

**CONSTITUTION
&
BY-LAWS**

LAKE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

October 2020

November 2019

CONSTITUTION

Lake Wisconsin Evangelical Free Church

PREAMBLE

We the members who compose Lake Wisconsin Evangelical Free Church (LWEFC) establish the following Constitution, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I – AFFILIATION

LWEFC, an autonomous and self-governing church, is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) and its Forest Lakes District (FLD) and will participate in and be supportive of EFCA ministries.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by transforming all people into fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through:

- Multiplying followers of Jesus Christ,
- training them to live the Christian life and
- equipping and deploying them into kingdom ministry.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith of this church originates from the EFCA and the Forest Lakes District.

EFCA Statement of Faith

Adopted by the Conference on June 9, 2019

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:¹

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 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.

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.

Other Matters of Faith (Defined by LWEFC)

God the Father

We believe there is only one God and Father of all who reigns with providential care over the universe and all creation, according to the purposes of His grace. (Romans 8:28-30, 1 Cor 8:6, Eph 4:6, Is 8:6, Ps 47)

The Father is revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ. (John 14:9-11) God is Father to those who by faith in Jesus Christ become children of God. (John 20:17, John 10:30, John 1:12, Romans 8:15-16, 2 Cor 6:18, Gal 4:6) God is love. (1 John 4:8)

We believe that the Father concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of all people (2 Cor 1:3-4). He is a Father to the fatherless and protector of widows (Ps 68:5). He hears and answers prayer. (Matt 6:6,9, Matt 21:2) He has blessed us in Jesus Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. (Eph 1:3)

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and as such, one's biological sex is not to be rejected (Gen 1:26-27; Matt 19:4).

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive, lifelong covenantal union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25; Matt 19:5-6). We believe that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special divine metaphor that is supposed to illustrate the union of Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-32). Pastors of LWEFC will abide by this belief when they are asked to perform marriages.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4). We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, and use of pornography) is contrary to Biblical teaching (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10). We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of LWEFC.

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of humanity, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of LWEFC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Team, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, is our final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application on all theological and doctrinal matters beyond the Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Any person shall be eligible for membership who:

- Confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,
- desires to live in obedience to the Word of God,
- agrees with (1) the Statement of Faith and (2) "Our Master's Plan," which includes the Core Values, Mission and Vision of this church,² and
- desires to participate in the worship, fellowship and other ministries of this church.

ARTICLE V – PROPERTY

A. This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or by purchase, and to hold such real, personal and mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the state of Wisconsin, and as deemed necessary for the business of this 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 this church, the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by this church's constitution and by-laws.

C. In case of dissolution of this church, the property shall be assigned to the Forest Lakes District of the EFCA. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the membership of this congregation or when the church has not held an annual meeting for two years or when less than six members remain.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

The constitution may be changed at a congregational meeting subject to the following:

A. A motion for such change must be made, seconded and passed by a majority of votes cast at a congregational meeting that is held at least two (2) months in advance of the vote for constitutional change.

B. The vote for constitutional change must have at least fifty percent (50%) of the voting members present and two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast to pass.

BY-LAWS

Lake Wisconsin Evangelical Free Church

SECTION I – GOVERNMENT

LWEFC shall function under a congregational form of government. By congregational we mean that the final authority for church government is placed in the assembly of the local congregation as represented at a church meeting. However, to run a church effectively and efficiently, all matters cannot be brought to the congregation. The following items are the absolutes which must be brought to the congregation and which will require two-thirds (2/3) of voting members present for approval: (see quorum, section IV-D)

- The calling and dismissal of pastoral staff
- The calling of elders
- The approval of our annual budget and purchases, expenditures or liquidation of assets in excess of ten percent (10%) of the budget
- The acquisition or sale of land or construction of buildings not already in the budget
- The changing of the constitution and by-laws

SECTION II – MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership Basics

1. Membership shall be open to those who meet the qualifications set forth in Article IV of the constitution of this church.
2. Application for membership shall be obtained from and can be approved by the elder team.
3. Attend the new member class which is taught by the Senior Pastor or a teacher designated by the Senior Pastor with the approval of the elders. In the event of the absence of the Senior Pastor, the elders can appoint a teacher.
4. An interview with an elder is required prior to consideration for membership.
5. A member must be eighteen (18) years of age before he/she can vote.
6. New members will be recognized at any regular church service.

7. Pastoral staff and their spouses will automatically become voting members of the congregation at the time of their call.

B. Discipline

1. Church discipline may be exercised on any member who manifests behavior detrimental to the work and testimony of this church; including, but not limited to, moral failure, doctrinal deviation or that which causes division in the church body.
2. If discipline involves removal of membership, the action shall be done in writing by the elder team and done as stated in:

Matthew 18:15-17

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses'. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Galatians 6:1

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

C. Termination

1. Any member who has been absent from the church for a period of one year shall cease to be a member, unless satisfactory communication is carried out between the member and the elder team.
2. Any member who has joined another church shall cease to be a member, effective immediately.

D. Reinstatement

Any person who has been dismissed from the church membership for church discipline reasons may be reinstated upon repentance as deemed sincere by the elder team.

SECTION III – MEETINGS

A. The annual congregational meeting shall be held in January.

B. Elections shall take place in the fall congregational meeting with the elected assuming their responsibilities the day after the annual meeting.

C. Additional congregational meetings may be called at the discretion of the elder team or by a written petition to the elder team of twenty-five percent (25%) of voting members.

D. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for congregational meetings, all of which require at least a two (2) week advance notice.

E. LWEFC desires that all members attend congregational meetings. However, there are some situations in which this may not be possible. A member may request an absentee ballot in advance of the meeting from the elder team if the member:

1. will be out of state at the time of the meeting OR
2. is not able to attend the meeting but their spouse, who is also a member, is able to attend the meeting.

SECTION IV – OFFICERS

A. Elder Team

3. Qualifications

- a. Elders are to be men who are members in good standing for at least one year and are at least twenty-five (25) years of age.
- b. Elders are to be men who meet the biblical qualifications as outlined in:

I Timothy 3:1-7

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1:5-9

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is

entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

- c. Elders are to be men who are fully supportive of the LWEFC Statement of Faith.
- d. Elders are to be men who are able and willing to lead by example and who are fully supportive of the LWEFC stated Core Values, Mission and Vision.

4. Responsibilities

- a. Be responsible for the spiritual health of the congregation, oversee the teaching of the Word of God, ensure that every aspect of the church's ministry is characterized by sound doctrine and provide practical as well as spiritual leadership of the church.
- b. Oversee all other teams and committees with each elder being assigned to and responsible for the effective ministry of at least one team.
- c. Oversee the budget and financial direction of the church.
- d. An elder shall serve as the nominating committee chair and recruit a number of church members to serve with him. The nominating committee shall consider recommendations from the congregation for any vacancy on the Elder Team, with approval by the elders.
- e. Appoint any worship coordinator(s) to implement the worship and music ministry under the direction of the elder team.
- f. Appoint a church secretary and a church treasurer on an annual basis.
- g. Choose a chairman each year and provide a chairman for each congregational meeting.

5. Selection

- a. The elder team shall consist of the Senior Pastor and four (4) or more members elected by the congregation, providing there are four (4) or more that meet the qualifications for elder.

- b. Elder team members may serve three (*3) consecutive two (*2) year terms and be eligible for additional terms following a lapse of one year.
- c. Pastoral staff may become elder team members through the normal selection and approval process.

(*Amended 11/18/13 from 2 consecutive, 3 year terms.)

B. Deacon/Deaconess Team

1. The deacon/deaconess team shall consist of an elected team leader and members appointed by the team leader with input from the pastor and elder team. The team members shall be appointed yearly or as needed. Qualifications for team members are outlined in:

I Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 6:1-4

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

2. The deacon/deaconess team will be expected to define and implement their ministry under the direction of the elder team. This will include encouraging, implementing and coordinating the caring, visitation and hospitality ministries (including, but not limited to, fellowship dinners, nursery, prayer chain and communion preparation).
3. The deacon/deaconess team leader will be elected for two (2) year terms with a three (3) consecutive term maximum, followed by at least one term off from this position. If the resignation of the team leader should become necessary, it shall be made in writing to the elder team.

C. Trustee Team

1. The trustee team shall consist of an elected team leader and members appointed by the team leader with the input from the pastor and elder team. The team members shall be appointed yearly or as needed.
2. The trustee team will be expected to define and implement their ministry under the direction of the elder team. They will be responsible for maintaining the church property and facilities, preparing the annual budget with input from other teams and approving expenditures not otherwise delegated.
3. The trustee team leader will be elected for two (2) year terms with a three (3) consecutive term maximum, followed by at least one term off from this position. If the resignation of the team leader should become necessary, it shall be made in writing to the elder team.

D. Missions Team

1. The missions team shall consist of an elected team leader and members appointed by the team leader with input from the pastor and elder team. The team members shall be appointed yearly or as needed.
2. The missions team will be expected to define and implement their ministry under the direction of the elder team. They will seek to stimulate and encourage the congregation to be more actively involved in missions.
3. The missions team leader will be elected for two (2) year terms with a three (3) consecutive term maximum, followed by at least one term off from this position. If the resignation of the team leader should become necessary, it shall be made in writing to the elder team.

E. Christian Education Team/Youth

1. The Christian education team/Youth shall consist of an elected team leader, the youth pastor and members appointed by the team leader with input from the youth pastor and the elder team. The team members shall be appointed yearly or as needed.
2. The Christian education team will be expected to define and implement their ministry under the direction of the elder team and the youth pastor.
3. The Christian education team leader will be elected for two (2) year terms with a three (3) consecutive term maximum, followed by at least one term off from this position. If the

resignation of the team leader should become necessary, it shall be made in writing to the elder team.

F. Christian Education Team/Adult

1. The Christian education team/Adult shall consist of an elected team leader, the senior pastor and members appointed by the team leader with input from the senior pastor and the elder team. The team members shall be appointed yearly or as needed.
2. The Christian education team will be expected to define and implement their ministry under the direction of the elder team and the senior pastor.
3. The Christian education team leader will be elected for two (2) year terms with a three (3) consecutive term maximum, followed by at least one term off from this position. If the resignation of the team leader should become necessary, it shall be made in writing to the elder team.

SECTION V – PASTORAL STAFF

A. Qualifications

1. Pastoral staff are to be men who meet the biblical qualifications as outlined in:

I Timothy 3:1-7

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1:5-9

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

2. Pastoral staff are to be men who are fully supportive of the LWEFC Statement of Faith, Core Values, Mission and Vision.

B. Selection

1. The elder team shall assemble, with congregational input, persons to serve on a pastoral search team.
2. The pastoral search team shall make their recommendation to the elder team.
3. Upon approval from the search team and the elder team, the candidate will be presented to the congregation for their approval.
4. Two-thirds (2/3) of voting members present at a congregational meeting is required for final selection of any full-time pastoral staff candidate.

C. Termination

1. Any member of the pastoral staff may be dismissed upon review of the elder team and two thirds (2/3) of voting members present at a congregational meeting.
2. A two (2) month notice, or a shorter notice as mutually agreed upon, shall be given in the case of termination or resignation.
3. In cases involving unethical conduct, as determined by the elder team, termination may be immediate.

D. Responsibilities

1. Senior Pastor
 - a. The pastor provides the spiritual and administrative leadership of the church for the purpose of equipping the congregation for ministry (Ephesians 4:12- to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up).
 - b. The pastor shall be a voting member of the elder team.
 - c. The pastor is ultimately accountable to the congregation, but he reports to and is evaluated annually in writing by the elder team on the basis of his job description and stated goals.

- d. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all the teams/committees of the church.
2. Pastoral Staff
 - a. All pastoral staff are ultimately accountable to the congregation, but they report to and are evaluated annually in writing by the senior pastor on the basis of their respective job descriptions and stated goals.
 - b. Pastoral staff shall be ex-officio members of such teams/committees as determined by the elder team.

SECTION VI – NOMINATIONS

A. **Elder Team** - The nominating committee will provide any nominees for vacancies on the Elder Team at the fall congregational meeting. Prior to September 1st, the congregation can provide specific recommendations in writing to the nominating committee.

B. **Other Officers** - The congregation can provide nominees for vacancies in the following offices:

- Deacon/Deaconess Team Leader
- Trustee Team Leader
- Missions Team Leader
- Christian Education Team Leader/Youth
- Christian Education Team Leader/Adult

C. The elder team must approve all nominees. The congregation will vote on the nominees for each vacant office. Elder team members must receive two-thirds (2/3) of voting members present. All other officers must receive a simple majority of voting members present.

D. If any vacancy occurs for an office, someone will be temporarily appointed to fill that office until the next election. For a vacancy on the Elder Team, the nominating committee will temporarily appoint someone with approval by the elders. For a vacancy of any other office, the elders will temporarily appoint someone.

SECTION VII – AMENDMENTS

A. These by-laws can be reviewed and changed at the discretion of the congregation.

B. The amendment process shall be initiated by the elder team and the notice of such proposed changes must be made in writing to the congregation in the call of the meeting.

C. The amendment shall require two thirds (2/3) of voting members present at a congregational meeting.