

Constitution of the Evangelical Free Church of Laguna Hills (Original)

Article I. Name

We, the members of the Evangelical Free Church of Laguna Hills, in order to set forth our stand on the Word of God and to facilitate the orderly transaction of business, do ordain and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article II. Statement of Faith

- We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of his will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
- We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. he died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
- We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age, to convict men of sin, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
- We believe that man was created in the image of god, but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit, can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
- We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ by faith are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become children of God.
- We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. These are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
- We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the

Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head.

- We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
- We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
- We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Article III. Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify God and to make and equip disciples to serve and to advance His Kingdom.

Article IV. Affiliation

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with the Southwest District Conference of said denomination. While so affiliated, this church shall remain independent, self-governing and its own highest authority under God.

Article V. Membership

A. Qualifications for Membership.

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior, and has acknowledged agreement with the statement of faith and this constitution. The spirit of membership and this church constitution shall be, "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ."

B. Admission to Membership

1. Application for membership shall be made to the Deacon Board.
2. The Deacon Board shall hear the personal testimony of the candidate and consider the faith and life of the applicant. They shall make recommendations to a following business meeting. Christian experience, assurance of salvation, subscribing to this Constitution and Statement of Faith contained therein shall be considered.
3. Recommendation for admission to membership shall be a unanimous vote of the Board of Deacons.
 - a. Any member of the Deacon Board objecting to the admission of an applicant for scriptural and/or constitutional reasons shall state the reason to that Board. The vote for membership by this Board shall be unanimous. Any vote for exclusion shall be cause to refer this matter to the Elder Board who will ultimately decide whether to recommend the party in question as a member at the next congregational meeting.
 - b. Any applicant not recommended for membership shall be advised by two or more members of the Board of Elders of the reason and shall be given the opportunity to appear before that board to clarify his/her position.
4. The names of the individuals recommended for membership shall be announced in writing at least one week prior to the meeting in which they are to be voted upon. Any member of the congregation objecting to the admission of an individual for scriptural and/or constitutional reasons is encouraged to present the evidence to the Board of Elders.
5. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders, admission to membership shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any regularly scheduled or specially called congregational meeting.
6. New members shall be officially welcomed into the church fellowship at a regularly scheduled worship service subsequent to their admission.

C. Privileges and Responsibilities

It is the concern of the church in its ministry, teaching and fellowship groups to help every member, by God's grace, to enjoy his Christian privileges and to share in the responsibilities of the church body. We encourage members, therefore, to have regular personal devotions, family devotions, and to share their faith as they have opportunity. We encourage members also to participate in the activity of the church, to be regular in attendance at church services, including the Lord's Supper and to make regular financial contributions as God has prospered them (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:23-25, I Corinthians 16:2).

D. Termination of Membership

1. Any member who absents himself from all church services for one year or more, except for illness, essential occupation or temporary absence from the community, and expresses no interest in the church as a result of personal contact, shall automatically cease to be a member of the Evangelical Free Church of Laguna Hills and shall be advised in writing of the termination of his/her membership.
2. Any member desiring to withdraw from membership in order to become a member of another congregation shall receive upon written request, a letter stating his/her status as a member of this congregation.
3. A member may be removed from membership upon recommendation of the Board of Elders by a majority vote of the members present at any regular or specially called congregational meeting.

E. Discipline, Dismissal and Restoration of Members

1. If any member is guilty of gross misconduct or of espousing unsound doctrine contrary to the teachings of the Bible, he is to be dealt with according to the pattern of discipline set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. The restoration of the erring member shall be the single purpose and love the motivating force in these interviews.
2. If the erring member should choose to continue in his/her unrepentant condition, one shall be deprived of membership.
 - a. The recommendation for removal from membership shall be by majority vote of the Board of Elders for scriptural or constitutional reasons upon the testimony of two or more witnesses.
 - b. Every person against whom such proceedings are to be brought shall be notified in writing at least fifteen days prior to the date of the meeting. Such notice shall state the charges to be brought and the time and place of the meeting.
 - c. Every person so charged shall have the opportunity to appear at such meeting in his own behalf.
 - d. At the meeting the accused shall be faced by his accusers with the evidence of the charges made.

F. Membership Records

The church shall keep a membership book containing the name and address of each member, date of membership, and date of termination if membership is terminated. This will be kept by an individual designated by the Deacon Board.

Article VI. Church Leadership and Duties

A. Church Leaders

1. Pastor - to be called.
2. Board of Elders - to be elected.
3. Administrative Committees - to be appointed by the Board of Elders and confirmed by vote of the membership.

B. Qualifications

1. Pastor(s) - The Pastor shall be a minister licensed by the Evangelical Free Church of America, who is sympathetic and cooperative with said denomination, and who subscribes to this constitution and the statement of faith herein. Also, the Pastor shall meet the scriptural qualifications of Elders referenced below.
2. Board of Elders - The qualifications of the Elders are set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In addition, an Elder shall be a member in good standing and be at least 21 years of age.
3. Administrative Committees - The qualification of those serving on the various ministry committees are set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. Likewise they shall be members in good standing and at least be 21 years of age.

C. Duties of the Church Leaders

1. Pastor(s) - The Pastor shall fulfill his divine calling by conducting public services, preaching the Word of God, administering the ordinances of the New Testament, watching over the spiritual welfare of the fellowship and leading its members in accomplishing its purpose (Article III). He shall be a member of the Board of Elders and an ex-officio member of all other Boards, committees and organizations of the church. He is to be a leader among leaders. The relationship of other pastors to the Board of Elders shall be defined by the Board based upon the duties of each Pastor.
2. The Board of Elders - The Board of Elders shall have the responsibility to watch over the spiritual life and ministries of the church and shall assist the Pastor in the performance of his duties. It shall have complete responsibility for the administration of all church business subject to the final authority of the congregation. It shall regularly report its decisions to the congregation. The Board shall elect its own officers, consisting of:
 - a. Chairman, who shall serve as Moderator of the Church. In addition to presiding over all meetings of the Board of Elders, the Chairman shall preside over congregational business meetings and shall

assist the Pastor in the work of the church. He shall have power to call meetings involving the Board of Elders and also to call special congregational meetings at the direction of the Board of Elders (see Article XII). He shall appoint a Recording Secretary each year to keep accurate minutes for each congregational meeting. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

- b. Vice-Chairman, who shall act as Moderator in the absence of the Chairman.
 - c. Secretary, who shall also be the Clerk of the church.
3. Terms of Office
- a. The Pastor - The Pastor shall serve for an indeterminate term.
 - b. Board of Elders - The Elders shall be elected for terms of three (3) fiscal years and, as far as practicable, one-third of the Board shall be elected each year. An Elder, after serving a full three-year term shall be ineligible for re-election until the lapse of one year.
 - c. Administrative Committees Members - Their term of office shall be for three (3) years commencing with the fall congregational business meeting. Committee members, after serving one full three-year term, shall not be eligible for reappointment to that committee until the lapse of one year; however, they would be eligible for appointment to other committees.

Revised 5/24/93

Article VII. Board of Elders

A. Number

The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of five (5) elected members. The Board may vary its size subject to approval of the congregation.

B. Vacating of Office

An Elder shall be presumed to have vacated his office if he ceases to be a member in good standing or if he moves from the community. An Elder may also be removed from office for failure to attend regular meetings of the Board without reasonable cause or for conduct impairing his efficiency. If, after being admonished, there is no correction, he shall be removed from office upon a two-thirds vote of the Board of Elders and ratification by the membership (Matthew 18:15-17).

C. Administating Committee Ministries

The Board of Elders shall organize itself annually according to the recognition of its members' spiritual gifts, interests and experience. Each

Elder shall oversee one or more administrative committees. The Board shall appoint all the administrative committee members that are necessary to accomplish the purpose of this church (Article III). All appointees shall be ratified by a majority vote of the congregation.

The following are typical, but not exclusive, administrative ministries to be overseen by the Board of Elders:

1. Worship Committee - Under the Direction of the Chairman of Worship and the Pastor, it shall supervise public worship services, music, choirs, musical features, ushering, welcoming and shall perform such other duties as the Elder Board may direct. The Music Coordinator and the Head Usher shall be members of this committee.
2. Financial Committee - Under the direction of the Chairman of Finance, this committee has authority within the limitations of the budget in all matters dealing with the finances of the church. It shall submit in writing a monthly financial report to the Board of Elders as well as a quarterly report to the congregation. It shall consult with each of the Elder Board members regarding the budgetary needs of their administrative committees at least 60 days before the annual business meeting. A proposed budget must be presented to the Elder Board 30 days before the annual business meeting for approval. The Chairman of Finance will then submit the budget to the congregation. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be members of this committee. This committee shall also supervise all matters relating to the planning, acquisition, operation and maintenance of all church properties. This includes the opening and closing of facilities for all functions of the church and performing other duties as the Elder Board may direct.
3. Youth Ministries Committee – Under the direction of Chairman of Youth, this committee shall supervise all educational and recreational activities, such as children's ministries, youth programs, boys' and girls' clubs and the nursery. The chairmen of any of these ministries, as well as any other persons appointed by the Executive Board, shall serve on this committee.
4. Outreach Committee - Under the direction of the Chairman of Outreach, this committee shall supervise all missionary activities and commitments. It shall seek to promote care and concern and coordinate training within the fellowship in response to the Great Commission at home and abroad. They shall perform such duties as the Elder Board may direct. The chairman of the W.M.S., F.C.L.F., Camp Registrar and Missionary Correspondent shall serve on this committee.
5. Deacon Committee - Under the direction of the Deacon Chairman, this committee shall supervise membership classes, administration of the Lord's Supper and baptisms; minister to the sick, shut-ins or the bereaved by offering food and help; encourage church prayer for one another and to coordinate and enlist help for serving meals and having

church socials or picnics. It shall perform such duties as the Elder Board may direct. It shall consist of members appointed to coordinate each of the above mentioned ministries.

6. Adult Ministries Committee - Under the direction of the Adult Ministries Chairman, it shall oversee Adult Sunday School classes, Mid-Week Home Bible studies, Growth Groups and Visitation for the church membership. All adults will belong to one specific adult class. Each class will consist of a class chairman, coordinating couples who administrate class socials, class needs and visitation of new members; each class will also have its own teacher. The emphasis of these Adult classes is to care and nurture one another in small groups. As classes grow or membership increases, new classes will begin under leadership that is available. Home Bible studies and Growth Groups will be formed for the different levels of commitment and maturity. The Adult Ministries Committee will consist of a chairman, chairman of each Adult Sunday School class, a Growth Group Coordinator and a Visitation Secretary and others as needed.
7. Membership of the Administrative Committees – A designated Elder shall give leadership and oversight to administrative committees (Article VII, Sec. C). Each administrative committee will consist of members appointed by the Elder Board and approved by the congregation in September. The Elder Board may appoint special committees and sufficient personnel as it deems necessary for the duration of the need.
8. Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee shall consist of four members from the Board of Elders, selected annually by that Board and three persons elected annually by the congregation. The vice-chairman of the Board of Elders shall serve as the chairman of this committee. A secretary shall be selected from those elected to the committee by the congregation. The committee shall seek to obtain the names of those qualified to serve in elected offices as listed in Article VI. Nominations for Elders and nominating committee members from the congregation are to be approved by the individuals being considered, the nominating committee and the Board of Elders, prior to their names being released to the congregation at least two (2) Sundays before the annual congregational meeting. This committee shall prepare, distribute and count these ballots at the congregational meetings. it shall meet as often as is necessary to perform its responsibilities as stated herein.

Article VIII. Pastoral Relations

A. Pulpit Committee

When it becomes necessary to call a Pastor, a representative Pulpit Committee, consisting of four members from the Board of Elders and

three members at large, shall be named by the Board and ratified by the congregation. It shall be the duty of this committee to take the necessary steps to secure a Pastor. In seeking a suitable candidate, the committee shall consult the leaders of our district and take suggestions from the members of the church. The committee shall investigate the merits of every candidate under consideration in regard to his agreement with the Statement of Faith and Constitution, his personal character, education, ministerial record and preaching ability in determining his fitness for this pastorate. Only one candidate shall be presented to the congregation at a time. When a suitable person has been found, the committee shall recommend him to the Board of Elders, who shall make its recommendations to the congregation for its consideration.

B. *Calling a Pastor*

The proposed call of a Pastor shall come before the congregation at a specially called business meeting; notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend the call. The vote shall be by closed ballot.

C. *Pastoral Salaries*

The initial terms of a Pastor's salary, vacation allowance and other benefits shall be established at the time of the call. In addition, the Pastor shall be entitled to attendance at the National and Southwest District Conferences; any additional time shall be approved by the Board of Elders. The Worship Committee shall be responsible for the pulpit supply in the Pastor's absence. The Pastors' salaries shall be reviewed by the Board of Elders prior to the finalization of the annual budget. Any additional changes to the initial terms accompanying a Pastor's call shall be first recommended by the Board of Elders and then confirmed by vote of the congregation.

D. Terminating of Pastorate

1. The terms of this office may be ended upon thirty (30) days notification in writing on the part of the Pastor or the congregation. A Pastor shall first give his resignation to the Board of Elders before it is presented to the church.
2. Accusations against the Pastor shall be considered in the following order:
 - a. They must be in writing; signed; and presented to the presiding Elder.
 - b. The accusations shall then be considered by the Board of Elders and if resolved in a meeting with the pastor to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned, no further action need be taken.
 - c. If not so resolved, those signing the accusations must meet with the Board of Elders and the Pastor. The Board of Elders shall determine if further action is necessary. At this time the Southwest District shall be advised and consulted. A request for dismissal signed by one-quarter of the church membership and processed in the above manner must be presented to the membership of a specially called meeting of the congregation. A majority vote, by closed ballot, of members present shall be necessary to carry the motion for dismissal. If dismissal is demanded, the pastoral tenure shall terminate and 30 days additional salary shall be paid.
 - d. In the event the Pastor wins a vote of confidence of the church at such an election, all officers signing such petition mentioned above in Section D, #2 of this Article, shall automatically relinquish their offices for the remainder of their elected terms.

Article IX. Other Employees

A. Calling

The addition of Pastoral Staff shall be made by a recommendation of the Elder Board to the congregation at a regular or specially called Business Meeting. A recommendation from the Elder Board will be entertained at this meeting requesting authority to pursue and to hire additional staff with or without forming a Pulpit Committee.

B. Supervision

1. All salaried employees shall be under the general supervision of the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board. Such employees shall be provided with a written job description at the time of call or hire.
2. All salaries for pastoral staff and church employees will be reviewed prior to the annual congregational meeting in May.
 - a. The Pastors' salaries shall be reviewed by the Board of Elders prior to finalizing the annual budget.
 - b. All salaries for non-pastoral support staff will be reviewed by the Finance Committee prior to the annual congregational meeting in May.
3. The Finance Committee shall draft recommendations for a proposed yearly budget which shall be submitted to the Elder Board for approval prior to the annual congregational meeting in May.

Article X. Auxiliary Organizations

A. Formation of Organization

The formation of an auxiliary organization may be initiated only with consent of the Board of Elders and the congregation.

B. Leaders of Organizations

Presidents and/or chairmen of all organizations, including organized classes, shall be members of the Evangelical Free Church of Laguna Hills. Exceptions to this rule may be made on a temporary basis in cases of specific need by approval of the Board of Elders.

Article XI. Finances

A. Income

Necessary finances for conducting the church, its programs and missionary outreach shall be obtained through voluntary tithes and regular offerings. Additional pledges and free-will offerings may be taken as deemed advisable by the Board of Elders. Any fund raising, entertainment, suppers, bazaars or other projects held by the church or auxiliary organizations must be approved by the Board of Elders. This corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members.

B. Liability

The extent of personal liability, if any, of members for corporate obligations and the methods of enforcement and collecting are as follows:

No member, officer, director or other associates of this corporation shall be personally liable for any corporate obligations.

C. Stock

This corporation shall have no capital stock.

D. Expenditures

Every conveyance, sale or mortgage of church property, real or personal, must be ratified by the congregation. Expenditures not provided for in the budget greater than \$5,000 for one item in any one fiscal year shall not be made without approval of the congregation.

E. Transfer of Funds

No money shall be transferred from one fund to another without a two-thirds authorization of voting members present at a congregational meeting.

F. Designated Gifts

Unbudgeted gifts designated to charitable organizations, or unbudgeted church activities, programs, people or items, must be approved by the Trustee Board and the respective ministries under which these gifts would be administered. Donors are encouraged to petition the Trustee Board to include their gifts in the church budget.

Article XII. Meetings

A. Public Services

Regular public worship services shall be conducted every Sunday. Other public services may be arranged by the Board of Elders.

B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as deemed appropriate by the Pastor and the Board of Elders. All Believers present shall be invited to participate.

C. *Business Meetings*

1. The annual congregational meeting shall be held in the month of May at which time the Pastor and all Elder Board members shall present a written report of the year's activities. The fiscal year of this church shall be from June 1 to May 31.
2. Congregational meetings shall be held in May, September and January.
3. Special business meetings may be called as often as the Board of Elders deems necessary. Any business meeting must be announced in a written notice to members (church bulletin will suffice) and at all public services during the ten (10) days before it is held. Announcements of a special business meeting must specify the purpose for which the meeting is called. Only the announced agenda may be acted upon.

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D. Rules for Business Meetings

1. The chairman or vice-chairman of the Board of Elders shall moderate at all business meetings. Should both be absent, a member of the Board of Elders may be selected by the Board to preside at the meeting.
2. Rules of Order

Annual and quarterly business meetings shall be conducted as follows:

- a. Scripture reading and prayer
- b. Approval of agenda
- c. Reading and approval of minutes
- d. Reception of new members
- e. Elders' reports
- f. Committee reports
- g. Undecided or unfinished business
- h. Election/approval of board members and special committees as needed
- i. New discussions:
 - i. Action upon recommendation brought by officers and/or committees
 - ii. Action proposed by members of the meeting
- j. Closing prayer

Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be the parliamentary manual of this church except where it may be contrary to this constitution.

E. Ratification

A simple majority of members shall decide every issue except when otherwise stipulated by the constitution.

Article XIII. Authority

The congregation, at its regular, special and annual business meetings, shall grant legislative and governing authority to the Board of Elders of this corporation.

Article XIV. Voting

A. Eligibility

All members who are at least 18 years of age and in good standing are eligible to vote.

B. Elder Election

The election of the Board of Elders for any fiscal year shall be held at the annual business meeting in May.

C. Terms of Office

1. The term of office for Elder Board members shall be three (3) fiscal years. Approximately one-third of the members shall be elected every year. No Elder may serve two successive full terms.
2. Administrative committee appointments shall be for a single two (2) year term, commencing with the fall congregational business meeting. Committee appointees may not serve two successive terms on any committee. Approximately one-half of the members shall be appointed annually.

D. Vacancies

Any vacancy on the Board of Elders will be filled for the remainder of the term of the vacating Elder by the regular procedures for election at the next business meeting. Administrative Committee vacancies shall be filled for the balance of the fiscal year by appointment of the Board of Elders. They shall be confirmed by vote of the membership at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

E. Nominees

Nominations for the officers of the church and the Nominating Committee shall be presented by the Nominating Committee at the annual congregational meeting in May. The proposed slate of officers is to be mailed to members at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting.

F. Appointments

Appointments by the Board of Elders may be ratified at any business meeting and shall be by majority vote.

G. Officer Election

All church officers shall be elected by closed ballot. Election of officers shall be based on qualification (by guidelines of Article VI). Any nominee must receive a majority vote of members present to be elected.

Absentee ballots for the election of Elders may be obtained from the nominating committee by submitting a written request at least 24 hours prior to the meeting time. The ballot must be submitted to the nominating committee prior to the business meeting.

H. Quorum and Vote:

Type of Meeting	Quorum	Vote Required
Annual Meeting	20%-voting membership	Majority present
Quarterly/Special	20%-voting membership	Majority present
Calling of Pastor	33%-voting membership	2/3 majority present
Executive Board	2/3 members	Majority present

Article XV. Property Rights

- A. The church shall have power to buy, own and sell real property in its own name.

- B. Should the church membership vote to dissolve and cease to function as a church, or if the membership should be dissolved through some disaster, the property of the church, both real and personal, shall pass to the Southwest District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America to enable said District to renew the work of this church or use the values thereof for further gospel enterprises.

- C. In the event this church shall vote to unite or combine with another church, it shall not be considered to have been dissolved, and the property rights shall be retained by the new combined church. If a division occurs in the church, the name and property shall be retained by those adhering to the constitution as determined by the District Superintendent and the Southwest District Board.

Article XVI. Amendments

Any article or section of this constitution may be amended by vote of two-thirds of the members present at any business meeting. Written notice of such amendments must be mailed to all active members at least thirty (30) days prior to said meeting.