

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE

CHURCH OF

, CALIFORNIA, INC.

PREAMBLE

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we identify ourselves with each other as a local church body. Our chief aim is to love and glorify God and to do His will. Recognizing that His will is found principally in His Word, the Scriptures both Old and New Testaments. We believe this constitution is in agreement with His will for us as a local church. We therefore voluntarily submit ourselves to the following Articles:

ARTICLE I -- NAME

The name of this church shall be

CHURCH

, CALIFORNIA, INC.

ARTICLE II -- PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is Worship (Matthew 4:10), Discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20), Evangelism (Matthew 4:19), Fellowship (John 13:34,35) and Compassion (Matthew 5:46, 8:13, 6:36).

Worship is ascribing worth, honor, and praise to God. This involves glorifying God with your words, life, lifestyle and work. Discipleship is causing Christians to grow into complete maturity in the Christian Life. This involves instruction, mentoring, serving and change. Evangelism is leading people to a saving knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ. This involves telling the good news of Christ's sacrifice for sin, assessing the work of the Holy Spirit on an individual and asking people to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. Fellowship is connecting people to each other and the Lord in deep and meaningful sharing. This involves building common bonds in Christ and through learning, sharing and serving. Compassion is sharing the love and blessings of Christ in tangible ways will all people. This involves meeting the needs of believers and non-believers especially those who are afflicted and down trodden, crying out with others for justice, and seeking to prevent

ARTICLE III -- AFFILIATION

We are affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and the Southwest District, while remaining self-governing as a local church under Christ.

ARTICLE IV -- STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 1. We believe, 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 men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.

SECTION 2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

SECTION 3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost 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 now is our High Priest and Advocate.

SECTION 4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

SECTION 5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 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 means of salvation.

SECTION 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.

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

SECTION 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.

SECTION 11. In the personal and pre-millennial 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.

SECTION 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.

ARTICLE V -- MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS. This church shall receive into the membership those 12 years of age or older who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, who are manifesting in their lives the fruits of a true faith in Christ, and who give testimony to that fact.

SECTION 2. ADMISSION. All applicants for membership shall complete a membership class taught by the Pastor or an Elder. Prior to acceptance as a member, each applicant shall meet with a delegation from the Church Board to verify that they meet the qualifications for membership. Upon unanimous approval by the delegation and the Church Board and completion of the membership class, the new members shall be introduced to the congregation. An outline of the membership class shall be made available to prospective members upon request.

SECTION 3. TERMINATION. Matters involving termination of membership shall be determined by the Elders, except as noted in subsection c., below. Unanimous approval by the Elders is needed for termination. Members may be dismissed from the membership by reason of:

a. **TRANSFER OR PERSONAL REQUEST:** A member may be transferred to another church or simply dropped from the church membership by personal request.

b. **INACTIVITY:** Members who have not attended services or supported the church for six months, after efforts to reclaim, are dropped from the membership roll. The exceptions are those in missionary service, in the service of our country, away at school, invalids, and those the Elders vote to retain for special reasons.

c. **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:** In any case of gross misconduct concerning a member, the disciplinary procedures of Matthew 18:15-17, II Thes. 3:14-15, and I Cor. 5:11-13 are to be followed. If the member is unrepentant, then that member shall be removed from the membership by a 2/3 vote of the congregation.

SECTION 4. RE-INSTATEMENT OF FORMER MEMBERS

Former members who left the church and who desire to reinstate their membership may make such request of the Church Board. The Church Board shall meet with the former member, and verify that they meet the qualifications for membership. The Board may waive the requirement of attendance of the membership class.

SECTION 5. VOTING QUALIFICATIONS.

The right to vote shall be vested in members on the active roll of age 18 and over.

ARTICLE VI -- GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1. CONGREGATION. The final authority for this local church shall be vested in its voting membership who operate as one body under their head the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECTION 2. SENIOR PASTOR. The Senior Pastor shall be the Chief Elder of the church, and shall function as the pastor-teacher, and shall perform all of the scriptural and necessary duties of the pastoral office. He shall be a permanent member of the Church Board and the Nominating Committee.

SECTION 3. CHURCH BOARD. The Church Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor and the Elders. The Deacons, Deaconesses, Secretary, and Treasurer serve the board as non voting members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Church Board shall be Elders. The Board shall propose, and according to the will of God and the church body, administer the program and business of the church. The Chairman of the Board shall preside at all church business meetings and all Board meetings. The Church Board shall be the Board of Directors of the corporation, subject to the authority of the church body. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be the President and Vice-President of the corporation, and be elected by Board members during the January Board meeting.

a. **ELDERS:** The Elders shall consist of the Pastor and two or more members from the congregation. The members from the congregation shall be elected by the church and may serve as Elder continuously, year to year, upon the congregational approval. The number of Elders shall be determined by the needs of the congregation as determined by

the Board, and recommended to the Nominating Committee. Candidates for the position of Elder shall have been a church member no less than one year.

b. DEACONS: The Deacons shall consist of two or more members from the congregation. The Deacons shall be elected by the congregation, and may serve as Deacon continuously, year to year, upon the congregational approval. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the congregation as determined by the Board, and recommended to the Nominating Committee. Candidates for the position of Deacon shall have been a church member no less than one year.

c. DEACONNESSES: The Deaconesses shall consist of two or more members from the congregation. The Deaconesses shall be elected by the congregation, and may serve as Deaconess continuously, year to year, upon congregational approval. The number of Deaconesses shall be determined by the needs of the congregation as determined by the Board, and recommended to the Nominating Committee. Candidates for the position of Deaconess shall have been a church member for no less than one year.

d. SECRETARY: The Secretary of the Church shall be appointed by the Church Board and approved by the congregation.

e. TREASURER: The Treasurer of the Church shall be appointed by the Church Board and approved by the congregation.

ARTICLE VII -- SENIOR PASTOR

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS. The Senior Pastor may be called prior to membership in the church, but he must meet the other qualifications of Elders. He shall be one who is convinced of his call to the pastorate and shall be will trained for the task. He shall affirm his agreement with the articles of this Constitution.

SECTION 2. RESPONSIBILITIES. The Senior Pastor is the primary teacher of God's word to the congregation and therefore should be involved in teaching on a number of levels besides the sermon, large group, small group and individual. The Senior Pastor is also an Elder and a prime example to the congregation of spiritual maturity. This means that he should spend regular time in meditation on God's Word and in prayer for himself and his family separate from his teaching duties at the church. He is further a prime shepherd of the body. This mean that he should spend regular time with God concerning the congregation and regular time with the congregation learning their concerns and needs. He is also a chief OVERSEER responsible for the program and purpose of the church. This means that he should understand and evaluate all the ministries of the church and how each is working to accomplish the purpose of the church.

SECTION 3. METHOD OF SELECTION. When the need to select a pastor arises, a Pulpit Committee shall be formed. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of: The Chairman of the Church Board, as Committee Chairman, two Board members, plus four members from the congregation who are selected at a special business meeting. The Pulpit Committee shall investigate the needs of the church and the possible candidates. They shall make their recommendations to the Church Board. The Church Board shall invite the candidate to preach, and, if possible, remain in the community for several days, thereafter, the candidate shall meet with the Church Board. Upon unanimous approval by the Elders. A special business meeting shall be called to consider the candidate with notice of such meeting given at least one week prior to said meeting. Vote required to call: 3/4 of members present. No other candidate shall be invited unless action on the previous one has been completed, with negative results.

SECTION 4. TERMINATION. The relationship between the Senior Pastor and the church shall be continuous until dissolved by either, giving thirty days written notice, or less by mutual consent. The church may initiate such action if two or more members shall, in writing, submit such a request for termination and the reasons therefore to the Elders. After prayerful consideration, and review by the Elders for its biblical grounds, the matter shall be presented to the Church Board. It shall then be presented to the church body at a special business meeting. Notice of such meeting shall be given at least one week prior. Vote required to terminate: 3/4 of members present.

ARTICLE VIII -- PASTORAL AND CHURCH STAFF

a. DEFINITION: The Pastoral and Church Staff are defined as those who receive financial compensation for services rendered to the Church.

b. MANNER OF SELECTION: The Senior Pastor and the Elders in assessing the needs of the congregation may begin the process of adding Pastoral Staff. The Senior Pastor and Elders will develop a prioritized list of candidates, a job description for the position, and the methodology for remuneration. A candidate having been screened by the Elder board will be presented to the congregation for final approval. Church Staff may be added by the Elders as the need dictates and the budget allows.

c. SUPERVISION AND TERMINATION: The supervision and termination of Pastoral and Church Staff shall be under the Senior Pastor's direct control.

ARTICLE IX -- OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. ELDERS

a. QUALIFICATIONS: Elders are spiritually mature men who have been equipped and designated by the Holy Spirit to oversee, and, by their example, lead in the life and ministry of this local church body. Essential qualities of Elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-5.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES: In the above biblical passages the Elders bear three primary responsibilities. They are to be ELDERS: persons of the highest spiritual maturity in the congregation. They are to be OVERSEERS: able to guide and functioning in the ministry of the church. They are to be SHEPHERDS: caring deeply for the people of the congregation.

c. MANNER OF SELECTION: The Church Secretary will supply the Nominating Committee with a list of every eligible member for Eldership. The Nominating Committee after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential Elders to the Elder Board. The Elder board after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential elders to the Congregation. The Congregation after prayer and discussion will vote to elect or not elect the potential candidates for Elder. The Congregation will also approve or disapprove of each current elder each year. A vote of disapproval of an elder must be on stated biblical grounds.

The Elders shall post the slate of potential candidates for the position of Elder two weeks prior to the November business meeting. Vacancies in office occurring between the November meetings shall be filled by the Church Board subject to ratification by the church body.

c. **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE:** Any Elder failing to attend the regular meetings of the Church Board without reasonable cause, or any Elder willfully neglecting his duty, or guilty of conduct which impairs his service as an Elder, may be recommended for removal in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19. A unanimous vote of the Church Board is required.

SECTION 2. DEACONS.

a. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Deacons are spiritually mature men who have been equipped and designated by the Holy Spirit to serve and, by their example lead in the life and ministry of this local church body. Essential qualities of Deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

b. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Biblically the deacons are to assist the Elders by managing the physical, material, and financial needs of the congregation.
Acts 6:1-6

c. **MANNER OF SELECTION:** The Church Secretary will supply the Nominating Committee with a list of every eligible member for the position of Deacon. The Nominating Committee after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential deacon candidates to the Elder Board. The Elder Board after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential deacon candidates to the congregation. The Congregation after prayer and discussion will vote to elect or not elect the potential deacon candidates to the position of deacon. The Congregation will also vote to approve or disapprove of each current deacon during the November Business Meeting. A vote of disapproval of a deacon must be on stated Biblical grounds.

The Elder Board will post a slate of potential candidates for Deacon two weeks prior to the November business meeting. Vacancies in office occurring between the November meetings shall be filled by the Church Board subject to the ratification of the church body.

d. **REMOVAL FROM OFFICE:** Any Deacon failing to attend the regular meetings of the Church Board without reasonable cause, or any Deacon willfully neglecting his duty, or guilty of conduct which impairs his service as a Deacon, may be recommended for removal by unanimous vote of the Church Board.

SECTION 3. DEACONNESSES.

a. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Deaconesses are spiritual mature women who have been equipped and designated by the Holy Spirit to serve and by their example lead in the life and ministry of this local church body. The essential qualities of a Deaconess are found in I Tim 3:11 supplemented with the advice from Titus 2:3-5 for older women.

b. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Biblically and historically the Deaconesses assist the elders by meeting the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of women. 1 Tim 3:11, Titus 2:3-5

c. **MANNER OF SELECTION:** The Church Secretary will supply the Nominating Committee with a list of every eligible member for position of Deaconess. The Nominating Committee after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential Deaconess candidates to the Elders. The Elders after prayer and discussion will present a list of potential Deaconess candidates to the Congregation. The Congregation after prayer and discussion will vote to elect or not elect the potential candidates for Deaconess. The Congregation will also vote to approve or disapprove each current Deaconess. A vote of disapproval must be on stated biblical grounds.

The Elders shall post a slate of potential candidates for position of Deaconess two weeks prior to the November Business Meeting. Vacancies occurring between the November Business Meeting shall be filled by the Elders with ratification by the congregation.

d. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE: Any Deaconess willfully neglecting her duty, or guilty of conduct which impairs her service as a Deaconess may be recommended for removal by a unanimous vote of the Elder Board.

SECTION 4. SECRETARY. The Secretary shall keep a record of all church business meetings and be responsible for all necessary correspondence for the church.

SECTION 5. TREASURER. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the accurate accounting and reporting of funds received and disbursed. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board and the Treasurer's signatures shall be authorized for disbursement of funds. Two signatures shall be required. The Treasurer shall submit a semi-annual Treasurer's report for the congregation.

SECTION 6. NOMINATING COMMITTEE. This committee shall present prospective Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses to the Elders for review and presentation to the Congregation two weeks prior to the November Business Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall select their chairman at their first meeting. The members of the committee shall also include the Senior Pastor, the Vice Chairman of the Church Board, a third Elder, plus three members of the congregation who are selected at the Annual Business Meeting, to serve for the following year.

SECTION 7. OTHER COMMITTEES. All other committees, unpaid staff, and officers shall be under the direction of the Church Board. The Church Board shall approve, or disapprove, of the functioning of all auxiliary organizations.

ARTICLE X -- SERVICES AND MEETINGS

SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 to December 31.

SECTION 2. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS. Regular business Meetings shall be scheduled for January and November. The one in the month of January shall be the Annual Business Meeting. The one in the month of November shall be for the Election of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses and officers as needed. The new Board and officers shall take office on the first of January. Approval of the Budget for the coming year shall occur at the November Business Meeting.

SECTION 3. SPECIAL MEETING. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Church Board, or group of ten or more voting members. Public notice shall be given from the pulpit at least one week in advance, stating in general terms the business to be transacted.

SECTION 4. QUORUM AND VOTE. For all meetings, the vote required is based on the amount of members present at the meeting, not on the number of votes cast.

TYPE OF MEETING	QUORUM REQUIRED TO PASS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE
ANNUAL MEETING	30%	51%
SPECIAL MEETING	30%	51%
CALLING A PASTOR	40%	75%

DISMISSING A PASTOR	40%	75%
SELECTION OF ELDERS OR DEACONS	40%	75%
DISMISSING AN ELDER OR DEACON	40%	75%
CHURCH BOARD MEETING	50%	51%
MEMBER TERMINATION	40%	66% - 75%
OF THE ELDER BOARD		
CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT	40%	75%

SECTION 5. SECRET BALLOT. The use of the secret ballot shall be customary on all matters requiring more than a simple majority.

SECTION 6. SERVICES. The church shall conduct a Worship service on Sunday and other services at the direction of the Church Board to fulfill the church's stated purpose of Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, and Compassion. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis.

ARTICLE XI -- AMENDMENTS

Articles IV and XI of this constitution cannot be repealed or amended. Any other article or section may be amended by a vote of 3/4 of the members present at any business meeting. Notice of such amendments must be made available to the congregation at least two weeks prior to said meeting.