



BY-LAWS & ARTICLES OF FAITH

Evangelical Fellowship Church



EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
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Preamble

God requires that a Christian congregation shall conform to His divine word in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 1:6-8, 2 Timothy 4:1-5) and that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). Therefore, we the members of the Evangelical Fellowship Church, accept and subscribe to the following By-Laws in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our congregation shall be governed.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Galatians 1:6-8

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

1 Corinthians 14:40

But all things should be done decently and in order.

Article 1: Name

The name of this congregation shall be Evangelical Fellowship Church.

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose of this congregation shall be to seek to honor and glorify God, to carry out His will, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior to spread the kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship and love by the preaching of the Word of God, and by administration of the sacraments of Communion and Baptism.

Article 3: Articles of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal, pre-millennial return in glory and power.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. We believe that salvation is the act of sovereign grace conferred on the believer by a loving heavenly Father and that it is by grace alone; that man's good works are of no avail in bringing personal redemption, good works being rather the fruit of devoted Christian discipleship.
5. We believe that men in his natural condition is a sinner and alienated from God: That the sinner must repent of his sin before he is in condition to receive forgiveness of sin and regeneration.
6. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose application of the blood of Christ to the heart of the believer he is cleansed from all sin and enabled to live a godly life, victorious over all power of the devil.
7. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
8. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ.
9. We believe that the walk of a Christian should be one of continual growth in grace and the knowledge of the Son of God.
10. We believe in two sacraments: Baptism, which is an outward sign of the new birth, and the Lord's Supper, which is also an outward acknowledgment of faith in Christ.

Article 3.a: Statement of Biblical Authority

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our governing Consistory board is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Article 3.b: Membership Affirmation of Confession and Conduct

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Evangelical Fellowship Church By-laws, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and these Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The membership of the Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Bylaws.

Article 3.c: Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any other form of sexual conduct, or any attempt to change one's sex, or involvement in any actions not appropriate to one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

Article 4: Membership

1. Members shall be in agreement with the statement of faith as set forth in Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c.
2. Prospective members shall be admitted to membership upon confession of faith after having first been examined by the consistory.
3. Voting members shall be at least 18 years old.
4. Termination of membership:
 - a. A member may be terminated by not attending at least three worship services during the calendar year.
 - b. Members who conduct themselves in an unchristian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15-20. If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, their membership shall be terminated.

Matthew 18:15-20

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

- c. Each case shall be presented individually to the Consistory which is the spiritual governing board of the church. A unanimous vote shall be required for termination. If such member deliberately absents himself from the meetings at which his case is to be discussed, or in some other manner makes it impossible to deal with him/her, he thereby terminates his own membership.

Article 5: The Office Of Pastor

The pastoral office of this congregation shall be conferred only on such who profess and adhere to standards set forth in Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c.

Article 6: Authority Of The Congregation

1. General: The governing bodies of this congregation shall manage their affairs, but shall be subject to the approval of the congregation.
2. Right of calling: The right of calling pastors shall be vested in the congregation and shall never be delegated to a small group or to an individual.
3. Decision making process: Any decision made by the congregation must be in accordance with the Word of God.
4. The congregation shall have the power to elect:
 - a. The permanent pastor.
 - b. All members of consistory and the board of trustees.
 - c. The Sunday school superintendent.
 - d. An elder as the president of the congregation, in the absence of a permanent pastor. The president of the congregation is also the president of the consistory.
5. The congregation shall have the power to remove:
 - a. The permanent pastor.
 - b. Any member of the consistory and board of trustees.
 - c. The Sunday school superintendent.
 - d. Any person from church membership.
- 5A. Procedure from removal of office.
 - a. Any pastor or officer may be removed from office by the congregation by a two thirds majority ballot vote, in a Christian and lawful order, for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to doctrine other than specified in Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, scandalous life, or willful neglect of duties.
 - b. The congregation may request the resignation of any pastor or officer from his position in the church in the case of prolonged incapacity of general incompetence.
6. The congregation shall have the right to decide the regular place of worship.
7. The congregation shall have the right to set the date of regular congregational meetings.
8. The congregation shall have the right to call special congregational meetings. This requires one fifth of the voting members of the congregation. The president of the congregation may also call special meetings.
9. The congregation shall have the right to approve the purchase of real property and the erection of and addition to buildings. The congregation may not order the purchase of real property or the erection or addition to buildings.
10. The congregation has the right to audit the financial records of the church in the presence of the financial secretary and or treasurer. Records of congregational giving will be kept confidential.

Article 7: Officers

1. The officers of the congregation shall be such officers, boards of committees as the By-Laws may prescribe.
2. Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may be delegated to them may, at any time, be altered or revoked.

Article 8: Dissolution

If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who continue to adhere to the standards of Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c of these by-laws. If division takes place for any other reason, the property shall remain with the majority of the members. In the event the congregation should totally disband, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the nearest church conforming to Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c.

Article 9: Doctrinal Conformity

Only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in public service of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the standard of Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c.

Article 10: Changing The By-Laws

1. This congregation may adopt such by-Laws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose.
2. Unalterable articles: Articles 2, 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, 5 and 6 of this Constitution shall not be subject to change or repeal.
3. Amendments to these By-laws may be adopted at a regular member congregational meeting, provided:
 - a. They do not conflict with the provision laid down in Article 3, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c or with any other Article that pertains to a Scriptural doctrine or practice.
 - b. The proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous meeting of the congregation and published prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon.
 - c. That an affirmative vote of two thirds majority of the congregation members present is secured.

Article 11: Regular Congregational Meetings

1. Meetings will be held quarterly, one of which will be the annual meeting, at which the election of officers of the church will be held. The permanent pastor and officers, to fill vacancies, may be elected at other meetings.
2. The president of the congregation will preside over meetings. He may never delegate this authority to any person who is not a voting member of the congregation.
3. Unless otherwise agreed, meetings will be held at the regular place of worship.
4. Meetings will be open only to members of the congregation. Guests may attend if it meets with the approval of the majority of the voting members present at the meeting.
5. A secretary will be elected at each meeting to record the minutes of the meeting.

Article 11.a: Special Congregational Meetings

1. May be called at any time as prescribed in By-law Article 6.7 and the date and reason for said meeting is publicly announced and posted in the regular place of worship on at least three Sundays prior to the meeting. Only the posted items of business may be voted at special meetings.
2. Meetings are open to persons as prescribed in By-law Article 11.4.
3. A secretary will be elected at each meeting to record the minutes of the meeting.

Article 11.b: Quorum Congregational Meetings

1. Ordinarily the voters present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business, however, for amending the By-Laws, for purchase of real property, for erection of or addition to buildings, or for removal from office of the permanent pastor or any church officer, or for the removal of any person from the church membership, a two-thirds majority of all voting members of the congregation will constitute a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, those voting members of the congregation present may fix a date for an adjourned meeting, for which twenty-one days written notice must be given to all church members. Those voting members present at an adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Article 11.c: Order Of Business Of Regular Meetings

1. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the By-laws.
2. Order of meeting:
 - a. Opening prayer.
 - b. Elect a secretary.
 - c. Roll call or registration.
 - d. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting.

- e. Reports of officers and standing committees and action thereon.
- f. Unfinished business (old).
- g. New business (elections at annual meetings).
- h. Recommendations of the congregation.
- i. Adjournment with prayer.

Article 11.d: Motions

1. All motions, including nominations of candidates for office, require a second.
2. A majority of the votes cast will carry or defeat a motion.

Article 11.e: Procedure For Congregational Election Of Church Officers

1. A three person nominating committee shall be appointed from voting members of the congregation by the president of the congregation.
2. They shall publicly announce and post their list of candidates at the regular place of worship at least four Sundays prior to the elections.
3. Any voting member of the congregation may nominate additional candidates for any office to be filled. He may do so at the election meeting.
4. Any candidate for office of permanent pastor, elder, deacon, trustee, or Sunday school superintendent must be at least twenty-one years old and a member of the congregation in good standing for 9 months, or in case of a recent member, have regularly attended worship meetings for one year.
5. If any person should be elected who does not meet with the qualifications of the previous article (11.e.4), he will be removed from office and a new election held.
6. Election voting will be by ballot.
7. Only one vacancy for one office may be voted upon at one time.
8. The majority of ballots cast shall be required to elect.
9. The names of the newly elected officers will be publicly announced for two Sundays after the election. On the third Sunday after election, during worship service, the members of consistory will be ordained. Ordination is for life. A permanent pastor must also be ordained at this same service. Also at this same service, the newly elected members of consistory and the board of trustees, and Sunday school superintendent will be installed to office. Installation is only for the term of office.

Article 12: Consistory

1. All members are elected by the congregation for two years except the permanent pastor, who is elected by the congregation for an indefinite period of time.
2. Purpose of consistory is to take charge of all:
 - a. Spiritual and social concerns of the congregation.
 - b. Christian teaching of the congregation.
 - c. Other unmentioned Christian concerns of the congregation.
3. Members of consistory
 - a. Permanent pastor.
 - b. Elders (up to four in number).
 - c. Deacons (up to four in number).
4. Officers (elected by the consistory for one year, except the permanent pastor):
 - a. President - he will be the permanent pastor of the church, except as per By-Law Article 6.4.d. He will preside over all congregational and consistory meetings.
 - b. Vice-President - in the absence of the president, he will fulfill all his duties. He must be an elder.
 - c. Secretary - he will record all minutes of all consistory meetings and keep all other records as necessary. He will be the correspondent for consistory.
5. Other rules and regulations:
 - a. Consistory may make all other necessary rules and regulations that conform to the constitution and By-laws and use the Bible as authority.

Article 13: Board Of Trustees

1. All members are elected by the congregation for one to three years.
2. Purpose of trustees:
 - a. Take charge of temporal concerns of the church (temporal being worldly, not religious or sacred and of this life only).
 - b. Manage the finances and property of the church.
 - c. Be responsible for all contracts between the church and all other parties, except as prescribed in By-law Article 15.2.
 - d. Be the only purchasing agent of the church.
3. Members will be six in number.
4. Officers (elected by the trustees for one year):
 - a. President - He will preside over all trustee meetings.
 - b. Vice President - He will fulfill all duties of president in his absence.
 - c. Secretary - He will record all minutes of all trustee meetings and keep all other records, as necessary. He will be the correspondent for the trustees.

- d. Financial Secretary - He will collect, record and bank all income money. All offerings may be taken up by the consistory and then turned over to the financial secretary on the same day they were collected.
- e. Treasurer - He will make payment of all bills as directed by the board of trustees (the financial secretary and the treasurer may be the same person).
- 5. Motions passed by the trustees to purchase real property and to erect or make additions to buildings must secure congregational approval before action may be taken. The trustees must have approval of the consistory before making any purchase of religious material.
- 6. Other rules and regulations: The trustees may make all other necessary rules and regulations that conform the By-laws.

Article 14: General Rules For Both Consistory/Board Of Trustees

- 1. Members:
 - a. A person may serve on both bodies simultaneously.
 - b. A person may serve as an officer of either body simultaneously.
 - c. When an officer's term has expired, he may succeed himself by election.
- 2. Quorum:
 - a. A majority of the total number of each body will constitute a quorum.
- 3. Motions:
 - a. All motions required a second, including the nomination of candidates for office.
 - b. A majority of the votes cast will carry or defeat a motion.
- 4. Attendees of Meetings:
 - a. Any church member may attend all regular meetings.
 - b. Portions of any meetings and all special meetings may be closed to all except members of the body that is holding the meeting.

Article 15: Joint Authority Of Consistory And The Trustees

- 1. The permanent pastor will not be part of this authority.
- 2. Purpose:
 - a. To make contracts between the church and permanent pastor or preachers. This includes setting the wage and fringe benefits. Contracts will be signed by all members of both bodies.
 - b. Other business may be conducted at joint meetings, but only with mutual agreement of both parties.

3. Meetings:

- a. May be called at any time by the vice-president of consistory or president of the trustees.
- b. All members of both parties may attend meetings, but only an equal number of votes may be cast from each body. The members who are allowed to vote will be determined by separate voting of each body, at the beginning of the meeting.

4. Quorum shall consist of a quorum from each body.

5. A majority of the votes cast will carry or defeat a motion.

6. Officers:

- a. There will be no elected officers.
 - b. At each meeting a temporary chairman and secretary will be elected.
7. Minutes of all meetings will be given to consistory and the trustees.

Article 16: Sunday School

1. Will be under the direction of the consistory at all times.

2. Purpose:

- a. To teach Christianity to children and adults.
 - b. Aid the church in all ways possible.
3. The leader will be the superintendent. He will be elected for two years by the congregation in the manner that consistory and trustees are elected.

4. By-Laws, rules and regulations:

- a. The Sunday school may adopt its own By-Laws, rules and regulations but they will be subject to the approval of the consistory. Consistory will make certain they conform to the By-Laws of the church.

Article 17: All Other Clubs And Organizations

1. Organizing clubs and organizations:

- a. In order to organize any group that is affiliated with the church, permission must be obtained from consistory.

2. Authority:

- a. Consistory will have full authority over all clubs and organizations.

Article 18: All Social And Money Raising Events

1. Consistory will have full authority over all events. Consistory will be certain they are always conducted in a Christian manner.
2. Consistory and/or any church body or group will have full control over any money they may gain from any event. Exception: the trustees will have control over any funds profited from an event they sponsor.
3. If consistory or any body or group chooses to turn any funds over to the trustees, they will be put in the general fund and the trustees will gain control over them.

Article 19: Missions

1. Consistory may appoint a missions committee to promote missions among the congregation and to correspond with and support missionaries.
2. No missionary shall receive financial support without an express vote taken to that effect by the consistory.
3. Missionaries and mission agencies shall be in agreement with Article 3, of these By-Laws.

Article 20: Administration Of The Sacraments

1. It shall be the practice of this church to welcome any born again believer to the Communion Table. Self-examination is to be encouraged.
2. It shall be the practice of this church to restrict baptism to believers only, who are able to give a testimony of their faith in Christ.
 - a. Specifically, it shall not be our practice to baptize infants, but rather to hold a service of dedication at which their parents will vow before the congregation to provide their children with Christian teaching and example.
 - b. Mode of baptism shall be immersion if at all possible. Baptism may be administered by pouring or sprinkling if the candidate has a physical condition which makes immersion inadvisable.