

CONSTITUTION OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF KINGSBURG

Revised April 2009

A. NAME: The name of our church shall be THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF KINGSBURG, CALIFORNIA, dba THE ORCHARD BIBLE FELLOWSHIP.

B. NON-PROFIT STATUS AND CORPORATE OFFICERS:

1. Non-profit: Our church is a religious non-profit corporation organized for religious purposes under California's non-profit corporation law, for the private gain of no person, and was incorporated on May 28, 1907 (secretary of State Record Book 203, page 518).

2. Corporate: Because California law requires corporate officers, our Leadership Team will assign church officers to the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer (normally our treasurer for this office). As a corporation, our church has the power to buy, own and sell real property, equipment, and supplies in its own name.

C. GOVERNING DOCUMENTS: Our governing documents are as follows, with each successive document intended to be an agreement with those above. Where there is conflict, the one(s) above prevail.

1. The Bible: The principles of the entire Bible are our authoritative guide for teaching and living, and we hereby state our intention to conduct our individual and corporate affairs by the Bible, in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, our basic beliefs are those of the Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith, the 10 articles of which follow. This Statement is amendable only by official action of the EFCA, and our formal agreement. We recognize that any independent amending of this Statement would necessitate discontinuing affiliation with the EFCA.

We believe . . .

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 Him and to make all things new for His own glory.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and pre-millennial 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.

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.

2. Laws of our land: We intend to be law-abiding citizens. Insofar as we are convinced that there is no contradiction with Scripture, nor the First Amendment and other clauses of the US Constitution, we will obey the laws of our land, and govern ourselves in accord with them.

3. This Constitution: We establish this constitution, originally constructed by our congregation in 1904-07, but most recently revised on the date at the top of this document, as the basic rules of government for our church.

4. Policies and procedures: Our Leadership Team is hereby authorized to establish bylaws, and specific written policies and procedures as needed, in keeping with Scripture, state law, and this Constitution. Furthermore, under the authority of our Leadership team, our Ministry Teams are authorized to establish written policies and procedures pertaining to their area of ministry, but these must be approved by our Leadership Team. All policies and procedures will be contained in a policy book, and followed, but may be revised by the Leadership Team when circumstances dictate.

D. GOVERNING STRUCTURE:

1. "Free" church government: In keeping with biblical and Evangelical Free Church principles, our church shall remain it's our highest authority, conducting its business through the business sessions of out congregation and Leadership Team, responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ and Scriptural principles.

2. Congregational authority: The congregation will decide the following, by vote:

- Revisions to this constitution
- Affirmation of applicants into membership
- Election of our elders
- Changes in affiliation
- Calling of pastors
- Affirmation of the annual budget
- Approval of unbudgeted expenditures (if not covered by other policy)
- Decisions to take legal action
- Capital improvements and major construction projects
- Any other issue our Leadership Team chooses to place before the congregation.

3. Leadership Team and its authority: In keeping with New Testament principles of church government, we herby establish a congregationally elected Leadership Team, to be comprised of a group of men whom we choose to call by the biblical term "elders." It will give direction, set policies, maintain standards, and make sure we function as a Bible-based church honoring our Lord Jesus Christ. The selection and responsibilities of this group is described further in the bylaws.

4. Our affiliation: This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and EFCA West. As such, we may send delegates to the National and District Conferences, and shall promote and support the organizations and agencies of the EFCA. Although we look to EFCA leadership for advice and counsel, and may choose to defer occasional decisions to such leadership, this clause does not change D.1 above.

E. PURPOSE:

1. Our founding purpose (since 1904): The purpose of this church shall be the preaching of the word of God to the mutual edification, instruction, and discipline of the members and other believers; the winning of souls for Christ; and the furtherance of the gospel on the mission fields at home and abroad.

2. Our mission: Our Leadership Team is authorized to word a working mission statement based on our above purpose, and to keep it current and appropriate for our community and times. This may be expressed in five parts.

Our PURPOSE will be the broad statement above.

Our MISSION will be a more specific statement related to our community about what we intend to DO.

Our TARGET will be most specific of all, and will focus our attention for a span of time.

Our VISION will be a specific statement of the kind of church we intend to become.

Our DREAMS will be a broad statement of great things we visualize we might be able to do if our Lord so leads.

F. MEMBERSHIP: Membership in this church may be extended to anyone who has placed trust in Christ as personal Savior, who is living a life consistent with that decision, and who is able to subscribe to the principles of our Constitution and Bylaws.

G. MEETINGS: According to the requirements of state law, we will hold an Annual Business Meeting at a time set by our Leadership Team. At the meeting, we will vote on nominated officers, review a meaningfully informative financial report of the year gone by, decide on the proposed budget for the year ahead, report to the congregation on church matters, and make decisions on any other business of a congregational nature which has been proposed in advance of the meeting. Further provision for meetings will be described in the bylaws.

H. DISSENSION and DISSOLUTION:

1. Dissension: If division occurs such that peacemaking steps do not bring resolution, then we agree to request our EFCA District to provide outside leadership to moderate and give guidance. We agree that the name and all property and possessions shall be retained by those adhering to this Constitution, especially the provisions including our Statement of Beliefs and affiliation.
2. Dissolution: If our church as an organization should ever come to the place where there are not enough qualified leaders in place to conduct any ministry or business, then the congregation may vote to ask our EFCA District to provide temporary leaders until those temporary leaders (operating under authority delegated to our EFCA District) determine that the church is able to govern its own affairs again. Should our church come to the place where it is no longer able to function at all, and must be dissolved, we agree this will be done with the guidance and participation of our EFCA District. We agree that, in such a case, our property and possessions would become the property of our EFCA District, and/or would be liquidated and disposed of under the authority of our District.

I. AMENDMENTS: Our Leadership Team may propose changes to this Constitution at any congregational business meeting, by presenting the wording and reason for the change. The proposal will then be a matter of

prayer and discussion for two months. Then the Leadership Team may call another business meeting for the purpose of revising, or voting on the proposed change. A 75% affirmation is required. The procedure for changing bylaws is the same, except one month between meetings shall be sufficient.