

# CONSTITUTION OF UNITED EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

October 22, 2002

Revision - April 19, 2005

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# ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

## I. NAME

The name of this church or corporation shall be the United Evangelical Free Church of Seattle, Washington.

## II. ADDRESS

The address of the principal place of business of this corporation shall be 1420 Northwest 80th Street, Seattle, Washington 98117-4242.

## III. PURPOSE

By faith in God, in obedience to Jesus Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the United Evangelical Free Church is to MAKE DISCIPLES who reach UPWARD to exalt God, INWARD to edify the church, OUTWARD to evangelize the world, in order to bring glory to God.

## IV. ARTICLES OF FAITH

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

- 1. God** 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. The Bible** 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. The Human Condition** 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. Jesus Christ** 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. **The Work of Christ** 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. **The Holy Spirit** 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. **The Church** 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. **Christian Living** 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. **Christ's Return** We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial 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. **Response and Eternal Destiny** 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.

## V. POWERS

1. This church shall have the power to purchase, sell, receive or mortgage real estate and to receive funds, stocks, bonds, and all personal property of every nature for the furtherance of the objectives and purposes for which it is founded.
2. This church shall also have power to invest funds and personal property coming into its hands in such stocks, bonds, securities and real estate.

3. This church shall also have the power to publish and distribute gospel literature, to send missionaries; and to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. This church shall have the power to do each and every act necessary to carry out the fulfillment of its objectives and purposes.

## VI. OFFICERS

The officers of this corporation shall be President (Church Chairman), Vice President (Church Vice-Chairman), Secretary (Trustee Board Chairman), and Treasurer (Church Treasurer). These officers shall be elected in accordance with the By-Laws of this Corporation and must be citizens of the United States of America.

## VII. AMENDMENTS

The Articles of Incorporation may be amended in the following manner: The amendment, in writing, shall be submitted to the Elder Board, and be made available to the congregation at least three months preceding the next regular congregational business meeting. Announcement of the meeting shall be made from the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The amendment shall be passed by a three-fourths majority of members present.

## VIII. PROPERTY RIGHTS

If division occurs in the church, the name and all properties including real estate, funds, stocks, bonds and all personal property of every nature are retained by those adhering to the Articles of Faith contained in the original Article of Incorporation and the By-Laws as determined by the Pacific Northwest District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, the title of all properties including real estate, funds, stocks, bonds and all personal property shall be given to the Pacific Northwest District of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

**BY-LAWS**  
OF THE  
**UNITED EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH**  
**OF SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

**I. MEMBERSHIP**

**1. Application and Acceptance**

(a) Application. Application for membership shall be submitted to the Deacon Board who will interview the applicant and make recommendation to the congregation. Membership in this church shall be extended to those who confess faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and whose life and conduct give evidence of such faith.

(b) Acceptance. The acceptance of any applicant shall be determined by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a congregational business meeting.

**2. Responsibility**

It is expected that members will fulfill their Christian responsibilities, contribute to the support of the church, and willingly serve according to their God-given gifts.

**3. Transfer and Dismissal**

(a). Transfer. Any member who desires a letter of transfer or recommendation shall be issued such a letter by the Deacon Board.

(b). Joining Another Church. Any member joining another church shall be dropped from the membership.

(c). Non-attendance. Any member who has had no contact with the church for a period of two years, and has given no reason for absence and lack of contact, may be dropped from membership upon recommendation of the Elder Board. This action shall not be taken until the person has been given notice of the intended action.

**4. Discipline**

(a). Congregation. The Elder Board shall be responsible for administering discipline to any member whose conduct is contrary to Scripture. If there is

no evidence of repentance, membership may be withdrawn by recommendation to the congregation and a closed-ballot, two-thirds majority vote.

(b). Pastors. The Elder Board shall hold the pastors accountable for their Christian life and conduct. On testimony of two or more witnesses, the Elder Board shall investigate charges and, if necessary, recommend action to the congregation. Two-thirds, closed-ballot majority vote by the congregation is needed to dismiss a pastor.

## II. PASTORS, AND OFFICERS

### 1. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor must be ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America. The Senior Pastor shall lead the church as Bible teacher, administrator, mentor, motivator, and example of Christian living. The Senior Pastor shall submit a report of ministry to each semi-annual and annual congregational business meeting. By virtue of position, the Senior Pastor is a member of the church, and may actively participate and vote in any and all entities of the church, including all boards and committees.

### 2. Associate Pastors and Staff

Associate Pastors must be credentialed by the Evangelical Free Church of America. Associate Pastors and other staff may be appointed by the church to work in conjunction with and be responsible to the Senior Pastor.

### 3. Chair

The Chair of the congregation shall preside at all business sessions of the church. By virtue of position, the Chair may actively participate in and vote on any and all boards and committees, and may delegate responsibility to the Vice Chair. The Chair shall be elected at the annual business meeting in even-numbered years. The Chair shall also serve as President of the Corporation and be a citizen of the United States of America.

### 4. Vice Chair

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair. In addition, the Vice Chair shall carry out any duties delegated by the Chair. The Vice Chair shall be elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years. The Vice Chair shall serve as Vice President of the Corporation and be a citizen of the United States of America.

## 5. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all proceedings and decisions of business meetings of the church, and preserve all secretarial records of the church. The Secretary shall be elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years.

## 6. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall receive, keep an accurate record of, and deposit all funds to the account of the church. The Financial Secretary shall submit a complete written report of all funds received to the semi-annual and annual business meetings of the congregation, and shall submit reports to the Finance Committee and others as requested. The Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual business meeting in even-numbered years.

## 7. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving all funds deposited to the account of the church, making all disbursements, paying bills approved by appropriate board or committee chair, and keeping an accurate record of receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall present a written report to semi-annual and annual business meetings of the congregation, the Finance Committee and others monthly or as requested. The Treasurer shall be elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years.

## 8. Auditors

Two active members, not members of the Finance Committee, shall audit the books of the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and all other financial records of the church and report to the Elder Board within 90 days of fiscal year-end. The congregation may use an outside auditing firm to perform some or all of the duties of the Auditors. One Auditor shall be elected at each annual business meeting.

### III. BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

#### 1. Elder Board

(a). Membership. The Elder Board includes the Senior Pastor, church Chair, Vice Chair and three elders. One elder shall be elected in even years and two in odd-numbered years at the annual business meeting.

(b). Responsibility. The task of the Elders includes protecting the flock from false teachers (Acts 20:28-31); feeding the flock by teaching biblical

truth (Acts 6:1-7) and equipping people to serve (Ephesians 4:11-16); leading the flock through oversight (1 Peter 5:1-2) and management of finances (Acts 11:29-30; 1 Timothy 5:17-18); and caring for the needs of the flock (Acts 6:1-7) including prayer for the sick (James 5:14). The Elder Board shall be structured to provide representation for and oversight of:

- (i). Worship Ministry (Sunday services and special services).
- (ii). Community Life Ministry (Adult Bible Fellowships, Cell Growth Groups, Youth Ministry, Christian Education and Deacons).
- (iii). Outreach Ministry (Local, National and International).
- (iv). Ministry Support (Trustees, Finance and Administration).

The Elder Board shall be responsible for discipline and leadership in the church and shall initiate changes to maximize the church's ability to make disciples, communicating their vision and initiatives to the congregation. The Elder Board may buy, sell, mortgage or transfer real property with authorizing vote of the congregation and may approve general expenditures up to \$5,000. The congregation may refer additional items of business to the Elder Board for action.

(c). Quorum. Fifty percent of the Elder Board shall constitute a quorum for conducting business.

## 2. Deacon Board

(a). Membership. The Deacon Board shall consist of the deacon Chair, deacons and deaconesses. The deacon Chair shall provide leadership and supervision to the Deacon Board. The deacon Chair shall be elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years. There shall be a minimum of four deacons and four deaconesses, half of each to be elected at each annual business meeting.

(b). Responsibility. The Deacon Board shall serve the practical needs and provide auxiliary support to the community life of the church, such as visitation, communion responsibilities and ushering, under the direction of the Elder Board.

## 3. Trustee Board

(a). Membership. The Trustee Board shall consist of at least five trustees. The trustee Chair shall be elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years. There shall be a minimum of five trustees, with at least two elected at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years and three elected in even-numbered years.

(b). Responsibility. The trustees shall supervise and maintain church properties. They are authorized to spend a maximum of \$2,500 on any church project and up to \$5,000 with Elder Board approval. The trustees shall secure fidelity bonds for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. They shall submit a written report to the annual and semi-annual business meetings and to the Elder Board or others as requested.

#### 4. Children's Ministries Board

(a). Membership. The Children's Ministries Board shall consist of five members. Three shall be elected at the annual business meeting in even-numbered years and two in odd-numbered years.

(b). Responsibility. The Children's Ministries Board shall hold its organizational meeting within one month of the annual business meeting and elect its own officers. The Board shall meet periodically to coordinate and evaluate the Children's ministries of the church. The Children's Ministries Board shall appoint the Sunday School Superintendent and approve leaders of Children's ministries, as necessary. A written report of its activities shall be submitted to the annual business meeting of the congregation.

#### 5. Senior Pastor Search Committee

(a). Membership. The Senior Pastor Search Committee shall consist of seven members and three alternates as follows: The elder who is senior in time served; one deacon; one trustee; and one member of the Children's Ministries Board, to be selected by their respective boards; and three members and three alternates to be elected by the congregation.

(b). Responsibility. The Senior Pastor Search Committee is initiated by a congregational business meeting to obtain a Senior Pastor. The senior Elder shall serve as Chair of the Senior Pastor Search Committee for its organizational meeting, which shall be held within ten days of election of committee members. This committee shall continue to serve until a candidate for the pulpit has accepted a call. At the discretion of the Elder Board, a search committee may be used in the calling of other pastors. Also see: V. Business Meetings, Sec. #8.

#### 6. Nominating Committee

(a). Membership. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three active members, elected at the annual congregational business meeting. Term of office is one year. The members of the Nominating Committee cannot succeed themselves.

(b). Responsibility. The committee shall nominate church members for offices to be elected at the annual business meeting. If there is a vacancy in a church office between annual business meetings, the Nominating Committee shall bring nominations to the Elder Board.

#### 7. Finance Committee

(a). Membership. The Finance Committee shall consist of a Chair elected by the congregation at the annual business meeting in odd-numbered years, Trustee Chair, Outreach Committee Chair, Deacon Board Chair, Children's Ministries Board Chair, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and a representative of the Elder Board. The Finance Committee Chair shall call and preside over meetings of the Finance Committee.

(b). Responsibility. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for preparing the annual budget for presentation to the annual business meeting. The Finance Committee shall monitor the budget throughout the year, suggesting needed changes to the Elder Board. The Finance Committee Chair may sign checks, and negotiate financial matters on behalf of the congregation as directed by the Elder Board.

#### 8. Outreach Committee

(a). Membership. The Outreach Committee shall consist of the Chair, elected by the congregation in even-numbered years, and not less than three additional members. The Outreach Committee Chair shall appoint the three or more additional members, and shall call and preside over meetings of the committee.

(b). Responsibility. The Outreach Committee shall lead the church in reaching outward by initiating and promoting evangelism in Seattle, North America, and around the world.

### IV. WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services shall be held weekly. Any changes in schedule shall be approved by the Elder Board.

### V. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Annual and Semi-Annual Business Meetings of the Congregation: The annual and semi-annual business meetings of the congregation shall be held in the months of April and October, respectively, unless otherwise specified by the congregation.

The Elder Board shall establish the date and place at least three months prior to the meetings. The annual meeting shall include election of church officers, presentation of annual reports and other business.

2. Special Business Meetings of the Congregation: Special business meetings may be called by the Elder Board, or by ten members of the congregation with written notification to the Elder Board. Announcement of the special meeting shall be made from the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The purpose of the special meeting shall be indicated in the announcement. Discussion and action shall be limited to the announced subjects.

3. Quorum. Twenty-five percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for business meetings.

4. Voting Age. All members at least age 16 may vote.

5. Voting. All matters shall be decided by majority vote of members present at any business meeting except when otherwise specified in the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws or by the decision of the congregation.

6. Parliamentary Authority. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the final authority.

7. Order of Business. All business meetings shall, in general, be conducted in the following order:

- A. Prayer
- B. Minutes of the preceding business session
- C. Reports
- D. Old Business
- E. New Business
- F. Adjournment or recess

8. Calling a Senior Pastor. Calling a Senior Pastor may take place at any church business meeting by voting on candidates presented by the Senior Pastor Search Committee. Any church member may submit names to the committee who will consider each name. The Committee will request the Elder Board to approve a candidate's visit to the church. A two-thirds majority closed-ballot vote of members present at the business meeting shall constitute a call to the candidate. A Senior Pastor is called for an indefinite time. Three months notice is required by a Senior Pastor, or the church, in case of resignation or dismissal.

9. Election of Officers. Officers are elected at the annual business meeting from candidates presented by the Nominating Committee or members nominated at the meeting. Election shall be by closed ballot majority vote of members present. Officers will serve two years and cannot hold the same office more than four

consecutive years. Nominating Committee members shall serve one year and cannot succeed themselves.

10. Removal of Members and Officers. Removal of officers from office and members from membership shall be decided by closed ballot of members present at a church business meeting.

11. Committees. Committees may be appointed or elected by members present at any business meeting as needed. The Chair of the congregation may attend and vote in any committee meeting.

## VI. DENOMINATIONAL STANDING

This church shall remain autonomous and conduct its business through its business sessions. This church shall cooperate with the Evangelical Free Church of America and its branches as the church itself may officially decide.

## VII. AMENDMENTS

The By-Laws of the Church may be amended in the following manner: The amendment, in writing, shall be submitted to the Elder Board, and be made available to the congregation at least three months preceding the next regular congregational business meeting. Copies of the amendment shall be sent by first class mail, or hand delivered, to all members who want copies. Informational meetings may be held. Announcement of the meeting shall be made from the pulpit for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The amendment shall be passed by a three-fourths majority of members present.