

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We the members of The Evangelical Free Church of Crystal Lake, in order to carry out more effectively the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - CHURCH NAME

The name of this Church shall be "The Evangelical Free Church of Crystal Lake."

ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION

This Church shall be independent and self-governing, and it shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America through its Great Lakes District Conference or its successor.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this Local Church is to glorify God:

- To show love to the unsaved and to minister to their physical and spiritual needs and to present to them the way of salvation,
- To evangelize and disciple on mission fields at home and abroad,
- To assemble to worship God, to administer the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and to fellowship with His body of believers,
- To reflect our oneness in Jesus Christ and promote unity in the Body,
- To build up and equip the believers to minister to each other's needs and accept the leading of the Holy Spirit in the discipline of Christian living in accordance with God's Word. -Ephesians 4:1-16.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH FOCUS

Recognizing the purpose of this Church as all encompassing, with the aid of the Holy Spirit we will minister to all. However, as the Lord adds to our resources it is our intention to especially emphasize and focus our efforts in the areas of Christian Education, Missions, and our Youth.

ARTICLE V - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

SECTION 1 – From the Evangelical Free Church of America

- 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 (Deut. 6:4; Psalm 102:25-27; Matt. 3:16-17; I Peter 1:18-20; Rev. 5:9-14).
- 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 (John 17:17; Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 10:23; II Peter 1:16-21).
- 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 (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 5:12-21; Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 1:21-22).
- 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 (Luke 23:44-24:7; John 1:1-3, 15-18; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 7:22-27).
- 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 (Rom. 3:21-26; Eph. 2:4-8; Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 9:22-28).
- 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 (John 16:7-15; Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 1:13-14).
- 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 (Matt. 28:18-20; I Cor. 11:23-26, 12:12-27; Eph. 4:4-6, 15-16; Heb. 10:25).

- 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 (Matt. 5:13-16; Eph. 2:10; 4:1, 20-32; 6:10-18; I John 5:1-5).
- 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 (Acts 1:7-11; Titus 2:13-14; I John 3:1-3; Rev. 19:11-20:10).
- 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 (Matt. 25:46; John 1:12, 3:16; Acts 20:21; Rev. 20:11-21:7). Amen.

SECTION 2 – Local Church Distinctives

- 1) We believe in the existence of the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, prince of the power of the air and the kingdom of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matt. 4:1-3; Eph. 2:2; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10; Luke 11:14-23).
- 2) We believe that New Testament baptism by immersion "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: is a symbol of our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Lord, and of our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Candidates for membership are urged to be baptized, but baptism is not a prerequisite to Church membership (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:36-39).
- 3) We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death and should be observed until He comes again. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is for believers only and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (I Cor. 11:23-33).
- 4) We believe that marriage is ordained by God to join one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as a human object lesson of a divine relationship (Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:21-33; Heb. 13:4).
 - a. We believe that marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the partners (Rom. 7:2-3; I Cor. 7:39). Divorce is strongly discouraged but permitted because of fornication and/or adultery (Matt. 5:32, 19:3-9), or because the unbelieving partner forsakes the believing partner and institutes the divorce (I Cor. 7:10-24).
 - b. We believe that Christians should neither marry unbelievers, nor enter into any other entangling alliances with them (I John 2:15-17; II Cor. 6:14-18).

- c. We believe that God commands sexual intimacy to only occur between one man and one woman who are married to each other and that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage (Heb. 13:4, I Cor. 7:1-5).
- d. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (I John 1:9, I Cor. 6:9-11). We believe that every person must be afforded love and kindness. Hateful behavior does not accord with Scripture or the doctrines of the church (I Cor. 13:4-7, Prov. 15:1, 1 Peter 3:15).

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who give evidence by their confession and their conduct that they are living in real fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and have been received into membership at a business meeting of the Church.

ARTICLE VII - PROPERTY

SECTION 1 – Power of Control

This Church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the Church or in trust to the benefit of the church.

SECTION 2 – Division of the Church

In case of the division of this Local Church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), the property of the Church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and Bylaws.

SECTION 3 – Dissolution of the Church

In the event of the dissolution of this Local Church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), all property belonging to the Church, real personal, and mixed and wherever situated, shall automatically become the property of the Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America or its successor organization if said Conference or successor is then in existence; and otherwise said property shall automatically become the property of the Evangelical Free Church of America or its successor organization. If the Evangelical Free Church of America or its successor has at that time also ceased to exist, said property shall be conveyed and transferred by the Board of Trustees of the Church to any successor organization which shall at the time of conveyance and transfer under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended and which shall have objectives consistent with those of the Church.

SECTION 4 – Determination of Dissolution

This Local Church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the church itself, or when the Church has not held an annual meeting for three successive years, or when less than six members remain.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing prior to any vote. Amendments must receive preliminary adoption at an Annual Business Meeting and final adoption at a succeeding Annual Business Meeting. Adoption at both meetings requires the affirmative vote of two thirds of the membership present, and a quorum shall be one fourth of the total membership.

Article IV CHURCH FOCUS was added, the EFC of A 12 point Doctrinal statement adopted, minor modifications were made, and the complete Constitution reaffirmed by a vote of the congregation on January 22, 1994.

Article V DOCTRINAL STATEMENT was revised to reflect the EFCA 10-point doctrinal statement, Article V Section 4 LOCAL CHURCH DISTINCTIVES on marriage was clarified, and other minor modifications were approved by a vote on the congregation on October 29, 2017.

Article V Section 1.9 DOCTRINAL STATEMENT was revised to reflect the EFCA replacement of “premillennial return” with “glorious return” by a vote of the congregation on June 28, 2020.