

# CHINESE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF LOS ANGELES

## CONSTITUTION

### **PREAMBLE**

As members of this church, we band ourselves together in order to carry out the commission and commandments given by our Lord Jesus Christ, and we do ordain and establish the following Constitution and Bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this church shall be the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Los Angeles.

### **ARTICLE II – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

#### 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.

## Position Statement

### Marriage and Human Sexuality

We believe that God first created man and then created woman, from the man, as a counterpart to the man. He then brought the woman to the man and established marriage as a one-flesh relationship between the man and the woman. We therefore define “marriage” as a legal covenant between a man and a woman for an exclusive relationship. A civil government’s sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with this definition of “marriage.”

We also believe that the context for sexual activity is the marriage of a man and woman. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church.

## ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is, and shall be: worshipping our almighty God; preaching of the Word of God to the mutual edification, instruction, and discipline of its members and other believers; winning of the unsaved to Christ; helping young Christians develop their spiritual lives; instructing people in the Word of God; and furthering the cause of Christ on the mission fields at home and abroad. The Church welcomes people of all backgrounds and cultures. As long as the need exists, the primary field of ministry of this church shall be the ethnic Chinese immigrants, Chinese-Americans, and their families in the greater Los Angeles area.

In addition, this church may establish and administer educational or charity programs for the sake of community outreach and concern, with the expressed purpose of propagating Christian compassion to glorify God.

## ARTICLE IV – AFFILIATION

The church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). It shall align itself with the denominational polity enumerated in the next Article.

## ARTICLE V – CHURCH POLITY

This church shall have the freedom under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to govern its own affairs in accordance with both the mind of Christ and the Word of God. It shall develop a local church polity, that is, a governance structure and process, that shall fit within the following parameters of the denomination’s congregational philosophy.

The membership shall include only those who have a personal faith in Christ.

The collective membership in a duly-called meeting is the highest authority, under Christ, exhibiting a willingness to be biblically accountable to the elected leadership and encouraging the elected leadership to be mutually accountable to the congregation as the ultimate authority in the local context. Moreover, members and leaders are united in subscribing to a relationship covenant based on Matthew 18, giving priority to biblical patterns of conflict resolution and exercising biblical discipline within the context of Christian love and cultural sensitivity.

This church shall practice the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) denomination’s congregationalism as that form of governance wherein the highest authority under Christ in a local church resides in the corporate understanding of the mind of Christ and in which a realistic process and reasonable opportunity exist by which that understanding is determined, implemented and executed, especially as it affects these core matters:

- Determination of membership;
- Election of the principal governing Church Board;
- Calling of the Senior Pastor;
- Approval or alteration of Constitution and Bylaws;
- Approval of an annual church budget;
- Approval of any major purchase of item, loan or mortgage with estimated value of fifty thousand US dollars or more.
- Approval of final dissolution.

The Church shall promote congregationalism as that form of polity that includes the involvement of the entire body in ministry. The congregation shall commit to entrust much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are trained, trusted, and allowed to lead.

## ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, being born again and baptized, and in whose life the fruits of true faith in God are being manifested.

## ARTICLE VII – PROPERTY RIGHTS

The church shall have power to buy, own, and sell real property in its own name. If a division occurs in the church, those adhering to the Constitution shall retain the name and all its property. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, the property shall automatically become the property of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). If EFCA is unable or unwilling to receive these assets, the said assets shall be distributed, as the existing membership directs, to one or more nonprofit funds, foundations, or corporations which are in keeping with the purpose and statement of faith of the Church, and which have established their tax exempt status under IRC Section 501 (c) (3).

## ARTICLE VIII – PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The principal office for the transaction of business of the church shall be initially located at the Chinese Evangelical Free Church in Monterey Park. The church, by appropriate action, shall have authority to change said principal office from one location to another.

## ARTICLE IX – CORPORATE SEAL

The corporate seal shall be circular in form and shall contain the name of the corporation and the date and state of incorporation.

## ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

Amendment to this Constitution may be made at any business session of the church by a two-thirds majority of votes cast when said proposed amendments have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting at least three months prior to the time of its adoption. Voting shall be done according to Bylaws.

**CHINESE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
OF LOS ANGELES  
BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1 --- Eligibility of Membership**

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior and Lord, and has been baptized, in whose life the fruits of true faith in God are being manifested where a consistent biblical Christian walk is evident. Applicant must subscribe to the church's statement of faith.

**Membership shall be of two categories:**

**A. Active:** Persons who are eligible for membership in this church, according to Article I Section 1, are active members subject only to regulations stipulated elsewhere in these Bylaws. Active members 18 years of age or above have the right to vote.

**B. Inactive:** the purpose of this class of membership is to enable temporary affiliation of persons visiting this city for protracted periods or for active members who have moved from this city, but still desire to be affiliated with this church. An inactive member is entitled to fullest participation in worship, activities, and fellowship, but the inactive member has no voting right in the business of the church.

**Section 2- Admission to Membership**

A. Each congregation-specific ministerial committee led by the assigned pastor shall administer the admission process. An Admission Committee shall be established by each congregation-specific ministerial committee. The Admission Committee shall consist of representatives of the Ministerial Staff and at least one Board member.

B. Application for membership shall be submitted to the Ministerial Staff. Candidate shall attend a catechism/membership class before the interview.

C. The Admission Committee shall hear the personal testimony of the candidate and consider the faith and life of the applicant in accordance with the additional qualifications for membership stated in Bylaws Section 3 of Article I.

D. The Admission Committee shall then in the absence of the individual, vote on the admission of the applicant.

E. Should the Admission Committee decide in favor of the applicant, the individual's name shall be announced in the Sunday bulletin for two consecutive weeks. If any member objects to the admission of an applicant, the reason for so doing must be given in writing to the Board within the two-week period. The Admission Committee shall then reconsider the application. If there are no objections, the applicant shall automatically become a member. Disapproved applicant may appeal to the Board for reconsideration either in writing or in person.

F. The new member shall formally be received and welcomed at the next observance of the Lord's Supper and enter into the membership book.

**Section 3 – Qualifications and Expectations of members**

All members of this church must have by faith received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (John 1:12; Rom. 10: 9-10). Each member is expected to conduct his life according to the standard set forth in the Scriptures. Such conduct includes moral purity (I Cor. 6: 9-18; I Thes. 4:1-7), personal honesty (Eph. 4:25) and biblical fidelity (Jude 20-21; II Tim. 3:14-17). Their lives are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as they walk in the light (I John 1:6-9), emulating the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:15-21; II Peter 1:5-8).

**Section 4 – Membership Role**

The following actions shall be done by vote of the membership:

A. The adoption and revision of the Constitution and Bylaws.

B. The approval of the annual budgets of the church, building program, and any other programs determined by the Church Board as mandatory for membership approval.

C. The election of members of the Church Board and other individuals or entities so designated in the Bylaws.

D. The calling of the Senior Pastor.

E. The approval of transactions of real property under the name of the church.

F. The approval of the dissolution of the church.

**Section 5 – Membership requirement for Position of Responsibility**

Church membership shall be required for all church officers, teachers, and fellowship advisors. Church membership shall be required in any other positions of significant responsibility within the church and organizations; however, exceptions may only be made by Board actions.

**Section 6 - Membership Meetings**

A. The annual membership business meeting of the church shall be held in November. The Mid-Year membership business meeting shall be held in May. These meetings shall be called by public announcement in two regularly scheduled services, at least one of which is on Sunday, or by written announcement to the members and by public announcement at one regularly scheduled Sunday service.

B. Any special membership business meeting shall be called by public announcement in two regularly scheduled services, at least one of which is on Sunday, or by written notice to the members and by public announcement at one regularly scheduled Sunday service. Special membership business meetings may be called by the Board or based upon request by written petition signed by the number of voting members equal to the required quorum of a regular membership meeting." Article 1, Section 6C of the Bylaws.

C. Voting: Members are expected to attend all business meetings. In order to conduct official church business, a quorum of at least 100 of the voting membership shall be required. In the event that a quorum cannot be reached in any church business meeting, a second church business meeting shall be called no sooner than two weeks after the first meeting. The second meeting will follow the necessary procedure of usual business meetings. Members attending the second meeting shall constitute a quorum. All members age 18 and over are eligible to vote.

a) A simple majority shall decide every issue except when otherwise stipulated by the Constitution and Bylaws.

b) The calling of the Senior Pastor, election of Officers, amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, and all sensitive issues shall be decided by closed ballots.

c) The calling of a Senior Pastor shall require a two-thirds majority vote.

#### D. Order of business meetings

All regular and special business meetings shall be conducted in the following order:

a) Scripture reading and prayer.

b) Minutes of preceding business meeting.

c) Reports.

d) Tabled business.

e) New business.

f) Adjournment with prayer.

Any parliamentary procedure not set forth in this Constitution and Bylaws shall be referred to the ruling of "Roberts Rules of Order."

### **Section 7 Termination of Membership**

A. If any member, or anyone of the staff or the Board of the church, is found to live or teach contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith of this church, he/she shall be admonished in love Gal. 6:1, 2. If there is no repentance, exclusion from the church shall follow according to Matthew 18:15-18. After due consideration, the Church Board and the Senior Pastor shall proceed with disciplinary procedures by: (1) withholding of the Lord's Supper for 3 months or more. If no repentance is evident within three months then (2) the Board shall vote on the termination of membership. Upon an affirmative vote a letter stating the reason for the termination shall be sent by the Board to the terminated member via certified mail with a return receipt requested.

B. Any member who has withdrawn from membership or been discharged has no right in any business meeting of the church or to its property.

C. Members of good standing will receive a letter of recommendation when moving to other localities.

D. Any member continuously absent from all services, showing no interest in the work of the church, and giving no response to letters of inquiry for six months shall automatically be classified as an inactive member of the church.

### **Section 8 Membership Book**

The Church Board shall delegate the Business Administrator to keep and maintain a membership book containing the name and address of each member, date of membership, and date of termination of membership, if membership is terminated. By March 31 of each year, ministerial staff has the responsibility to identify active and inactive members for report to the Board.

## **ARTICLE II – OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1 - Officers and the Board**

The officers of the Board shall be as follows:

Senior Pastor, Associate pastors (if any), Chairman, Secretary, and the chairmen of the following committees:

Children, Christian Education, Fellowship, Community Concern, Mission, Evangelism, Facility, and Finance. The above named officers shall constitute the official Board.

### **Section 2 - The Board**

The Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate pastors, Chairman, Secretary, and the chairmen of the committees. The Board shall meet monthly to coordinate and expedite items of an immediate nature related to taking care of the business of the church. It shall be responsible for the annual salary review of the paid salaried staff and to decide on all matters of the church except those retained as the responsibility of the membership by the constitutions. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Board, with input from the ministerial staff, is responsible for making interim arrangement to maintain the spiritual care of the Church.

### **Section 3 - Duties of the Ministerial Staff and Officers**

#### **A. The Ministerial Staff**

The Ministerial Staff shall devote his time to the spiritual work of the church, preach the Word of God, lead the worship and devotional services, do visitation work, particularly among the sick and needy, instruct the people in the Holy Scriptures, and shall give a report at the annual meeting as to the spiritual work and condition of the church. Each member of the Ministerial Staff shall perform his/her duties according to the established job description. The Senior Pastor shall designate one of the Ministerial Staff to take charge of the Pastor's duties during the Pastor's absence.

#### **B. Chairman**

The Chairman shall preside at all business sessions of the church, and the Board. He has power to call meetings of church, and the Board.

A Board member shall be elected by co-optation to perform the duties of the chairman in his absence.

### **C. Secretary**

The secretary shall keep an accurate record of all business that have been brought before the church and the Board. He is to turn over to his successor all minutes and correspondence which accrue and shall attend to all correspondence of the church.

The chairman shall appoint a temporary secretary to perform the duties of the secretary in his absence.

### **D. Duties of other members of the board**

They shall be chairpersons of their respective committee which shall function according to guidelines established and approved by the Board. Chairman of each committee, assisted by the ministerial staff, shall recruit nominees of the respective committee and present their names to the Board. The Board shall be responsible for the annual appointment of members of committees from the lists of nominees presented.

The Board reserves all the rights to make direct appointments if necessary.

## **Section 4- Elections**

A. All officers, except the pastors, shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the positions that are vacant.

### **B. Staff Recruitment and Release Procedure**

The calling of senior Pastor will go through two channels of equal authority. The candidate must be approved by both the District Superintendent, and the Board of the Church. The candidate then also needs the confirmation, the call, by the church members. Recruitment of all other pastors and ministerial staff will go through two channels of equal authority. The candidate must be approved by both the Senior Pastor and the Board. The members, however, need just to be informed.

Release of Pastors will follow the equivalent procedure of recruitment.

Hiring and termination of administrative staff will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor or an administrative pastor in consultation with the Senior Pastor.

C. All officers of the Board except all pastors shall be elected for a term of three years. However, the election shall be arranged and the terms of office adjusted so that their terms will expire progressively as determined by the Board.

D. No elected officer (Pastor excluded) shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

E. The election of officers shall proceed as follows:

The Board shall begin the nomination process no later than September. The Board shall contact nominees to ascertain their willingness to serve, if elected. It shall prepare a list of all offices to be filled, all incumbents, and persons ineligible for re-election. Where possible, at least two candidates shall be nominated for each office.

A formal ballot shall be presented at the annual meeting, at which time the Chairman of the Board can open the floor for additional nominations. At the close of the nominations, the member shall be asked to complete the ballots and return the ballots to an ad hoc committee which will tally the votes and announce the elected. All elections shall be decided by a simple majority of all votes casted. In the event no candidate to the same position receives a majority, there shall be a second ballot casted with the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes again voted upon. No candidate receiving votes less than a simple majority of all votes casted, shall be elected.

The candidates thus elected shall assume office on the first week of the January meeting.

F. When an officer resigns, leaving an unexpired term, the Board shall appoint a temporary officer to fill the office until the following annual meeting at which time the remaining unexpired term shall be filled by election.

## **ARTICLE III – AMENDMENTS**

Amendment to this Bylaws may be made at any business session of the church by a majority of votes cast when said proposed amendments have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting at least three months prior to the time of its adoption. Voting shall be done according to this Bylaws.

**--- END of BYLAWS ---**