



Bylaws

of the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City

January 2010 Reinstated

Amended on January 31, 2010

Approved on April 18, 2010

Revised on April 10, 2011

Amended on September 27, 2020

Amended on _____

These Bylaws concern solely the internal religious governance of the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City (the “Church”). All matters addressed herein—including but not limited to membership, discipline, doctrine, worship, the calling and removal of pastors and elders, and the administration of Church affairs—are religious in nature and are governed by Holy Scripture as understood in accordance with the Church’s Statement of Faith.

PREAMBLE – CHURCH AUTONOMY

The authoritative interpretation of these Bylaws, and the resolution of any dispute arising under them, is vested exclusively in the Elder Team of the Church. The Elder Team shall interpret and apply these Bylaws in a manner consistent with Scripture and the Church’s Statement of Faith, and such interpretations shall be final and binding on all members and officers of the Church. No civil court or secular tribunal shall have authority to interpret these Bylaws or to review the ecclesiastical decisions made hereunder.

We believe that it is critical that we be led and directed by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Our structure of government is meant to achieve that end, to produce theocracy (government by God), not democracy (government by the people). Only in that end will our structure of government have meaning. In that spirit and based on our understanding of the pattern of Scripture, we set forth the following on how this church will be governed.

Article 1 – GOVERNANCE

- A. Our government shall be congregational in its form in the sense that all leaders are accountable to the members of the congregation. Under Christ, the ultimate seat of human authority shall reside in the collective determination of the membership, under the Word and will of God.
- B. Church members shall approve biblically qualified elders and a church chairman. The membership shall entrust the policy matters of church leadership to this Elder Team and shall entrust the day-to-day administration of the church to the ministry staff. The Elder Team will be members, who by virtue of giftedness and character, can be trusted to act in accordance with Scripture and the mind of Christ. All elders and church officers must be chosen from among members of the church.
- C. The membership is empowered to make decisions in at least the following matters, which must be brought before the members for approval:
 - Calling full-time pastoral staff
 - Approval of the annual spending plan
 - Changing the Constitution and Bylaws
 - Election of the Elder Team and Church Chairman
 - Buying and selling real estate and approval of any loans
 - Determination of membership

Article 2 – MEMBERSHIP

A. Qualifications

The membership of the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City shall consist of persons who

- confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior from sin, giving evidence of repentance and regeneration,
- subscribe to the Statement of Faith (Appendix A) and the Membership Covenant (Appendix B)
- have been received into its membership according to the Bylaws of this church.

B. Responsibilities

The members of the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City are responsible for the ministries of the church. As such, they shall faithfully:

1. Attend the services and meetings of the church (Hebrews 10:25)
2. Support the church with cheerful giving (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7)
3. Pray for the church, its members, its ministries, and our community (Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 1:9-10; James 5:16)
4. Participate and serve in the community of the church in a way that nurtures accountability, spiritual growth, and caring (Galatians 6:2, 9-10)
5. Submit to the loving oversight and discipline of the members and elders of this church (1 Peter 5:5; Hebrews 13:17)
6. Be responsible to affirm matters and decisions as outlined in Article 1C of these Bylaws.

C. Installation

1. Any person who desires membership shall attend a membership class prior to applying for membership.
2. Any person 18 or older in age shall complete and submit an application for membership.
3. A membership applicant shall be required to share his or her personal testimony of faith in Christ with selected elders (two or more).
4. The Elder Team shall post the names of the candidates publicly for two weeks prior to a membership meeting. Any member of the church objecting to a candidate must give to an elder a written just cause for objection in accordance with the Bible and the Bylaws of this church. The Elder Team will consider the objection and then decide on putting forth the candidate for membership vote.
5. The slate of member candidates are affirmed by a single membership vote at a membership meeting, at which time candidates may give public testimony of their faith in Christ Jesus.

6. The Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City shall, at all times, keep a roll of all active members of the Church.

D. Accountability/Discipline

1. **Resignation**

Any member in good standing (not under church discipline) may resign from membership in the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City. The request shall be in writing to the Elder Team stating the reason for their resignation.

2. **Forfeiture**

The membership roll shall be reviewed once each church year by the Elder Team. Any members who have been absent from the regular services of the church for a period of 12 months and who have failed to communicate with the church within that time shall be considered for termination of membership.

The Elder Team will formally attempt to reach out to and care for absent members. If there is no reply after 1 month of attempted contact, the Elder Team may recommend the member for removal from membership at the next membership meeting.

3. **Corrective Discipline**

In case any member of the church shall be discovered living or teaching contrary to the Word of God, the Statement of Faith, or the Church Covenant, then shall the church, through the Elder Team, place such a member under corrective discipline according to Scripture (Matthew 18: 15-20; I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:5-11, 7:5-12; Ephesians 6:1-5; Titus 3:10-11). If said member shall not repent, but shall continue in the same unrepentant way, said member shall be recommended by the Elder Team to the membership for dismissal from membership.

A request for withdrawal from membership will not be granted to a member who is currently under discipline by the Elder Team until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

4. **Restoration**

A person who has been dismissed from membership of the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City may be reinstated if the person's repentance is accepted as genuine by the Elder Team. The Elder Team may present a motion for reinstatement to the membership at any meeting. A vote by the membership will determine reinstatement into the fellowship of the church.

5. **Surrender of Privilege**

Any member whose membership has been terminated for any reason thereby surrenders all membership privileges and all rights of any interest in the real estate, personal property, and business of this congregation.

Article 3 – MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

- A. **Meeting Leadership**

All membership meetings shall be conducted under the leadership of the Elder Team. The Church Chairman or another designated elder shall preside at membership meetings, yielding the chair to other designee as he may deem proper for the business being considered.

- B. **Annual Meeting**

The membership shall have at least one scheduled meeting during the year. This will be the annual meeting held on a date set by the Elder Team. Pastors, staff, and the Church Chairman may present reports. The annual spending plan will be presented for membership approval.

C. Special Meetings

In addition to the annual membership meeting, special membership meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the Elder Team, or by a request submitted to the Elder Team and signed by 25% of the membership.

D. Town Hall Meetings

The Elder Team may call town hall meetings to take place prior to a membership meeting to allow for discussion and amendment of proposals. This would preclude discussion at a membership meeting and allow for a direct vote.

E. Emergency Meetings

1. An emergency meeting may be called by majority vote of the Elder Team after which every effort must be made to notify all members.
2. If in-person gatherings are not allowed by law or catastrophic circumstances, a membership meeting can be postponed as determined by the Elder Team, or it may meet remotely (teleconference or videoconference) with alternate provisions for voting. Every effort must be made to notify all members.

F. Notice

Meetings, along with the stated purpose of the meeting, shall be announced publicly for at least 2 full weeks prior to the meeting at Sunday worship services and by written notice to the members.

G. Quorum

A quorum for a meeting of the membership shall consist of one-third of the membership (See Article 2 Membership). No voting by proxy is permissible. A 70% vote of approval shall be determinative of all decisions, unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws.

Article 4 – CHURCH OFFICERS

A. Powers and Authority

The officers of the church have vested in them all the powers and authority usually ascribed to officers of a corporation and will have authority to use these titles when necessary in handling corporate or civil matters involving the church. The authority of the elders in decisions and leadership is corporate. No individual elder shall assume authority other than what is specified in these Bylaws or granted by the Elder Team.

B. Elected Officers

The church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado as a non-profit religious organization, and the officers of the corporation are approved by the membership. According to the Church Constitution, Article IX, these officers are as follows:

1. **Church Chairman** (elected by the membership)
 - a. The Church Chairman shall preside over membership meetings and ensure that all decisions of the church are fully carried out.
 - b. He shall be considered as a church elder and be subject to all governing policies of the same.
 - c. He will preside over all meetings of the Elder Team.
2. **Elders** (elected by the membership)
 - a. An elder shall be publicly recognized as desiring to serve as an elder, fulfilling the biblical requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
 - b. The Elder Team shall provide leadership and promote the spiritual welfare of the church.

C. Elder-Appointed Officers

The following officers are appointed by the Elder Team:

1. **Treasurer** (appointed by the Elder Team from within the church membership)
 - a. The Treasurer shall serve on the Financial Stewardship Team of the church.
 - b. He or she shall oversee accurate recording and reporting of church funds.
 - c. The Treasurer (or his or her designee) shall make all disbursements and pay all bills according to the church spending plan or those that have been approved by the Elder Team.
 - d. The Treasurer will be required to attend the monthly business meetings of the Elder Team or other meetings as requested.
2. **Recording Secretary** (appointed by the Elder Team from within its own membership)
 - a. The Recording Secretary shall ensure that an accurate record of the proceedings and decisions at all membership meetings of the church shall be kept; such records are to be approved at the following business meeting of the Elder Team.
 - b. The Recording Secretary shall also ensure that an accurate record of the decisions of the Elder Team is kept.
 - c. The Recording Secretary shall preserve in a safe place all church records (not including financial records) as may be required by the State of Colorado.
3. **Church Financial Secretary** (appointed by the Elder Team from the church membership):
 - a. The Financial Secretary shall serve on the Financial Stewardship Team of the church.
 - b. The Financial Secretary shall ensure the proper receipt of all money received by the church and keep proper records of the source and the purpose for the money given.

- c. The Financial Secretary shall preserve in a safe place all financial records including records as may be required by the State of Colorado and the Internal Revenue Service.

D. Term Limits

The officers of the church are elected or appointed to two-year terms and may serve three consecutive terms.

Article 5 – ELDER TEAM

A. Overview

The Elder Team shall be elected by the membership. The Elder Team shall consist of no less than six men, the Church Chairman, and the Senior Pastor. One elder shall be appointed by the Elder Team to serve in the absence of the Church Chairman. The Elder Team shall provide leadership and promote the spiritual welfare of the church.

B. Qualifications

An elder shall be publicly recognized as desiring to serve as an elder, fulfilling the biblical requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

C. Responsibilities

The Elder Team shall be charged with the following responsibilities to advance the work of the Lord at the Evangelical Free Church of Cañon City:

1. To provide scriptural direction and protection for the church.
2. To administer confidential or sensitive matters of church discipline.
3. To oversee the church membership process.
4. To serve as a council of appeal to determine scriptural appropriateness whenever members dispute an action taken or a decision made by the ministry staff or a ministry team.
5. To oversee the finances of the church by establishing financial policies and ensuring compliance with the membership-approved spending plan.
6. To appoint a nominating or other ad hoc team as appropriate
7. To provide a written or oral report to the membership annually regarding their activities during the past year and their plans for the upcoming year.

D. Installation

1. The Elder Team appoints a nominating team. In addition to the Senior Pastor and Church Chairman, this team shall consist of an additional elder and up to three at-large members from the church membership.
2. The nominating team facilitates the receiving of nominations from church membership. They will submit a list of proposed candidates to the Elder Team for approval.
3. The Senior Pastor shall contact the candidates to obtain their consent to serve, if approved.

4. The names of the elder candidates will be posted publicly for no less than two weeks prior to the annual membership meeting. Any member of the church objecting to a candidate must give to an elder a written just cause for objection in accordance with the Bible and the Bylaws of this church. The Elder Team will consider the objection and then decide on putting forth the candidate for membership vote.
5. Elder candidates must be affirmed by at least 75% of the members in attendance at a membership meeting.

E. Church Records

The Elder Team shall ensure that the following records are kept:

1. Minutes of the meetings of the membership
2. Membership roll with official membership dates
3. Resolutions adopted by the Elder Team
4. Appropriate accounting records
5. Articles or restated Articles of Incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect
6. Constitution or restated Constitution and all amendments to it currently in effect
7. Bylaws or restated Bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.

F. Conflict of Interest

If a conflict of interest by an elder or pastor should arise, that elder or pastor shall abstain from being involved in a decision in which there is a conflict of interest.

Article 6 – SENIOR PASTOR

A. Responsibilities

The Senior Pastor reports to the Elder Team. He shall preach and teach the Word of God, oversee the public worship services of the church, watch over the spiritual welfare of the church, and lead the congregation in a practical Christian life. In conjunction with the Elder Team, he will develop the mission and vision and oversee the ministry of the church. He will manage the ministry staff and will be responsible to hire and fire staff members, in concurrence with the Elder Team. He shall be a voting member of the Elder Team and an ex-officio member of all teams.

B. Membership Vote to Call

The Senior Pastor shall be chosen by a 75% majority vote at a membership meeting of the church. The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained minister in accordance with the standards of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). If the candidate for senior pastor is not currently ordained by the EFCA, he agrees to initiate the ordination process within 90 days of the date of hire and be approved on or before four years from the hire date. The vote to call a pastor shall also signify acceptance into church membership for the pastor and his wife. He shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

C. Termination

The Senior Pastor's employment may be terminated by a 75% majority decision of the Elder Team. If the Senior Pastor has committed an act of grievous misconduct, the Elder Team may terminate him immediately.

Article 7 – CHURCH STAFF

A. Overview

The church staff shall execute the vision of the church. The appropriate mix of pastoral and non-pastoral staff, as well as full-time and part-time roles, will be determined by the needs of the church and may adjust over time.

Church staff members, whether ordained or lay, serve in roles that are integral to advancing the mission and articulating the vision of the Church. Each staff member is called to carry out the Church's Great Commission, to teach, model, and uphold the beliefs and practices set forth in the Church's Statement of Faith, and to shepherd and minister to the congregation and community in the name of Jesus Christ. The Church retains the exclusive right to select, direct, evaluate, discipline, and terminate its staff members in accordance with its religious beliefs, doctrine, and these Bylaws, free from interference by any civil authority.

B. Requirements - Associate Pastors

1. All pastoral staff shall affirm the Statement of Faith (Appendix A) and work within the organizational structure set forth in the Constitution and these Bylaws.
2. All pastors shall be members of the church and fulfill the responsibilities as such, as well as the responsibilities outlined the Employee Team Handbook, and shall have other qualifications, responsibilities, and authority as their position descriptions may provide.
3. All full-time pastors shall hold a ministerial credential in good standing with the EFCA. If not currently credentialed by the EFCA, he agrees to initiate the process within 90 days of the date of hire and be approved on or before two years from the hire date.

C. Requirements - Other Ministry Staff

The ministry staff shall consist of men and women who will give servant leadership to the area of ministry where they have been called to serve. The titles given to each ministry staff member shall be determined by the Senior Pastor based on the nature of their ministry, their training and background, and the policies and procedures of the EFCA.

Staff members will meet the qualifications outlined in the Employee Team Handbook and the requirements of their specific position descriptions.

D. Accountability

1. With respect to the exercise of their responsibilities, all staff members will be accountable to the Senior Pastor or his designee and will be reviewed according to the requirements in the Employee Team Handbook.

2. All staff members will work under the direction of the Senior Pastor or his designee and may be dismissed by him with concurrence of the Elder Team.
3. Shall there be an interim time with no senior pastor, pastors and ministry staff shall be accountable to the Elder Team.

Article 8 – MINISTRY TEAMS

The ministries of the church shall be developed, directed, and administered by designated pastors, ministry directors, and their respective ministry teams. Ministry teams shall operate according to ministry team policies approved by the Elder Team. Each ministry shall recruit teams and individuals whom they deem qualified to serve with them in carrying out the ministry. The chairperson of a ministry team shall be a member of the church.

Article 9 – DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All members and officers of the Church, by accepting or retaining membership or office, consent to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Elder Team over such matters and waive any right to seek resolution of internal Church disputes in any civil court, tribunal, or other secular forum. This provision shall be interpreted broadly to encompass all matters of internal Church governance and religious practice.

Any question, controversy, or dispute arising out of or relating to these Bylaws, or the internal governance, doctrine, discipline, membership, employment, or affairs of the Church, shall be submitted to the Elder Team for resolution. The Elder Team shall prayerfully consider the matter in light of Holy Scripture and the Church's Statement of Faith and shall render a final decision. The decision of the Elder Team shall be final, binding, and conclusive upon all members, officers, staff, and any other person or entity subject to these Bylaws.

Appendix A

EFCA Statement of Faith

Adopted by the Conference on June 19, 2019

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

God. 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. 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.

The Human Condition. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Christ's Return. 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. 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.

Appendix B

CHURCH COVENANT

We, the members of this church, do covenant together, God helping us . . .

- That as aliens and strangers, we will abstain from sinful desires (1 Peter 2:11) avoiding every kind of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22).
- That we will get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, and be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave us (Ephesians 4:31-32), loving one another from the heart (I Peter 1:22).
- That, as we have opportunity, we will do good unto all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10).
- That we will remember our leaders, who speak the Word of God (Hebrews 13:7).
- That we will submit to the loving oversight and discipline of the members and officers of this church (I Peter 5:5, Hebrews 13:17).
- That we will give as God has prospered us (I Corinthians 16:2), not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7).
- And may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip us with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever (Hebrews 13:20-21). — Amen