

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Revised 5/12/11

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Article 1 - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be the "Fellowship Community Evangelical Free Church".
(established January 1985)

Article 2 - STATEMENTS OF FAITH

The Fellowship Community Evangelical Free Church is an autonomous church united around these theological convictions:

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 requires, 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.

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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 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.

Article 3 - PURPOSE

The purpose of the church shall be to worship, glorify, and serve God; edify and teach the saints; enjoy and encourage Christian fellowship, and to reach those outside of Christ with His saving grace, both in our community and around the world.

Article 4 - AFFILIATION

This congregation is affiliated with the "New England District Association, Incorporated of the Evangelical Free Church of America, Incorporated", for the purpose of pursuing mutual objectives with said Evangelical Free Church of America.

This affiliation in no way affects the complete autonomy of this church.

Article 5 - MEMBERSHIP

This congregation shall receive into membership only those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, have testified of their salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, affirmed the Statements of Faith, declared their intent to support the congregation in its purposes as stated in the constitution and by-laws, and who follow the procedure for membership provided in the by-laws of this congregation.

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Article 6 - PASTORS AND ELDERS

The Elders of this church constitute its guiding council. The Elders shall seek the Holy Spirit's leading concerning the affairs of the church.

The Elders shall be affirmed by a congregation vote.

Article 7 - DEACONS

The deacons of this congregation shall be Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, Service Deacons, Trustees.

The Deacons shall be elected by the congregation.

Article 8 - ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

The Administrative Board shall consist of one Elder, one Pastor, the Moderator, the Treasurer, the Clerk, one Service Deacon, and one Trustee.

Article 9 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The congregation's decision-making process shall be through member voting on business issues and selection of deacons to represent the church.

There will be congregational business meetings scheduled for January, May, October, and November, for conducting church business. Other special congregational meetings may be scheduled.

The November scheduled congregational business meeting shall be for the purposes of elections, and voting on the proposed annual budgets.

Committees are elected at congregational business meetings for specific purposes.

Minimum voting quorums for meetings shall be established to assure adequate member participation in decision making.

Article 10 - PROPERTY

This congregation shall have the power to receive, either by gift or by purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Connecticut, as is deemed necessary for the business of the congregation, 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 congregation. The Church Clerk and a Trustee, designated by the Administrative Board, shall have the power to receive, purchase, sell, lease, convey, mortgage, deed or otherwise transfer property of the congregation, only after having been duly authorized by the members of the congregation, at a duly convened congregational business meeting. Announcement of the proposed transaction shall be given at the regular church services 2 Sundays before the meeting. All contracts, notes, mortgages, conveyances, assignments, leases, releases, and other papers and documents in behalf of the congregation shall be executed by the Church Clerk and designated Trustee.

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In case of the division of the membership within the congregation, the property of the congregation shall belong to those members who continue to abide by the Confession of Faith set forth in Article 2 of this Constitution and who adhere to the other provisions of this Constitution.

In the event that the members vote to dissolve the church corporation, all rights, title and interest in the property of said congregation shall be transferred to the New England District Association of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The designated Trustee and Church Clerk holding office at the time such dissolution is voted, shall be authorized to act with full powers on behalf of said church corporation in making such transfer of property effective; and, if necessary, their terms of office shall be automatically extended if elections have been discontinued by the congregation, until such time as the transfer of the congregation's property is completed.

Article 11 - INDEBTEDNESS

In pursuit of their duties as defined in the By-Laws of the congregation, the Administrative Board shall not have the power to contract debts, beyond that which has been authorized by the congregation.

Article 12 - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution shall be approved at any special or regularly scheduled congregational business meeting, and shall require a quorum of 75% of the membership.

Amendments to Article 2 Statements of Faith, Article 5 Membership, Article 10 Property, and Article 12 Amendments, shall require a 95% majority vote of the members present.

All other Articles shall require a 75% majority vote of the members present.

Proposed amendments shall be presented and discussed, and a draft approved, at a duly convened business meeting of the congregation, at least 3 months prior to the date of the business meeting for final amendment approval.

Amendments shall not be made more frequently than once every 12 months.