder Board Chairman are ex-officio members of every committee and team.

ARTICLE SIX

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED OR AFFIRMED BY THE CONGREGATION

1. Elders.

Elders will be affirmed for three year terms and may serve two consecutive terms. One year must be taken off prior to any additional service on the board.

2. Ministry Directors.

Elected Ministry Directors will be elected for two year terms and may serve two consecutive terms. One year must be taken off prior to being elected to the same ministry team leadership position.

3. Treasurer

4. Financial Secretary

5. Operations Director

The Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Operations Director will be elected for one year terms and may serve three consecutive terms. One year must be taken off prior to being elected to the same position. In addition, the Treasurer and Financial Secretary cannot serve more than three consecutive terms in either of these financial positions without taking a year off before being elected to another financial position.

B. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee will consist of one Elder, the Senior Pastor and three members who are not on the Elder Board.
2. The Nominating Committee shall be elected annually by the Congregation based on the names suggested by the membership and selected by the Elder Board. No member may serve on this committee for more than three years in succession.
3. The Elders on the Nominations Committee will be selected from those Elders who are not eligible for election as Elders.
4. One of the Elders on the Nominations Committee will be appointed by the Elder Board to chair the committee.
5. The Nominations Committee will be named no later than July 15 for the election to be held in October or November. They will take office on July 15 and serve for a term of one year.
6. The Nominations Committee will solicit names of individuals to serve in elected or affirmed positions from the congregation. Names of individuals who are biblically qualified in accordance with the specific positions will be submitted to the Nominations Committee for consideration. In the event that no qualified, able, and willing person is available to fill a position, that position will remain unfilled, and will be considered vacant.
7. The Nominations Committee will be responsible to secure names for vacancies, should they arise. They will submit them to the Elder Board who shall appoint members until the next congregational membership meeting when the vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the term. Term limitations will apply as if the person had filled the entire term.

ARTICLE SEVEN

MEETINGS

A. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS:

1. A meeting will be held in the month of October or November. Business shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Approval of the budget for the coming fiscal year which begins January 1;
 - b. Acceptance of new members;
 - c. Affirmation of Elders and election of other elected positions.
2. A meeting will be held in the month of January. Business at this meeting shall include but not be limited to acceptance of new members and reports from the Elders, Senior Pastor, and the Ministry Teams.
3. A meeting shall be held in mid-year. Business at this meeting shall include but not be limited to the acceptance of new members.
4. Other meetings may be called by the Elder Board as needed.

B. PROCEDURES:

1. The Chairman of the Elder Board or his designated representative will preside at all church meetings.
2. Meeting minutes will be recorded by the secretary of the Elder Board or by a person designated by the Elder Board.
3. The date, time and subject matter of all congregational business meetings must be communicated in Sunday services at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The budget and ballot for election/affirmation will be posted at least two Sunday Services prior to the meeting.
4. Meetings should be conducted in an orderly fashion (referring to **Robert's Rules of Order as necessary**).

C. QUORUM:

Except as otherwise specified, those members present at a business meeting

D. VOTING:

Except as otherwise specified, a simple majority of those members present will carry all business.

E. ATTENDANCE:

Meetings will be open to non-members as well as members and both are encouraged to attend. Non-members may speak when recognized by the chairman but may not vote. Closed meetings for members only may be called at the discretion of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE EIGHT

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members present at any congregational business meeting provided that notification of the proposed amendment is made to the members in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The quorum for this vote shall be thirty (30) percent of the active members.



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