



Constitution of
Evangelical Community Church
of Abu Dhabi

Approved by the members of ECCAD on January 24, 2020

PREAMBLE

The Evangelical Community Church of Abu Dhabi (ECC) is a group of believers residing in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates who unite for worship, fellowship, prayer, the preaching of the Word of God and the proclamation of the gospel here and abroad, and who subscribe to a basic unifying Statement of Faith (Article I). The vision of ECC is to be an embassy of the Lord Jesus Christ in Abu Dhabi, growing disciples from the nations to be gospel ambassadors to the nations.

We are independent of denominational affiliation and welcome people from different denominations. Our congregation is uniquely international which provides special opportunities for Christians from all over the world to know and love one another and contribute their special gifts. At the same time, we have the unique task of achieving a stable ministry with relatively transient people.

It is prayerfully hoped that this Constitution will provide the framework for necessary flexibility while giving us needed stability.

ARTICLE I: STATEMENT OF FAITH

THE BIBLE: We believe the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by Him and completely accurate in the original manuscripts, and therefore our only authority in all matters of faith and practice (Mk. 12:36; Lk. 24:44; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim.3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

THE TRINITY: We believe that there is one God, infinite and eternally self-existent, in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:18-19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

JESUS CHRIST: We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. He exists eternally with the Father, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and was crucified and buried. He was resurrected bodily on the third day, appeared to his followers, and ascended into heaven where He is seated at the right hand of the Father. We believe this same Jesus will one day return physically and visibly to the earth, and every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Jn. 1:1-3, 14, 18; 1 Jn. 4:2, 14-15; Is. 7:14; Mat. 1:18-23; Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Cor.15:3-7; Jn. 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 2:10-11).

THE HOLY SPIRIT: We believe the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He indwells every believer at the moment of salvation and ministers through them as they yield themselves to God (Jn. 14:16-17; Acts

2:38, Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13, Eph. 4:30; 5:18).

SALVATION: We believe all men are sinners and therefore justly deserve God's condemnation. The atoning death of Jesus is God's provision for our salvation, and eternal life is received by repentance from sin and personal faith in Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1-14; 3:1-21, 36; 10:27-30; Rom. 1:11-17; 5:6-8; Eph. 2:1-9; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

THE RESURRECTION AND FUTURE JUDGMENT: We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the dead, of the believer to everlasting life and fellowship with God, and of the unbeliever to condemnation and everlasting punishment (Jn. 5:25-29; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11-15).

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: We believe that the believer ought to conduct himself so as to honor God and be a consistent testimony of his new life in Christ. He is to obey the commands of Christ and His Word (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:17; Jn. 14:21).

THE CHURCH: We believe the Church is composed of all who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The local Church is a congregation of believers united by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:13; 14:23).

CHURCH ORDINANCES: We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances administered by the church. Water baptism is the act by which the believer pictures his identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. In the Lord's Supper, the believer partakes of the bread and the cup in remembrance of Jesus Christ, proclaiming His death. The Lord's Supper should be a special time of self-examination (Mat. 28:18; Lk. 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:23-32).

THE GOALS OF THE CHURCH: We believe the Great Commission is to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing and teaching. All of God's people are to be prepared for works of service so that the Body of Christ may be built up. We gather together for worship and fellowship and disperse into the world to be witnesses of God's love and eternal salvation (Mat. 28:19-20; Eph. 4:11-13; Jn. 4:24; Acts 1:8; Heb. 10:24-25).

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Becoming a Member

- a. Membership in the Evangelical Community Church shall be open to anyone who gives evidence of personal faith in Jesus Christ, is in agreement with the Statement of Faith and is willing to commit to the responsibilities expressed in the church covenant. Members of ECC may retain concurrent membership in a church in their home country.
- b. An applicant seeking membership should sign a statement affirming his or her personal faith in Christ, commitment to the church covenant and agreement with the Statement of Faith. To qualify for membership at ECC, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. The elders will be responsible to assess each person's qualification for membership by personal interview. After the personal interview, unless just cause exists for withholding membership, the Elders will recommend the applicant for admission into membership by a majority vote of the congregation at any regular or special meeting of the members. By voting, the congregation affirms the applicant's profession of faith and extends the covenant privileges of church membership to him or her.

Section 2: Voting Membership

- a. The voting membership shall be composed of those who have been acknowledged into the membership of the church and are faithful in attending the worship services of the church. Voting privileges shall not apply in cases where UAE law requires a specific age for one to vote on legal matters.
- b. For the purpose of determining the quorum for a members' meeting (**Article IV, Section 3**), the basis shall be the current roster of voting membership in good standing. All of those who have permanently departed from Abu Dhabi, or have not been in regular attendance for one year, may be removed from the church membership roll by a majority vote of the congregation.
- c. A person removed from the voting membership roll for non-disciplinary reasons within the past year may be reinstated by resuming attendance at the worship services, by reaffirming his or her agreement with the church's doctrinal position and commitment to the church covenant, and by a majority vote of the congregation upon recommendation of the Elders.

Section 3: Member's Responsibility

- a. Members are expected to conduct their lives in accordance with God's commands set forth in His Word, including being faithful in attendance at worship, striving to fulfill the responsibilities of the membership covenant, supporting the ministry of the church by giving of their time, gifts, and resources as the Lord prospers them, and faithfully praying for the church, its members, its leadership and its ministries.
- b. Under Christ, this congregation is overseen by elders but governed by its members. Therefore it is the privilege and responsibility of members to be present at members' meetings, freely express their views and to vote conscientiously under the authority of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God on the election of those serving as elders and deacons, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote (**Article III Section 2**).
- c. Every New Testament Christian is a minister and faithful membership is itself a ministry. It is the privilege of members who have committed to the congregation to use their gifts to serve in various capacities in the ministry of the church.

Section 4: On Church Discipline

- a. A member shall be deemed to be under the discipline of the church if the Elders find that any of the following circumstances has occurred:
 1. The member has evidenced unethical or immoral conduct or behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian and contrary to biblical principles, by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored.
 2. The member has propagated doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith and church covenant.
 3. The member has wronged another member causing discord or dissension that has not been repented of or reconciled after following the process outlined for resolution (**Article II, Section 4.b**).
- b. The purpose of such discipline should always be:
 1. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Gal 6:1-5; 1 Cor 5:5; Heb 12:7-11).
 2. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Thess 5:14; 1 Tim 5:20; Titus 1:11).
 3. For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Cor 5:6-7).
 4. For the good of the church's witness to non-Christians (Acts 5:1-14; 1 Cor 5:1; 1 Pet 2:12; 1 John 3:10).
 5. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting his holy character (2

Cor 6:14–7:1; 1 Pet 2:12).

- c. The process of discipline outlined below, based on Matthew 18:15–20, shall be followed in cases where one member finds sin in the life of another member. In cases of egregious or scandalous sin (1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10) or divisiveness, the Elders may recommend that the congregation move immediately to remove the sinning member from membership as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 (see also Titus 3:10). The goal in all cases is the loving restoration of the one caught in sin, by God’s grace. Discipline as a church should ordinarily be considered only after individual private admonition has failed.
1. The member who detects the sin shall tell the other his fault, just between the two of them.
 2. If the sinning member does not repent, then two or three witnesses shall be taken along to attempt to bring about the repentance and restoration of the one caught in sin.
 3. If the sinning member still does not repent, the Elders will tell the situation to the church membership at a regular or special meeting of members and urge the members to pursue the one caught in unrepentant sin.
 4. If the sinning member will not listen to the admonition of the church, the Elders will recommend to the congregation the excommunication of the person at a regular or special members’ meeting. Excommunication will be enacted by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at the meeting and entails the removal of the person from membership and suspension from participation in the Lord’s Supper. An excommunicated person shall normally be encouraged to pursue repentance by attending corporate worship except in cases of egregious slander or divisiveness which may also entail exclusion from corporate worship and church gatherings as the case requires (Titus 3:9–11). Absentee voting shall not be permitted on issues of excommunication. All votes for excommunication of a sinning member will be conducted by secret ballot.
- d. An excommunicated person who has demonstrated contrition and clear fruit of repentance shall be restored to fellowship by recommendation of the Elders and a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a regular or special members’ meeting (2 Cor 2:5–7). He or she shall be reinstated into membership and welcomed again to participation in the Lord’s Supper. All votes for restoration shall be conducted by secret ballot of members present at the meeting. Absentee ballots shall not be permitted for votes for restoration.

Section 5: Termination of Membership

- a. The church will normally recognize the termination of person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned, by a majority vote of the congregation to remove the person from membership.
- b. The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death.
- c. A person's membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members (**Article II Section 4 b**).
- d. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.
- e. The church has the authority to terminate membership following extended periods of non-attendance, after endeavours have been made to follow up with the member pastorally.

ARTICLE III: GOVERNANCE

Section 1: Overview

The form of church government will be congregational, with final authority residing in the whole body of voting church members. The church will be governed independently of any outside denomination or organization. The church will be led by a plurality of lay Elders and staff Pastors and served by Deacons and Deaconesses, all of whom are elected by the congregation. The church may also have other staff, committees, ministries and offices as provided for in the Constitution.

Section 2: The Congregation

Items which shall be determined by the voting membership as a whole are the following:

1. Call or dismissal of pastoral staff and those in key paid leadership positions, as designated by the Elders (**Article III, Sections 4, 5, 7**).
2. Election or dismissal of Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses (**Article III, Sections 3, 6**)
3. Admission of new members, removal of departing members, excommunication of members for disciplinary reasons, and restoration of an excommunicated person (**Article II, Sections 1, 2, 4**).
4. Approval of the church budget

5. Expenditures not included in the church budget in excess of Dhs. 100,000
6. Ratification and Amendment of the Church Constitution (**Article VII**)
7. Ratification of final dissolution of the church (see **Article V**)

Section 3: Elders

- a. Duties - The Elders will be responsible for shepherding the members of the church toward Christian maturity, teaching and protecting sound doctrine, overseeing the church's affairs, ministries and resources, and setting the church's vision.
- b. Qualifications - Elders must be men who meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. A candidate for elder must be a voting member at ECC for at least one year prior to standing for election.
- c. Number - There shall be at least three Elders (not counting Pastors).
- d. Election - The congregation shall elect Elders to serve a three year term at a regular or special members' meeting. An Elder may be elected to a second consecutive term, but may not serve as an elder for one year after his second term. Elder candidates shall be nominated by the Elders or a Nominating Committee appointed by the Elders. Elder candidates shall be elected in a secret written ballot by a two-thirds majority of those voting. Those elected to the Elders shall begin their terms immediately. If a need arises, the Elders may co-opt a qualified church member to serve as an Elder until the next members' meeting. The Elders will elect a chairman and may appoint other officers and sub-committees as needed from among themselves.
- e. Dismissal - A vote of no confidence in an Elder may be presented at a regular or special members' meeting of the congregation. If 51% or more of those casting ballots express no confidence, the Elder shall be immediately dismissed from his office.

Section 4: Senior Pastor

- a. Duties - The Senior Pastor will share in the Elders' work of shepherding and oversight, with particular responsibility for preaching and teaching, assisting the elders in setting the church's vision, directing the church's public worship, and leading the church's staff. The Senior Pastor will be a voting member of the Elders.
- b. Qualifications - The Senior Pastor must be a man who meets the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- c. Call - The Elders shall appoint a Selection Committee representative

of the membership. The Committee will recommend a single candidate for Senior Pastor and upon approval of the Elders supervise a general election. The candidate shall be elected in a secret written ballot by a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast at a meeting called for that purpose (**Article IV, Section 4**).

- d. Dismissal – If a question of confidence in the Senior Pastor should arise, efforts shall be made by the Elders to resolve the matter. If such efforts fail, the individual may be asked to resign. If the person refuses to resign, a special members’ meeting may be called to render a vote of no confidence (**Article IV, Section 4**). The vote shall be taken at the meeting by a secret written ballot. If 51% or more of those casting ballots express no confidence in the pastor his services will be terminated.

Section 5: Pastoral Staff

- a. Duties – Additional Pastors may be hired to meet the needs of the church. Their titles and duties will be determined by the Elders. These Pastors will be voting members of the Elders, provided there are at least two lay elders for each voting Pastor. These Pastors may not vote on matters related to church staff, as determined by the lay Elders.
- b. Qualifications – Pastors must be men who meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- c. Call – The Elders may appoint a Selection Committee to assist in identifying and selecting candidates for a Pastoral Position. If appointed, the Selection Committee will recommend a single candidate and upon approval of the Elders supervise a general election. If no Selection Committee is appointed, the Elders will present a single candidate at a general election. The candidate shall be elected in a secret written ballot by a two-thirds majority of ballots cast at a meeting called for that purpose (see **Article IV, Section 4**).
- d. Dismissal – If a question of confidence in any of the Pastoral staff should arise, efforts shall be made by the Senior Pastor and the Elders to resolve the matter. If such efforts fail, the individual may be asked to resign. If the person refuses to resign, the Elders may call a special members’ meeting to render a vote of no confidence. If 51% or more of those casting ballots express no confidence, his services shall be terminated.

Section 6: Deacons and Deaconesses

- a. Duties – Deacons and Deaconesses shall serve the congregation and Elders by caring for the church’s practical and administrative needs. The Elders shall establish or remove diaconal positions and define diaconal

responsibilities as they deem necessary for the orderly functioning of the church.

- b. Qualifications – Deacons and Deaconesses shall be men and women who are voting members and who meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- c. Election - The church shall elect Deacons and Deaconesses to serve three year terms at a regular or special members’ meeting. A Deacon or Deaconess may be elected to a second consecutive term, but may not serve for one year after the second term. Diaconal candidates shall be recommended to the church by the Elders or a Nominating Committee appointed by the Elders. Diaconal candidates shall be elected in a secret written ballot by a two-thirds majority of those voting. Those elected shall begin their terms immediately. If a need arises, the Elders may coopt a church member to serve in a diaconal role until the next members’ meeting. If a diaconal position is removed by the Elders, the Deacon or Deaconess assigned to that position may be reassigned by the Elders to another diaconal task for the remainder of his/her term.
- d. Dismissal - A vote of no confidence in a Deacon or Deaconess may be presented at a regular or special members’ meeting of the church. If 51% or more of those casting ballots express no confidence, the Deacon or Deaconess shall be immediately dismissed from his office.

Section 7: Other Officers, Committees, Staff and Ministries

- a. Officers and Committees - Other officers and committees may be appointed or dismissed by the Elders as needed.
- b. Leadership Staff – The Elders may establish additional key leadership positions on the paid church staff. The process for calling and dismissing individuals to these roles shall be the same as for Deacons and Deaconesses (**Article III, Section 6**).
- c. Administrative and Adjunct Staff - The Elders have the authority to hire and dismiss part time and/or full time administrative or adjunct staff members as necessary for the effective management of church affairs. The Elders have the authority to make the distinction between administrative staff (as per this section) and key paid leadership positions.
- d. Ministries - Church ministries may be appointed or removed with approval of the Elders. The Elders shall approve the responsibilities and lines of accountability for such ministries.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Section 1: Religious Meetings

The church shall meet weekly for worship and the preaching of the Word of God. Other meetings for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, etc., may be scheduled as needed or desired.

Section 2: Elder Meetings

The Elders shall have regular meetings for prayer, shepherding and oversight of the congregation.

Section 3: Members' Meetings

- a. The church shall gather for regular members' meetings in the months of January, March, May, September, and November at a suitable date and time determined by the Elders or at a different date and time determined by the Elders to be more convenient for maximal congregational participation. The membership shall be notified of the meetings at least two weeks in advance by announcement at the weekly services with the proposed agenda items made available in advance of the meeting. An Elder designated by the Elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.
- b. In every meeting together, members will act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. In special circumstances, when it is deemed necessary by the elders, non-members will not be allowed to attend members' meetings.
- c. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.
- d. The annual budget shall be adopted by the congregation in the January members' meeting at the start of the fiscal year.

Section 4: Special Members' Meetings

- a. A special members' meeting may be called by the Elders or by petition signed by 10% of the voting membership. Notice of such a meeting and its purpose shall be announced at least two successive weekly services preceding the meeting. Except in the case of an emergency, no meeting may be conducted during the months of June, July or August. Any necessary action voted on during such an emergency meeting will be reviewed at the regular members' meeting in September.

- b. An emergency members' meetings is a special members' meeting that may be called by a majority of the Elders or by petition signed by 25% of the voting membership. All resolutions passed at an emergency members' meeting shall be subject to review at the next regular members' meeting.

Section 5: Quorum

A quorum shall consist of the number of church members actually present at a properly constituted regular or special members' meeting of the church (see **Article IV, Sections 3 and 4**). All votes taken at such meetings shall be considered official and binding.

Section 6: Absentee Voting

A person who cannot be at a meeting may vote using an absentee ballot available one week before the meeting. He/she must personally sign the absentee ballot and return it by the time the voting takes place. He/she may not designate another member to vote for him/her but may have another person cast the signed absentee ballot. Absentee voting is not permitted in the case of member additions, removals, excommunication, or restoration.

ARTICLE V: DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

In the event of termination of the church, the Elders will liquidate the assets and give them to a non-profit organization, with first priority being given to Christian organizations in basic agreement with our Statement of Faith.

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall be from 1 January through 31 December. The budget adopted at the January members' meeting shall be retroactive to 1 January. It shall be extended into the next year until a new budget is adopted.

ARTICLE VII: RATIFICATION, REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Ratification

The Constitution shall become effective upon ratification by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at a regular or special members' meeting. Copies of the proposed Constitution shall be made available to all members at least fourteen (14) days before a members' meeting called to consider it.

Section 2: Review

The Constitution shall be reviewed by the Elders or a committee appointed by the Elders at least every three (3) years.

Section 3: Amendments

Any voting member can propose an amendment to the Constitution by submitting the text of the proposed amendment in writing to the Elders. It shall be considered further if it is approved by the Elders or supported by 25% of the voting membership. It shall be passed if two-thirds of the voting membership present at a members' meeting approves it (**Article IV, Section 4**).

Ratified 17 May, 1985

Reviewed and Ratified 12 May, 1989

Amended and Ratified 16 January, 1995

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Amended and Ratified 29 January, 2007

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