

Constitution  
and  
By-Laws of  
Liberty  
Evangelical Free  
Church

*November 25, 2012*

# **The Constitution of Liberty**

## **Evangelical Free Church of Pella, Iowa**

### **Preamble**

We, the members of Liberty Evangelical Free Church of Pella, Iowa, in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

### **Article 1: Name**

1.100

The name of this organization shall be Liberty Evangelical Free Church of Pella, Iowa.

### **Article 2: Corporate Existence and Powers**

2.100

The corporate existence of the church shall begin on the date the certificate of incorporation is issued by the Secretary of the State of Iowa and shall continue perpetually thereafter unless dissolved as provided by law.

2.200

The church is organized exclusively for the charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the *Internal Revenue Code*.

2.300

No part of the net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any director or officer of the church or any private individual (*except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the church affecting one or more of its purposes*).

2.400

No officer of the church, or any private individual, shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any church assets on dissolution of the church. No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, except as otherwise may be permitted in 501(h) of the *Internal Revenue Code*. The church shall not participate in or intervene in (*including the publishing or distributing of statements*) a political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

2.500

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles, the church shall not conduct or carry on activities not permitted to be conducted or carried on by any organization exempt under 501(c)(3) of the *Internal Revenue Code*, or by any organization, contributions of which are deductible under 170(c)(2) of the *Internal Revenue Code*

2.600

As a means of accomplishing the foregoing purposes, the church shall have all of the general powers set forth in Chapter 504A of the Code of Iowa, and as it may hereafter be amended. These general powers shall be exercised exclusively for the attainment of the charitable, education, religious, or scientific purposes of the church as set forth in this Article.

### **Article 3: Authority & Affiliation**

3.100

Authority: The congregation, at its annual, quarterly, and special business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of this organization

3.200

Affiliation: 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 and unite in all efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the church itself may officially decide.

### **Article 4: Purpose**

4.100

With the liberty which is ours in Christ, we choose to love, honor and obey our Lord. Glorifying Him in all we do, we endeavor to spread the light of His gospel to our community and to encourage one another to walk in the Spirit until He comes again.

### **Article 5: Statement of Faith**

5.100

The Statement of Faith of this organization shall be the same as the Statement of Faith of the Central District Conference and The Evangelical Free Church of America, which reads as follows:

5.101

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.

5.102

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.

5.103

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.

5.104

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.

5.105

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.

5.106

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.

5.107

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.

5.108

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.

5.109

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.

5.110

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 6: Membership**

6.100

Membership of this church shall be composed of those who, through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again, who manifest the fruit of a true Christian life, who subscribe to the aforementioned Statement of Faith, and who are willing to support the church by their prayers, contributions and attendance.

## **Article 7: Officers**

7.100

The corporation affairs shall be managed by an Elder Board. The membership of this board, their election and their term of office is defined in the bylaws of this church.

## **Article 8: Property**

8.100

This church shall have the power to receive by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Iowa and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise. All purchases of real estate or major construction and building renovations or additions must be approved by seventy-five per cent (75%) majority vote of a quorum present at an annual, quarterly, or special business meeting of the church.

8.200

All debts for the corporation shall be held in the name of the corporation. The personal and private property of the officers or members of this corporation shall not be used in the payment of the corporate debt.

8.300

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

8.400

In case of 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 (6) members remain.

## **Article 9: Amendments**

9.100

Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a 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 (66 2/3%) of the membership present or voting.

### **Amendments:**

January 20, 1994

November 15, 2009 (Adopted EFCA revised Statement of Faith)

# **The Bylaws of Liberty**

## **Evangelical Free Church of Pella, Iowa**

### **Article I: Membership**

#### **1. Requirements:**

- a. Membership of this church shall be composed of those individuals who, through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again, who manifest the fruit of a true Christian life, who subscribe to the Statement of Faith, and who are willing to support the church by their prayers, contributions and attendance.
- b. The minimum age for membership shall be thirteen.

2. Procedure: Any person desiring membership shall complete the membership application form and return the completed form to the Elder Board. Two elders shall visit each applicant and then ask each applicant to appear before the Elder Board for the purpose of giving his or her confession of faith. The Elder Board shall then vote upon such application and if the person receives a unanimous, favorable vote, that person shall be accepted by the church, as soon as possible, during a worship service. If the vote is not favorable, the matter shall be tabled until the next meeting of the Elder Board. Any elder not voting in favor of the applicant shall state scriptural reasons for voting no. Before the next meeting of the Elder Board, the applicant and two members of the Elder Board will discuss the application. If a unanimous favorable vote cannot be attained at the second meeting, the application for membership shall be denied. (John 1:12-13 & 14:23-24)

#### **3. Status:**

- a. All who manifest spiritual interest in the welfare of the church by regular attendance at the services, who contribute regularly to its financial support and who give of their service as the Lord leads and equips, and those who because of sickness or infirmity are unable to attend services but desire to retain membership shall be classified as active members.
- b. Members who move out of the local area may retain an Associate Membership. To do so they must contact the church at least once a year. Associate members shall not have voting privileges.
- c. Members between the ages of 13-17 shall be granted full rights of membership. They are considered associate members, however, and will not assume voting privileges until they are 18 years of age, at which time their associate status is removed.
- d. Members who absent themselves from the church services and fail to maintain an active status shall be contacted by the Elders through visitation and letters of concern.
- e. Persons who desire membership on a short term basis such as college students or missionaries on furlough who do not wish to withdraw their membership in their home church may request an associate membership.

#### 4. Termination:

- a. Any member who wishes to resign his membership from the church shall so notify the Board of Elders. All resignations shall be reported to the church at the next annual business meeting.
- b. If any member shall conduct himself in a manner which, in the studied opinion of the Pastor and Board of Elders, is not in harmony with the scriptural principles and for which he does not show evidence of repentance, he shall be interviewed and counseled by the Pastor and then the Board of Elders, after the manner clearly indicated in the Word of God. (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1) The restoration of the erring member shall be the single purpose and love the sole motivating force in these interviews.

If the member should choose to continue his unrepentant condition, he shall be deprived of his membership upon a recommendation from the Board of Elders and two-thirds majority vote of at least a quorum at a special meeting of the church.

- c. Failure to reaffirm, when required, his or her faith according to the Statement of Faith.
  - d. Members who have apparently lost interest and who, after being contacted by the Elders, continue to evidence such lack of interest after a year's time, shall be considered inactive and be notified of same.
  - e. Any member who has resigned or whose membership has been deprived shall be excluded from all rights of the organization.
5. Reinstatement: Any member who has been separated by actions taken under Article I, section 4 may be reinstated by following the procedures outlined in Article I, section 2.

#### **Article II: Officers**

1. Pastoral Staff shall be elected by an eighty-five percent (85%) majority vote of a quorum present at any annual or special business meeting of the church. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time. Upon acceptance of his call, the Pastor and his wife shall be added to the active membership of the church. The Pastor, upon the Lord's call to another ministry shall give the Elders thirty days notice via a written resignation. Upon acceptance of the resignation, the Pastor and his wife shall remain members as long as they remain active within the fellowship of Liberty Evangelical Free Church. Should spiritual conditions arise necessitating consideration of pastoral termination, the principles of I Tim. 5:19-20 may be exercised, prayerfully and lovingly, by the Elder Board.
2. The Elder and Deacon Boards
  - a. The Elder Board shall consist of at least three spiritually qualified male active members in addition to the Senior Pastor. The election of Elders shall follow the procedure found in the policy statement of this covenant.
  - b. The Deacon Board shall consist of at least three spiritually qualified male active members. The election of Deacons shall follow the procedure found in the policy statement of this covenant.
  - c. The Church Chairman and Vice-Chairman, following the election of the Elder and Deacon

Boards, shall be annually elected from among the Elder Board, excluding the Pastor. The elected Church Chairman shall also serve as chairman of the Elder Board. The Deacon Board shall elect its own chairman from among the Deacon Board.

- d. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Elders/Deacons to a 3 year term and shall be eligible to serve a second successive term. In lieu of an appointment, the deacon board may select a deacon to serve as the treasurer on an annual basis.
- e. The terms of office for the Deacons and Elders shall be for three years, their terms of office being so arranged that the terms of one-third of their number shall expire each year.
- f. If a vacancy occurs on the Elder Board, Deacon Board, or Deaconess Board due to resignation, removal of a member, or due to an increase in the number of the board members, the Elder Board can appoint a replacement who fulfills the qualifications set forth in Scripture until the voting members of this church can elect a replacement at the next annual business meeting of the church. An unfilled seat following an election needs to follow the nominating and election process in Article VI.
- g. Upon request of the Board of Elders, a special Congregational meeting may be called for the purpose of raising or lowering the number of elders and deacons so as to maintain an effective level of operation of the church as God so blesses.

At least three Deaconesses shall be elected by the church to assist the Pastor and Elders in spiritual ministry. Their duties are described in the policy statement of this covenant. Deaconesses shall be elected to serve a term of three years, their terms of office being so arranged that one-third of their number shall expire each year. The Deaconesses will oversee the committees they deem necessary to minister to women or other unique or special needs of the body. Prior to forming any committees, the Deaconesses shall have the approval of the Elder Board. Any and all functions needing financial resources will need the approval of the Deacon Board.

A Leadership Community shall exist consisting of members of the Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, and ministry leaders. The Church Chairman shall convene monthly meetings open to all, to freely discuss the direction, vision, and other affairs of the Church in any manner or format deemed useful by the Church Chairman. The Leadership Community will be responsible for overseeing the ministries necessary to meet the daily spiritual and physical needs of the church. All committees deemed necessary will be accountable to their specific ministry leaders and the Leadership Community will be accountable to the Elders.

- 5. Church staff positions, other than pastoral positions, will be hired using the following procedures:
  - a. To fill a new or replaced church staff position, notice must be placed in the bulletin for two (2) Sundays. Applications for any church staff position must be submitted to the Deacons.
  - b. The Deacons, with the Senior Pastor or administrative elder, will appoint the employee.
  - c. The Deacon Board will recommend the position's compensation to the congregation for approval.
  - d. Should any church staff employee feel the need to resign, notice shall be given to the Deacons two (2) weeks prior to departure.

- e. Should conditions arise necessitating consideration of termination of a church staff employee, principles of Galatians 6:1-2 may be exercised prayerfully and lovingly by the Elder Board.
- f. Should conditions arise necessitating a change in a church staff position, Elders and Deacons can make needed changes if within approved budget.

### **Article III: Meetings**

1. The fiscal year shall end December 31st. In order to elect officers and approve budgets at the annual meeting that would take effect at the beginning of the fiscal year, the annual meeting will be held on a date designated by the Elder Board which shall not occur any later than the first Sunday in December. The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to receive reports of the Elders, Deacons, pastoral staff, Deaconesses, to elect officers and to transact any other necessary business of the organization.
  - a. The Church Chairman, or Vice-Chairman in his absence, shall conduct all annual business meetings of the organization using the following agenda:
    - (1) Reading of God's Word and prayer
    - (2) Approval of Agenda
    - (3) Minutes of previous meeting read and approved
    - (4) Reports of officers (Elders, Deacons, Pastor , Deaconesses)
    - (5) Committee reports (Christian Ed., other ie: Building)
    - (6) Unfinished business
    - (7) New business
      - a) Occasioned by reports
      - b) Approval of budget
      - c) Agenda items
    - (8) Election of officers
    - (9) Closing prayer
  - b. All annual business meetings shall be conducted by an approved agenda. A tentative agenda shall be established and distributed two Sundays prior to the annual meeting. Members wishing to submit a business item shall submit it in writing to the Church Chairman, for consideration with the Elders, within one week of the publication of the tentative agenda. Then a second agenda shall be written up and approved after a prayer time at the beginning of the meeting. Items raised that are not on the approved agenda can only be discussed - no action can be taken.
  - c. All reports, as well as the church budget, will be made available at least two weeks prior to the business meeting.

There shall be, in addition to the annual meeting, a semi-annual congregational meeting. It shall be held during the 3rd week of June (or as otherwise designated by the Elder Board). The purpose (or agenda) of this meeting must be publicized for two Sundays prior to the semi-annual meeting.

3. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Elder Board, or the Deacon Board. Such meetings shall be announced at two regular Sunday services of the church prior to the meeting. Such notice shall include the purpose of the special business meeting and only this purpose shall be discussed at the meeting.

#### **Article IV: Quorum**

The quorum at all congregational meetings shall be the eligible members present.

#### **Article V: Amendments**

These bylaws or the Policy Statement for Electing Church Officers may be amended by a simple majority vote of a quorum present and voting at any annual or special business meeting of the church, providing notification of the proposed amendment has been made to the membership at least two weeks prior to such meeting. Such announcement shall be made by the Elder Board.

#### **Article VI: Policy Statement**

##### **I. Nominating Procedure**

- A. The Elder Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee at or previous to the regular July Elder meeting. The committee shall meet by the first Sunday in August with the purpose of selecting nominees for the elected positions. The Nominating Committee will be disbanded after each annual meeting.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the following: one (1) Elder, one (1) Deacon, one (1) Deaconess, the Senior Pastor, and three (3) at-large members. Only those board members whose terms do not expire are eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- C. The Nominating Committee shall:
  1. Select a qualified nominee from the eligible membership to serve in each elected position.
  2. By the 3rd Monday in September, the Nominating Committee will give the Elders names of the qualified nominees for prayerful consideration and approval.
  3. Prepare an Election (Affirmation) Ballot for printing in the bulletin at least two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting.

## II. Election Procedure

- A. The election of board members shall be at the annual meeting by the active members present.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall supervise the procedure (distribution and counting of ballots, etc.).
- C. Candidates must be elected by a 2/3 majority of the active members present.
- D. The elected offices to be filled each annual election are:
  - 1. Elder: This office is to be filled by spiritually qualified men.
  - 2. Deacon: This office is to be filled by spiritually qualified men.
  - 3. Deaconess: This office is to be filled by spiritually qualified women.

## III. Duties and Qualification

### A. Elder Responsibilities

- 1. These men shall work together with the Pastor(s) to oversee the spiritual welfare and ministries of the church. Their primary areas of ministry are to minister the Word of God and devote themselves to an active prayer ministry.
- 2. Work with the Pastor in ministering to the church family through visitation, counseling, intercession, and the promotion of evangelistic efforts in the church.
- 3. Regularly reviews, evaluates and approves policies for the ministries and direction of the church insuring that the congregation's labors are directed toward the fulfillment of the purposes and vision of the church.
- 4. Handles all matters of discipline together with the Pastor, investigating and resolving issues according to Matthew 18:15-17.
- 5. In the absence of the pastor, shall provide leadership and pulpit supply.
- 6. Examines and considers applicants for membership.
- 7. Assists the Pastor in administering the ordinances of communion and baptism.

### B. Elder Qualifications

- 1. An elder shall be a man who is mature - not a new convert. He must be describable by terms such as (see I Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9): temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, gentle, generous, not a victim to drink, greed or a bad temper.
- 2. An elder must possess a good reputation in the community for honesty, respect, and kindness. He is to have a demonstrated ability to manage a family well, having obedient children and a wife who is supportive of his ministry and submissive to his leadership.
- 3. An elder is to possess not only a firm grasp of the Scriptures but be able to teach them. He must be sound in doctrine and have no dispute with the twelve articles of our statement of faith.

### C. Deacon Responsibilities

1. Responsible for the collection, deposit, and distribution of the offerings of the church.
2. Submits annual budget to the congregation and a report on the expenditures.
3. Submits recommendations to the Elder Board for deposit/withdrawal of funds from special accounts.
4. Regularly evaluates, with the treasurer, the offerings and disbursements of the Church.
5. Responsible for the care, custody, and control of the physical properties of the Church, and under direction of the Congregation, shall make purchase of buildings and other properties as needed; handle improvements and repairs; handle mortgages, insurance and other pertinent matters.
6. Handle matters of benevolence, first, to those in the congregation then to those outside the congregation that are in need of financial assistance.
7. Ascertain and lovingly oversee the meeting of physical needs within the Liberty family, keeping in mind the necessity of discretion as well as the need to avoid enabling people to be irresponsible.

### D. Deacon Qualifications

1. A deacon shall be a man who illustrates a consistent spiritual lifestyle. He must be describable by terms such as (see I Tim 3:8-12): honest, dignified, self-controlled, not a victim of drink, greed or bad temper.
2. A deacon must be tested and therefore, a man with a reputation for integrity, sincerity and sound doctrine.
3. He is to have demonstrated ability to manage a family well. His wife is to be a respected woman in the church and community and be known for her kindness, temperance & honesty.

### E. The Responsibilities of Deaconesses

1. The deaconesses will support the spiritual needs of the women of the body through encouragement and prayer.
2. The deaconesses oversee women's ministries, hospitality needs of the congregation, and any other special needs the elders may designate. Deaconesses are not expected to personally meet all those needs, instead they will establish guidelines for, appoint, and oversee the following:

#### A. Women's Ministries

1. Ladies Bible Study
2. Ladies Night Out
3. Birthday card ministry

B. Social (hospitality) needs of congregation

1. Organize small groups to set-up and clean up for special events such as fellowship time after church, picnics, graduation, etc.
2. Keep track of equipment and supplies needed for events such as funerals and conferences and resupply as needed with Deacon approval.

C. Oversee needs of hospital illness and long term illness

Oversee Meal Ministry

Provide assistance to Pastors and Elders for other special needs for those who are sick.

D. Oversee the nursery committee

Assist Elders with communion

Purchase bread and juice.

Prepare and clean up plates on communion Sunday (once a month).

F. Special Ministries

1. Alert ministry council of special needs (physical, benevolent, spiritual, transportation, etc.)
  2. Assist single mothers with special needs.
  3. Assist in counseling women under direction of Elder board.
  4. Meet with leadership council on a monthly basis for prayer/reporting.
  5. Meeting spiritual needs of prayer and Bible study.
3. Submit annual Deaconess budget to the Deacons for presentation to the congregation.
  4. Appoint a Deaconess who takes minutes and gives a copy to each of the Deaconesses. Head Deaconess will keep records for historical reference.
  5. Deaconess reports to the Congregation via the church newsletter.

**Article VII: Philosophy of Ministry**

**Purpose:**

With the liberty which is ours in Christ, we choose to love, honor, and obey our Lord. Glorifying Him in all we do, we endeavor to spread the light of His gospel to our community and to the world and to encourage one another to walk in the spirit until He comes again. Mt 22:37-39, Mt 28:18-20, Mt 5:14-16, Heb 10:23-25, Gal 5:1

## **Our Goal:**

1. Our aim is to make *growing disciples of Christ\**. A disciple should always endeavor to be more like Christ by being established in the disciplines of God's Word, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing. A disciple displays Christ's character, values, and discipline in their ministry as gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Mt 28:18-20, 2 Cor 3:18, Phil 3:8-10a

\*Comment: Discipleship is a process of introducing others to the power of the gospel and continually teaching the power of the gospel as demonstrated by a transformed life. Obedience is not out of guilt or adherence to rules, rather out of love for God. A disciple is a follower of Christ.

## **Our Leadership:**

2. All *pastoral staff, elders, deacons, deaconesses, and group leaders* are to model servant leadership and discipleship, to grow in their own ministry skills, and to encourage and equip the rest of the congregation.
3. All *pastoral staff*, while directly responsible for some specific responsibilities, are to be enablers and equippers of the congregation to do ministry.
4. The *senior pastor's* role and commitment is working together with his fellow elders in vision-casting, training leaders, teaching the Word, being a model disciple of Christ and personally reproducing disciples in his own life. (Eph. 4:11-13).
5. The role of our *elders* is to give supervision and spiritual leadership to the entire church. The elders regularly review, evaluate and approve policy for the ministries and direction of the church insuring the congregation's labors are directed toward the fulfillment of the purpose, vision and philosophy of ministry of the church. They are to spend priority time in prayer and the ministry of the Word.
6. The role of the *deacons* is to lovingly ascertain and oversee the meeting of the physical needs of the congregation.
7. The *deaconesses* oversee women's ministries, hospitality needs of the congregation, and any other special needs the elders may designate as outlined in the bylaws, Article VI.
8. The primary role of our *Leadership Community* will be a meeting of the pastoral staff, elders, deacons, deaconesses and all ministry leaders to discuss the direction, vision, and functions of the ministries of the church.

## **Our Ministries**

9. The purpose of *all of our* ministries will be to guide individuals of all ages into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to encourage them to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord by clearly and creatively communicating the Bible and its Gospel message at every level.

10. All of our ministries will be Biblically based and supported by a strong base of prayer, thereby expressing our *total dependence upon God* (Acts 1:14, 2:42, 6:4, Rom 12:12).
11. Since our purpose is to produce and develop disciples we will *evaluate every ministry* on that basis, modifying or discontinuing ministries that are ineffective.
12. We seek to have growing disciples maintain a healthy involvement in all sized discipleship ministries which include large worship group services, medium-sized discipleship classes, small group and one-on-one training and mentoring
13. Our *evangelism* focus will be to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our lifestyles, testimonies, and acts of love through the power and promoting of the Holy Spirit and waiting on God for the increase. We see evangelism as the starting point and indispensable catalyst to all disciple making.
14. Corporate *Worship Services* are to be God-glorifying, Christ-centered, encouraging for disciples and have a celebrational spirit. Important, but not overriding, our methods will be sensitive to unbelievers in worship through explanation and action. Participation rather than observation is encouraged in the worship celebration.

### **Important Methods and Principles**

15. Our primary method of disciple making is to communicate the vision that a believer can be an apprentice of Jesus Christ, seek a commitment of intention from the believer to be an apprentice of Jesus Christ, and then provide the means to learn to do the various things Jesus desires of growing disciples.
16. We will use ministries, task forces, and discipleship structures rather than boards and committees to make decisions and do ministry, seeking to *minimize policy makers and maximize persons doing ministry*.
17. We believe in the priesthood of believers with *each member ministering* to others. The ministry a person engages in should be consistent with his or her giftedness. As believers mature, they can aid in the pastoral care within our body (I Pet. 2:5; II Tim. 2:2).
18. *Facilities and resources* are only important as they serve to enhance our mission of making disciples. God will provide for every genuine need.
19. *Leaders of various ministries* will be selected based on Biblical criteria, considering their character, faithfulness, spiritual giftedness and proven experience.
20. *People will be trained* for ministries they are asked to undertake by seeing the ministry modeled and then practicing while being observed. Basic skills of intimacy with God (i.e. Bible study, prayer), ministry with and to others (i.e. spiritual gifts, "one another" commands), and evangelism (sharing personal testimony, sharing the gospel) must be taught.
21. We will be a church that not only reproduces disciples but *develops and encourages disciple making churches in Pella and beyond*, wherever there is need and the resource to meet the need.
22. From within our disciple making ministry, *short-term and full-time missionaries* will be recruited, trained, sent and supported.

23. We believe that God has established the government for our benefit, and that God's Word calls believers to pray for those who govern us (Romans 13:1-2, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-14). However, if ever forced to choose between obedience to God's Word versus obeying a civil law, Liberty Evangelical Free Church will choose to obey God's Word and bear whatever consequences result from that decision.

**Marriage--** We believe the only Scriptural marriage is between one man and one woman and that God intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. The Scriptures also teach that cohabitation prior to marriage is not a part of God's design (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:8-9, Romans 1:26-27, Romans 13:13-14, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Cor. 7:10-11).

**Sanctity of Life--** We believe that every person is created in the image of God, and that life begins at conception. We affirm the biblical prohibition against the taking of human life by another person, or oneself, through the means of euthanasia or assisted suicide (Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 9:6, Exodus 20:13, Deut. 32:39, Psalm 139:13-16, Eccl. 8:6-8, Matthew 5:21, Acts 17:24-25).

## Amendments

### Constitutional Changes:

September 12, 1993: Article 7 - Words "Board of Director" changed to "Leadership Council"

January 20, 1994

November 15, 2009: Adopted EFCA revised Statement of Faith

### Bylaws Changes:

September 12, 1993:

Article I - Requirements for members (taken from constitution) added. Defines active and inactive membership. Provides for associate members; includes minimum age, more extensive termination section and reinstatement procedure.

Article II - Decision for staff positions placed on whole Leadership Council rather than just the Elders. Added words "Associate Pastor"

Article III - Moved annual meeting from the second to the third Thursday. Also added a semi-annual meeting in June. Leadership Council may change the meeting dates if ever deemed necessary.

Article VI - There is now a provision made for absentee ballots for use in extenuating circumstances.

Section III - Completely rewritten

July 14, 1994: Added Article VII - Philosophy of Ministry

1. Changed "Our aim is growing..." to "Our aim is to make growing..."

2. Changed "All staff" to "all pastoral staff"

7. Added "as outlined in Bylaws, Article VI." to end of sentence.

August 2, 1994: Article II - Section 3 and Section 4 are now switched.

Section 4 - All Leadership Council changed to "Ministry Council". Words Changed to include the Deaconesses as members of the Ministry Council.

Section 5 - a. & b. "Leadership Council" changed to "Deacons." c. Deacon Board will recommend the salary to the Congregation. Notice of resignation will be given to the Deacons.

Article III - Section 1. Dates for church meeting may now be changed by Ministry Council. Under b. - Business items submitted to Church Chairman and are considered with the Elders.

Section 2. Changed Leadership Council to Ministry Council.

Article VI - Section 1. - Point 4. Under D. - Completed ballot for bulletin presented on last Sunday of Dec. instead of first.

Section 3. - Point 3. under A. - added "set policies for" the ministries and direction of the church as a responsibility. Under C. - Point 3.- Changed the words "Leadership Council" to "Elder Board" and Point 4.- Changed the word "income" to "offerings", "congregation" to "church", and deleted the last part.

April 3, 2005, the following changes were made:

Article II, Section 1: "Pastor/Associate Pastor" changed to "Pastoral Staff". Added "Upon acceptance of the resignation; the Pastor and his wife shall remain members as long as they remain active within the fellowship of Liberty Evangelical Free Church."

Article II, Section 2-a: Added the word "Senior" before "Pastor".

Article II, Section 4 Change "Ministry Council" to "Leadership Community" throughout. Add "and ministry leaders" after Deaconesses in the first sentence. Changed "accountable to their specific ministry leaders" also.

Article II, Section 5-b: Change "Pastor" to "Senior Pastor or Administrative Elder"

Article III, Section 1 and 2: Change "Ministry Council" to "Elder Board."

Article VI, Section III, Part A-3: Change the word "sets" to "approves."

Article VI, Section III, Part E-6-a: Change "Ministry Council" to "Leadership Community."

Article VI, Section III, Part E-6-d: Change the word "council" to "community."

Article VII, Purpose: Added Scripture

Article VII, Our Goal: Added Scripture and Comment

Article VII, Our Leadership:

2: Changed the word "discipleship" to "servant leader."

4: Added “working together with his fellow elders in”

5: Change the word “set” to “approve.”

8: Change “Ministry Council” to “Leadership Community will be a meeting of the pastoral staff, elders, deacons, deaconesses and all ministry leaders to discuss the direction, vision, and functions of the ministries of the church.”

9: Completely rewritten

12: Completely rewritten

14: Added “Corporate Worship Service” Also added “our methods” will be “sensitive” to “unbelievers” in worship “through explanation and action.”

15: Completely rewritten

19: added “of various ministries” will be selected

#### June 19, 2005

Article II, Section 2, Part d: deleted “unless it becomes a hired position.” Added: “In lieu of an appointment, the deacon board may select a deacon to serve as the treasurer on an annual basis.

Article VI, Section III, Part E: Completely rewritten.

#### November 17, 2007

By-law change to Article III, clause 2

Changed the word from held “on” to held “during” and changed the word the third “Thursday” to the third “week”

#### November 15, 2009

Changed Article 5: Statement of Faith to align with the EFCA Statement of Faith adopted by the National Conference on June 26, 2008.

#### August 28, 2011

Added Article 7 #23 of Bylaws.

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November 25, 2012

By-law change to:

Article IV change. *“In order to conduct business at a meeting of the congregation, thirty-five percent (35%) of the eligible voting membership must be present.”* to *“The quorum at all congregational meetings shall be the eligible members present.”*

Article III: Meetings, section 1 reads that *“...the annual meeting will be held not later than the third Sunday night of November, as designated by the Elder Board.”* To replace this with *“... the annual meeting will be held on a date designated by the Elder Board which shall not occur any later than the first Sunday in December.”*