

# BYLAWS OF THE LANCASTER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

*Approved May 18, 2014*

Realizing that Christ is the Head of His body, the church, and understanding that the Scriptures are to be the guiding light for our lives and this church, we set forward the following governance structure for the Lancaster Evangelical Free Church (LEFC).

## **SECTION I: THE CONGREGATION**

Our government is congregational in form, in the sense that all leaders are accountable to the congregation. Under Christ, the ultimate authority in the church resides in the members. The members shall entrust the policy matters of the church to the men they have affirmed as elders, and day-to-day administration to the ministry staff. These men and women, by virtue of their giftedness and character, can be trusted to act in accordance with Scripture and the mind of Christ. All elders and church officers must be chosen from among members of the church. The board of elders is empowered to make decisions in all matters except the following, which must be brought before the members for their approval:

- Affirmation of the calling of the senior pastor, elders, church officers, deacons, deaconesses and three members-at-large.
- Approval of the annual budget.
- Approval of any proposed increase in the annual budget that is more than 10% of the total general fund budget approved for the current fiscal year.
- Approval of changes to the Constitution or these Bylaws.
- Approval of the buying and selling of real estate, the expansion and new construction of facilities and any long-term (for more than twelve months) indebtedness amounting to more than 5% of the total general fund budget approved for the current fiscal year.
- Approval of prospective members.
- Approval of any substantive changes to the “Requirements and Procedures for LEFC Congregational Business Meetings” manual.

In addition to holding congregational business meetings at least once each year, the elders may call special congregational business meetings by announcing the meeting date in each worship service on two consecutive Sundays, one of which must be on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting, with the nature of the meeting stated in the announcement.

All congregational meetings shall be governed by the “Requirements and Procedures for LEFC Congregational Business Meetings” manual.

## **SECTION II: MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the congregation approve for membership those who are determined by the elders to have satisfied all the requirements set forth in the Constitution and any pre-membership instruction prescribed by the elder board.

After calling by the congregation and upon his first day of paid service, the senior pastor and his wife shall become members of the congregation, as shall the man selected to serve as the executive pastor.

### **A. Membership Commitment.**

After the vote to approve their membership, new members shall read aloud and thereby voice their acceptance of the following commitment:

Believing that Christ died to save His people, I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is my Lord, and commit myself to this body of believers.

By becoming a member of this church, I willingly submit to God, the Scriptures, this body, and its leaders, to hold me accountable for my faith, doctrine and personal life. Should I ever deviate from Scripture, I expect the church to lovingly, yet firmly, call me to return to those ways which honor our heavenly father.

I agree to study God's word, and model Christ in my home, work, and community. I will endeavor to give a portion of my income in support of LEFC, speak with others about Christ, protect my home as a place of dwelling for God's Spirit, pray for others, and use my abilities and resources to serve others. I will at all times strive to maintain unity with my other brothers and sisters in the faith.

I will do these things out of obedience to God who paid the full price of my redemption through the death of his Son. To Him be the glory!

### **B. Membership Status.**

**1. Request for termination.** For members in good standing, a letter of recommendation to another church or a written request for withdrawal of membership shall be granted by the elders, and the member's name will then be dropped from the church membership roll.

**2. Forfeiture.** Should the elders determine that a member has been absent from the regular services of the church for a period of six months and has failed to communicate with the church within that time period, the elders shall proceed to remove that member from the roll. Removal will occur only after a letter of inquiry has been sent to the member and no response has been received within thirty days or upon receiving a response indicating that the member desires to fellowship elsewhere. Forfeiture of membership shall not occur if: the member is a missionary sent out from the church; the member indicates that he is a student or has an occupation that requires temporary residence outside of the area; the member has health issues precluding participation in services or meetings; or, if the member provides another compelling reason for his temporary absence.

**3. Formal Removal.** When any member is discovered to be consistently living or teaching contrary to the Word of God, the Statement of Faith or the Membership Commitment, then the

church, through the elders, shall place the member under corrective discipline according to Scripture. (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:5-11, 7:5-12; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10-11). If the member fails to repent and continues in the same evil way, the elders may remove the person from the membership roll.

**4. Reinstatement.** Any person who has been formally removed from membership may be reinstated as a member, if the elders determine that true repentance has occurred and the person is again walking in the fear of the Lord.

A person who has left LEFC under good circumstances may be reinstated to membership by the elders, upon their return and active participation in the services of the church, without having to go through the member approval process.

**5. Changes in membership status.** The elders shall report any changes they have made to the membership roll at each congregational meeting.

### **C. Service in a position requiring affirmation by the membership.**

In order to serve in any position (other than senior pastor) that requires affirmation at a congregational meeting, membership for a period of at least 11 months shall be a prerequisite. The nominating committee may grant an exception to this requirement, if there is a scriptural basis for doing so.

## **SECTION III: CHURCH STAFF**

### **A. Senior Pastor.**

1. The senior pastor reports to the board of elders, of which he shall become a member upon being called and upon his first day of paid service. He shall preach and teach the Word of God, oversee the public worship services of the church, watch over the spiritual welfare of the church (with the other elders), help manage the ministry staff and other paid employees, and model for the congregation what it means to be a follower of Christ. In conjunction with the board of elders and ministry staff, he will develop the mission and vision and help oversee the ministries of the church. His remuneration shall be determined by the board of elders, in conjunction with the executive pastor and the elder board's financial advisory body. He shall be a voting member of the board of elders and an ex-officio member of all committees, councils and boards (except for the pastoral search committee).

2. When required, a pastoral search committee convened by the elders shall propose a prospective senior pastor to the elder board, for affirmation and calling by the congregation. The committee shall be chaired by the elder board chairman. The other committee members shall consist of: two other elders; the chairs of the deacon and deaconess boards; the executive pastor; and, the three members-at-large who serve on the nominating committee. Once a search committee has been convened, the members of this committee shall continue to serve in this capacity until the membership has voted to call a recommended candidate and the candidate has agreed to serve as senior pastor.

3. The senior pastor shall be chosen by an 85% majority vote at a congregational meeting

of the church. He shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

4. The senior pastor's employment may only be terminated by the board of elders.

### **B. Executive Pastor.**

1. The executive pastor shall be hired by the elder board with the concurrence of the senior pastor, to whom he reports. He shall become a member of the elder board upon his first day of paid service. His title and remuneration shall be determined by the board of elders in conjunction with the senior pastor and the elder board's financial advisory body, and shall be based on the nature of his ministry, his training and experience, whether he has been ordained, etc. He shall be a voting member of the board of elders and an ex-officio member of all committees, councils and boards. He shall act as a legal representative and signatory for the church.

2. In conjunction with the senior pastor, he provides overall leadership and direction to ministry leaders and the accomplishment of the vision and mission of the church. Other areas of management responsibility include church finances, budget preparation, church administration, human resources, ministry team health and focus, strategic planning and project management.

3. When such positions are created or have been vacated, he shall be responsible for the selection and termination of ministry leaders, with the concurrence of the board of elders and the senior pastor. He shall also select and terminate other church employees (except for those who report directly to ministry leaders).

### **C. Ministry Leaders.**

1. Those selected to serve as the church's ministry leaders shall be men and women who will give servant leadership to the area of ministry that they direct. The titles and remuneration given to each ministry leader shall be determined by the board of elders in conjunction with the senior pastor, executive pastor and the elder board's financial advisory body, and shall be based on the nature of their ministry, their training and experience, whether they have been ordained, etc.

2. Ministry leaders will work under the direction of the executive pastor and senior pastor, and may be terminated by them with the concurrence of the board of elders.

3. Whenever ministry support positions exist, ministry leaders shall be responsible for the selection and termination of persons who serve in these support positions.

## **SECTION IV: BOARD OF ELDERS**

The board of elders shall provide leadership of the church, promote its spiritual welfare and oversee the development and implementation of church policies. It shall consist of up to 12 men, known as sitting elders, who are publicly recognized as desiring to serve as an elder and who fulfill the Biblical requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They shall serve one-year terms and shall be affirmed in this role annually by the congregation.

Additional men who fulfill the Biblical requirements for eldership and are affirmed at congregational business meetings may serve as non-sitting elders. These shall perform duties assigned to them by the

chairman of the elder board, including serving as a sitting elder, should a sitting elder be incapacitated or otherwise be unable to serve the church in that capacity.

Sitting elders shall serve no more than six consecutive, one-year terms, after which they shall take a one-year break. An elder may serve a seventh consecutive year, if the elder board determines that there is a compelling reason for doing so.

The senior pastor and the executive pastor shall serve as sitting elders *ex officio* and shall not be subject to annual affirmation by the membership or the term limitation stated above. Other ministry leaders or paid staff may serve as elders. No more than one-third of the sitting elders may be ministry leaders or paid staff.

### **A. Authority and responsibilities.**

The board of elders is authorized to perform the following:

1. To provide scriptural direction for the church.
2. To be a primary source of encouragement, support and counsel for the senior pastor as he provides spiritual leadership.
3. To evaluate church programs in light of Biblical principles and the church's philosophy of ministry.
4. To review ministry goals and direction to ensure that they are consistent with the Scriptures.
5. To interview and approve prospective members, administer confidential or sensitive matters of church discipline and otherwise oversee the church membership processes.
6. To determine that doctrinal teaching is consistent with the Statement of Faith found in the Constitution.
7. To oversee the finances of the church by establishing financial policies, by overseeing the creation of an annual budget (to be approved by the membership) and by ensuring compliance with the approved budget and church financial policies.
8. To approve the creation of ministry leader or other paid positions and determine to whom the holders of these positions shall report, as well as eliminating positions when warranted.
9. To establish separation agreement terms with departing employees.
10. To appoint elder board advisory councils (consisting of sitting and non-sitting elders, ministry staff and church members) as needed, to assist in the development of church policies and otherwise help advance the Kingdom of God (examples: finances; personnel; bylaws; capital campaign).
11. To convene a nominating committee which shall put forward the names of members for affirmation as elders, church officers (if position is not filled by a sitting elder), deacons, deaconesses and three members-at-large. This committee shall consist of 8 members: the chairman of the elder board; the senior pastor; the executive pastor; the chairs of the deacon and deaconess boards; and, three members-at-large. All proposed nominees must be approved by the board of elders before being contacted as qualified candidates for office. The nominating committee shall then contact the candidates to obtain their final consent to serve and place their

names on the ballot for affirmation at a congregational meeting.

12. To ensure that a policy and procedure manual is complete, up-to-date and available, detailing the operating procedures of the church, and to approve any policy changes that may be needed.

13. To provide an annual written or oral report to the congregation regarding their activities and the ministries of the church during the past year, as well as plans for the upcoming year.

14. To assume other functions and duties that are not specifically delegated by these bylaws and that are necessary for the proper functioning of this church.

## **B. Church records.**

The elder board shall ensure that the following records are kept and, if not of a confidential nature, ensure that these are communicated or made available to the congregation:

1. Minutes of congregational business meetings and elder board meetings.
2. Roll of the members in the congregation with the dates of their approval and removal.
3. Resolutions and position papers adopted by the elder board.
4. Appropriate accounting records.
5. Articles or restated Articles of Incorporation and all amendments currently in effect.
6. Constitution or restated Constitution and all amendments currently in effect.
7. Bylaws or restated Bylaws and all amendments currently in effect.

## **C. Conflict of interest.**

If a conflict of interest by any elder should arise, that person shall abstain from being involved in a decision in which he has a conflict of interest.

## **SECTION V: CHURCH OFFICERS**

The officers of the church are elected or appointed to one-year terms. The officers of the church have vested in them all the powers and authority usually ascribed to officers of a corporation and will have authority to use these titles when necessary in handling corporate or civil matters involving the church. The church is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Non-Profit Corporation, and the officers of the corporation are as follows:

### **A. Senior Pastor.**

Called by the congregation, he shall act as a legal representative and signatory for the church.

### **B. Chairman of the Elder Board.**

The chairman is elected by the elder board. He or his designee from the board presides over all meetings of the elder board and ensures that the duties of the board are faithfully executed. He or his designee from the board shall also preside over congregational business meetings and he shall ensure that all decisions made at that meeting are implemented. He shall act as a legal representative and

signatory for the church.

**C. Treasurer.**

The treasurer shall be appointed from among the sitting elders. The treasurer shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Elder Board (including the Executive Pastor) regarding financial matters of the church, and shall meet regularly with the Executive Pastor (or his designee) to discuss LEFC financial matters. He shall review the monthly financial statements provided by the church staff, and participate annually in discussions with an independent CPA firm to ensure that financial systems and process are functioning appropriately. The treasurer shall act as a legal representative and signatory of the church.

**D. Church Secretary.**

The church secretary may be appointed from among the sitting elders. If the elder board chooses not to appoint the church secretary from among the sitting elders, the nominating committee shall put forward the name of a church member to be affirmed by the congregation to fill this position. The church secretary shall ensure that an accurate record of the proceedings and decisions at all business meetings of the church are kept. The secretary shall also ensure that an accurate record of the decisions of the board of elders is kept. The secretary shall preserve in a safe place all church records (not including financial records) as may be required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**E. Church Financial Secretary.**

A church member shall be put forward by the nominating committee and shall be affirmed by the congregation to fill this position. The financial secretary shall ensure the proper receipting of all money received by the church and keep proper records of the source and the purpose for which the money was given. The financial secretary shall ensure that a record of all contributions received by the church, including any records as may be required by any governmental entity, is kept in accordance with LEFC guidelines for records retention.

**F. Legal representatives and signatories on behalf of the church.**

Unless otherwise specified by law or by a party with whom the LEFC proposes to establish a contractual agreement, formal contracts of the church, promissory notes, mortgages, loans or other evidences of indebtedness and corporate documents shall be executed, signed or endorsed by at least two of the persons designated as legal signatories in these bylaws (the senior pastor, the chairman of the elder board, the treasurer and the executive pastor).

At no time may the two required signatories be the senior pastor and the executive pastor.

All checks and drafts drawn on banks or other depositories on funds to the credit of LEFC or in other special accounts of the church shall be signed by such person or persons as is stipulated in the church's policy manuals or other policy documents, or as may be authorized by the elder board.

**G. Special provision regarding relatives serving in leadership positions dealing with church finances.**

Two or more persons related by blood or marriage may not serve concurrently as church treasurer and church financial secretary, and they may not be the church's sole legal representatives or signatories on official documents.

**SECTION VI: DEACONS & DEACONESSES**

Men and women who are affirmed by the congregation may serve on the board of deacons and board of deaconesses, respectively. These boards will assist the elders in meeting spiritual, social and physical needs within and outside of the congregation and shall provide leadership, in conjunction with ministry staff, for men's and women's ministries.

The elder board may choose to appoint staff members as permanent members of the deacon board and deaconess board in order to provide connection to the staff leadership and initiatives.

Prospective deacons shall meet the qualifications set out in I Timothy 3:8-13. Prospective deaconesses shall meet the qualifications set out in I Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5.

If the elder board determines that a deacon or deaconess no longer meets the qualifications to serve in that capacity, he or she will be asked to step down and an explanation will be given to the membership.

Each board shall elect their own chairperson and any other officers they consider necessary. The chairpersons will report periodically to the chairman of the elder board or his designee. The chairperson shall not be a paid staff member of LEFC. Each board shall also submit an oral or written report concerning their ministries at each congregational business meeting.

**SECTION VII: MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Each ministry of the church shall operate according to its ministry policies and procedures as written in a ministry handbook, manual or other document. These shall be reviewed periodically by the senior pastor, executive pastor and the board of elders.

Each ministry may establish any procedures needed to accomplish its ministry goals and objectives, but any policies or policy changes must be approved by the executive pastor and affirmed by the board of elders.

It is LEFC's ministry philosophy to build teams to accomplish the work of ministry, and the ministries of LEFC should reflect that philosophy.

**SECTION VIII: BYLAW REVISIONS**

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed for adoption at any congregational meeting and shall require approval by a 75% majority of the votes cast. If approved, the changes shall take effect immediately.

**These bylaws were approved by vote at the 5/18/2014 Congregational Business Meeting.**