

Church Plant Affiliation with the EFCA's Great Lakes District

Congratulations on reaching this major milestone as a young church. We are excited that your church has grown and matured to move from church plant status to member church status. You were born as an EFCA church because of your commitment to the EFCA's Statement of Faith and the EFCA's mission to Glorify God by multiplying transformational churches among all people. You have continued as an EFCA church as your church has been growing by reaching new people with the Gospel and incorporating like-minded believers into your fellowship. So we do not see you as joining the family today, but instead we are celebrating with you that you have moved from childhood to adulthood, from church plant status under the oversight of others to full member EFCA church status.

Introduction

Generally as an EFCA church plant, the decision-making authority was entrusted to an Oversight Team who gave oversight to the church plant in matters of spiritual life, doctrine, and finances. Part of the Oversight Team's role was to help the church plant write its constitution and bylaws and aid in the process of recognizing members and affirming/installing the church's governing board.

As an autonomous, interdependent EFCA church it is important to understand how EFCA churches govern themselves. This polity is rooted in our deep conviction in the priesthood of all believers and the importance of godly, local church leaders.

The following is an excerpt from *What It Means to Be an EFCA* that is helpful in understanding how a local EFCA governs itself.

An EFC has the freedom under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to govern its own affairs in accordance with both the mind of Christ and the Word of God.

An EFC develops a local church polity that fits within the following parameters of congregationalism: The membership includes only those who have a personal faith in Christ (a believers' church). The collective membership in a duly-called meeting is the highest authority, under Christ, in the local church, exhibiting both a willingness to be scripturally accountable to the elected leadership and encouraging elected leadership to be mutually accountable to them as the ultimate authority in the local context. Moreover, members and leaders unitedly subscribe to a relationship covenant based on Matthew 18, giving priority to biblical patterns of conflict resolution and exercising biblical discipline within the context of Christian love and cultural sensitivity. Congregationalism is that form of government wherein the highest authority under Christ in a local church resides in the corporate understanding of the mind of Christ and in which a realistic process and reasonable opportunity exists by which that understanding is determined and carried out, especially as it affects such matters as:

1. Determination of membership.
2. Selection or appointment of the principal governing board.
3. Selection of the senior pastor or senior directional leader(s).
4. Approval or alteration of constitution/bylaws.
5. Approval of an annual church budget.
6. Approval of any major purchase or dissolution.

An EFC has as its local polity a form of congregationalism that fits the size and demographics of the congregation. An EFC teaches that congregationalism includes the involvement of the entire body in ministry. An EFC entrusts much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are trained, trusted and allowed to lead.

Below is checklist and some questions that will facilitate the process of being affirmed as a full member EFCA church.

Constitution and Bylaws Checklist

Please attach a copy of the church's constitution and bylaws and if applicable most recent annual report to the congregation.

- The present doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Free Church of America is the doctrinal statement of the church and any additions are in the By-Laws.
- The constitution and by-laws conform with the EFCA's "What is an EFCA church?"
- Includes a statement of affiliation in the constitution that your church "is in affiliation with the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
- Includes a statement in section on Pastoral Call that requires pastor/pastoral staff to secure EFCA credentials within eighteen (18) months of commencement of ministry.
- Includes church property rights, division and dissolution statements to your constitution as follows:
 - "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 _____ and as 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 in the name of the Church."
 - "In order to maintain the integrity of _____ church, when an irreconcilable division occurs within the body which threatens its unity and/or existence, the Superintendent, along with other members of the Great Lakes District Board of Directors, has the prerogative of taking the initiative to mediate the situation."
 - "In case of dissolution of the church organization, the assets shall be assigned to the Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the church, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain."

Basic Church Information for the records:

Name of Church:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Website:

Pastor's Name:

Pastor's Email:

Your Church's Story

Tell your church's story by answering these questions:

What church(es) partnered with you in planting the church?

What is your church's mission statement, core values, and vision?

When did your church begin regular worship services?

What is your church's strategy for making disciples?

Statistics

In the past year, how many people have come to Christ in the church plant?

What is your church's average worship attendance?

How many members (partners) does the church have as of today?

Commitment to the EFCA and the Great Lakes District

As an EFCA church of the Great Lakes District, we make the following commitments:

Regular attendance and sending of delegates to the bi-annual conference of the EFCA.

Regular attendance and sending of delegates to the annual conference of the Great Lakes District

Supporting the ministries of the GLD by giving 1.25% of our annual budget to the GLD

Supporting the ministries of the EFCA by giving 1% of our annual budget to the EFCA

Pastor: _____ Date: _____

Chairman of the Board: _____ Date: _____

Secretary: _____ Date: _____