

Elim Church Constitution

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ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Church shall be Elim Evangelical Free Church of Puyallup, Washington, as stated in the original Articles of Incorporation dated June 2, 1975.

ARTICLE II - CHARACTER

Section 1 - PURPOSE

Ephesians 4:11-16, Matthew 28:18-20. The purpose of this Church is to glorify God and advance the cause of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, the preaching and teaching of the Scriptures, consistent Christian living by its members, the practices of New Testament stewardship, evangelism, and discipleship.

Section 2 - POLITY

The government of this Church is vested in its membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligations, mutual counsel and cooperation common among Evangelical Free Churches, and to that end, shall maintain fellowship with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Section 3 - DOCTRINE

This Church accepts the Holy Scriptures as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth is in essential accord with the beliefs of the Evangelical Free Church of America and is set forth in the "Articles of Faith" appended to this Constitution.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Church shall receive as members only those who have, by faith, accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior.
- B. Those who are received into the membership of this Church will publicly assent to the Elim Church Covenant, Articles of Faith and Constitution.
- C. No person shall be excluded from membership because of sex, race, national or ethnic origin, or color. The Elder Board shall examine all applicants for membership to determine if they have received Christ as their Savior, and to determine that they meet the qualifications of this Article, and are in agreement with this Constitution, the Articles of Faith, and the Covenant. On the basis of this examination, they

shall be accepted or denied membership in this body.

Section 2 - PROCEDURE FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. Those who desire membership shall indicate their desire to a member of the Elder Board.
- B. Candidates shall be given an application for membership, a copy of the Constitution, and any other pertinent documents. They shall read through these and fill out the application for membership and turn it in to an elder.
- C. Selected Elder Board members, or those whom the Elder Board designates, shall hear the applicants' personal testimonies of faith in Christ and their present relationship with Christ. Candidates must affirm the Articles of Faith and Covenant of this Church, and agree to support the work and worship of this Church.
- D. The Elder Board shall give public notice by posting the names of prospective members for two (2) weeks prior to final Elder Board approval. Should anyone oppose the acceptance, real cause based upon the Word of God shall be given to the Elder Board.
- E. By vote of the Elder Board, these candidates shall be presented to the Congregation for acceptance into membership at a regular Sunday Service.
- F. In case of application for membership by those whose circumstances make it impossible for them to appear and be received publicly into fellowship with this Church, the applicants shall submit an application for membership certifying their acceptance of the Articles of Faith, agreement to the Covenant of the Church and its Constitution, and shall also satisfy the Elder Board as to their Christian experience. Having signed the Articles of Faith and Covenant and the Constitution, such applicants may then be received into Membership without appearing in Person.
- G. A pastor and his wife called by the Church are automatically members of the Church, but may maintain other personal church memberships such as those significant to pension rights and ordination.

Section 3 - VOTING RIGHTS

All members, eighteen years of age or older shall have equal voting rights.

Section 4 - DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- A. All discipline shall be formative and corrective. The motive for disciplining a believer is love. The goal is to restore the believer to fellowship with the Lord and His Church. The example is that of our Lord as found in Matt. 18:15-17, 21-22.
- B. Activity subject to church discipline is defined as follows: conduct that brings reproach upon the

Church or promotes discord and/or injury, or deviation from doctrine as stated in the Articles of Faith and this Constitution.

- 1) In such cases the Elder Board will notify personally or by letter the one accused, explaining the nature of the charges and asking them to appear before the Elder Board to respond to the charges.
- 2) If the accused refuses to appear, the Elder Board shall remove their name from the Church Membership Roll. The Elder Board shall inform the Church of its decision at a duly called business meeting following the decision.
- 3) If the accused appears before the Elder Board, there shall be a full and fair hearing of the case. The Elder Board is empowered to acquit the accused if the majority of those present vote that the accused is innocent of the charges. If a majority of the Elder Board present find the accused guilty but repentant, that member may be relieved of all ministry responsibilities. This member may be restored after a period of counseling and probation. If, on the other hand, a majority of the Elder Board present find the accused guilty but unrepentant, they shall relieve the accused of all ministry responsibilities, and remove the name of the accused from the Church Membership Roll and so inform the members at the next business meeting. ("INVESTIGATION AND RESTORATION PROCEDURES FOR LEADERS ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT " details the process to be followed regarding those in leadership and shall be consulted and followed throughout the process.)
- 4) Offenders who refuse to appear or who are found unwilling to settle their differences on Scriptural grounds understand that the Elder Board has the authority to remove their name from the Roll of Church Membership and to remove them from participation in this Church.

- C. Members thus disciplined will receive a letter of dismissal from the Church for failure to conform to the Articles of Faith, Covenant and Constitution.

Section 5 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Church may be terminated in five ways:

- A. By WRITTEN REQUEST of the member to the Elder Board.
- B. By TRANSFER. Letters of Transfer shall be granted upon request of members who apply for them, providing they are not subject to or under discipline at the time of application. When such letters have been granted, the members' relationship with this Church shall be considered terminated.

- C. By DISMISSAL. Members who are found guilty of conduct that is scripturally inappropriate and refuse to respond appropriately to discipline as outlined in Article III, Section 4 of this Constitution, shall have their Membership terminated.
- D. By ABSENTATION. Members who indicate a lack of interest in the ministry of this Church for a period of three (3) months or more and do not respond to written inquiry from the Elder Board shall have their membership terminated. Written notice of said termination shall be sent to the member.
- E. By DEATH.

Section 6 - REINSTATEMENT

Persons who have been removed from the membership may be reinstated in accordance with Article III, Section 2 of this Constitution.

Section 7 - MEMBERSHIP ROLL

The Membership Roll shall be updated immediately preceding all business meetings. The updated Roll shall be made available at all meetings.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1 - AUTHORITY

- A. The Congregation authorizes the leaders of this church to conduct the business of the ministry.
- B. The leadership will consult with the Congregation and keep them informed of the decisions which are made.
- C. All leaders of the Church are accountable to the assembled body and are subject to its vote.

Section 2 - DEFINITION

The Officers of the Church shall be:

- A. Senior Pastor - to be called
- B. Associate Pastors - to be called
- C. Elders - to be elected
- D. Treasurer - to be elected
- F. Financial Secretary - to be elected

Section 3 - SENIOR PASTOR

- A. QUALIFICATIONS OF:
 - l) The Pastor of this Church shall be a man equipped by God to do the work of the ministry: A man of integrity, duly ordained, who has sufficient service in ministry to serve the body at Elim Evangelical Free church.

- 2) His qualifications shall be based upon I Tim. 3:1-7, Eph. 4:11-12 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. The admonitions found in I and II Timothy shall be the general description of his character and ministry.
- 3) He shall be in full agreement with the Articles of Faith and Constitution of Elim Evangelical Free Church, without mental reservation.
- 4) He shall be licensed or ordained with the Evangelical Free Church of America no later than 18 months after beginning his ministry at Elim Evangelical Free Church

B. CALLING OF:

- 1) When by death, resignation, or removal, the pastorate shall become vacant, the Pastoral Search Committee shall interview prospective candidates and make recommendations to the Congregation. Candidates shall be considered as to the qualifications listed above.
- 2) After a candidate is heard and examined by the Pastoral Search Committee, and approved by a unanimous vote of the Elder Board, he will then be invited to candidate before the Congregation.
- 3) When the Pastoral Search Committee is ready to propose a pastoral candidate, it shall mail to each member of the Church the following:
 - a. The name and qualifications of the pastoral candidate.
 - b. The date of his visit.
 - c. The date and time of the business meeting at which the proposal of the Pastoral Search Committee will be acted upon.

This mailing shall be made at least 10 days prior to the candidate's visit.

- 4) The vote to call a pastor shall be by secret ballot. For a call to be valid, it shall require a three-fourths (3/4) majority approval of the entire voting membership.
- 5) When a pastoral call is extended, the Elder Board shall present to the new Pastor a written statement, approved by the membership, which will include job description, salary, vacation, and other benefits.

C. DUTIES OF:

- 1) He shall have oversight of the Church in spiritual matters, preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances of communion and baptism, and carefully watch over, guide and advance the spiritual interests of the church.

- 2) He shall serve for an indefinite period of time.
- 3) He shall be responsible for the visitation of the sick and for ministering to the spiritual needs of the individual members.
- 4) He shall be a voting member of the Elder Board, and shall work with the Elders of the Church to determine its needs and ministries.
- 5) He shall submit a written report of his work to the Congregation at the Annual Business Meeting.
- 6) He will represent the Church at annual meetings of the EFC District.
- 7) Other outside responsibilities and ministries will be permitted with the Elder Board's approval.

D. SEVERING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH:

- 1) In the event the Pastor desires to resign his office, at least a thirty (30) day notice shall be given.
- 2) In the event there are serious accusations against the Pastor, these shall be submitted to the Elders and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses (I Tim. 5:19). The Elder Board shall review the EFCA guidelines and procedures, contact the District Superintendent and inform him of the situation, and submit to EFCA guidelines and procedures and leadership. This accountability to the district board and the EFCA discipline process shall be in effect from the first day of the pastor's employment with Elim EFC regardless of where he might be in the credentialing process.
- 3) In the event the Elder Board deems the pastor's ministry to be ineffective, the Elder Board may dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Elder Board must, however, state in writing the pastor's areas of ineffectiveness and allow up to a six (6) month period in which to rectify the problem area/areas. A negative review at the end of this period shall result in his dismissal, which the Pastor may contest and bring before the Congregation for a vote of confidence.
- 4) If the matter is brought before the Church body, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the entire voting membership at a properly called business meeting shall be required for a pastor's removal. The vote shall be by secret ballot.

Section 4 - ASSOCIATE PASTORS

A. QUALIFICATIONS OF:

Prospective Pastors shall be considered as to educational qualifications, spiritual condition,

and previous experience, and must agree and subscribe to the Articles of Faith and Constitution without mental reservation.

rectify the problem area/areas. A negative review at the end of this period shall result in his dismissal.

B. CALLING OF:

Associate Pastors will be called according to need as determined by the Elder Board and as confirmed by the Congregation. A prospective pastor shall be given a carefully outlined job description, interviewed by the Elder Board, and upon favorable response, shall be presented to the Church as a candidate for a call. If applicable, a written statement of salary and benefits shall be presented. A three-fourths (3/4) majority approval of the entire voting membership cast by secret ballot shall be required for a call to be valid.

C. DUTIES OF:

- 1) The duties of Associate Pastors shall be those as presented by the Elder Board in a written job description, relating to the particular phase of the ministry to which he/she is called. They shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
- 2) It shall be the responsibility of the associate pastors to comply with the requests and instructions of the Senior Pastor and the Elder responsible for overseeing that ministry area.
- 3) Associate Pastors shall be voting members of the Elder Board, and shall work with the Elders of the Church to determine its needs and ministries.

D. SEVERING RELATIONSHIPS WITH:

- 1) In the event the Associate Pastor desires to resign his office, at least a thirty (30) day notice shall be given.
- 2) In the event there are serious accusations against the Associate Pastor, these shall be submitted to the Elders and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). The Elder Board shall review the EFCA guidelines and procedures, contact the District Superintendent and inform him of the situation, and submit to EFCA guidelines and procedures and leadership. This accountability to the district board and the EFCA discipline process shall be in effect from the first day of the Associate Pastor's employment with Elim EFC regardless of where he might be in the credentialing process.
- 3) In the event the Elder Board deems the Associate Pastor's ministry to be ineffective, the Elder Board may dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Elder Board must, however, state in writing the Associate Pastor's areas of ineffectiveness and allow up to a six (6) month period in which to

Section 5 - OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS

A. QUALIFICATIONS OF:

- 1) All Officers shall have been members in good standing for not less than one (1) year. Occasional exceptions can be made upon approval by the Elder Board.
- 2) All Officers must subscribe in conviction and conduct to the Constitution of this Church before they can be elected to office.

B. ELECTION OF:

- 1) All Officers shall be elected by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the membership present at the Annual Budget and Election Meeting on the first Sunday of December. A quorum of fifty percent (50%) of the membership must be present.
- 2) Should vacancies occur during the year, the Chairman of the Elder Board shall direct the Nominating Committee to follow the procedure in Article 5, Section 3.B to fill the vacancy. A vote to confirm the candidate shall take place at a duly called business meeting following the specifications set out in Article 4, Section 5.B.1 above.

C. TERMS OF OFFICE:

- 1) The term of office shall be two (2) years for all elected and appointed Officers.
- 2) By special request of the Elder Board and with approval of the Nominating Committee, any officer may be nominated for election for two additional terms. The officer must then sit out one full year before being re-elected.

D. GENERAL DUTIES OF:

All Officers shall receive an updated job description at the beginning of each term.

E. REMOVAL OF:

- 1) Any officer shall be presumed to have vacated his office if he ceases to be a member or if he moves from the vicinity and thereby can no longer serve effectively. Any officer may also be removed from office for failure to attend, without reasonable cause, regular meetings or for conduct impairing his efficiency. In the event the Elder Board deems the officer to be ineffective, the Elder Board may vote by a three-fourths (3/4) majority to remove him from office.
- 2) In the event that there are serious accusations against an officer of the Church, the Elder Board shall act in accordance with Article III, Section 4.

Section 6 - ELDERS

Elders shall meet the qualifications of I Tim. 3:1-13
Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

A. ELECTION OF:

- 1) As availability of qualified men may permit, the Church shall elect from its membership seven (7) men to serve as Elders. Additional elders may be elected, as determined by the Elder Board, based on church growth.
- 2) They shall be elected for a two year term. By special request of the Elder Board and with approval of the Nominating Committee, any officer may be nominated for election for two additional terms. The officer must then sit out one full year before being re-elected.

B. DUTIES OF:

- 1) At their first meeting after the annual election, the Elders shall select from their own group a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and a Secretary of the Elder Board.
- 2) The Elders shall, with the Pastor, have oversight of the Church in spiritual matters, administer the ordinances of communion and baptism, and carefully watch over, guide and advance the spiritual interests of the Church.
- 3) In the conduct of church business, the Elders may approve expenses as stated in Article VIII, Section 2. They shall be responsible for retaining additional staff. Salaries and other compensation of the Pastor(s) and church staff will be approved by the Congregation in the church budget.
- 4) The Elders shall appoint the members of the standing committees. They shall appoint the Congregational Secretary at the beginning of each year.
- 5) The Chairman of the Elders shall conduct business meetings of the Church.
- 6) The Chairman of the Elders shall submit a written report of the work of the Elders at the Annual Business Meeting.
- 7) A member of the Elder Board shall interview all candidates for church membership and, with approval of the Elder Board, recommend to the Church those meeting the requirements for membership (refer to Article III, Section 2).
- 8) The Elder Board shall have charge of all matters of discipline of the members of the Church (refer to Article III, Section 5).
- 9) The Elders shall be responsible for the disbursement of the Benevolence Fund.
- 10) The Elders shall review the Pastor (s) and other church staff annually.
- 11) For purposes of Washington State Law, the Elder Board shall be considered the Elder

Board of Directors of the Corporation, with the Elder Board Chairman as President.

Section 7 - TREASURER

A. DUTIES OF:

- 1) He/she shall be accountable to the Elder Board.
- 2) The Treasurer shall keep the books in order and keep financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals.
- 3) The Treasurer shall make a full report to the Church at the Annual Business Meeting and when otherwise directed by the Elder Board. He/she shall prepare a comprehensive report for the Elder Board for its regular monthly meeting.
- 4) The Treasurer shall oversee payment of the church bills and staff salaries as directed by the Elder Board.
- 5) Assistants to the Treasurer may be appointed by the Elder Board to assist the Treasurer in the proper maintenance of all accounts.

Section 8 - FINANCIAL SECRETARY

A. DUTIES OF:

- 1) He/she shall be accountable to the Elder Board.
- 2) The Financial Secretary shall be accountable for all monies received in public offerings or otherwise. He/she will, with the assistance of the counting teams, count all monies received at each church service. (Each counting team must consist of at least two members approved by the Elder Board.) The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for depositing all monies on or before the first business day following each service.
- 3) The Financial Secretary shall present copies of the Weekly Offering Statement to the Treasurer and the church office.
- 4) Financial Secretary shall provide a record of annual giving to each member no later than January thirty-first of each year.

- B.** Assistants to the Financial Secretary may be appointed by the Elder Board to assist the Financial Secretary in carrying out these responsibilities.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

Section 1 - QUALIFICATIONS OF:

A person must be a member of the Church to qualify to be a member of the Pastoral Search Committee, the Nominating Committee or chair of any other committee, and must agree with our Articles of Faith.

Section 2 - DUTIES OF:

- A. Each committee, at its first meeting, shall select a Chairperson in accordance with Article V, Section 1, preferably not an Elder attending that committee.
- B. If applicable, each committee shall annually, by September 1st, recommend a budget, pertaining to its area of responsibility, for approval by the Elder Board and for adoption by the Church.
- C. Each committee shall annually prepare a written report of the work of the committee to be submitted when its duties are completed and/or at the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 3 - NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- A. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the Pastor, one Elder and a minimum of three members of the congregation. The Elder Board shall appoint the committee by no later than August 15th.
- B. This Committee shall prepare and present at the Annual Budget and Election Meeting a slate of candidates for the offices to be filled. They shall also fill vacancies that occur during the year. The names of the candidates shall be published in the Church bulletin and posted for two (2) consecutive Sundays. Preceding the Election Meeting, the candidates shall study the responsibilities and functions of their office. The Senior Pastor or appointed Elder shall oversee their education.
- C. Regular members of this Church may make nominations only by filing with the Nominating Committee a written and signed nomination. The Nominating Committee shall consider persons so nominated by their qualifications.

Section 4 - PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

- A. When it is necessary to call a pastor, a Pastoral Search Committee consisting of two Elders and three members shall be nominated by the Elder Board and approved by vote of the membership. For specific procedures involved in calling a pastor, see Article IV, Section 3:B.
- B. This Committee shall serve until the completion of its work and the calling of a pastor.

Section 5 - OTHER COMMITTEES

Other committees will be formed by the Elder Board as necessary. The Elder Board shall determine the duties of each committee, and shall establish procedures for guidance, accountability, and decision making.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

Section 1 - DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS

The Church shall:

- A. Meet each Sunday for worship, preaching, and Christian education.
- B. Meet for observance of the Lord's Supper on one Sunday of each month and at such other times as the Pastor or Elders may decide.
- C. Promote and encourage other weekly meetings for prayer, Bible study and fellowship.

Section 2 - ELDER BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- A. Church members may attend any meeting by request to the committee chairperson, except when a closed session is called for discussion of personal and/or confidential matters.
- B. The Elder Board shall meet at least once a month at a time and place it may determine.
- C. All other committees shall meet as needed.
- D. A quorum of three-fourths (3/4) of the entire Elder Board or committee must be present to transact business.

Section 3 - BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. ANNUAL BUDGET AND ELECTION MEETING - This meeting of the membership shall be held on the first Sunday of December to elect new officers and approve a budget for the coming year.
- B. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING - This meeting of the membership shall be held in January for the purpose of presenting annual reports and transacting other business that may properly come before this meeting.
- C. SPECIAL MEETINGS - Special meetings of the membership may be called by the Pastor, Elder Board or by written request of a quorum (50%) of eligible voters. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated at the time of announcement. Any business that is not in conflict with other provisions of the Constitution may be transacted at such a meeting.

Section 4 - RULES GOVERNING BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. Announcement of all business meetings shall be made from the pulpit and printed in the Sunday bulletins two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting.
- B. Unless otherwise specified, fifty percent (50%), of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be approved by a simple majority (more than one-half) of the voting members making up that quorum. If a quorum is lacking, the meeting shall be adjourned. The Elder Board may reschedule the meeting for a later date.
- C. Significant congregational decisions shall include:
 - 1) Election of officers
 - 2) Constitutional Amendments
 - 3) Purchase, sale or consolidation of real property
 - 4) Purchase or sale of other assets in a value in excess of \$4,000.00
 - 5) Approval of annual budget
- D. QUORUM
 - 1) At a meeting where a significant congregational decision will be acted upon, the quorum shall be 50% of the voting membership.
 - 2) In the event a quorum cannot be raised that motion shall be tabled and the following steps shall be taken if deemed necessary:
 - a) Announcement of a second meeting, two weeks hence, shall be made according to procedures in Article VI, Section 4:A. An agenda and reason for the second meeting shall be included with the announcement.
 - b) The number of voting members attending the second meeting shall be considered a valid quorum.
 - c) The significant decision must be approved by three-fourths (3/4) of those voting members present and those voting by absentee ballot.
- E. All business meetings shall open with prayer and the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used as a guideline.
- F. Except for routine matters, all voting of the membership shall be by secret ballot. Disagreement regarding method shall be resolved by a decision to use secret ballots.
- G. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. In the event members are not able to attend a business meeting, they may apply to the Elder Board for an absentee ballot. Upon submitting such ballot, voting members must sign an updated membership roster. It shall be the responsibility

of the Elder Board Chairman to assure the confidentiality of absentee ballots. The availability of absentee ballots shall be announced in accordance with rules for announcement of all business meetings as stated in Article VI. Section 4:A.

ARTICLE VII - PROPERTY

Section 1 - PROPERTY RIGHTS

Individual members have no rights to Church property. Upon termination of membership, or dissolution of the Church, a member shall not be entitled to an interest in the assets.

Section 2 - PURCHASE AND SALE OF PROPERTY

A three-fourths (3/4) vote by secret ballot at a properly called business meeting shall be required for the purchase or sale of real estate. A quorum (50%) of the voting membership must be present.

Section 3 - DIVISION AND DISSOLUTION

If division occurs in this Church, the name and all property shall be retained by those adhering to this Constitution. If the Church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, the property shall be given to the Pacific Northwest District of the Evangelical Free Church of America, to enable said District to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises.

Section 4 - CONSOLIDATION

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Elder Board shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such a consolidation in so far as the property is concerned. A report of such agreement must be made to the membership and approval granted by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the membership before any legal papers are signed. A quorum (50%) of the acting voting membership must be present.

Section 5 - REGISTERED AGENT

- A. The registered agent will be responsible to receive service of process in the name of this corporation; and to immediately notify the office of the Secretary of State in the event of the agent's resignation, or of any changes in the registered office address of this corporation.
- B. This agent shall be appointed by the Elder Board for an indefinite time.

ARTICLE VIII - FINANCES

Section 1 - BUDGET

The Elder Board shall prepare and submit to the Congregation an annual budget for its approval. The budget shall include all anticipated expenditures, the sum of which shall not exceed projected income.

Section 2 – EXPENDITURES

- A. Expenditures shall be made under the direction of the Elder Board.
- B. As necessary, the Elders may approve discretionary spending above budget limitations; however, the combined discretionary spending in all categories may not exceed five percent (5%) of the total annual budget.
- C. Expenditures above five percent (5%) must be approved by the congregation.

Section 3 - BENEVOLENCE FUND

Monies from the Benevolence Fund shall come from contributions made at the communion services, and from any other monies which the Church may designate for the fund. The Elder Board shall not be required to make public disclosure of the specific disbursements from this fund, but an accounting will be kept by the Church Treasurer.

Section 4 - AUDITING

At least every two years the Elder Board shall appoint a committee to audit the church books. None of the committee members shall be officers of the Church. The committee shall submit a report to the Elder Board. Copies of the report shall be made available to a member request.

ARTICLE IX - MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1 - FISCAL YEAR

The Church's fiscal year shall end on December 31.

Section 2 - AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

No auxiliary organizations of the Church shall be formed without first obtaining the approval of the Elder Board. All gifts to outside causes from auxiliary organizations are subject to approval of the Elder Board.

Section 3 - CONGREGATIONAL SECRETARY

- A. Each year the Board of Elders shall appoint from the membership a Congregational Secretary.
- B. DUTIES OF:

- 1) The Secretary shall keep a complete and accurate record of the proceedings of all church business meetings. He/she shall read the minutes of the last meeting at each business meeting.
- 2) He/she shall find a substitute to record proceedings and read minutes in his/her absence.
- 3) He/she shall submit a written statistical report of the Church Membership at the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 4 - OTHER STAFF

- A. Qualifications and descriptions of duties for additional Staff shall be provided by the Board of Elders.
- B. Salaries for hired Staff shall be included in the budget and voted on during a scheduled Congregational Meeting.
- C. DUTIES OF:
 - 1) The duties shall be those as presented by the Elder Board in a written job description.
 - 2) It shall be their responsibility to comply with the requests and instructions of the Senior Pastor and the Elder Board.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the Church by a quorum as specified in Article VI, Sec. 4.D.1. Such amendment shall be presented in writing, mailed to each voting member not less than two (2) weeks before the business meeting, and posted in a public place two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE XI - ADOPTION

By the adoption of this Constitution on June 3, 1990, and amended on January 25, 2009, the membership of Elim Evangelical Free Church of Puyallup, Washington, hereby rescinds all previous Constitutions and Amendments.

APPENDIX A – Articles of Faith

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus -- Israel's promised Messiah -- was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and 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.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

APPENDIX B – Covenant

Those who are received into the membership of this Church will publicly assent to the Elim Church Covenant:

“Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we do now in the presence of God and our fellow believers solemnly enter into this Covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

“We shall seek to maintain the personal discipline of regular prayer, study of the Scriptures, and worship that we may grow in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall regularly attend worship service.

“We shall seek to pray for and serve one another in Christian love; to forgive, even as we ourselves have been forgiven of God, and to seek reconciliation according to Christ's command, and to encourage others through our words and service.

“We shall seek to be mindful that we are called to be doers of the Word and not hearers only and thus to faithfully serve in this Church with our time, talents, possessions and financial resources.

“We shall seek to set a proper example before our families at all times; to train our children in the doctrines and duties of our faith; and to encourage family and private devotions.

“We shall seek to walk before all men that the light of God's presence may shine from our lives in such a manner as to encourage them to come to Him Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life; therefore, we shall not indulge in practices which might be detrimental to the moral, spiritual, or physical well-being of ourselves, our fellowship, or our community. Where personal habits and indulgence in pleasures may be an offense or cast a stumbling block in the path of others, we will voluntarily abstain from these practices in order to maintain a pure witness (Rom. 14:12-23).

“Believing in the fundamentals of our faith as expressed in the Articles of Faith in this Constitution, we shall seek to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. May God help us as we seek to keep this Covenant into which we have prayerfully entered as fellow members of Christ's body.”

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INVESTIGATION AND RESTORATION PROCEDURES FOR LEADERS ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT

SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP COVERED BY THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies to all believers who have accepted ministerial responsibility in the church including but not limited to Church Officers, Children's and Youth caregivers and leaders, teachers, elders, Sunday School Superintendent, Worship Director, CE Director, Community Group Leaders, AWANA Commander.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Documentation is important.** In general all allegations, complaints, content of phone calls, notifications, minutes of hearings, and correspondence are to be documented in writing and kept on file for future reference.
2. **Leaders accused of misconduct must be considered innocent until the accusation has been substantiated.** The welfare of all involved, including the offender, the offended, the affected families, the congregation must be protected and pastoral care extended to all of the affected parties.
3. **Misconduct in ethical, moral or financial areas is the issue of concerning these guidelines.** Because elders and leaders have a responsibility to ensure the emotional, spiritual, and physical well being of those under their

care, exploitation of individuals while serving in these positions is also considered misconduct. Doctrinal error is of a different nature and procedures for addressing such charges are not being addressed. A biblical first century list of areas of misconduct can be found in I Corinthians 5, 6. Consideration of the character traits in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 is applicable in these cases as well.

4. **In light of the unique nature of sexual misconduct we state that such misconduct between a leader and anyone other than the leader's spouse is sin.** Such sexual misconduct is defined as sexual activity or contact between the leader and the other individual. Inappropriate sexual activity includes any form of intercourse, contact to the breasts, genitals, or other intimate parts, requesting such activity, engaging in sexual innuendo, or sexually suggestive speech. It does not matter who initiated the activity or if the other party consents or willingly participates.
5. **Full restoration of with God and the Body is the goal.** Full restoration to the ministry leadership must be a separate consideration.

GUIDING SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES

The guiding Scriptures are as follows:

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. **18** For the Scripture says, “**YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,**” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” **19** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. **20** Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning. **21** I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

Galatians 6: **1** Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. **4** But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

Matthew 18:15 “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **16** “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** **17** “And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. **18** “Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. **19** “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. **20** “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”

PROPOSED PROCESS

Step 1 – Receive an accusation against a leader or confession from a leader.

1. If there is a charge made against a leader to an Elder, that charge must be brought by two or three witnesses (Matthew 18; I Timothy 5:19). This requirement can be met by following the provision of Matthew 18 whereby those individuals who meet with the accused to discuss the accusations can now be considered witnesses.
2. The complaint shall then be put in written form and specific in nature.
3. The Elders shall meet with the persons making the complaint to hear the allegations directly. The following passages list those sins for which a leader is held accountable:

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, **22** greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

Galatians 5:19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving,

slandrous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

In the event that a leader comes to the Elder Board and confesses persistent sin, proceed to Step 3.

Step 2 – The Elder Board conducts a preliminary investigation. After receiving the written complaint, the Elder Board shall meet with the accused in order to:

1. Present him/her with a copy of the written complaint and notify him/her of his right to respond. If the accused confesses, then proceed to Step 3.
2. Outline the process to be followed in responding to the complaint.
3. Receive his/her response to the complaint.
4. Following the meeting with the accused, the Elder Board shall provide a written summary of his response to his accusers. They shall be given a copy of this response and shall be allowed to respond.
5. After reviewing the written complaint, the accused's response and any counter-response from the accusers, the Elder Board shall determine if the complaint has merit and whether to proceed with the investigation.
6. If the Elder Board believes further investigation is needed, the Elder Board proceeds in a way that will protect the rights of the accused, the accusers, and the congregation. To do so, the following steps must be taken:
 - a. With consideration for the gravity of a damaged reputation and yet recognizing the seriousness of some charges, the Elder Board may decide it is necessary to notify the congregation that an investigation is proceeding.
 - b. The Elder Board may suspend the accused from his/her duties, depending on the nature of the accusations, pending the outcome of this process.
 - c. The Elder Board shall investigate the accusation fully, seeking information and documentation from the accusers, the accused and other sources as necessary. Based on its investigation, if previously notified, the congregation shall be updated.
7. In the case where there are unsubstantiated allegations:
 - a. At the conclusion of the investigation, if the Elder Board finds that the charges are unsubstantiated, every effort shall be made by the Elder Board to exonerate the leader.
 1. A written summary of the investigation and conclusions will be provided to the accused.
 2. In cases where the congregation has been notified of the investigation, if the accused chooses, a public statement to the congregation of exoneration shall be made by the Elder Board.
 3. To the extent possible, the Elder Board shall insure that the needs of the accuser and the congregation are also addressed.
 4. Charges made in bad faith will require disciplinary action against the accusers.
8. Questionable Charges – If the Elder Board is unable to substantiate the charges, but substantial concerns remain, they are not constrained to publicly exonerate the person. They may wish to recommend an appropriate system of accountability.

Step 3 – The charges are substantiated. At the conclusion of the investigation, if the Elder Board finds that the charges are substantiated, the Elder Board shall recommend one of the following steps, depending upon the severity of the offense.

1. **Level 1** – If persistent action was unintentional and the effect minimal and/or arose because of poor judgment on the part of the accused:
 - a. It is expected that confession, repentance, seeking forgiveness and restitution will be made as appropriate to the appropriate individuals.
 - b. When appropriate, the Elder Board shall require the individual to receive specific training or counseling.

- c. In light of the action recommended the Elder Board would meet individually with the accusers, the accused, to explain the action taken. In addition, this action will be communicated in writing to each party.
2. **Level 2** – The persistent action that was clearly inappropriate and intentional on the part of the accused, but the offense and consequences were relatively minor.
 - a. It is expected that confession, repentance, seeking forgiveness and restitution will be made.
 - b. The Elder Board will determine an appropriate restoration/recovery process.
 - c. The Elder Board may recommend dismissal from ministry leadership for a specified period of time until the person has satisfactorily completed the restoration and recovery process.
 3. **Level 3** – The persistent action was clearly inappropriate and intentional on the part of the accused, and the offense was clearly unethical behavior which was persistent and/or resulted in (or could have resulted in) serious harm to others.
 - a. It is expected that public confession, repentance, seeking forgiveness and restitution will be made.
 - b. The Elder Board will require removal of the accused from his duties.
 - c. A process of recovery will be created and offered.

Step 4 – Where the person is repentant, restoration is always the goal (Galatians 6:1-2). However, repentance will not always be the end result. In those cases where the accusations are well founded and the accused is not repentant, disciplinary action must be taken in accordance with Scripture by the Board of Elders. The Elder Board must inform the church within a reasonable time frame of the discipline which has been taken (I Cor. 5:5, 7, 13). The congregation shall be requested to continue to pray for the repentance and restoration of the offender and to refrain from any intimate fellowship with him/her until he/she has been restored (I Cor. 5:11; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Rom. 16:17-18).