

# BY-LAWS

Adopted November 17, 2024



## ARTICLE I - PREAMBLE

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### Section 1. Name and Affiliation.

The corporate name of this church shall be "*The First Evangelical Free Church of Wichita, Kansas.*" This church affiliates with the Evangelical Free Church of America for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure and to the extent this local church may officially decide. However, this church shall remain its own highest authority, under Christ, and shall conduct its business according to these Bylaws.

### Section 2. Theology

#### A. Statement of Faith.

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

#### 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.

### B. Other Theological Convictions.

**Marriage and Human Sexuality:** We believe the Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman. We believe the Bible also teaches that sex is a gift from God and intended only for a man and a woman within the sacred bounds of marriage. Sexual activity outside of marriage, according to the Bible, is sinful.

### **Section 3. Mission Statement**

Our Mission: We exist to make disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God as the grace of the gospel grows deep in God's people and goes wide to all peoples.

### **Section 4. Church Property**

In case of a division of the church, from which God in His mercy preserve us; the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by these By-Laws. In case of dissolution of the church, the property shall automatically become the property of the Midwest District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The church shall be considered dissolved when no more than five members remain.

### **Section 5. Conduct of Business**

This church shall have power in its corporate name to buy, own, hold in trust, use, inherit, lease, rent, sell, exchange or dispose of, such real and personal property as may be useful and necessary for the furtherance of the Lord's work. It shall also have the power to mortgage and encumber all or any part of the church property, and to borrow (except as limited in Article III, Section 4) and raise money or other assets of any kind, for the furtherance of the Lord's work.

All church property, real, and personal, shall be held, and all debts of the corporation shall be contracted, by the Trustees in the name of the corporation. Private property of the church members and officers of the corporation shall not be subject to payment of the corporate debts.

### **Section 6. Amendments**

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any regular members meeting of the church or at any special meeting called for that purpose, by two-thirds of the votes cast, provided said proposed amendments have been presented in writing and discussed at a regular members meeting at least one month prior to the meeting at which the vote is taken.

## **ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP**

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### **Section 1. Qualifications**

Membership is open to any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose character, conduct and reputation are in accord with his/her confession, who believes what is set forth in our Statement of Faith, who has been baptized, who agrees to abide by and support the By-Laws of this church, and who pursues faithfulness to the Membership Covenant.

### **Section 2. Membership Covenant**

#### **Membership Covenant:**

As believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we gladly covenant with God and fellow members in the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God as the grace of the gospel grows deep in God's people and goes wide to all peoples.

As disciples we will love one another and live in a manner worthy of the gospel:

- We will build one another up with the Word.
- We will pray with and for one another.
- We will gather with one another regularly to worship.

- We will give generously to care for one another's needs and support our mission.
- We will serve and care for one another using our spiritual gifts.
- We will partner with one another to show compassion for the lost.
- We will partner with one another in evangelism and missions.
- We will submit to one another and the authority and discipline of the church.

### **Section 3. Admission**

Those persons who desire membership in the church shall submit a completed membership application to the church office. The Elders, with assistance from the Deacons, will oversee personal interviews with all member applicants. If the applicant is found eligible for membership, the Elders shall publicize the candidate's name for two successive weeks to allow congregational input; then they will vote on the applicants and admit them to membership. New members shall be welcomed publicly in a timely manner.

Members of the pastoral staff and their spouses automatically become members with full voting privileges upon acceptance of a call from the church. They cease being members when their vocational ministry with the church is completed, unless they remain active in attendance.

### **Section 4. Withdrawal/Removal**

A. Any member who wishes to withdraw from the membership shall inform a pastor or elder in writing. A letter of recommendation shall be provided, upon request, to anyone who resigns while a member in good standing.

B. Any member who absents himself from church services for a period of one year shall no longer be considered a member unless special arrangements are made. An attempt will be made to notify the individual who is removed at his/her last known address.

### **Section 5. Discipline**

A. Any member is subject to church discipline when he or she persists in living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith. Church discipline may also be applied in the case of individuals who may not have joined the church but attend regularly.

B. If any believer becomes aware that another professing believer in the fellowship is living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith, he or she has the duty to lovingly reprove the other in private. If the person persists in sin, the Elder Board shall be advised and the reprovng believer shall again go to the professing believer accompanied by one or two witnesses, one of whom should be an Elder. Together they should confirm the facts and, if necessary, lovingly reprove and try to restore the erring person spiritually. If satisfactory changes are not made, the Elder Board shall take appropriate action, which may include informing the church of the situation and removing the person from membership and/or fellowship. Once the discipline process has been initiated, it will continue to completion even if the person resigns his or her membership. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:10-11)

C. If the individual in question or any other member of the church objects to removal by the Elder Board, the matter may be brought before the church at a regular or special members meeting. A 2/3 vote of the members present shall be required to overrule any decision made by the Elder Board.

D. Any person after being removed from the membership and later repenting and desiring to rejoin the church must apply according to Section 2.

## ARTICLE III - GOVERNANCE

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### Section 1. Church Meetings

The government of the church shall be congregational, with authority vested in its members. A majority vote of those present at a properly called members meeting shall be final in all matters, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws. Major decisions, including specifically the hiring of the Lead Pastor, election of officers, approval of the annual budget, purchase and sale of property, and any decision to expand the facilities significantly beyond specified limits are reserved for the congregation at its members meetings.

### Section 2. Elected Officers

Qualifications. Every person nominated to be an officer of the church (Elder, Trustee, Deacon, Missions Committee Member, or Corporate Officer) must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older, have held membership in the church for at least one year, and be faithfully living out the Membership Covenant. Those nominated as church leaders shall also meet the scriptural qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

### Section 3. Elder Board

A. Duties. The operation and administration of the church between members meetings shall be delegated by the membership to the Elder Board.

The Elder Board, under the headship of Christ and with the Pastoral Staff, shall be responsible for spiritual oversight of the church. They shall ensure that the Body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching. They shall confront any false teaching and behavior that is contradictory to biblical truth, implementing appropriate corrective measures. They shall shepherd the flock and encourage ministry to the poor and distressed. They shall endeavor to resolve conflicts in the church in accord with biblical principles.

The Elder Board must also ensure that the life of the church is being well managed. They shall provide discernment and direction regarding vision, goals, and priorities for the Body. They shall monitor mission effectiveness and ministry alignment.

The Elder Board shall have oversight and direction of the Pastoral Staff, the Trustees, the Deacons, and the Missions Committee.

B. Selection. Members of the Elder Board must be male in gender and shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year for a term of three (3) years. An Elder may serve no more than two consecutive terms before taking a year off. The election shall be held in such a manner that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Elders will be elected each year. There shall be a maximum of twelve (12) elected Elders.

The Elder Board shall consist of the following voting members:

- \* Elected Elders
- \* Lead Pastor
- \* Executive Pastor or Senior Associate Pastor

C. Officers. The Elder Board shall choose its own officers annually following the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year. Officers of the Elder Board shall include at least a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary.

D. Meetings. The Elder Board shall hold meetings at least monthly. Regular and special meetings may be held at the call of the Chairman of the Elder Board, the Chairman of the Church, the Lead Pastor, or three members of the Elder Board. The presence of a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of those present, except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws.

#### **Section 4. Trustees**

A. Duties. The Trustees shall be responsible to the Elder Board for the property and financial management of the church. They shall be responsible for the cleanliness, maintenance and repair of the buildings and shall manage all church property.

The Trustees shall be responsible for deeds and other valuable papers of the church. Legal title to real and personal property of the church and corporation shall be held and conveyed in its corporate name. Deeds and conveyances of real and personal property shall be signed by the required corporate officers. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property valued at more than \$10,000 without the consent of the membership. No contractual indebtedness shall be incurred without a 2/3 vote of the membership, except as allowed in Article III, Section 4, E below.

The Trustees shall prepare a written report of work accomplished and money expended for each regular members meeting of the church. The Trustees shall oversee, in conjunction with the Operations Director, the preparation of the annual church budget.

B. Selection. Trustees must be male in gender and shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year for a term of three (3) years. Trustees may serve no more than two consecutive terms before taking a year off. The election shall be held in such a manner that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Trustees will be elected each year.

C. Officers. The Trustees shall choose their own officers at the first meeting following the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year.

D. Meetings. The Trustees shall endeavor to hold monthly meetings. Regular and special meetings may be held at the call of the Chairman of the Trustees, the Chairman of the Church, the Chairman of the Elder Board, the Lead Pastor, or any three Trustees. The presence of a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of those present.

E. Expenditure Limits. The Trustees may authorize non-budgeted per project expenditures not to exceed 2% of the annual church budget for general maintenance and 2% for capital improvements.

#### **Section 5. Deacons**

A. Duties. The Deacons, under the guidance of the Elder Board and the Pastors, shall minister to the spiritual life and physical needs of the church. They shall assist the Pastors with communion and baptism, the Elder Board with membership interviews, and the designated pastor with assimilation/retention ministries and administration of benevolence. The Deacons may organize themselves as best they see fit to accomplish these tasks.

B. Selection. Deacons may be men or women and shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year for a term of three (3) years. Deacons may serve no more than two consecutive terms before taking a year off. The election shall be held in such a manner that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Deacons are elected each year.

## **Section 6. Missions Committee**

A. Duties. The Missions Committee, under the guidance of the Elder Board, shall encourage missions interest in every department of the church. It shall plan missions conferences and arrange for missions speakers upon approval by the Elder Board. The committee shall endeavor to keep the church informed about our missions partners. The committee members are to demonstrate a passion for missions, knowledge of missions, and discernment.

B. Selection. Missions Committee members may be men or women and shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year for a term of three (3) years. Missions Committee members may serve no more than two consecutive terms before taking a year off. The election shall be held in such a manner that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Missions Committee members are elected each year.

C. Officers. The Missions Committee shall choose their own officers at the first meeting following the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year.

D. Meetings. The Missions Committee will meet monthly. Members are expected to attend 9 of the 12 meetings in one year. The presence of a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of those present.

## **Section 7. Corporate Officers**

A. The Chairman of the Church shall be appointed by the Elder Board from among the Elders for a one-year term, not to exceed three terms in a row. He shall preside at all members meetings, make sure all members meetings are properly announced, and be a voting ex-officio member of all boards and committees. He shall have such additional responsibilities as designated by the Elder Board.

B. The Vice-Chairman of the Church shall be appointed by the Elder Board from among the Elders for a one-year term. He shall be prepared to preside at any members meeting where the Chairman is absent, and shall assist the Chairman in carrying out his duties.

C. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Elder Board for a term of one year, keep minutes of members meetings, and attend to church correspondence as delegated by the Lead Pastor, the Church Chairman, or the Elder Chairman.

D. The Financial Secretary shall be chosen by the Trustees and approved by the Elder Board for a term of one year, shall supervise the counting and recording of all contributions received at the Church services, be responsible for a detailed recording of the funds received, and submit a written report of all receipts at each regular members meeting. He shall not have check-writing authority or responsibility for any expenditure for the church. If chosen from outside the Trustees, the Financial Secretary shall become an ex officio member of the Trustees.

E. The Treasurer shall be chosen by the Trustees and approved by the Elder Board for a term of one year, shall oversee disbursements and the payment of all bills by check as authorized, receive a weekly record of income from the Financial Secretary, keep an accurate ledger of all receipts and disbursements of each account, and prepare a written report for each regular members meeting. He shall not be involved in the counting or deposit of any funds for the church. If chosen from outside the Trustees, the Treasurer shall become an ex officio member of the Trustees.

F. All Corporate officers of the church shall be men. No pastor may serve as a Corporate Officer.

## ARTICLE IV - PASTORAL STAFF

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### Section 1. Lead Pastor

A. Qualifications. The Lead Pastor shall meet the scriptural qualifications for his calling as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He shall be a man of established Christian character, sound in faith and doctrine, and shall be qualified to teach and preach the whole counsel of the Word of God. He shall be a worthy example in his life and teaching, and shall be in full accord with the Statement of Faith in Article I, Section 2 of these By-Laws. (Acts 20:26,27; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:7-9)

B. Duties. The Lead Pastor, as an undershepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, shall teach and preach the Word of God and supervise the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion. He shall advance the spiritual life and interests of the church. He shall be responsible to lead the staff, though certain staff may report administratively to other individuals.

The Lead Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board. He shall be accountable to the Elder Board to accomplish the vision, goals, and priorities of the church within guidelines established by the Elders. He shall report on the work and condition of the church at the Quarterly Members Meetings. By virtue of his position he shall be a voting ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church.

C. Selection. The Elder Board shall appoint a Lead Pastor Search Committee, which must include at least three Elders. This committee must be ratified by vote of the membership. The calling of a Lead Pastor may take place at any regular or special members meeting called for that purpose. Voting shall be done by closed ballot. The Lead Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time and must receive a two-thirds majority of all votes cast.

D. Removal. The Lead Pastor serves at the will of the Elder Board. He may be dismissed with an 80% vote of the elected Elders. This decision may be overruled by a 2/3 vote of the membership.

### Section 2. Additional Pastoral Staff

A. Qualifications and Duties. Additional pastoral staff qualifications, duties and calling shall be the same as those of the Lead Pastor except where otherwise specified in their job descriptions. Copies of these job descriptions shall be kept by the Operations Director. Each job description may be amended by the Elder Board at any regular meeting by a majority vote.

B. Selection. The membership shall approve the hiring of all staff through the budget process. Actual selection of individuals to fill approved staff positions shall be by agreement of the Lead Pastor and at least 2/3 of the Elders. For full-time pastoral staff the appointment of a Search Committee shall be the norm. It is expected that the primary constituency for any ministry position will be consulted during the hiring process.

C. Removal. All pastoral staff serve at the will of the Lead Pastor and the Elder Board. No pastor shall be dismissed without a two-thirds vote of the Elder Board.

D. Annual performance reviews. Annual performance reviews shall be given to each pastoral staff member indicating strengths and areas for improvement for the preceding year and goals for the following year. These reviews shall be written and presented by the person or board to whom the pastoral staff member reports, with approval from the next higher level within the church. Appropriate input shall be sought from others within the church body. At least two follow-up sessions shall be held during the following year to monitor progress in the areas for improvement and toward the goals.



## **ARTICLE V – APPOINTED COMMITTEES**

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### **Section 1. Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall prayerfully consider nominations for officers to be elected at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year. It may place in nomination one candidate for each office vacancy or multiple candidates. The number of vacancies will be determined by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Elders, Trustees, Deacons, and Missions Committee respectively, except as specified in these By-Laws. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members appointed by the Elder Board from among the church membership and shall serve a one (1) year term. The Chairman shall be appointed by the Elder Board. No member may serve more than four (4) consecutive years. Such candidates shall be selected for their spiritual gifts. The Elder Board may by a 2/3 majority remove any member of the committee.

### **Section 2. Special Committees**

A. Financial Controls Committee. The Elders shall ensure that adequate Financial Controls are developed and maintained by the Trustees. Periodically the Elders shall appoint a committee of church members or experts outside the church to accomplish an Internal Financial Controls Review. A report of the findings shall be made to the Elders, who shall be responsible to see that the Trustees make any corrections to procedures that are necessary. This shall be done at least every two years and whenever there is turnover in any of the following positions: Operations Director, Bookkeeping Administrator, or pastor supervising the Operations Director.

B. Other committees shall be established and appointed by the Elders as needed. Special Committees shall function until assignments are completed, or until the committee is dissolved by the Elder Board or by the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS**

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### **Section 1. Members Meetings**

Members meetings shall be held quarterly at a time and place designated by the Elder Board. Selection of Elders, Trustees, Deacons, and Missions Committee members, and approval of the annual budget for the ensuing year shall occur at the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year. Corporate decisions shall be by a majority vote of the members present, except where otherwise specified in these By-Laws. Reports shall be made by the Lead Pastor, church officers, and committees as required by these By-Laws, and by others as deemed by the Elder Board to be of interest to the membership.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings**

A. Special members meetings may be held at a time and place designed by the Elder Board. Such meetings may be called by at least two of the following: Lead Pastor, Chairman of the Church, Chairman of the Elder Board, four members of the Elder Board, or a signed petition of not less than 10% of the active membership of the church.

B. Special information members meetings shall be held upon request by at least two of the following: Lead Pastor, Chairman of the Church, Chairman of the Elder Board, or Chairman of the Trustees, and at a time set by the officers calling the meeting. No action shall be taken at a special information meeting to decide or vote on any matters requiring a corporate decision or vote of the members. It shall not be necessary to have a quorum at a special information meeting.

### **Section 3. Meeting Notices**

Members meetings, both regular and special, must be publicly announced at two Sunday morning services preceding the meeting. If matters of special importance are to be considered or voted upon, such items must be stated in the announcement and/or included in the Church Bulletin for those Sundays. Special informational meetings must be announced at Sunday morning services immediately preceding the meeting. As an alternate, the members may be advised by a first class letter mailed at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.

### **Section 4. Quorum**

The presence of 20% of the active members of the church shall constitute a quorum for the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year; 10% for other members meeting. A quorum will be assumed to be present unless called for. Active members shall not include underage members, members who are non-residents, or members who have not attended or contributed for six months. Only those who are at least eighteen years of age are allowed to vote in members meetings.

### **Section 5. Election and Ratification Procedures**

Nomination and voting procedures shall be as follows:

A. The Nominating Committee is responsible to provide an appropriate means of soliciting nominations from the congregation.

B. The Nominating Committee's slate of candidates must be distributed and posted at least three weeks prior to the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year so that members can give prayerful consideration to the candidates. Concern about a candidate's eligibility must be submitted in a written and signed format to the Committee chairman.

C. Additional nominations may be made by church members. All such nominations must be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee not less than three weeks prior to the last Quarterly Members Meeting of the year. Each nomination must set forth the qualifications of the proposed candidate and be signed by a second member. Persons so nominated must also have given their written permission to be nominated. These nominations will be placed on the official ballot. No nominations for elected offices will be received from the floor.

D. Selection of Elders, Trustees, Deacons, and Missions Committee members shall be by closed ballot.

E. A plurality of all votes cast shall decide all elections or ratifications.

F. Persons newly selected shall assume their duties on January 1 of the coming year, or if chosen to fill a vacancy, at the close of the meeting in which they are ratified.

G. Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled at any regular or special members meeting of the congregation. Such nominations shall be handled in a manner consistent with procedures for annual elections. The term of an officer so selected shall include the remainder of the current year and three subsequent years beginning on January 1.