

CONSTITUTION OF CALVARY BIBLE CHURCH

Adopted May 20, 2001

Amended, September 13, 2009

PREAMBLE

This document is designed to give only a foundation for the decent, orderly functioning of this church. It could not be nor is it intended to be comprehensive. The life, ministry, and practices of this church shall be governed first and foremost by the Scriptures, then by the assembly, then by this document, then by the policies and procedures approved by the Board of Elders, then by principles of spirit-guided love and wisdom.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be: "Calvary Bible Church, An Evangelical Free Church, Incorporated."

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The Purpose of this church shall be to promote Worship, Instruction, Fellowship, and Evangelism: the Worship of God, the Instruction and Fellowship of Believers, and the Evangelism of the lost at home and abroad.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section A. As An Evangelical Free Church, we believe:

GOD

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

THE BIBLE

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

THE HUMAN CONDITION

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

JESUS CHRIST

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

THE WORK OF CHRIST

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

THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

THE CHURCH

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

CHRISTIAN LIVING

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

CHRIST'S RETURN

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

RESPONSE AND ETERNAL DESTINY

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

Section B. As a local church, while whole-heartedly affirming our commitment to both the letter and the spirit of the Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith, Calvary Bible Church maintains certain doctrinal distinctives. We believe:

1. That the Bible should be interpreted in a plain, normal and ordinary way.
2. That all true believers are eternally secure.
3. That water baptism is for believers only and its proper mode is immersion.
4. That all believers receive the Holy Spirit's baptism at the time of their salvation.
5. That certain spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healing, and tongues were temporary.

ARTICLE 1V: OUR COMMITMENT TO PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

We will sincerely try to abide by the clear, applicable standards of the Word of God as they relate to our attitudes and behavior. When the Word of God does not give clearly specific instructions, we agree to govern our own lives by the balanced principle of responsible freedom: freedom because it is for freedom that Christ has set us free; responsible because we are not to use our freedom to indulge the sinful nature.

We may partake of life freely, for God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. We must partake responsibly because we are not our own, and are to glorify God in our bodies.

Our lives before others should be attractive and blameless –

- To those outside the body: An example of the believer.
- To those inside the body: An example to the believer.

ARTICLE V: AFFILIATION

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America through its Great Lakes District Conference and shall unite in cooperative efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the church itself may officially decide.

ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP

A. **OVERSIGHT OF MEMBERSHIP** The Elders shall receive, classify, discipline, and dismiss members, and shall publish membership changes. They shall review and as necessary update the list at least annually and shall include an official membership list in the records of the September Business Meeting. They shall inform the congregation at each Business Meeting of any changes in membership that may have occurred since the previous Business Meeting.

B. **ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP** Any person 18 years or older who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has received or will receive believers' baptism (if physically able), whose character, conduct, and reputation is in accord with their confession, who subscribes with a satisfactory attitude to the Statement of Faith, who agrees to abide by the Constitution of this church, and who is willing to support this church in attendance, prayers, service, testimony, and material means, is eligible for membership in this church.

C. **PROCEDURE FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO MEMBERSHIP** The Elders shall issue and receive membership applications, acquaint candidates with the church, and interview the candidate concerning personal faith and agreement with the church's doctrines, policies, and procedures. If they desire to receive the

candidate, they shall publish the name for congregational consideration. If no just cause arises to prevent it, they shall receive the candidate into membership and shall notify the congregation of the reception.

Those who were converted and baptized as children shall, in order to be eligible to vote and hold office, be required, upon turning 18 years of age, to go through the interview process to affirm their faith and desire for membership.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS Each member and their household is urged to seek and serve the Lord, to participate harmoniously in the worship, learning, fellowship, ministry, and outreach of the church, to participate in the financial support of the church, and to represent the Lord and the church well in the world.

E. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

1. All members and their dependents are considered under the shepherding care of the Pastors, the Elders, and the church family, and are encouraged to participate in worship, learning, fellowship, service, outreach, and giving.

2. In addition to the general privileges of membership, active and associate members may vote, hold office (beginning at age 25), be eligible for ongoing teaching ministry and ongoing committee ministry, and be eligible for access to the facilities for weddings, funerals, and other church-related affairs.

F. CLASSIFICATION

1. ACTIVE - all members unless otherwise classified.

2. ASSOCIATE - a temporary resident of the area who wishes to maintain primary membership in a home church (e.g., someone in the area for college or military service).

3. NON-RESIDENT - a previously active resident who has moved elsewhere (for mission service, military service, retirement, temporary work relocation, etc.) but who wishes to maintain primary membership here.

4. INACTIVE - one who has not attended the main service of the church at least six times in the last six months, or one who is under discipline.

G. DISCIPLINE If a member strays from their commitment to the Lord and this church, they do harm to themselves, the testimony and life of the church, and their testimony to the world as a professing Christian. Reasons for discipline may include personal offenses, heresy in doctrine, a divisive spirit, and carnality in conduct. It is the responsibility of the church, under the initiative and guidance of the Pastor and Elders, to seek to bring the stray member to repentance and renewal and restoration.

The stages of the discipline process may include: contact to confirm the facts; confrontation concerning the member's errors; at least six months as an inactive member under discipline during a time of continued prayer and effort toward restoration; finally, removal from membership by a majority vote of a congregational business meeting. If at any stage the Elders sense genuine repentance, they may end the discipline process and restore the straying member to active membership.

The attitude in discipline shall be grief over sin, loving concern for the stray member, prayerful dependence on the Spirit, humility over our own failures and weaknesses, and an ongoing hope for repentance and restoration. Guidelines for discipline found in Scriptures such as Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1-5, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-16, Titus 3:10, shall be followed.

H. REMOVAL A person may be removed from membership:

1. by request from the member or from a church on their behalf.

2. by removal by the Elders when an Associate member moves from the area.

3. by erasure by the Elders due to neglect of duties for at least one year.

4. by expulsion by a majority vote of a congregational business meeting due to church discipline.

5. by death.

ARTICLE VII: GOVERNMENT

A. AUTHORITY.

1. This church is and ever shall remain an autonomous, self-governing, and self-supporting church.

2. The ultimate authority of the church shall rest with the congregation. The congregation shall exercise their authority through calling full time pastors, electing Elders and Deacons, and authorizing major matters of business (such as real estate purchases and building programs), at duly called congregational business meetings. All decisions of the Pastors, Elders, and Deacons are subject to review and revision by the congregation at a duly called business meeting.

3. The Officers of the Corporation shall be the Senior Pastor, the Moderator, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Chairman of the Properties Committee. The signatures of at least three of the Officers of the

Corporation shall be required to execute all legal documents, mortgages, and contracts pertaining to real property or obligations of the church. The Officers of the Corporation shall not execute any legal documents, mortgages, or contracts pertaining to the real property or obligations of the church without the authorization of the congregation.

B. LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

1. SENIOR PASTOR

a. The senior pastor shall endeavor by God's grace to live a godly life, maintain a godly home, lead the church in pursuing its purposes, preach and teach the Word of God, preside at the public services, exercise general oversight, and perform duties inherent in his office. He shall be ex officio member of all boards, committees, and organizations.

b. In the case of a pastoral vacancy, the congregation shall elect a committee, including at least three Elders and at least three members at large, to search for and recommend candidates. The candidate shall be given a job description before being issued a call. A three-fourths majority of votes is necessary to issue a call. If accepted, the call shall stand until ended by the pastor's resignation or dismissal by the congregation.

c. The congregation can dismiss a senior pastor at a duly called special business meeting by a secret ballot no confidence vote of one-third or more. The relationship will then end within thirty days (or sooner if the Elders deem it best). In either case, a minimum of one month salary and benefits shall given.

2. ASSISTANTS TO THE SENIOR PASTOR

a. Full time ministry staff assistants may be called by the Congregation upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Elders. A three-fourths majority of votes is necessary to issue a call. If accepted, the call shall stand until ended by their resignation, or by dismissal by the congregation. They shall be given a job description and terms of employment before being called, shall work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and Elders, and shall be called for an indefinite period of time. The Congregation upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Elders shall have the power of dismissal.

The congregation can dismiss an assistant to the pastor at a duly called special business meeting by a secret ballot no confidence vote of one-third or more. The relationship will then end within thirty days (or sooner if the Elders deem it best). In either case, a minimum of one month salary and benefits shall given.

b. Part time ministry staff, all temporary staff, and all support personnel, including clerical and custodial personnel, shall be hired and supervised by the Senior Pastor and ministry staff, in consultation with the Elders, and with the assistance of the Deacon Committees.

3. ELDERS

a. The Elders shall serve the congregation by giving general oversight to the life and ministry of the church, including the areas of sound doctrine, spiritual needs, services and programs, staff needs, administrative matters, budget planning, policies and procedures, staffing needs, discipline, and the welfare of the pastors and their families. They shall have the authority to review and revise all plans, policies, and procedures, of the church's committees and ministries.

b. There shall be a minimum of seven and a maximum of twelve Elders, elected by the congregation at the March Business Meeting to a three year term of June through May with a minimum one year off between terms. The Elders shall organize the Elder Board as they deem best to carry on its ministry. A quorum for Elders' meetings shall be two-thirds of its members.

c. Elders shall be male, members in good standing for at least one year, at least 30 years old, and qualified according to 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5.

d. The congregation can dismiss an Elder at a duly called special business meeting by a secret ballot no confidence vote of one-third or more. The office will end immediately.

4. DEACON COMMITTEES

a. Deacons shall facilitate the ministries of the church by caring for physical, material, accounting, and legal matters. Deacon committees shall include (but not be limited to) Finances, Properties, and Benevolence Committees. Each Committee is empowered and encouraged to organize itself and establish related committees and work groups to carry on its ministries. Each committee is encouraged to recruit from the congregation committee members to assist in the ministry. They shall report as requested to the Pastors and Elders.

b. There shall be a minimum of nine Deacons, elected by the congregation at the March Business Meeting to a three-year term of June through May with a minimum one year off between terms.

c. Deacons shall be male, members in good standing for at least one year, at least 25 years old, and qualified according to 1 Timothy 3. Their wives are to be qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:11.

d. The congregation can dismiss a Deacon at a duly called special business meeting by a secret ballot no confidence vote of one-third or more. The office will end immediately.

Deacon committees shall include:

a. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of at least three Deacons elected for a three-year term of June through May with a minimum one year off between terms. The Committee shall include the Finance Secretary (who shall be Chairman), the Treasurer, and the Benevolence Coordinator, all elected by the congregation at the March Business Meeting. The Chairman may, if desired, recruit other Elder-approved at-large members to serve on the committee.

The Finance Committee is the accounting committee of the church. It shall, in consultation with the Elders, establish financial policies and procedures. It shall receive, record, count, deposit, disburse, and report on church funds. It shall assist the Elders in preparing an annual budget. It shall assist in fund drives. It shall work closely with and be assisted by the church's pastoral and administrative staff in matters of record keeping and communication needs.

The Finance Secretary shall be responsible, with the assistance of the Finance Committee, for the receiving, counting, recording, and prompt deposit of all funds, for communicating with the Treasurer, and for giving annual, private receipting to donors.

The Treasurer shall be responsible, with the assistance of the Finance Committee, to maintain an up to date account of funds on hand, disburse funds as requested by ministry leaders and authorized by the budget (or, in the case of approved designated gifts, the donor), and submit reports to the Elders, Staff, ministry leaders, and congregation as requested.

The Benevolence Coordinator shall lead the response to material and monetary needs – especially those of our church family. They shall establish policies and procedures for determining eligibility for material assistance. They shall help people through financial and material crises as well as establish ministries and opportunities for training and assisting people in financial management.

b. Properties Committee

The Properties Committee shall consist of at least three Deacons elected for a three-year term by the congregation at the March Business Meeting. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman. The Chairman may, if desired, recruit other Elder-approved at-large members to serve on the committee.

The Properties Committee shall oversee the church's buildings, grounds, furniture, equipment, and décor, for efficient, comfortable, attractive facilitating of the church's ministries. The committee shall work closely with and be assisted by the church's pastoral and administrative staff.

c. Other Committees. The Elders may establish additional Deacon Committees as are necessary to facilitate the ministries of the church.

C. ELECTIONS.

A Nominating Committee shall be formed each year composed of the Senior Pastor, three Elders (appointed by the Elders), the chairman from each of the main Deacon committees (appointed by each committee), and at least four at-large members (chosen at the September congregational business meeting).

The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for Elders and Deacons for the March Business meeting. They shall review and screen candidates for Biblical qualification, suitable giftedness, and present willingness and desire to serve.

The Nominating Committee shall present in writing a slate of nominees to the congregation for review, comment, and additional nominees at least eight weeks prior to the March Business Meeting. Any reservation or objection that members have should be promptly reported to the Nominating committee for consideration and possible revision of the ballot. A final ballot shall be posted no less than four weeks prior to the March Business Meeting. The Congregation shall vote on the final slate of nominees at the March Business Meeting. Candidates must receive a majority of the votes cast. No nominations shall be allowed from the floor.

D. BUSINESS MEETINGS.

1. There shall be at least two business meetings each year. The general times of the meetings, and the minimum business to be conducted, shall be:

- within fourteen days after the last Sunday in August (unless otherwise specified, the second Sunday in September at 6:00 PM): to receive the annual finance report, to present a budget for the fiscal year September through August, to receive necessary written reports, to elect a nominating committee, etceteras.

- within fourteen days after the last Sunday in February (unless otherwise specified, the second Sunday evening in March at 6:00 PM): to elect Elders and Deacons, to receive a 6-month finance report, to receive annual written reports from committees, etceteras.

2. Other meetings shall be called by the Senior Pastor, by the Elders, or by petition to the Senior Pastor

and/or Elders of 10% of the Active members.

3. The specific dates and times for meetings shall be determined by the Elders. Notice of all meetings must be given at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting. In case of emergency special meetings, a written announcement mailed to all voting members 72 hours prior to the meeting specifying its time and purpose shall be sufficient.

4. A quorum required to conduct business shall be 20% of voting members.

5. All meetings of this church or any board or committee thereof shall be conducted first according to Scriptures and then according to this Constitution and then according to Robert's Rules of Order.

6. The Elders shall elect from their number each year a Moderator and Vice-Moderator for church business meetings, for one year renewable terms. The Moderator shall see that announcements, notices, preparations, appointments, and etceteras, are made for the meeting, and shall chair the meeting. The vice-moderator shall serve in the Moderator's absence.

7. The Elders shall appoint on an annual basis from the church membership a Clerk for recording and reporting minutes of the Business Meetings, and for maintaining such records, documents, histories, etceteras, as directed by the Elders.

ARTICLE VIII: FINANCES

1. SPENDING PLANS

The Elders shall adopt an annual budget for the fiscal year September 1 through August 31. The process will be as follows:

- a. Ministry leaders shall make budget requests for the coming fiscal year based on their ministry plans.
- b. The Finance Committee will provide to the Elders all necessary records of present and previous year's finances.
- c. The Congregation shall be given opportunity for informed input to potential budget plans before the Elders adopt the budget.
- d. The budget shall serve as an income goal and a spending guide for the present year.

2. INCOME

The church shall be supported primarily through direct giving of the tithes and offerings of its people. All material gifts must have prior approval by the Elders or the related ministry leaders. All designated gifts, fund drives, and fund raising projects must be approved by the Elders before activation, reception and/or disbursement.

3. EXPENDITURES

Each ministry shall monitor its expenses and shall be authorized to make purchases and requests in keeping with its purposes and the approved budget for its category of ministry. The Finance Committee shall keep each ministry apprised of the balance on hand in its budget category. The Finance Committee shall disburse funds based on the approved budget and funds on hand.

During the year, the Elders shall monitor financial trends through the reports of the Finance Committee. If ministry needs or opportunities arise, the Elders may make minor adjustments within the overall budget. And if funds are available, the Elders may approve and direct spending up to 10% beyond the total budget. Requests for spending beyond the adopted budget shall be submitted by the appropriate ministry leader to the Elders for approval.

4. AUDIT

An outside audit shall be regularly conducted. The results will be reported in the following business meeting. Details will be available to any interested member upon request to the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE IX: REAL ESTATE

A. This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as authorized by the State of Illinois and is deemed necessary for the business of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of all such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.

B. The sale, purchase, or transfer of the church's real estate or other physical properties of the church shall be authorized by the congregation and executed by the Officers of the Corporation.

C. In case of division of the Church (from which we pray God by His mercy may preserve us), the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and Bylaws.

D. In case of dissolution of the Church, the property shall be assigned to the Great Lakes 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 enterprise. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for at least three years, or when less than six members remain.

ARTICLE X: CREDENTIALING FOR MINISTRY

Any member who feels called to become a minister may request appropriate credentialing. If the Board of Elders affirms the person's sense of call, they shall cooperate with the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church in the process of examination and credentialing.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution in all its parts may be amended by a three-fourths vote cast at any regular or special meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the congregation for at least two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting, and provided an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in the church Foyer on the four Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

A SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL CALENDAR

FISCAL AND MINISTRY YEAR: September 1 through August 31

CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS:

Second Sunday night in September to receive year-end reports, receive next year's budget, elect a Nominating Committee, etceteras

Second Sunday night in March to receive six-month reports, elect Elders and Deacons, etceteras

Other meetings as necessary

TERMS OF SERVICE FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS: June 1 through May 31