



2026

South Suburban Church
Constitution & Bylaws

South Suburban Evangelical Free Church
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SSEFC Constitution & Bylaws

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Constitution

PREAMBLE

We, the members of South Suburban Evangelical Free Church, in order to more effectively carry out the commission given by Jesus Christ to His church in Matthew 28:18-20, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be South Suburban Evangelical Free Church.

ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION

A. Authority

The congregation, comprised of the members of the church, at its annual, regular, and any other special business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this organization.

B. Affiliation

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (hereafter referred to as EFCA) through its North Central District (hereafter referred to as NCD). This church shall also be entitled to send delegates to their conferences, support their home and foreign missions, and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ in any measure the church may officially decide.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in every way prescribed or approved by the Bible, and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent work as the Constitution and Bylaws of this organization may determine. This organization operates as a non-profit organization according to the laws of the state of Minnesota, according to the 501(C)(3) IRS code.

ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith of this organization is the same as that of the EFCA, which currently reads as follows:

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

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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.

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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 V - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall be composed of those individuals who confess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, whose conduct is in accord with their confession, agree to abide by and support this Constitution and Bylaws of this church, and have been admitted to membership and are in good standing, according to the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

The oversight of this church shall be vested in the Elders. The procedure for appointment of Elders and other Officers of this church shall be specified by the Bylaws. The qualifications, terms of office, authority, and duties of Elders and other Officers shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

Any Elder or Officer must be a Member.

ARTICLE VII - PROPERTY

- A. 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 Minnesota 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 held in the name of the church.
- B. In case of division of the church, the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and Bylaws. For help in determining who is abiding by the Constitution and Bylaws, the NCD will be consulted.
- C. In case of dissolution of the church organization, the property shall be assigned to the NCD, to enable said District to renew the work or use the value thereof for further gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three (3) years, or when fewer than ten (10) members remain.

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ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing for a first vote at a regular business meeting of the church at least three (3) months prior to the annual meeting. At the succeeding annual meeting they may be voted upon. Both votes must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership present and voting.

ARTICLE IX – PROVISION FOR BYLAWS

South Suburban Evangelical Free Church shall provide Bylaws for its government and administration. These shall not conflict with the Word of God or with this Constitution.

ARTICLE X – THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Section 1:

Alongside the EFCA Statement of Faith, we affirm and abide by any other positions and statements adopted by EFCA Boards or the EFCA Conference, including, but not limited to: ‘Biblical Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage: Resolution’ and ‘Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations.’

Section 2:

Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality

God created human beings as male and female in His image (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4). The complementary, relational nature of humanity as male and female is God’s good design and is intended for His glory and our flourishing (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Js. 3:9; cf. Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10). Sex/gender is not fluid or changeable; it is a biological reality designed by God and to be joyfully accepted as His good gift.

Biblical marriage is a covenantal, procreative, lifelong union of one biological man and one biological woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to reflect the covenant love between Christ and His Bride, the Church (Gen. 2:18, 21-25; Eph. 5:22-33). We will not perform or sanction any “marriage” that does not align with the historic biblical view of marriage affirmed by Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:5-6).

Scripture grants two life-giving options for sexual behavior: monogamous marital relations between one biological man and one biological woman (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-25; Matt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:5-8; cf. 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4) or sexual celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7; Matt. 19:12). Any form of sexual intimacy outside the bounds of biblical marriage, such as pre-marital sex, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, incest, pedophilia, or pornography is sinful and contrary to God’s good design for human sexuality (1 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5).

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BYLAWS OF SOUTH SUBURBAN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

Adopted 06/14/2026

Article I – Membership

A. Admission

For admission to membership, individuals must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and:

1. Confess a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, give evidence of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and be a baptized believer. Applicants must meet the requirements for membership stated in Article V of the Constitution and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of South Suburban Evangelical Free Church ("SSEFC" or the "Church").
2. Complete the SSEFC membership class or its equivalent as prescribed by the Elders.
3. Be interviewed by at least two (2) Elders or Pastors to affirm the applicant's faith, spiritual life, and understanding of and agreement with the EFCA Statement of Faith, the SSEFC Constitution, and these Bylaws. Upon approval by the Elders, the names of approved applicants shall be communicated to the congregation through the Church's customary method of communication. Any voting member may communicate concerns regarding an applicant directly to the Church Chairman or the Lead Pastor within two (2) weeks following the initial notice. Such concerns shall be reported to the Elders and investigated prior to the applicant's formal acceptance. If no concern is received, or if no scriptural basis for concern is found to exist, the applicant shall be welcomed into membership at the next regular worship service.
4. **Transfer of Membership.** Transfer of membership to or from another church is not permitted. A member in good standing who relocates and wishes to join another church may request a letter of recommendation from the Elders.

B. Categories

1. **Voting Member.** A member in good standing who actively fulfills the responsibilities of membership set forth in Section C of this Article and who is not a member of any other church. Voting members shall have the right to vote on all matters submitted to a vote of the congregation as set forth in Article IV.
2. **Inactive (Nonvoting) Member.** The Elders may designate a member as inactive when the member's life circumstances prevent him or her from attending and/or supporting SSEFC on a regular, ongoing basis. Inactive members do not have voting privileges. The Elders shall periodically review inactive members and encourage their return to active participation.

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C. Responsibilities

Every member of SSEFC shall commit to:

1. Identify SSEFC as their church home and maintain current contact information with the Church office.
2. Participate in God's mission through SSEFC by:
 - (a) Maintaining his or her personal walk with Christ.
 - (b) Committing to pray for SSEFC, its leaders, and its influence in the community.
 - (c) Personal presence and participation in the life and ministry of SSEFC.
 - (d) Supporting SSEFC through regular, sacrificial giving.
 - (e) Investing in relationships that help others grow one step closer to Christ.
 - (f) Promoting the unity and welfare of the congregation as the family of God.
3. Be accountable to the leadership of SSEFC and recognize the spiritual authority of the Elders.

D. Accountability

1. **Ecclesiastical Nature of Discipline.** Church discipline is a purely ecclesiastical matter, conducted between Christians under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. The discipline process is a spiritual exercise of the Church's religious authority and is not subject to secular judicial review. All members, by joining SSEFC, voluntarily submit to this process and acknowledge its religious character.
2. **Discipline Process.** When necessary, as determined by the Lead Pastor and/or the Elders, discipline and restoration shall be conducted by the Elders in accordance with the principles and procedures of Matthew 18:15–17, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:5–11, Galatians 6:1–2, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, and Titus 3:9–11. The goal of all discipline shall be repentance, reconciliation, and restoration. If a person is dismissed from membership due to disciplinary reasons, he or she may be reinstated after the Elders determine the person has truly repented and sought reconciliation, following the process set forth in Section E.4 of this Article.
3. **Confidentiality Waiver and Mandatory Reporting.** Members of SSEFC are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline and understand that, in voluntarily submitting themselves to the spiritual authority of the Church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others as the discipline process requires (Matt. 18:15–20). This includes, but is not limited to, notification of civil authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat exists that someone may be endangered (Rom.

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13:1–7), as well as disclosure of other violations of Scripture that may not result in physical danger but are spiritual in nature. Each member of SSEFC agrees that it is not appropriate to appeal to a civil court on account of a discipline process, dismissal, or any action taken by the Church in connection therewith (1 Cor. 6:1–6).

4. **Appeal.** An individual placed under discipline by the Elders may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing before the congregation at a congregational meeting, pursuant to the process set forth in Article IV, Section C.1.

E. Withdrawal of Membership

1. **Voluntary Withdrawal.** A member in good standing who is not currently subject to the disciplinary process described in Section D of this Article may withdraw from membership by submitting a written request to the Elders. The Elders shall acknowledge the withdrawal and remove the individual from the membership roll. A member who is currently subject to the disciplinary process may not withdraw from membership without the express approval of the Elders.
2. **Administrative Removal for Prolonged Absence.** Any member whom the Elders determine to have had a prolonged absence (defined as six (6) or more consecutive months) with neither communication nor financial or ministry support may be removed from membership. Prior to any such removal, the Elders shall make reasonable efforts to contact the absent member, encourage the member's return, and ascertain whether circumstances exist that may warrant extending additional grace. If, after such efforts, the member remains absent and unresponsive, the Elders may, by majority vote, remove the individual from the membership roll. The Elders shall provide written notice to the member at the member's last known address.
3. **Termination Following Church Discipline.** If, after the completion of the disciplinary process set forth in Section D of this Article, a member remains unrepentant and noncompliant with the counsel of the Elders, the Elders may, by majority vote, terminate that individual's membership. The purpose of such termination is the protection of the spiritual health and unity of the congregation, and the continued call to the individual's repentance and restoration (2 Thess. 3:14–15). Prior to termination, the Elders shall:
 - (a) Have followed each step of the Matthew 18:15–17 process, including (i) private admonition by one or more individuals; (ii) admonition in the presence of one or two witnesses; and (iii) admonition before the church or such portion of the church as the Elders deem appropriate;
 - (b) Have provided the member with reasonable notice of the specific nature of the concern and a meaningful opportunity to be heard by the Elders;

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- (c) Have made genuine efforts toward the member's repentance, reconciliation, and restoration throughout the process; and
- (d) Have documented the steps taken throughout the disciplinary process.

Upon termination, the Elders shall provide written notice to the individual. A member whose membership has been terminated under this Section may appeal the decision to the congregation at a congregational meeting pursuant to the process set forth in Article IV, Section C.1.

4. **Reinstatement.** An individual whose membership has been terminated under Section E.2 or E.3 may be considered for reinstatement upon demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Elders genuine repentance, a desire for reconciliation, and a commitment to fulfill the responsibilities of membership. The process for reinstatement shall follow the same procedure as admission to membership set forth in Section A of this Article.

Article II – Elders

The Elders shall serve as the Board of Directors of SSEFC as that term is used in the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 317A (the "Act"). All references to "Elders" in these Bylaws shall be understood as references to the Board of Directors of SSEFC for purposes of the Act.

A. Qualifications

An individual nominated for the position of Elder must:

1. Meet the spiritual requirements for leadership as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, including being above reproach, self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, and not a recent convert. He must be in full accord with the EFCA Statement of Faith, and SSEFC's Constitution and Bylaws.
2. Be a spiritually mature man and a voting member of SSEFC who has regularly attended SSEFC for at least one (1) year and has demonstrated leadership ability, a consistent Christian witness, and the exercise of spiritual gifts suitable for the office of Elder.
3. Be willing and able to commit to the priority of serving as an Elder, including faithful attendance at Elder meetings, active participation in deliberations, and availability for shepherding responsibilities.
4. Not hold any outside position or interest that would create a conflict of interest with his duties as an Elder and not be term-limited as specified in Article II, Section C. Each Elder shall annually affirm compliance with any Conflict of Interest Policy adopted by the Elders.

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B. Selection

It is understood that the Holy Spirit is the one who selects men for leadership (Acts 20:28), yet the Holy Spirit works through humans to accomplish His plans. Therefore, the process for selection is as follows:

1. **Nomination.** A written recommendation for the position of Elder may be submitted by any voting member of SSEFC to the Nominating Committee at least forty (40) days before the election. The Nominating Committee shall evaluate all nominees against the qualifications set forth in Section A of this Article.
2. **Vetting and Interview.** Each nominee shall be interviewed by the Nominating Committee and at least two (2) current Elders to assess the nominee's spiritual maturity, doctrinal alignment, character, and readiness to serve.
3. **Congregational Notice.** The names of all qualified nominees, together with biographical information, shall be provided to the congregation at least two (2) Sundays prior to the election. During this period, any voting member may communicate concerns regarding a nominee directly to the Church Chairman or the Lead Pastor. Such concerns shall be reported to the Elders and investigated prior to the election.
4. **Congregational Affirmation.** Each nominee must be affirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting. The casting of ballots shall be by secret ballot.
5. **Unfilled Positions.** If there are no candidates who meet the qualifications set forth in Section A and are willing to accept the nomination, the vacant Elder position(s) shall go unfilled until such candidates are available, provided that the Elders at all times consist of no fewer than three (3) members as required by the Act.

C. Composition and Organization

1. **Minimum Size.** The Elders shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members, including the Lead Pastor, with a preference of at least six (6). A majority of the Elders shall at all times be lay (non-staff) Elders. The Lead Pastor shall serve as an ex officio voting member of the Elders for the duration of his call.
2. **Terms of Office.** Terms of office are three (3) years, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms, after which an Elder is ineligible to serve for one (1) year. If an Elder is appointed to fill an unexpired term of less than eighteen (18) months, the partial term shall not count toward the maximum. If the unexpired term is eighteen (18) months or more, it shall count as one full term, and the Elder is eligible to serve for two (2) additional consecutive terms.

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3. **Vacancies.** A vacancy occurring among the Elders for any reason—including resignation, removal, incapacity, or death—may be filled by appointment of the remaining Elders in consultation with the Nominating Committee, as permitted by the Act. An Elder so appointed shall serve until the next annual congregational meeting, at which time the congregation shall vote to affirm a successor to complete the unexpired term. Written notice of any appointment shall be provided to the congregation within fourteen (14) days.
4. **Officers.** Each year, at its first meeting following the annual congregational meeting, the Elders shall elect officers as set forth in Article III of these Bylaws.
5. **Quorum.** A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Elders shall be two-thirds ($2/3$), rounded down, of the total number of Elders. The Elders shall work toward unanimity and consensus in all decisions. When unanimity cannot be reached, matters shall be decided by a majority vote of those present at a duly called meeting at which a quorum is present, unless a higher threshold is required elsewhere in these Bylaws.
6. **Regular Meetings.** The Elders shall meet in regular session at least monthly, or as otherwise determined by the Elders. Special meetings of the Elders may be called by the Lead Pastor, the Chairman, or any two (2) Elders.
7. **Notice of Elder Meetings.** Written notice (including by email) of the date, time, and place of any meeting of the Elders shall be delivered not fewer than five (5) days nor more than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting. Notice of no fewer than twenty (20) days shall be provided for meetings called for the purposes of amending the Articles or Bylaws, or removing an Elder. An Elder's attendance at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice unless the Elder objects at the beginning of the meeting to the transaction of business on the grounds that the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.
8. **Action Without a Meeting.** Any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Elders may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing (including by email from a director's email address of record) setting forth the action to be taken is approved in writing by all Elders entitled to vote on the matter. All written consents shall be filed with the corporate records.
9. **Confidentiality.** Elders shall maintain the confidentiality of all deliberations, personnel matters, disciplinary proceedings, and other sensitive information except as authorized by the Elders or required by law.

D. Responsibilities

The Elders, under the authority of the congregation and pursuant to 1 Peter 5:2–3, shall oversee the Church and shall be responsible for doctrinal purity, the shepherding of the flock, and the management of the Church's affairs. The Elders shall function and lead the body as a council of equals with plurality of leadership (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17).

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1. **Fiduciary Duties.** The following fiduciary duties apply to each Elder:

(a) Duty of Care. Elders hold full, non-delegable responsibility for the Church's actions and well-being. Elders are required to carry out their responsibilities with careful attentiveness and dedication, attending meetings, actively participating in deliberations, seeking outside counsel and guidance as appropriate, and ensuring that all state and federal taxes, registrations, returns, and other financial reports required under applicable laws are timely filed.

(b) Duty of Loyalty. Elders must always act in the best interests of the Church. This applies not only to decisions involving their own personal or business interests but also those of other key employees, Elders, and officers. Elders shall comply at all times with any Conflict of Interest Policy adopted by the Elders and shall refrain from making non-program loans, gifts, or advances to any person, except as permitted under the Act.

(c) Duty of Obedience. Elders are required to ensure that the Church's activities adhere to the corporate purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and Constitution, and to utilize the assets of the Church for the best interest of its beneficiaries. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding penalties, fines, and unnecessary taxes and costs.

Each Elder shall annually affirm compliance with the policies of the Church, including any adopted Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policies.

2. **Devotion to Prayer and the Ministry of God's Word (Acts 6:4). The Elders shall:**

(a) Read and study God's Word and pray, individually and together.

(b) Ensure that all aspects of SSEFC's ministry faithfully proclaim God's Word.

(c) Provide for the conduct of worship services, including the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(d) Pray for the sick in accordance with James 5:14–15.

3. **Shepherd God's Flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2–4). The Elders shall:**

(a) Guard sound doctrine and refute false teaching.

(b) Rebuke inappropriate conduct and administer church discipline in accordance with Article I, Section D.

(c) Communicate needs within the congregation.

(d) Pray for the congregation.

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(e) Hold one another accountable, encourage one another, and model godly character before the congregation.

4. Manage the Church (1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:17). The Elders shall:

(a) Establish and periodically review the mission, vision, and values of SSEFC.

(b) Establish and support ministry areas as deemed necessary for the flourishing of the body, including ministries of care.

(c) Review and assess the need for staff expansion or reduction.

(d) Prepare the fiscal budget for approval by the congregation. The Elders may enact budget deviations up to five percent (5%) of the current total annual budget during one ministry year without prior congregational approval.

(e) Annually review the Lead Pastor and receive staff reviews from the Lead Pastor.

(f) Establish and maintain SSEFC's Policy Manual, including but not limited to policies regarding: use of church funds and property; employment; legal matters; and child safety and abuse prevention—all of which shall be available to the congregation for reference. All employment and personnel policies shall comply with the Church's doctrinal convictions and applicable employment laws when not in conflict with doctrinal convictions.

(g) Maintain a current membership register with assistance from the staff.

(h) Develop and implement policies, procedures, and ministries as necessary to execute the vision and plans approved by the congregation. Written policies and procedures shall be made available to voting members upon request.

(i) Ensure that all corporate records required by the Act are properly maintained, including minutes of Elder meetings and congregational meetings, financial records, and the membership register.

E. Accountability and Termination

- 1. Standards of Conduct.** Elders are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal character, doctrinal fidelity, and practice, consistent with 1 Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:5–9, and the EFCA Statement of Faith. Each Elder shall annually reaffirm his commitment to these standards and to the SSEFC Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws.
- 2. Charges Against an Elder.** A charge against an Elder of failing to meet the standards set forth in this Section shall be considered only if it is supported by the written testimony of at least two (2) witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19–21). Written charges shall be submitted to the Church Chairman (or, if the charge is against the Chairman, to the Vice Chairman). The

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Elder who is the subject of the charge shall be promptly notified in writing of the nature of the charge.

3. **Investigation and Discipline.** Upon receipt of a properly supported charge:
 - (a) The remaining Elders (excluding the Elder who is the subject of the charge) shall appoint an investigation committee of no fewer than two (2) Elders to conduct a fair and thorough investigation. The investigation committee may seek outside counsel as appropriate.
 - (b) The Elder who is the subject of the charge shall be given a meaningful opportunity to respond to the charges and to be heard by the Elders.
 - (c) If the investigation committee determines the charge has merit and the concerns are not adequately resolved through private counsel and admonition, the Elder may be admonished, placed on a leave of absence, suspended from duties, and/or dismissed by a majority vote of the remaining Elders.
 - (d) If an Elder is placed under church discipline, the procedure shall follow the process outlined in Article I, Section D.
 - (e) All proceedings under this Section shall be documented and maintained in the confidential records of the Elders.
4. **Mediation.** If mediation is needed to resolve conflict among the Elders that cannot be resolved internally, the Elders shall seek and submit to mediation through the EFCA North Central District ("NCD") for resolution. If the NCD is unable to provide mediation, the Elders shall engage a qualified Christian mediator or mediation service mutually agreed upon by the parties.
5. **Removal.** An Elder may be removed from office by either:
 - (a) A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the remaining Elders (excluding the Elder subject to removal); or
 - (b) A two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a duly called congregational meeting.Written notice of the removal shall be provided to the removed Elder within seven (7) days.
6. **Voluntary Resignation.** Any Elder may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified therein.
7. **Restoration.** An Elder who has been removed under Section E.5 or who has resigned while under investigation may be considered for future service only upon demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Elders genuine repentance, a season of restoration, and renewed fitness

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for office. Any restoration to the office of Elder shall follow the full nomination and affirmation process set forth in Section B of this Article.

Article III – Officers of the Church

Officers of the Church shall be appointed by the Elders at its first meeting following the annual congregational meeting. Officers shall serve one-year terms and may be reappointed. All officers serve at the pleasure of the Elders and may be removed and replaced by majority vote of the Elders at any time. The Lead Pastor is not eligible for the offices described in this Article.

A. Church Chairman (President)

The Church Chairman shall serve as the President for purposes of the Act. The Church Chairman shall:

1. Be appointed by the Elders from among their number.
2. Chair Elder meetings and preside over congregational meetings.
3. Give legal notice of all meetings as necessary.
4. Issue credentials as necessary to members representing the Church.
5. Execute contracts, deeds, and other legal documents on behalf of the Church when authorized by the Elders.

B. Church Vice Chairman (Vice President)

The Church Vice Chairman shall:

1. Be appointed by the Elders from among their number.
2. Assist the Chairman and perform all duties of the Chairman when necessary.

C. Secretary

The Secretary shall:

1. Be appointed by the Elders from among their number.
2. Oversee recording of minutes for Elder meetings and congregational meetings.
3. Oversee maintenance of the following corporate records, as required by the Act:
 - (a) Copies of Elder meeting minutes. Those not deemed confidential shall be made available to the congregation.
 - (b) All congregational meeting minutes, to be made available to voting members upon request.
 - (c) A record of the names and addresses of all Elders and committee members.

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D. Financial Officer (Treasurer)

The Financial Officer shall serve as the corporate Treasurer for purposes of the Act. The Financial Officer shall:

1. Be appointed by and report to the Elders to act as the legal Financial Officer. The Financial Officer need not be an Elder.
2. In conjunction with the Lead Pastor, appoint or hire, oversee, and terminate (when necessary) a Finance/Accounting Team to perform the following functions: stewardship, treasury, financial secretary, bookkeeping, and payroll.
3. Ensure management and application of financial policies, procedures, and budgets approved by the Elders and/or the congregation.
4. Provide financial documentation to the Church as deemed necessary by the Elders, including monthly giving and expense reports and an annual financial report.
5. Engage an external auditor to provide a financial review at least every third year.

E. Execution of Documents and Instruments

Contracts, deeds, mortgages, and other instruments requiring execution on behalf of SSEFC shall be signed by the Church Chairman (President) or the Financial Officer (Treasurer), or such other person(s) as the Elders may authorize by resolution. Checks, drafts, or other orders for payment of money in excess of an amount established by the Elders shall require two (2) authorized signatures.

Article IV – Congregational Meetings

A. Annual Meeting

Congregational meetings shall be held at least once a year. The annual business meeting shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Approval of the annual fiscal church budget (July 1–June 30), which shall be available to the congregation at least two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting.
2. Election of Elders and other positions as needed.
3. Reports from the senior leadership. Other reports as requested by the Elders.

B. Special Meetings

Other congregational meetings may be called as deemed necessary or helpful by:

1. The Elders; or
2. Upon written demand signed, dated, and delivered to the Church Chairman (President) or Financial Officer (Treasurer) by at least fifty (50) voting members or ten percent (10%) of

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the voting members, whichever is less, describing the purpose for which the meeting is to be held, in accordance with the Act.

C. Protocol

1. **Notice.** Notice of the date, time, place, and agenda of all congregational meetings shall be given in accordance with the Act and provided to the congregation at least two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting. Any significant addition, as determined by the Elders, to the published agenda must be submitted by a voting member to the Church Chairman at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Such additions may be discussed but shall not be acted upon at the meeting.
2. **Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of at least twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership.
3. **Voting.** Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority of votes cast. Secret ballots shall be used for those items required to be voted upon by the members as listed in Section C.6.
4. **Budget Deviations.** A motion for any non-budgeted financial expenditure or a motion to change the current or proposed fiscal budget cannot be approved by the congregation without prior review by the Elders unless the individual item is equal to or less than two percent (2%) of the budgeted item and the total cumulative deviation is equal to or less than five percent (5%) of the total budget.
5. **Parliamentary Procedure.** Parliamentary procedure shall generally be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, or rules of order as adopted by the Elders, understanding that everything must be done in love.
6. **Reserved Matters.** The following items are required to be voted upon at a congregational meeting:
 - (a) Calling of the Lead Pastor.
 - (b) Buying and selling of real property.
 - (c) Incurring capital indebtedness.
 - (d) Annual church budget.
 - (e) Election of Elders.
 - (f) Election of Nominating Committee members.
 - (g) Amendment of the Constitution or Bylaws.
7. **Waiver of Notice.** A voting member entitled to notice of a meeting of members may waive notice of the meeting. A waiver of notice is effective whether given before, at, or after the

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meeting, and whether given in writing, orally, or by attendance at the meeting, as provided in the Act. Attendance of a member at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice of that meeting unless the member objects at the beginning of the meeting to the transaction of business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened, or objects before a vote on an item of business because the item may not lawfully be considered at that meeting and does not participate in the consideration of the item at the meeting. Any written waiver of notice shall be retained with the corporate records.

Article V – Staff

A. Lead Pastor

1. Qualifications. The Lead Pastor must:

(a) Be a man of established and true Christian character as described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, 4:12–15, 2 Timothy 2:15, and Titus 1:5–9, with special focus on the ability to teach God's Word (2 Tim. 4:1–2).

(b) Be in full agreement with the EFCA Statement of Faith, the Constitution, and the Bylaws of SSEFC.

(c) Be well-prepared for his office by education, training, and experience, and shall be ordained by the EFCA or seek ordination upon the satisfaction of applicable time requirements.

2. Selection. Upon recommendation by the Pastoral Search Committee and the Elders, the Lead Pastor shall be called by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.

3. Compensation and Housing Allowance. The Elders shall establish the Lead Pastor's total compensation package, including salary, housing allowance (to the extent permitted by Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code), benefits, and professional development allowances. The housing allowance designation shall be established by formal resolution of the Elders annually in advance, in accordance with IRS requirements.

4. Responsibilities. The Lead Pastor is expected to be a model to the Church (1 Cor. 9:27), so we recognize that our Lead Pastor must love his family well (1 Tim. 3:4) and ensure that he is keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). Additionally, in partnership with the Elders, he shall:

(a) Faithfully preach and teach the Word of God.

(b) Communicate and champion the mission, vision, and values of SSEFC.

(c) Call, equip, support, and oversee all church staff, including hiring and dismissing non-pastoral staff in consultation with the Elders.

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- (d) Be an ex officio member of all SSEFC committees and teams.
- (e) Be committed to the work of the EFCA through regular involvement in their meetings and programs, with a minimum attendance of one annual event.
- (f) Serve as an Elder.
- (g) Be accountable to the Elders.

5. Termination.

- (a) **Resignation.** The Lead Pastor must give at least thirty (30) days written notice of resignation to the Elders, unless waived by mutual consent.
- (b) **Elder-Initiated Termination.** If the Elders believe the Lead Pastor is no longer able to faithfully or effectively carry out his duties, a recommendation for termination may be presented to the congregation. Any recommendation from the Elders regarding the termination of the Lead Pastor must receive eighty percent (80%) approval from the Elders, excluding the Lead Pastor.
- (c) **Member-Initiated Termination.** Any request by the voting membership to terminate the call and employment of the Lead Pastor shall be presented to the Elders by written petition of at least one-third (33.3%) of the voting members.
- (d) **Congregational Meeting.** If either of the above situations should arise, a special congregational meeting shall be called at which the request for termination shall be considered. This meeting shall be announced to the voting membership at least two (2) weeks in advance, and quorum for this meeting shall be fifty percent (50%) of the voting members. A resolution to terminate the calling and employment of the Lead Pastor must receive affirmation from seventy-five percent (75%) of the voting members present and voting at such meeting.
- (e) **Severance.** If approved by the congregation, the Elders will present a letter of termination with a two (2) week notice. The compensation rate at the time of termination will be continued for one (1) month past the date of termination.
- (f) **Immediate Termination for Cause.** If there is evidence of defection from sound doctrine or conduct contrary to the Word of God (e.g., financial or sexual impropriety), the Lead Pastor may be terminated immediately at the discretion of the Elders, excluding the Lead Pastor. The compensation rate at the time of termination shall be continued for at least one (1) month past the date of termination.

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B. Staff

A Team Handbook will be maintained to outline the various staffing positions, with annual review by the Elders. All staff shall, as a condition of employment, affirm in writing their agreement with the EFCA Statement of Faith and the Church's Christian Code of Conduct, as established by the Elders.

- 1. Pastoral Staff.** All pastoral staff must substantially meet the same qualifications as the Lead Pastor. Upon recommendation by the Elders, a pastor shall be called by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting. The pastoral staff will be managed by the Lead Pastor. Pastoral staff are subject to the same process for termination as the Lead Pastor (Article V.A.5).
- 2. All Other Staff.** Other staff will be hired, managed, and if necessary, dismissed by the Lead Pastor in consultation with the Elders. Positions will be represented in the annual budget, which is subject to the congregation's approval. The Elders will determine the cessation of any created positions.

Article VI – Committees

The Elders shall have the power to appoint standing and special committees by resolution. All committees shall seek to function in conjunction with the Elders and report to the congregation.

A. Standing Committees

Standing committees function on a continuing or intermittent basis. Each shall appoint its own chair. Members are elected annually to one-year terms (or removed if necessary) by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting.

- 1. Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall:
 - (a) Consist of the Lead Pastor, two (2) other Elders, and four (4) voting members of SSEFC.
 - (b) Nominate candidates for Elder and other congregationally elected positions as needed.
 - (c) Consider scriptural and practical requirements for each office to be filled.

B. Special Committees

Special committees and their members are established by the Elders for a specific purpose and dissolve when their assigned task is complete. Each shall appoint its own chair. Members are elected to serve on the committee until dissolution (or removed if necessary) by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast by voting members at a congregational meeting.

- 1. Pastoral Search Committee.** The Pastoral Search Committee shall:

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(a) Consist of the Church Chairman or an Elder of his choosing, two (2) additional Elders, and four (4) voting members of SSEFC.

(b) Follow procedures recommended by the Elders to select and present one candidate at a time for Lead Pastor until a new Lead Pastor is installed.

2. Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee. The Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee shall:

(a) Consist of a minimum of two (2) Elders and three (3) voting members of SSEFC.

(b) After consulting with the Lead Pastor and Elders, present its proposed Constitution and Bylaws revisions to the congregation as stated in Article VIII of the Constitution and Article VIII of these Bylaws.

C. Committee Meetings and Procedures

Meetings of any committee may be called by the Church Chairman, the chairperson of the committee, or a majority of the committee's voting members. Notice of the time and place of any meeting of a committee shall be given at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Unless otherwise provided in the resolution creating the committee, a majority of a committee's members shall constitute a quorum. Any member of a committee may resign at any time by giving written notice to the chairperson of the committee or to the Secretary of the Church. Any member of a committee may be removed at any time by resolution adopted by a majority of the Elders.

Article VII – Deacons

A. Qualifications

Anyone appointed to serve as a Deacon must:

1. Meet the spiritual requirements stated in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and be in full accord with SSEFC's Statement of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws.
2. Be a spiritually mature man or woman who is a voting member of SSEFC.
3. Be willing to commit to the priority of serving as a Deacon.

B. Selection

1. The Elders may appoint or remove men and women as needed to serve as Deacons, with an annual review process of current needs and fit of the individuals.
2. Deacons may be appointed for ongoing ministries, or time-specific needs, as determined by the Elders.

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C. Organization

1. Deacons are permitted to organize as they best determine to serve the needs of the body, including selecting others to join their ministry area.
2. Deacons are accountable to the Elders.

Article VIII – Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended at a congregational meeting provided the proposed amendments have been sent to the voting members at least thirty (30) days in advance. Amendments must be affirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present.

Article IX – Indemnification

To the fullest extent permitted by the Act, SSEFC shall indemnify any Elder, officer, former Elder, or former officer of the Church, or any person who may have served at its request as a director or officer of another entity, against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which he or she is made a party by reason of being or having been such Elder or officer, except in relation to matters as to which he or she shall be adjudged liable for gross negligence or intentional misconduct in the performance of a duty. Such indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such person may be entitled under any agreement, resolution of the Elders, or otherwise. No indemnification or advancement of expenses shall be made if such indemnification would be inconsistent with: (i) Section 501(c)(3) or Section 4958 of the Internal Revenue Code; (ii) the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws; (iii) applicable state law; or (iv) a resolution of the Elders in effect at the time of the occurrence giving rise to the alleged cause of action.

Article X – Miscellaneous Provisions

A. Books and Records

The Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of account, minutes of the proceedings of the Elders and committees, and a record of the names and addresses of all Elder and committee members. All books and records of the Church may be inspected by a voting member, or his or her agent or attorney, at any reasonable time, in accordance with the Act.

B. Seal

The Church shall not maintain a corporate seal.

C. Inconsistencies with Articles of Incorporation

If any provision of these Bylaws is inconsistent with a provision of the Church's Articles of Incorporation or Constitution, as amended from time to time, the Articles of Incorporation and Constitution shall govern.

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D. Severability

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision in these Bylaws shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions.

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Appendix Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
03/16/2025	Final draft of Constitution	Voted to vote on the final draft of the constitution at our subsequent business meeting	CBRC
06/22/2025	Final draft of Constitution	Voted to affirm the new constitution	SSEFC Congregation
05/31/2026	Final draft of bylaws	Final draft of the bylaws was sent to the congregation	CBRC
06/14/2025	Final draft of bylaws	Final draft approved by the congregation	SSEFC Congregation

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