

# **The Constitution of the Evangelical Free Church of Lander Of Lander, Wyoming**

**January 14, 2020**

## **PREAMBLE**

Whereas, we, a body of evangelical believers in Jesus Christ, organized for the purpose of fellowship and propagation of the gospel of our Lord as recorded in the Holy Scripture, deem it wise that we have certain laws to serve as a criterion to work by; and help preserve the purpose and function of the local church; therefore be it resolved: that beginning with its legal adoption thereof we shall be governed by the following Constitution and Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization, a non-profit religious corporation organized under the laws of the state of Wyoming, is the ‘Evangelical Free Church of Lander’, an affiliate of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to work together for the unity, edification, discipline, and encouragement of believers, that they might grow in grace and holy conduct, and seek to win souls for Christ and to further His cause on the mission fields at home and abroad.

## **ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

*EFCA Statement of Faith Adopted by the Conference on June 19, 2019. Adopted by the Evangelical free Church of Lander on January 14, 2020.*

**God 1.** We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

**The Bible 2.** We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

**The Human Condition 3.** We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

**Jesus Christ 4.** We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

**The Work of Christ 5.** We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

**The Holy Spirit 6.** We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

**The Church 7.** We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

**Christian Living 8.** We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

**Christ's Return 9.** We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

**Response and Eternal Destiny 10.** We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We

believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1- Application For Membership**

1. This church shall receive as members only those who have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who by their lives manifest a born-again experience.
2. No person shall be excluded from membership because of sex, race, national or ethnic origin or color.
3. He/she must preclude disagreement with any of, and willingness to live in harmony with, all ten (10) articles of the EFCA Statement of Faith and abide by the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies of this church.
4. The applicant shall be required to share his or her personal testimony of faith in Christ with selected Elder Board members or those whom the Elder Board designates (two or more).
5. The Elder Board shall examine all applicants for membership to determine if they are members of the Body of Christ, and to determine if they sincerely support the purpose of this local Church as stated in Article II. If the Elder Board, in its sole discretion, determines that the moral and spiritual character of an individual would not support the stated purpose of this local church, then his/her application for membership shall be rejected.
6. When the Elder Board is confident of the applicant's faith in Christ, assurance of salvation, desire to live the Christian life, and willingness to submit to the fellowship and discipline of this local Body, the Elder Board shall then post the names of the candidates publicly for two weeks.
7. Any member of the church objecting must give to an Elder, in writing, a just cause in accordance with the Word of God and the Constitution of this church why this candidate should not be accepted. Taking these objections into consideration, the Elder Board shall then vote on acceptance of these candidates into the membership of the church.

8. Those who are admitted into membership in the church shall be formally presented and given the right hand of fellowship at a service the following Sunday or as soon as can be arranged.
9. Pastors and their wives automatically become members with full voting privileges on receipt and acceptance of a call from the church.

### **Section 2 – Junior Members**

1. No person under the age of twelve years shall be considered for membership.
2. Candidates between the ages of twelve and eighteen shall be received as junior members if they meet the requirements for adult membership.
3. A junior member may not make motions or vote, but is encouraged to participate in the discussion of business.
4. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, a Junior member shall automatically receive the full rights and privileges of an adult member.

### **Section 3- Membership Roll**

1. The membership roll shall be supervised by the Elder Board.
2. The membership roll shall be reviewed periodically by the Elder Board or those selected by the Elder Board to determine if the needs of any members have been neglected, or if any name should be removed from the roll.
3. If any member should be absent from the church services for a period of six months, without communicating with the same, the elders shall endeavor to contact such member and unless he/she has an acceptable reason, the name of said member shall be removed from the roll and notified of this action.

### **Section 4 – Discipline**

1. If any member of the church is found to be living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith of this church, he/she shall be counseled in love by the Pastor or by the Elder Board. If efforts to bring repentance and restoration fail, then the Elder Board will follow the procedures outlined in the following passages of Scripture: Matthew 18: 15-18; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1-2.
2. No accusation shall be considered by the church against any Elder or member unless supported by at least two witnesses. 1 Timothy 5:19

3. Any member who has withdrawn or has been dismissed has no right or claim upon the church property, real or personal.

## **ARTICLE V – RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Section 1 – Local Autonomy**

This church is independent and free so far as relates to its internal organization and the regulation of its own affairs. It is in subjection to no ecclesiastical body, except by its own consent. It controls the admission, discipline and removal of its members according to its own understanding of the Word of God.

### **Section 2 – Denomination**

Realizing the necessity and advantage of united effort, and being in general accord with the aim and scope of the Evangelical Free Church of America, this church, by vote of the congregation, has applied for and has been accepted for membership in such, and endeavors to cooperate with the Evangelical Free Church at large and its various functions that prove in accord with its purpose. In order to maintain its membership in the Evangelical Free Church of America, this church understands that: (1) Its Statement of Faith must be verbatim that of the EFCA and Rocky Mountain District (RMD), (2) Its Constitution and Bylaws must conform to the policies and practices of the EFCA and RMD, and (3) Individuals applying for membership in this church must preclude disagreement with any of, and willingness to live in harmony with, all ten (10) articles in the EFCA Statement of Faith.

## **ARTICLE VI – PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1. This church shall have the power to buy, own, and sell property in its corporate name.
2. Conveyance or encumbrance of all or any church property may be made, provided, however, that any such action must receive at least a three-fourths majority vote of the membership of the church present at a meeting duly called pursuant to Article VII of the Constitution of this church. Instruments of conveyance or encumbrance so authorized at any such meeting shall be executed in the name of the church by the President and Secretary of the church.
3. In the event of disagreement and division in the church membership (which God forbids), the church name and all church property shall be retained by those members remaining and adhering to the Constitution and Bylaws.
4. In the event the church ceases to function or should the corporation be dissolved, the right, title, and interest in and to all of the real and personal property of the church shall accrue to the benefit of, and be vested in the Rocky Mountain District of the Evangelical Free Church of America or the successor to said Church Body, provided,

however, that the Rocky Mountain District of the Evangelical Free Church of America or its successor organization shall at the time of designation, be exempt under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, or under such other successor provision of the Code as may then be in effect. If the Rocky Mountain District of the Evangelical Free Church of America is not so exempt from federal income tax at the time of dissolution of the church, then all of the real and personal property of the church shall be distributed to the Evangelical Free Church of America.

## **ARTICLE VII**

Amendments, additions or changes to the Articles contained in this Constitution may be made at any business meeting of the church by a three-fourths majority of votes cast when said proposed amendments, additions or changes have been presented in written form and discussed at a previous regular or special meeting for discussion. Articles III, V, VI, and VII cannot be amended, added to or changed except by mutual consent of the congregation and the Rocky Mountain District of the EFCA.

# **Bylaws of The Evangelical Free Church of Lander**

**January 14, 2020**

## **SECTION 1 – STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT**

1. Ultimate authority in the church shall reside in the membership of the congregation. They shall annually approve Biblically qualified Lay Elders. The Elder Board shall oversee the routine operation and government of the church as delegated by the congregational meetings.
2. In order to meet state legal requirements of incorporation, the Elder Board will elect from its members the following officers each year: A President; a Secretary. These men shall serve as the corporate officers of the church.

## **SECTION 2- ELDERS**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Elders shall be members of this church who are mature, godly men, who fully support the Bible, the Statement of Faith of this church, its Constitution, Bylaws and Policies and who manifest the qualifications stipulated by the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 5-9).

### **2. Selection**

- A. 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. Acts 6.
- B. Selection will be made on the basis of spiritual qualifications, leadership qualifications, and commitment to this church and to the Evangelical Free Church of America.
- C. At any such time as the need arises to appoint an Elder, the Elder Board shall nominate men to fill the position. These nominees shall be prayerfully evaluated and screened by the Elder Board according to the qualifications of an Elder (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 5-9). The results of a nominee's evaluation shall be privately shared with him by the Elder Board.
- D. The Elder Board shall submit their selection(s) to the membership for affirmation by closed ballot at the annual or special business meeting.

### **3. Term of Service**

- A. Each Lay Elder shall be affirmed by the congregation each year. There shall be no limit to the number of terms an Elder may serve if he serves well and does not disqualify himself.
- B. Any Elder who does not fulfill the qualifications or duties of his office, or does not faithfully attend the stated services of the church shall, after notice and attempt to restore said member, be asked by the Elder Board to resign from the Elder Board.

### **4. Evaluation, Discipline and Accountability**

The Elder Board shall evaluate itself and its members. It shall be a self-disciplining board according to Matthew 18: 15-20; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14-15; 1 Timothy 5: 19-20. However, the Elders are directly accountable to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, for all their actions and decisions (Hebrews 13:17). They are also accountable to the membership.

### **5. Function**

The Elders will have essentially a three-fold function: (1) To build and develop their own families in the Lord (1 Timothy 3: 4-5); (2) To feed, shepherd and pray for the flock of God (John 21: 15-17; Acts 10: 17-32; Acts 6: 1-4), which includes positive impartation of truth, refutation of error, and administration of discipline; (3) To oversee and manage the entire ministry of this local Body (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5: 2-3), assess the needs of the entire body, plan, evaluate and appoint those to assist in various areas of responsibility.

### **6. Basis of Authority**

The basis of authority for all the deliberations and activities of the Elder Board shall be the Scripture.

### **7. Decision Making Process**

The Elder Board shall approach decisions in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit. They shall earnestly seek to reach a unanimous decision without coercion.

### **8. Quorum for Elder Board Meetings**

A quorum for an Elder Board Meeting shall consist of a simple majority of the members of that board.



## **9. Organization**

The Elder Board shall be self-organizing. That is, the various functions and areas of responsibility of the Elder Board shall be delegated among the Board members. A Moderator, other than a Pastor, shall be selected each year by the Elder Board. He shall preside over Congregational Business Meetings. A Vice Moderator shall also be selected from among the Board members. The role of the Vice Moderator shall be to preside over Congregational Business Meetings in the absence of the Moderator.

### **SECTION 3 – TEAMS AND COMMITTEES**

#### **1. Selection**

Ministry Team members as well as Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall be recommended by the Elder Board to the congregation for appointment. Members of other committees and personnel needed for effective service in the church may be directly appointed by the Elder Board.

#### **2. Affirmation**

The members of each respective ministry team shall be affirmed by the church membership. All Ministry Team members, Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer must be members of the church.

#### **3. Policies**

The Elder Board shall maintain a current manual which shall include policies and all pertinent information and instructions for efficiency in the day-by-day operation of the church. The information contained in this may be amended or changed by the Elder Board as needed. This manual shall be available to the congregation upon request.

### **SECTION 4 – BUSINESS MEETINGS**

#### **1. Scheduled Meetings**

The congregation as a whole shall have at least one scheduled business meeting during the year. This will be the Annual Meeting held on the first Thursday of May, or such other date as set by the Elder Board.

#### **2. Special Meetings**

- A. Special congregational business meetings may be called at any time by the Elder Board or by a written request by ten or more church members presented to the Elder Board.

- B. These meetings, along with the stated purpose of the meeting, shall be announced publicly at the morning worship service on two consecutive Sundays, immediately preceding the special business meeting, or by written notice to the members and public announcement at the morning worship service on one Sunday, immediately preceding the special business meeting.

### **3. Voting Rights**

Members eighteen years of age or older shall be eligible to vote.

### **4. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> and end the following May 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **5. Decisions By Affirmation**

We will, as a congregation, operate under an affirmation of approval of all issues brought before the congregation by the Elder Board.

In all affirmation votes, if there is not a 75% affirmation by the members present on any given issue, the issue will be considered to be not affirmed by the membership.

- A) For affirmation of appointments such as an elder, each dissenting voter must be identified so that the Elder Board can investigate the objection(s) and determine the validity of the objection(s) and then report back to the congregation whether or not the candidate has been affirmed.
- B) On issues of budget, property, etc., affirmation by the membership will be requested after an explanation of the policy or issue has been offered. Each issue may be amended by motion and simple majority vote during the meeting before the affirmation vote is taken. If there are objections to the final proposal, each dissenting voter's concern will be investigated as to validity and the elders will make a final determination as to whether the concern has enough merit to declare a lack of affirmation.

### **6. Quorums**

The voting members attending any business meeting which has been properly announced shall constitute a quorum to conduct business. A member must be present at any meeting to vote.

## **SECTION 5 – PASTORS**

### **1. The Calling of a Pastor**

- A. The Elder Board shall recommend suitable candidates for Pastoral positions. Candidates shall be presented to the congregation one at a time.
- B. Candidates for Senior Pastor must be ordained ministers and must agree in writing to fully support the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
- C. Candidates for pastoral positions other than Senior Pastor must either be an ordained minister or willing and qualified to become ordained and must agree in writing to fully support the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
- D. The candidate shall have opportunity to preach at a church service(s) as the Elder Board may direct, and be interviewed by that Board. Candidates for Associate Pastor or other ministry staff positions may or may not be asked to preach but shall be given adequate opportunities to become acquainted with the congregation.
- E. Once the Elder Board determines it has a man to recommend as a candidate for a call, the congregation shall be convened for a special business meeting. The recommendation should be presented with all the reasons for suggesting him as a candidate. The congregation shall then vote as to whether or not it desires to send the recommended candidate a call. If the candidate receives at least a three-fourths majority vote, each dissenting voter must be identified so that the Elder Board can investigate the objection(s) and determine the validity of the objection(s). The Elder Board will then report back to the congregation as to whether or not the call will be extended. Should the candidate receive less than a three-fourths majority vote, the matter goes back to the Elder Board for the presentation of new recommendations. No candidate may be presented to the congregation for a vote the second time until at least two other candidates have been voted upon. Each candidate shall be voted upon separately following his meeting with the Elder Board and the church.
- F. The Elder Board shall notify the Pastor-elect of the action of the church immediately, and upon his affirmative reply make arrangements for his moving and installation.

### **2. Termination of Office**

- A. A Pastor shall serve an unlimited term of service unless other arrangements are made at the time the call is accepted.
- B. The relation between a Pastor and the church may be dissolved at the option of either, by the giving of one months notice, or by mutual consent.

- C. If a Pastor should depart from the Word of God in his conduct or in doctrine as contained in the Statement of Faith of the church, or demonstrate proven ineffectiveness in ministry as determined by the Elder Board, the Elders shall admonish him in love, and should this not have the desired result of restoration, said Pastor shall be discharged by action of the church. Should a Pastor be discharged for this reason, advance notice shall not be required.
- D. A Pastor may be discharged from his term of office by the church subject to the following conditions:
  - i. A Pastor may only be dismissed by the congregation at a properly called business meeting called specifically for that purpose.
  - ii. After hearing the reasons for his recommended dismissal, a Pastor shall be accorded the right of stating his position before the congregation. He (and his family) shall absent themselves at the time of voting.
  - iii. A ballot vote of simple majority of the members present shall make valid determination of the term of office of a Pastor
- E. The Pastor may be required to step down from his duties while waiting for the business meeting if, in the decision of the Elders, his presence would be damaging to the testimony of the church.

### **3. The Duties of the Senior Pastor**

- A. He shall perform all of the scriptural duties of this office, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have freedom of the pulpit. These shall include leading and preaching at the stated services of the church, overseeing the entire ministry of the church, administering the ordinances of the church, caring for the spiritual welfare of the members of the church, and discipling and equipping lay people to serve in various ministries of the church.
- B. He shall be a member of the Elder Board, and an ex-officio member of all ministry teams, committees, and all other organizations of the church.
- C. He shall supervise all church staff in consultation with the Elder Board.
- D. He shall not qualify for any elected office or appointed office on the Elder Board, nor can he serve as the Church Moderator or Vice Moderator.
- E. He shall abide by the Word of God in his life, teaching and preaching, taking great care in all his conduct so as to be esteemed a man of respect in the congregation and community.

#### **4. The Duties of an Associate Pastor**

- A. He shall perform such duties in connection with the work of the church as prescribed by the Senior Pastor.
- B. He shall be a member of the Elder Board and an ex-officio member of all ministry teams, committees, and all other organizations of the church.
- C. He shall not qualify for any elected office or appointed office on the Elder Board, nor can he serve as the Church Moderator or Vice Moderator.
- D. He shall abide by the Word of God in his life, teaching and preaching, taking great care in all his conduct so as to be esteemed a man of respect in the congregation and community.

#### **SECTION 6 – AMENDMENTS AND PROVISIONS FOR BY-LAWS**

Amendments, additions or changes to these Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the church by a three-fourths majority of votes cast when said proposed amendments, additions or changes have been presented in written form and discussed at a previous regular or special meeting for discussion.