

Constitution of the Lancaster Evangelical Free Church

Approved November 10, 2019

Preamble

The purpose of the Lancaster Evangelical Free Church (LEFC) is to glorify God as we make disciples of Jesus Christ.

1. Statement of Faith

The following is the statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America, the national organization with which this church is affiliated and whose theological convictions we hold.

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.
2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.
3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.
5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.
6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.
7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord

Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.
9. We believe in the personal, bodily and 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.
10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

2. Matters of Faith and Practice

LEFC members, employees, missionaries and any persons serving in discipling ministries (e.g. life groups and teaching venues such as preaching, adult bible fellowships, youth group, children's ministries, and men's and women's ministries) must agree with the statement of faith found in section 1 and the following matters of faith and practice.

The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms that God created human beings uniquely in His image as male and female, and He has designed marriage to be a covenantal relationship between one man and one woman. This Resolution on Biblical Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage is an important affirmation of the truth of the Bible, as articulated in the EFCA Statement of Faith.]

3. Affiliation

This church is a self-governing body. It endeavors to associate and cooperate with any other church or organization which claims Christ to be both Savior and Lord and seeks to extend his kingdom. To the extent that it may so decide, the church will affiliate itself with the Evangelical Free Church of America, send delegates to its conferences, and support its initiatives.

4. Membership

The members of this church are those who place their trust in Jesus Christ as their personal savior, have been baptized, demonstrate evidence of God's saving grace in their lives, are 16 years of age or older, support this constitution and its by-laws, are recommended by the elders and have been approved by the membership. Only members who are 18 years of age or older may serve in the leadership positions listed in the following section (5).

5. Governance Structure

With Christ as the Head, LEFC is governed by elders chosen from among the membership. The elders are assisted by deacons, deaconesses, church officers, ministry directors and church members-at-large who, together with the elders, oversee the spiritual and business affairs of the church on the membership's behalf. These leaders (other than the senior pastor, executive pastor/director and ministry directors) are to be annually affirmed or elected by the membership. There will be no less than one membership business meeting per year.

6. Property Rights

This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or by purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of Pennsylvania, 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.

If a division within the church membership occurs, the name and property of the church shall belong to those members who continue to adhere to this constitution. If both sides claim to support the constitution, the Evangelical Free Church of America shall serve as third party to decide which party shall receive the name and property of the church.

In the event the members vote for dissolution of the church corporation, all right, title and interest in the property of the church shall be transferred to the Evangelical Free Church of America, providing that organization is in agreement with the provisions of this constitution. Dissociation or renaming of the church shall not be considered a legal dissolution.

7. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution can be made only at a business meeting of the membership, and by agreement of at least 75% of those members who cast votes, and only when such amendments have been proposed in writing to the membership at least two months prior to that meeting.

8. Provision for Bylaws

The church shall have the power to make such bylaws to this constitution as are necessary and proper for the management of its affairs.

Approved by 99.3% of members voting at 11/10/19 Congregational Business Meeting.