



# Bylaws

## **Article I: Membership**

### **A. Eligibility**

Membership in this organization is open to any person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is living a life that reflects a commitment to becoming a fully devoted follower of Him. Members are expected to subscribe to the Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith, to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this organization, and to support the church in attendance, prayer, and giving. Voting is limited to members 16 years of age and older.

### **B. Application Procedure**

1. Those professing faith in Christ and desiring membership will complete an application form and participate in membership instruction. A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws will be given to all applicants along with the application form.
2. An applicant will meet with three members of the Faith Team, one of whom is the Senior Pastor (if the position is filled), to review the application form and give verbal testimony of his/her faith in Jesus Christ.
3. After hearing the applicant's testimony, the Faith Team will evaluate the application. Any concerns regarding the applicant's qualifications must be accompanied by Scriptural reasons. The Faith Team will affirm that the applicants have completed the membership process.
4. Applicants admitted to membership shall be offered the opportunity to be officially received and welcomed at a subsequent worship service.
5. An updated membership list will be presented at the annual congregational meeting.

### **C. Privileges**

1. An active member who is 16 years of age or older has the right to vote in all matters calling for a church vote.
2. A member who is 21 years of age or older may be elected to any office for which he/she meets qualifications.
3. Members shall be considered "inactive" when they move out of the communities into which the church's ministries extend, or if during the previous six (6) months they have not registered their attendance at any worship service.
4. Members determined to be "inactive" shall have no voting rights at any church vote and will not be considered part of its required quorum.
5. Members who are temporarily located away from the church, such as college students and military personnel, shall be returned to "active" member status upon their resumption of attendance.

### **D. Responsibilities**

Members are expected to:

- live together peacefully.
- give support and encouragement.
- accept one another in failure.
- give and receive correction as needed.
- contribute to the common good.
- respect authority.
- adjust to changing needs.
- practice financial stewardship.
- do what needs to be done.
- do it all in an atmosphere of love.

### **E. Removal**

1. Any member who has been absent more than twelve (12) consecutive months, from whom no communication has been received, (except in case of Section C, 5 above) may be dropped from membership by a majority vote of the Faith Team.
2. Any member who wishes to withdraw from the Church shall provide such notification in writing to a member of the Faith Team and shall receive a letter of dismissal or transfer, if requested.
3. Any member who is living in a way that is contrary to the Word of God, as understood by the Faith Team, and after contact and effort by the Faith Team refuses to repent will be considered for removal. The Faith Team shall follow the church discipline process outlined below before membership is terminated.
4. Death

## F. Church Discipline

1. The purpose of discipline is to restore a person to faith and fellowship.
2. Any church member or professing Christian in regular fellowship with the church who engages in conduct that, in the opinion of the Faith Team, is not in harmony with what the Bible teaches shall be encouraged to repent and forsake such conduct.
3. Sinful conduct necessitating church discipline shall include, but not be limited to the following:
  - a. Divisiveness, which is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the church (Titus 3:10)
  - b. Immoral behavior (including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc. 1 Cor. 5-6)
  - c. Questionable financial conduct (stealing, tax fraud, misuse of funds, properties, or assets 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10)
  - d. Theological views that are heretical or that stand in direct opposition to the teachings of the church and its

### Statement of Faith (2 John 7-11)

4. Every member of the church, who has knowledge of a Christian Brother or Sister's sinful conduct necessitating church discipline, should consider it his or her personal duty to warn and correct that individual.
  - a. This warning and corrective action is to be done in private, just between the two of them (Matt. 18:15).
  - b. However, if the sinning individual does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall go to him/her accompanied by one or two other believers, to further warn the sinning individual to repent and forsake their wrongful behavior (Matt 18:16).
  - c. If that individual still refuses to heed the warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the Faith Team in a private and confidential manner. However, no accusation shall be taken up by the church against any member or pastor except by the complaint of two or three Christian witnesses (Matt 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:19).
  - d. Two Faith Team members, accompanied by the accusing member shall then attempt to meet with the person accused of sinful behavior to substantiate the concern, and if substantiated, to warn of his/her need to immediately forsake the wrong behavior.
  - e. If further action is necessary, that person will be asked to meet with the Faith Team for a fair and impartial hearing of all the facts ascertainable. If the sinning individual refuses to forsake their sinful behavior, or refuses to meet with the Faith Team, church discipline shall result. This shall be done only after prayerful consideration and upon a three-fourths (75%) majority vote of the Faith Team. No Faith Team member, however, is entitled to vote on his/her own discipline.
  - f. The disciplined individual may appeal to the congregation at the next scheduled quarterly meeting. A majority vote of the congregation is needed to uphold the Faith Team decision.

### 5. Nature of the Church's Discipline

- a. For non-members, this shall include their exclusion from serving in any church ministry.
- b. For church members, this shall include their exclusion from serving in any church ministry and termination of their membership and all of its rights.
- c. For pastors or other paid members of the church's staff, their employment by the church shall also be terminated.
- d. The decision by the Congregation is final, and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.
- e. A letter shall be sent from the Faith Team to the sinning individual confirming the termination of their membership, serving, and/or employment, and shall include added encouragement to repent and an invitation to restored fellowship when they do (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

6. The ultimate purpose of church discipline is to seek the spiritual restoration to fellowship for any individual who has been disciplined by the church (2 Cor. 2: 5-11). Persons, after being removed from the membership, who repent and desire to rejoin the church, must apply for membership according to Article 1, Section B of these Bylaws.

## **Article II: Church Government**

### A. Qualifications for Leadership Positions

- All members who are at least twenty-one (21) years old and who exhibit the following characteristics are eligible.
1. He/she is trustworthy, respected in the community, and exemplifies Christ in his/her daily life. He/she must also have an understanding of the philosophy and vision of the Seasons of Faith Fellowship Church.
  2. He/she should possess a servanthood attitude toward God and others.
  3. He/she must see others as valuable to the Lord and basically equal in His sight.

### B. List of Faith Team Members

The Faith Team will consist of an elected chairperson, vice-chairperson, church clerk, treasurer, financial secretary (when the annual budget is equal or greater than \$75,000), and the senior pastor (when the position is filled). Non-voting members will include an appointed representative from the Worship Ministry, the Children and Youth Ministry, and the Outreach Ministry.

### C. Duties of Faith Team Members

The management and government of the Church between congregational meetings shall be vested in the Faith Team as representatives of the Congregation, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It shall be the duty of the Faith Team to assist the pastoral staff in exercising oversight over the Church, shepherding the flock with a humble heart (1 Peter 5:2), to guard the purity of doctrine, and to establish policy consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws. The

Faith Team shall act for the Church in the reception, discipline, and dismissal of members. They shall assist in the teaching of the Word, counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick and disciplining believers. They may appoint committees, either standing or ad hoc, to help accomplish the work of the ministry. The Faith Team shall have administrative oversight of the finances of the church. They will prepare the annual budget, provide an annual financial audit and keep the facilities and physical property of the Church in good repair.

1. **Chairperson:** It shall be the duty of the Chairperson to preside at all meetings of the Congregation and to oversee administrative functions of the Church. The Chairperson shall have the right to attend all board and committee meetings as an ex. officio member. The Chairperson shall also preside whenever there is a joint meeting of the Faith Team and another ministry team.

2. **Vice-Chairperson:** It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chairperson to preside at all meetings in the absence of the Chairperson or when there is any action before the Congregation pertaining to the office of Chairperson. In case of a vacancy in the pulpit, due to illness of the Senior Pastor or when there is no Senior Pastor, the Vice-Chairperson shall be responsible for obtaining coverage for pastoral responsibilities.

3. **Church Clerk:** It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to take minutes of all congregational and Faith Team meetings and to act in behalf of the church in signing legal papers, as required.

4. **Treasurer:** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep accurate and auditable records of all disbursements of funds for the Church. The Treasurer shall provide regular reports on the state of Church finances to the Faith Team and the Congregation. In the absence of a Financial Secretary, the Treasurer will assume the duties of that position as well.

5. **Financial Secretary:** The position of Financial Secretary shall be filled when the Church has an annual budget equal to or greater than \$75,000. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to keep auditable, accurate records of all income for the Church. The Financial Secretary shall make sure that one other person authorized by the Faith Team is present when offerings are counted and shall deposit all funds as quickly as possible. The Financial Secretary shall provide regular reports of Church income to the Faith Team and the Congregation. The giving records of individuals shall be kept completely confidential.

6. **Worship Ministry Representative:** The Worship Ministry Team shall appoint one of its members as an ex. officio representative to the Faith Team. The Worship Ministry Representative shall give input on all matters before the Faith Team and shall exercise due diligence in the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

7. **Children and Youth Ministry Representative:** The Children and Youth Ministry Team shall appoint one of its members as an ex. officio representative to the Faith Team. The Children and Youth Ministry Representative shall give input on all matters before the Faith Team and shall exercise due diligence in the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

8. **Outreach Ministry Team Representative:** The Outreach Ministry Team shall appoint one of its members as an ex. officio representative to the Faith Team. The Outreach Ministry Representative shall give input on all matters before the Faith Team and shall exercise due diligence in the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

#### D. Election/Nomination of Officers

1. Until such time as there are one-hundred (100) active, voting eligible members, nominations for elected office shall be made from the floor during the annual congregational meeting.

2. Once the Church has one-hundred (100) or greater active, voting eligible members, the nominating committee shall be responsible for recommending candidates for elected Faith Team positions to the Congregation. The nominating committee shall consist of three members who are appointed by the Faith Team. The nominating committee will be appointed three months prior to the annual congregational corporate meeting.

3. The nominating committee shall recruit spiritually mature individuals from the Congregation, who meet the qualifications for office, to be candidates for elected office. Suggestions for nominations may be made by any member of the Congregation to a committee member. The committee shall submit the names of at least two candidates for each open office to the Faith Team no later than one month before the annual meeting. The names of the nominees will be published no later than two weeks prior to the annual meeting.

4. The election of all officers is by secret ballot of all voting eligible members present. The candidate for each office with the highest vote total shall be declared the winner.

5. All elected Faith Team positions are for a period of three years. The positions being filled will be staggered so as to create smooth transitions. The Chairperson and Clerk will be elected in year one, the Treasurer in year two and the Vice-Chairperson and Financial Secretary in year three.

#### E. Limitation of Power

No officer, board or committee of this Church shall assume any of the following prerogatives without express congregational consent.

1. To amend this Constitution and Bylaws
2. To call pastoral staff
3. To purchase, sell, or mortgage real property on behalf of the Church
4. Authorize the non-budgeted expenditure of more than 3% of the annual expense budget without congregational consent

### **Article III: Pastoral Staff**

#### **A. Qualifications**

Each individual called or chosen to become part of the Pastoral Staff must:

1. be known to be of exemplary spiritual character.
2. be full of wisdom, full of the Holy Spirit, and full of faith with great vision for what God can and will do.
3. be gifted by God with the ministry skills, knowledge, and experience needed to provide and develop leadership, and produce spiritual growth through their assigned area of ministry.
4. have a passion for ministry.
5. embrace equipping others to do the work of ministry.

Already hold a valid credential with the EFCA or must pursue the appropriate credential with the EFCA. They must begin the process within two years of their starting date of ministry with Seasons of Faith Fellowship Church.

#### **B. Selection Procedure**

##### **Senior Pastor:**

1. The Faith Team shall appoint a Pastoral Search Team to solicit candidates that meet the credentials of the EFCA and investigate each regarding their personal beliefs, education, pastoral record, giftedness, and qualifications for the position.
2. The Pastoral Search Team shall then make their recommendations to the Faith Team.
3. The Faith Team and the Pastoral Search Team shall both interview the candidate. A candidate who receives unanimous approval will be invited to an informal church get acquainted session and will be invited to preach before the congregation at a regular Sunday service(s).
4. A special church meeting shall occur within ten (10) days after the visit of the candidate to consider the recommendation of the Faith Team.
5. A seventy five percent (75%) affirmative vote of cast votes shall be necessary for the extension of a call to a Senior Pastor. The vote shall be by secret ballot of all voting eligible members present.

##### **Other Pastoral Staff:**

1. The addition of any new pastoral staff position must be approved in advance by the Congregation through the budgetary process at the annual meeting or, in case of an emergency, at any congregational meeting.
2. The Faith Team will appoint a Pastoral Search Team to solicit candidates for the position and investigate each regarding their personal beliefs, education, ministry record, giftedness and qualifications for the position.
3. The Pastoral Search Team shall then make their recommendation to the Faith Team.
4. The Faith Team and the Pastoral Search Committee will both interview the candidate. A candidate that receives unanimous approval will be invited to an informal church get acquainted session.
5. A special church meeting shall occur within ten (10) days after the candidate's visit (unless a regular business meeting is already scheduled) to consider the recommendation of the Faith Team.
6. A 75% affirmative vote of cast votes shall be necessary for the extension of a call to other pastoral staff. The vote shall be by secret ballot of all voting eligible members present.

#### **C. Responsibilities/Accountabilities**

##### **Senior Pastor:**

The Senior Pastor is the teaching elder for the Congregation.

1. **Spiritual Leadership:** model servant leadership and provide overall spiritual guidance to the church and its ministries.
2. **Preaching:** make the study, teaching and preaching of God's Word the chief and primary duty.
3. **Strategic Planning:** provide Biblical vision and direction for the Church that will best achieve the Church's purpose and mission.
4. **Leadership Development:** give overall direction and ongoing spiritual Ministry training to the staff and the Faith Team, and insure development of leadership training throughout the church. The Senior Pastor will attend the Central District and EFCA annual conferences as often as possible, as well as other District and National events. He will also encourage the rest of the staff and leaders of Seasons of Faith to regularly participate in the District and denominational events.
5. **Worship Service Oversight:** In collaboration with the Worship Ministry Team oversee arrangements, conduct, and speakers of all the church's public and regular services.
6. **Administration:** Serve as a voting member of the Faith Team and an ex. officio member of all church ministry teams. Insure the effective administration of the church office staff.
7. **Accountability:** There shall be mutual accountability between the Faith Team and the Senior Pastor.

##### **Other Pastoral Staff:**

1. **Administrative Leadership:** Serve as the primary administrative leaders of the church.

2. **Accountability:** Be accountable to and serve under the direction of the Senior Pastor.
3. **Duties:** Shall be determined by the Senior Pastor with the support of the Faith Team.
4. **Salaries:** Shall be approved by the Congregation at the annual meeting or at a duly called special meeting.

#### **Article IV: Other Staff and Ministry Teams**

##### A. Other Staff

These are paid, full or part-time program directors, assistants and interns who administratively report to the pastoral staff. The addition of staff positions must fit within budgetary guidelines approved by the Congregation. Candidates shall be selected by the pastoral staff and must be approved by the Faith Team.

##### B. Ministry Teams

1. Ministry teams will be created or dissolved by the Faith Team as needed, to develop and carry out specific ministries that fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
2. Ministry teams will be lead by active church members in good standing. Team leaders shall be selected by the pastoral staff and must be approved by the Faith Team. In the absence of pastoral staff, selections will be made by the Faith Team.
3. Team leaders are accountable to the Faith Team. Their appointment will be reviewed annually by the Faith Team for either continued leadership or reassignment.
4. Team members are selected by the team leader and must be affirmed by the Faith Team. Team members are not required to be members of the church, but must be believers who exhibit godly character and are submissive to church leadership. It is recommended that the majority of any team be composed of church members.
5. The ministry teams at the inception of the church are:
  - a. **Worship Ministry Team:** The worship team is charged with creating an exciting, God honoring environment for worship. Each week the team must display the ability to lead Seasons of Faith audiences into a meaningful worship experience. The team will assist the Senior Pastor with worship service planning and manage the details required to implement the plan. They will lead or assist the musicians, vocalists, and technical teams to produce a great worship program.
  - b. **Children and Youth Ministry Team:** The children and youth team is charged with developing a young people's ministry that is creative and energetic, while maintaining a nurturing environment. Their focus is the spiritual development and maturation of our young people.
  - c. **Outreach Ministry Team:** The outreach team is charged with developing programs, studies, missions and social activities that honor God and encourage relationships, in fulfillment of our vision.

#### **Article V: Termination of Tenure of Officers and Staff**

##### Vacancy and Removal

An elected or appointed office shall be declared vacant when any of the following conditions occur:

1. Death or capacity altering disability
2. Resignation
3. Failure to attend fifty percent (50%) of the regularly scheduled meetings without a valid reason within a six-month period.
4. Removal from office by action of the Faith Team. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority is required to remove an officer from office. The officer shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of the accusers. He/she shall not be present during any discussions concerning him/her or during any voting.

##### B. Filling a Vacancy

Whenever a vacancy occurs in any elected office, the Faith Team may appoint someone to fill that vacancy until the next quarterly congregational meeting, at which time the one chosen to fill the vacancy must be presented to the Congregation for approval.

##### C. Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff

1. The Senior Pastor and all pastoral staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time and two months notice must be given by either the staff member or by the Church for the termination of ministry.
2. The Faith Team may, by a seventy five percent (75%) majority vote, recommend the dismissal of the Senior Pastor or pastoral staff to the congregation. Termination requires a majority vote cast by voting eligible members present at the special meeting. Voting will be by secret ballot.

##### D. Other Staff and Ministry Teams

The Faith Team by seventy five percent (75%) vote may dismiss other staff or ministry team members.

## **Article VI: Meetings**

### **A. Congregational meetings**

1. The annual, congregational corporate meeting will be held during the month of October each year. At this meeting annual reports shall be received, officers elected and other necessary business transacted. The fiscal year shall end on September 30.

2. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Chairperson, by any two Faith Team members, or by a written petition of a quorum of the active membership. Notice of such special meetings shall be given by announcement at two regular Sunday worship services prior to the meeting.

### **B. Rules of Order**

The rules of order contained in Roberts' Rules of Order (latest revision) shall govern this organization when it is not inconsistent with the Bible, the Church's constitution and Bylaws. "Ex officio" in this document shall be defined as "non-voting."

### **C. Quorum**

1. Fifteen percent (15%) of the active, voting eligible membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at congregational meetings. However, the quorum shall be twenty-five percent (25%) for the annual meeting and any meeting at which the Constitution and Bylaws are amended or a decision is made to call or dismiss a pastor.

2. If a quorum is not reached, a special meeting will be called for two weeks later and business will be transacted by the members present, regardless of their number.

3. A quorum of all ministry teams and committees shall be a majority of the members.

### **D. Voting Procedure**

1. All matters shall be determined by majority vote (one more than one-half of all the votes cast), except as otherwise specified by these Bylaws.

2. All voting shall be done by a show of hands unless a secret ballot is specified by the Bylaws. In close votes, hands will be counted by both the Chairman and the Clerk.

## **Article VII: Miscellaneous**

### **A. Organizations within the Church**

1. No organization shall be formed within or considered to be part of the Church activities before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the Faith Team for their approval and sanction.

2. The various organizations are requested to confer with the Chairperson of the Church from time to time regarding their plans and activities and to submit copies of their minutes to the Faith Team regularly. All matters of importance which affect the Church shall be submitted to the Faith Team for approval in advance.

3. No organization shall be permitted to function under the name of the Church whose chairperson or supervisor is not a member of the Church.

### **B. Fundraising**

Fundraising is limited to specific mission projects. General expenses of the church should be supported by the members. Methods of raising funds by any and all organizations operating as part of the Church shall be subject to the approval of the Faith Team in advance.

### **C. Recordkeeping**

The church shall keep and maintain the following records:

1. Financial records (adequate and correct books and records of accounts).
2. Written minutes of all Faith Team and Congregational meetings.
3. Church membership (list of members to be kept current).
4. Contribution statements (made available for all contributions).
5. Asset records (church property, facilities, equipment, etc.)

All such records shall be kept at the church office, and (with the exception of contribution statements) shall be available for inspection by any member of the church. In case there is no church office, the treasurer will keep items 1, 4, and 5 and the Clerk will keep items 2 and 3.

## **Article VIII: Amendments**

Amendments to these Bylaws must be approved by the Faith Team or submitted by five members from different households to the Faith Team, who will submit them in writing to the membership at least two weeks prior to a regular business meeting or duly authorized special meeting. A seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote of the votes cast by voting eligible members present is required for adoption.

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