

**Constitution & By-Laws of the
International Community Church (EFCA)
Columbia, Missouri**

I. The Constitution

A. Preamble

We, the members of the International Community Church, in order to effectively carry out the Great Commission given by Jesus to His church establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

B. The Name of Our Church

Our church will be known as the International Community Church.

"International" represents our scope of membership.

"Community" represents our relational nature.

"Church" represents our allegiance to the head of the church, Jesus Christ.

C. Authority and Affiliation

The congregation, at its business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this church.

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and its Central District Conference and shall send delegates to their conferences, support their missions program and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the church itself may officially determine.

D. Purpose

Our purpose is to be a witnessing community that celebrates and enjoys God, is characterized by faith building relationships and develops Christ-like maturity that results in empowering people for meaningful ministry to others.

E. Statement of Faith

We believe:

1. The scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of people and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict people, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.

5. That people were created in the image of God but fell into sin and are, therefore, lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and thus, become children of God.

7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.

8. That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the Body of Christ of which He is the Head.

9. That only those who are, thus, members of the church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.

10. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.

11. In the personal premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

12. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

F. Membership

Membership of this church shall be composed of those willing to sign the following Membership Covenant and are in harmony with the church doctrinal statement.

Associate Membership - Individuals that are members of other local churches, yet regularly attend and consistently serve at ICC, may become 'associate members' and still retain their membership at their home church. Associate member candidates that otherwise meet the eligibility requirements stated above, are accepted by the elders of ICC and are granted a blessing of the elders of their home church, are granted all rights and benefits of ICC membership. They may serve in any leadership position, excluding the office of elder. Status of associate members shall be reviewed by the elders every two years. Associate memberships will be available through December 31, 2010. "

Membership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as my Forgiver and Leader of my life and having been baptized, and being in agreement with the International Community Church's purpose and doctrinal statement, I now unite with this church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church

- By acting in love toward other members
- By refusing to gossip
- By following the leaders, and to submitting to church discipline and care.

2. I will share the responsibility of my church

- By praying for its growth
- By inviting the un-churched to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

3. I will serve the ministry of my church

- By discovering my spiritual gifts and talents
- By being equipped to serve by my church leaders
- By serving in a ministry or mission of my church

4. I will support the testimony of my church

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By giving regularly

G. Property

Property Ownership: The church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Missouri and is deemed necessary for the ministry of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.

Property in the Event of a Church Division: in case of a division of the church, the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by the Constitution and the By-Laws.

Property in Case of Dissolution of the Church Organization: In case of the dissolution of the church organization, the property shall be assigned to the Central District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America, to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization/ or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

H. Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a regular business meeting of the church at least three months prior to the annual meeting. They must be acted upon as previously adopted and without further amendment. At the succeeding annual meeting, they can be acted upon for final adoption, but must receive the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership present and voting.

II. The By-Laws

A. Article I - Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility

Membership in this church is open to any person who professes faith in Jesus Christ, and whose character, conduct and reputation are in accord with their confession of faith. Members are expected to affirm the Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith, to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of this church and to sign the Membership Covenant. Voting is limited to members 18 years of age and older.

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Section 2 – Application

Application for membership shall be made to any member of the Elder Team or staff. Applicants shall be given a copy of the Constitution, the By-Laws and the Membership Covenant and be invited to attend the membership class. Applicants shall meet with 2 members of the Elder Team to give a personal testimony of their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and give evidence of their understanding of and harmony with the Statement of Faith and the Membership Covenant.

The interviewing Elders will affirm their membership status with the church. Membership records shall be maintained by the administrator and the membership list shall be reported to the Congregation at the Annual meeting.

Section 3. – Removal

A. By Absence - Any members who are absent for twelve months or longer, consecutively, shall be listed as "inactive" by the Elder Team, resulting in a non-voting status. Any person absent for more than one year, continuously, from whom no communication has been received, may be dropped from the membership by a majority vote of the Elder Team.

B. By Request for Withdrawal - Any member who wishes to withdraw from the church shall provide such a request in writing to a member of the Elder Team and shall receive a letter of dismissal, stating the reasons for the withdrawal.

C. By Discipline - If any member shall conduct themselves in such a manner which, in the studied and prayerful opinion of the Elder Team, is not in harmony with Scriptural principles and for which he does not show evidence of repentance, they shall be interviewed and counseled by the Elder Team after the manner dearly indicated in the Word of God (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1) If it appears to the Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the discipline process has been properly concluded.

The restoration of the erring member and the protection of the spiritual life of the church shall be the purpose and love the motivating force, in these interviews. If, however, the member chooses to continue in this unrepentant condition, they shall be deprived of membership. This shall be done only after prayerful consideration and upon a unanimous vote of the Elder Team. No Elder, however, is entitled to a vote regarding his own discipline.

D. All membership changes shall be recorded by the church administrator.

E. Any member who has withdrawn or has been excluded from the church loses all rights of membership in the church.

B. Article II – Officers

Section 1 – Qualifications

All officers shall be persons of unrepachable Christian character, whose moral and spiritual standards are well recognized as fitting the qualifications listed in L Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Elders must be men and at least 25 years of age. All other officers must be persons at least 21 years of age.

Section2 - List of Officers

The officers of the International Community Church shall consist of the Elder Team and the Deacon Team, the Office of Business Administration Team, a financial Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 3 - Duties of Officers

A. Teaching Elder - The chief and most important duty of the Teaching Elder (s) shall be to study, preach and teach the Word of God. They will have the responsibility of guiding the spiritual life of the church as the first among equals with the Elder Team. They will have the right to attend all ministry team meetings. They shall not be eligible for any other elected office.

B. Elder Team - The management and government of the church between congregational meetings shall be vested in the Elder Team, as representatives of the Congregation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It shall be the duty of the Elders to exercise oversight over the church, shepherding the flock without lording it over them (I Peter 5:2) to be responsible for the teaching and preaching, to guard the purity of doctrine, and to establish policy consistent with the Constitution and the By-Laws. The Elders shall act for the church in the reception, discipline and dismissal of members.

They shall establish and unleash ministry teams, standing or ad hoc, to help accomplish the work of ministry. All staff and church related ministries are subject to the Elder Team.

The Elder Team shall inform the Congregation of major decisions affecting the Body within thirty days.

C. Deacon Team - The Deacons shall have the responsibility for administering the benevolence functions of the church. They will minister in counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, and visiting the sick. They shall give leadership to the ministries of Worship and Sunday School, Bible Studies and Discipleship, Fellowship and Body Life, and Outreach and Evangelism. They shall maintain all church property and equipment. The Deacons shall meet as often as necessary in order to fulfill their ministry. All major actions of the Deacon Team are subject to review of the Elder Team

D. The Office of Business Administration Team: The Office of Business Administration Team shall be responsible for the oversight of the business of the church. Their duties shall include the raising, collecting, depositing and distribution of all financial contributions; the development of policies pertaining to personnel salaries and benefits; the setting of goals for future growth and expansion; the development of materials and means for promoting the church's image and ministry to outside organizations, churches, and visitors; and the maintaining of records of members and attendees. The Office of Business Administration Team shall meet as often as necessary in order to fulfill their ministry. All major actions of the Office of Business Administration Team are subject to review of the Elder Team.

E. Financial Secretary - The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Office of Business Administration Team. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to keep accurate, auditable records of all income for the church. This person will make sure that at least one members of the Office of Business Administration Team is present when offerings are counted and shall deposit all funds as quickly as practical. This person will provide regular reports of Church income to the Deacon Team, the Elder Team, the Office of Business Administration Team and the Congregation. The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall keep the giving of individuals completely confidential.

F. Church Treasurer -The Church Treasurer shall be a member of the Office of Business Administration Team. It shall be the duty of the Church Treasurer to keep accurate and auditable records of all disbursements of funds for the Church. This person shall provide regular reports on the state of Church finances to the Office of Business Administration Team, Deacon Team, the Elder Team and the Congregation.

Section 4 - Election of Officers

A. General

1. A quorum of Church members must be present for the election of officers.
2. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least 5 members of the Elder Team and the Deacon Team, for a total of at least five members. The Nominating Committee shall have the duty to provide a job description for each office and to recruit spiritually mature individuals, after extensive prayer, from the membership to be candidates for office. Their recruiting should begin no later than September 1 and should be completed by October 1. Suggestions of nominations may be made in writing to the Nominating Committee for their consideration by any member of the church by September 15.
3. Nominations for Elder or Deacon shall be submitted by the Nominating Committee to the Elder Team for their approval at least 21 days before the Annual Congregational meeting. The Elders are responsible to verify that each candidate meets the Scriptural qualifications for church office. The approved slate must be submitted in writing at least two weeks before the Annual Congregational Meeting.

4. In general, the number of candidates for any church office shall be no more than the number of vacancies. If no candidate receives the necessary 2/3 vote by the Congregation, the Nominating Committee must present a new candidate within 60 days.

5. The election of officers shall be by secret ballot.

B. Paid Staff

1. Teaching Elder - A candidate for part-time or full-time paid teaching elder shall be submitted to the Elder Team by a special Teaching Elder Search Committee, which committee shall be appointed by the Elder Team and confirmed by the Congregation. A candidate selected by the Teaching Elder search committee must be presented to the Elder Team for approval and must in turn be recommended to the Congregation by the Elder Team. He shall be elected in a congregational meeting by at least a two-thirds vote of the eligible membership present and voting.

2. Ministry Staff - These are assistant ministry staff, seminary interns or program directors, part time or full-time, who administratively report to the Teaching Elder. Their employment shall be recommended by the Elder Team to the Congregation. The individual shall be affirmed in a congregational meeting by at least two-thirds vote of the eligible membership present and voting.

3. Service Ministry Staff - These are support service personnel (secretarial, clerical, bookkeeping, food service, maintenance, custodial, etc.) The positions shall be approved by the Deacon Team.

C. Elder Team

The number of Elders shall be according to the number who have been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20: 28) and recognized by the Church. Elders shall be elected by the Church at the Annual Congregational Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the eligible membership present and voting. Terms shall be for 2 years, arranged so that approximately one-third of the members shall complete their terms each year. An elder may not serve more than three consecutive terms; he may however, be elected to some other office.

The Teaching Elder shall be deemed a member of the Elder Team. His term may exceed the term limitation previously stated for elders by unanimous consensus of the Elder Team.

The Elders shall meet within two-weeks after the Annual Congregational Meeting to select their own officers including a team leader and secretary.

D. Deacon Team

The number of Deacons shall be according to the number who have been appointed by the Holy Spirit and recognized by the church. Deacons shall be elected by the Church at the Annual Congregational Meeting by a majority vote of the eligible membership present and voting, for a term of two years. Terms shall be for two years arranged so that approximately one-third of the members shall complete their terms each year. A Deacon may not serve more than 3 consecutive terms; they, may however, be elected to some other office.

The Deacons shall meet within thirty days after the Annual Congregational Meeting to select their own officers including a team leader and a secretary.

Section 5 - Termination of Tenure of Officers

A. An office shall be declared vacant when any of the following conditions occur:

1. Death

2. Resignation

3. Removal by church discipline (Removal from church membership includes removal from any office held by such member)

B. Whenever a vacancy occurs in any office the Elder Team may appoint someone to fill that vacancy until the next Annual Congregational Meeting, at which time the one chosen to fill the vacancy must be presented to the Congregation for affirmation. Vacancies on the staff must be filled in the manner prescribed in Section 4. B.

C. All staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time, and two months notice must be given by either the staff member or by the Church for the termination of ministry.

D. Dismissal of staff. Consistent with the duties of the Elder Team (Article II, Section 3.C), the elders may initiate dismissal consideration of staff. In the case of dismissal for moral reasons, the elder's duty shall be to follow the procedures described in Article 1, Section 3, C. If dismissal is sought for any other reason, the elders shall require a unanimous consensus of the Elder Team.

Section 6 - Limitation of Power

A. No officer or ministry team leader of this church shall assume any of the following prerogatives without express congregational consent:

1. To amend the Constitution or By-Laws
2. To call a staff member
3. To purchase, sell or mortgage real property in behalf of the church.

B. In addition, no officers shall authorize the non-routine expenditure of \$1,000 or three-tenth's percent (.3%) whichever is greater of the annual expense budget without Elder Team approval, nor shall any ministry team authorize the expenditure of more than five percent (5%) or \$2000. of the annual expense budget without congregational consent.

C. Article III - Meetings

Section 1- Congregational Meetings

A. The Annual Congregational Meeting of the Church shall be held during the month of October. At this meeting annual reports shall be received, officers elected, and other necessary business transacted. The fiscal year shall end December 31.

B. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Elder Team or by a written petition of a quorum of the active membership. Notice of such special meetings shall be given either by announcement at the regular Sunday celebration service at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting, or by written notice mailed in time to reach all resident members at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting.

C. At least once a year the Team Leader of the Elders shall call a meeting of all elected officers of the Church for a time of evaluation and discussion of the goals, accomplishments and any problems the church may be facing.

Section 2 - Rules of Order

Biblical standards (of love, grace and truth) as determined by the Elder Team shall govern this organization when it is not inconsistent with its Constitution and By-Laws. "Ex-officio" in this document shall be defined as "non-voting".

Section 3-Quorum

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at congregational meetings. However, the quorum shall be forty percent (40%) for any meeting at which officers are elected or the Constitution or By-Laws are amended. All matters shall be determined by majority vote (one more than one-half of all the votes cast), except as otherwise specified in these By-Laws. A quorum of all ministry teams shall be a majority of their members.

D. Article IV - Miscellaneous

Section 1- Organizations Within the Church

A. No organization shall be formed within or considered to be part of the Church activities before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the Elder Team for their approval and sanction. All such written proposals must be considered by the Elder Team by the next regularly scheduled Elder Team meeting.

B. The various organizations are requested to confer with a designated Elder from time to time regarding their plans and activities, and to submit plans, vision and goals in writing to the Elder team regularly. All matters of importance which affect the Church shall be submitted to the Elder Team for their consideration in advance.

C. No organization shall be permitted to function under the name of the church whose Team Leader is not a member of the Church.

Section 2 - Fund Raising

Methods of raising funds by any organizations operating as part of the Church shall be subject to the approval of the Elder Team in advance.

E. Article IV, Affiliation

The International Community Church hereby declares its affiliation with the Central District Conference or such other District to which the International Community Church may eventually be assigned by the Evangelical Free Church of America.

F. Article V - Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any regular or special congregational meeting of the church, providing written notification of the proposed alteration or amendment has been made to the membership at least ten days prior to such meeting.