

Olympic Evangelical Free Church

Constitutional Revision

FINAL DRAFT

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Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 1988 under the name Olympic Evangelical Free Church, for the **worship of God, the edification of the saints, the maintenance of the ordinances, and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ**, and since He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to conform more closely to His will for the Church in this age and to prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Therefore, we do hereby organize ourselves under the rulership of God and in accordance with the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Evangelical Free Church of America's (EFCA) 2019 Statement of Faith.

Article I. Formation

Section A. Name

The name of this church shall be Olympic Evangelical Free Church.

Section B. Foundation

The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Its code of guidance in all its affairs is the authoritative, inerrant, and divinely inspired Word of God. In this we firmly believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Section C. Purpose

We exist to glorify God by **pursuing** Him as our greatest treasure, **loving** all people, and **multiplying** devoted followers of Jesus Christ. In practical terms this involves but is not limited to:

1. Worshiping Him;
2. Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
3. Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
4. Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work whether local, domestic, or international;
5. Partnering with like-minded churches in our community for gospel ministry;
6. Administering the ordinances of baptism (see, VIII.B) and the Lord's Supper;
7. Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
8. Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Section D. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the fundamental basis of our faith. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the EFCA as our rule of faith and standard for receiving new candidates into church membership. **EFCA Statement of Faith (June 19, 2019)**

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious 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.

10. 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 II. Membership

Section A. Requirements

Clause 1. Members of this church shall consist of persons, at least sixteen-years old, who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior;

Clause 2. Who give evidence of regeneration by pursuing a lifestyle that aligns with his/her profession and the clear witness of Scripture— in this we fully acknowledge that this evidence of grace looks different in every Christian's life and that no Christian is perfect in this pursuit (1 John 1:8–10);

Clause 3. Who have been baptized in obedience to Christ (see, Policy on Baptism VIII.B);

Clause 4. Who hold without mental reservation the doctrines of our church as expressed in the EFCA Statement of Faith 2019;

Clause 5. Who promise to uphold the commitments expressed in the Membership Covenant (II.D).

Section B. Process

Clause 1. The Council of Elders (Elders) shall appoint members of the council to personally meet with and determine each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Clause 2. When the elders are confident of the applicant's faith in Christ, desire to live the Christian life, and willingness to submit to the fellowship and discipline of this local body, applicants' names will be submitted to the members for acceptance. Names will be submitted to the members for acceptance through a means deemed appropriate by the Elders.

Clause 3. An Applicant shall be received as a member of this church upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on the question at any members meeting.

Clause 4. Pastors, including part-time associate pastors, and their wives automatically become members with full voting privileges on receipt and acceptance of a call from the Church.

Clause 5. No member of this church shall retain membership in any other church.

Section C. Duties and Privileges

Clause 1. Under the authority of Christ and his revealed Word in the Scriptures, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Clause 2. Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Clause 3. The offices of elder and deacon shall be reserved for those who are active members of this church.

Clause 4. In most cases, positions of ministry leadership will be reserved for members.

Section D. Membership Covenant

Clause 1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:13-15; Colossians 1:13-20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 6:3-4).

Clause 2. We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to:

Clause 3. Pursue a joyous and devout walk with Christ in our lives and homes, through personal Bible reading, prayer, and meditation (Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 119:97; Psalm 1:1-3).

Clause 4. Walk with other members in love, so that we may be mutually encouraged and edified in our relationship with Christ. (Acts 2:46-47; John 13:34-35; Proverbs 27:17, 1 Peter 4:8).

Clause 5. Live a life characterized by humility, abstaining from gossip, and working to resolve all conflict with our fellow church members. (Philippians 2:1-8; James 4:10; Proverbs 16:28; James 1:26; Ephesians 4:1-3; Matthew 18:15-20).

Clause 6. Joyfully share the unsearchable riches of Christ with those whom God has placed in our lives (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 3:7-10; Psalm 96:3-4; Acts 1:8; Luke 24:44-47).

Clause 7. Submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all matters (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Clause 8. Actively participate in the life and ministry of this church: regularly attending its Lord's Day meetings, serving in its ministries, and attending, as frequently as possible, its members meetings (Heb 10:24; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-26).

Clause 9. Joyfully submit to the Elders of this church, as they oversee our discipleship, welcoming and biblically testing their instruction, in accordance with the Statement of Faith, as we seek to grow in biblical unity of the truth (Hebrews 13:17; 1 John 4:1; Ephesians 4:13-14; Acts 17:11).

Clause 10. Financially support the ministry of this church and be faithful stewards of everything that God has entrusted to us (2 Corinthians 9:6-11; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Luke 16:1-13; Matthew 25:14-30; Malachi 3:10).

Clause 11. Exercise the spiritual gift(s) that have been given to us for the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13, Romans 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

Clause 12. Live out the gospel in community, so that we may not dishonor God, pollute the church, or corrupt our souls. If the need should ever arise, we will submit to biblical church discipline, so that we may be restored in our relationship with God and the church (Leviticus 20:7; Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 12:4-11).

Clause 13. Join another like minded church, as far as it is possible, if I remove myself from this church (Heb 10:24; 1 Cor 12:12–19; Rom 13:3–8).

Section E. Membership Roll

Clause 1. The membership roll shall be supervised by the Elders, who shall review it periodically to determine if the needs of any members have been neglected, or if any name should be removed.

Clause 2. Members who are not in regular attendance for more than 6 months but have informed the elders of their impending absence and desire to remain engaged (whether military service, missionary service, illness, or other suitable reason as determined by the elders), shall not be deemed Inactive. Such members shall be provided with the ability to vote via absentee ballot if requested beforehand. The number of absentee ballots provided to qualifying members shall count toward the quorum of members present for a members meeting.

Clause 3. The Elders shall review the membership roll before all votes to identify Inactive members so that the quorum accurately reflects the Active members of the church. Inactive members shall be identified as those who do not meet the criteria of II.E.2 and shall not be able to vote. Inactive members may be restored to active membership upon an official request to and subsequent agreement of the Elders.

Clause 4. The membership Roll may be amended upon the recommendation of the Elders and subsequent agreement of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on the question at any members Meeting whether that be to **remove** absent members from the role, to acknowledge the **termination** of a person's membership, or to exercise **church discipline**.

Clause 5. The church may **remove** Inactive members from the membership role who, though physically able and without sufficient reason (see II.E.2), have stopped attending the Lord's Day Services for a period of at least twelve months. It should be noted that this removal is not an act

of excommunication but a sad acknowledgement that the member has chosen to separate himself or herself from the church.

Clause 6. The church shall recognize the **termination** of a person's membership (1) following his or her death, (2) and may do so following his or her voluntary resignation, or joining with another church.

Clause 7. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church for the purpose of proceeding with the process of church discipline.

Clause 8. The church shall have authority to exercise **discipline** over its members who are guilty of persistent, unrepentant, flagrant sin by which the reputation of Christ and/or His church is dishonored.

a. The purpose of church discipline is for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. Discipline also serves for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, for the purity of the Church as a whole, for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians, and ultimately for the glory of God by reflecting his Holy character.

b. If an Elder, Pastor, a member of the church staff, or a member of this Church is found to live or teach contrary to the Word of God and the statement of belief of this church, that person shall be counseled in love according to procedures outlined in Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Cor 5:1-5, 1 Cor 5:9-13, Galatians 6:1-2, Titus 2:15, 3:10.

c. If initial efforts to bring repentance and restoration fail, the Elders shall identify a course of further action and intervention.

d. If no repentance follows, the Elders shall recommend whether exclusion from any leadership role and/or official discipline is appropriate.

Article III. Meetings

Section A.

Clause 1. The church shall meet together for public worship each Lord's Day morning, and at other times throughout the week as the church may determine.

Clause 2. The responsibilities of the church, duly assembled in a members meeting, shall be:

- a. To elect/affirm officers;
- b. To receive applicants into church membership;
- c. To approve the call and job description of those Elders who receive compensation from the Church for fulfilling their Elder responsibilities;
- d. To recognize termination of membership due to persistent inactivity, death, voluntary resignation, or upon becoming a member of another church;
- e. To exercise church discipline;
- f. To approve, once in every year, a church budget;
- g. To hear reports from the Elders and, from time to time, the various Deacons/Deaconesses;
- h. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a members meeting;
- i. To conduct other business.

Section B.

Clause 1. The church shall hold a regular members meeting quarterly, which shall not be held in place of the regular Lord's Day morning meeting, but at some other time.

Clause 2. Member meetings shall observe Robert's Rules of Order.

Clause 3. The Elders, whenever they deem it necessary, or within thirty days of receiving a written request signed by ten percent of the voting membership, shall call a special members meeting.

Clause 4. No members meeting shall be held until the date, time, and place of such meeting shall be announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to the members meeting in question.

Clause 5. The Chairman of the Elders or his Representative shall preside as Moderator at all members meetings.

Clause 6. Members meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order, and 20% of active membership present shall constitute a quorum to do business. Motions shall be adopted upon the agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question, except on matters otherwise provided for in this constitution.

Clause 7. Members must be physically present in order to vote unless they have been provided an absentee ballot under the provision of II.E.2.

Clause 8. In the event that legal orders by local, state, or federal officials would prevent the Church from holding at least quarterly members meetings as required by this Constitution, and the Elders agree to abide by those orders, the Moderator shall declare duly-called meetings to be "virtual." In that case, all requirements in this Constitution for physical presence at members meetings shall be waived, and the Church shall gather and conduct business by any technological means available to the majority of the Church. No other rule shall be affected by a virtual meeting.

Article IV. Government

Section A. Authority and Leadership

Clause 1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the membership of the Church shall be the final authority within this local Church.

Clause 2. The biblical offices of this church shall be Elders and Deacons (see IV.C–D). The purpose of these offices is to lovingly lead, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

Clause 3. The membership’s authority is normally exercised through the election of Elders to lead, teach, shepherd, and govern the church.

Clause 4. All questions shall be decided by simple majority vote except where the provisions of the constitution otherwise prescribe.

Section B. Removal of Elected Officers

Clause 1. By resignation: Elders or Deacons may resign their office at any time if they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

Clause 2. By church discipline: The elders are responsible to cultivate an environment in the church in which all elders are held accountable to maintain faithfulness to the doctrine of the church and to the highest level of Christian behavior (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6). Should an Elder fail to remain faithful to the doctrine of the church or is living contrary to the standards of Christian behavior appropriate to his office, the Council of Elders may initiate the process of church discipline (see II.E.8) which may include **immediately suspending him from all duties**, removing him from office (1 Cor 5:1–5; 9–13), or **other disciplinary measures**.

Clause 3. By grievance: Elders should be protected from false charges, a theme we see applied from the Old Testament (Deut. 17:6) and within the church in the New Testament (Matt. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19). Where a grievance exists against an Elder or Deacon due to teaching contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in the EFCA Statement of Faith or to alleged conduct on their part unbecoming an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing (ex., not Currently Inactive or under Church Discipline).

a. If the Council of Elders, after thorough investigation and consideration (in accordance with Matthew 18), believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the Elder or Deacon may be terminated at any members meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of three-quarters of those members of the church present and voting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the active membership of the Church present at such meeting.

b. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

c. This process may also include formal discipline (see, II.E.8) depending on the nature of the grievance.

d. This process will always be followed in the case of serious allegations such as sexual misconduct or abuse, regardless of the membership status of the individual(s) bringing the charge. The requirement of 2 witnesses will also be waived in these cases.

Clause 4. By lack of Reaffirmation: If an Elder or Deacon fails to be reaffirmed to the office of Elder or Deacon, by a two-thirds vote, a special members meeting shall be called to consider the question of terminating the call of that Elder or Deacon.

a. The call shall be terminated only if supported by a closed ballot of a two-thirds majority of those members of the church present and voting with at least a quorum of the membership of the Church present.

b. Public notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given on the two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

Section C. Elders

Clause 1. Oversight of the ministry, resources, and facilities of the church shall be vested in the Council of Elders, which shall be composed of not fewer than three men —both staff (see IV.C-2 and IV.C-3) and lay elders— who satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2, women shall not serve as Elders.

Clause 2. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

Clause 3. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure.

Clause 4. Unless otherwise unable (see IV.C.1), a majority of the Elders should be laymen, that is, church members not in the regular pay of the church as preaching or staff Elders/Pastors.

Clause 5. At least once in every year, the Elders shall at any regular members meeting solicit private recommendations from the congregation for the office of Elder (i.e., no provision shall be made for open nominations).

a. The Elders shall carefully and prayerfully assess the spiritual qualifications of every recommendation received (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

b. In this process, the Elders shall solicit input from the Deacons who shall provide personal insight from their interactions with the potential Elder— specifically, whether or not, in their opinion, the potential Elder is Biblically qualified for the position (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

c. The Elders shall then prayerfully consider the Deacons' input. Upon a three-quarters majority vote among the Elders, they shall pursue further conversations with biblically qualified candidate(s) to determine their calling and desire to serve as an elder.

Clause 6. Elders shall be appointed from the membership of the church as follows: The Council of Elders shall present the membership with a list of nominees to the office of Elder at any regular members Meeting or through either physical and/or electronic means. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office.

a. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees.

b. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list.

c. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular members meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay on each of the nominees on a written ballot.

d. The Moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and any nominee having the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting (including provisions of II.E.2) on his nomination shall be an Elder.

e. The church shall in due haste publicly recognize each new elder and set them apart as such.

Clause 7. Lay Elders shall be reaffirmed triennially by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2). Staff Elders (see IV.C-2 and IV.C-3) shall NOT be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit.

Clause 8. Elders that have served two consecutive three-year terms shall be required to take a one-year sabbatical.

Clause 9. The Council of Elders shall choose their Chairman and other officers. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Washington, the Council of Elders shall serve as the Board of Directors of the Corporation, and the Chairman of the Elders shall serve as the president of the corporation.

Clause 10. The Elders shall, in keeping with the principles set forth in the Scriptures, (especially Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1-4) undertake the responsibility of shepherding God's flock by devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. They shall have particular authority:

- a.** To plan and oversee worship services;
- b.** To oversee the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- c.** To examine and instruct prospective members;
- d.** To oversee the process of church discipline;
- e.** To examine and recommend candidates for all offices and positions;
- f.** To oversee the work of the Diaconate and all other agents of the church;
- g.** To hire, oversee, evaluate the performance of, and when necessary, terminate the employment of non-elder church staff;

h. To take any other action which shall be necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the church.

Clause 11. Removal from office, see IV.B.

Section C-1. Elder Covenant with the Church Membership

Clause 1. Having been called by God and appointed to the office of elder by the membership of Olympic Evangelical Free Church, we covenant, by the grace of God and the aid of the Holy Spirit, to:

Clause 2. Preach and teach the Word, exalting the supremacy of Jesus Christ over all things, in order to edify the church and equip its members for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Clause 3. Lovingly care for you and seek your growth in Christ (Colossians 1:28-29; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

Clause 4. Conduct ourselves, before you and God, in a manner that is above reproach and representative of the calling that God has placed on our lives (1 Timothy 3:1-13 and 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Clause 5. Pray for you throughout the week, especially when there are trials or sickness in your life (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Ephesians 1:15-20; James 5:14).

Clause 6. Humbly and prayerfully oversee matters of church discipline for the sake of God's glory, the purity of the church, and the soul of the one being disciplined (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 12:4-11).

Clause 7. Shepherd the church selflessly, knowing that we will have to give an account for your soul that God has entrusted to us (1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:1).

Clause 8. Guard and shepherd the flock, whom God has entrusted to us, from false teachers and doctrines (Acts 20:26-30; Matthew 7:15; 1 Timothy 1:3-7).

Clause 9. Oversee the ministries of the church (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Clause 10. Equip and encourage you to serve Christ with the gift(s) that the Spirit has given you. (Ephesians 4:11-13, Romans 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 12).

Section C-2. Lead/Senior Pastor (Staff Elder)

Clause 1. Primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Scriptures in public meetings of the church may be vested in a Preaching Elder/Lead Pastor. Only one Lead Pastor may be recognized at a time.

Clause 2. The Lead Pastor shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the rights and responsibilities of a member of the church (see II.A-D). He shall satisfy all the qualifications and hold all the duties and responsibilities of an Elder (see IV.C).

a. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an Elder and the Lead Pastor.

b. The Lead Pastor shall be entrusted by the membership and the Elders with the responsibility to provide vision and leadership among the elders (see IV.C.2).

c. In regards to church staff and Associate Pastors, the Lead Pastor shall direct their service and oversee their performance.

Clause 3. The Lead Pastor shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit (see IV.C.7).

Section C-3. Associate Pastors (Staff Elders)

Clause 1. Other particular pastoral responsibilities expected to be of a long-term nature may be vested in one or more Associate Pastors.

Clause 2. Associate Pastors shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the rights and responsibilities of a member of the church. He shall satisfy all the qualifications and hold all the duties and responsibilities of an Elder.

a. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an Elder and an Associate Pastor.

b. In regards to ministry priorities and performance, Associate Pastors shall take their direction from and report to the Lead Pastor.

c. In the event of a disagreement with the Lead Pastor, an Associate Pastor shall make due effort to resolve it quickly and directly with the Lead Pastor. If the matter cannot be resolved after a number of sincere attempts, the Associate Pastor and the Lead Pastor shall present the matter to the Elders for greater discernment.

Clause 3. An Associate Pastor shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit (see IV.C.7), unless other arrangements were included in their job description.

Section C-4. Selection of Pastors

Clause 1. The Elders shall identify a pastor search committee composed of at least five (but no more than nine) active members who represent an adequate cross-section of the church's membership and ministries, two of whom shall be elders. The Lead Pastor shall be a member of any Associate Pastor search committee.

Clause 2. The search committee shall be accepted and installed by a majority vote of members present and voting on the question at any members meeting (including provisions of II.E.2).

Clause 3. The duties of the pastor search committee shall be to identify and recommend a single qualified candidate to the elders for the position being filled.

Clause 4. In seeking a pastoral candidate the committee shall:

- a. Carefully follow directions from the elders and the membership as they solicit, investigate, and interview applicants.
- b. Give careful consideration to each applicant's calling to ministry, qualification for ministry (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:1–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4), doctrinal fidelity, training, experience, ability to faithfully teach and preach, philosophy of ministry, reputation, and personality.
- c. Work closely with elders (and Lead Pastor if an Associate Pastor search) to assess applicants' doctrinal fidelity, ability to preach/teach, and philosophy of ministry.
- d. Arrange interview(s) with both the search committee and the elders paying special attention to their doctrine, ministry abilities, personal character, and ministry alignment.
- e. Secure personal recommendations, character references, and background checks for final candidates.
- f. Identify a final candidate upon a three-quarter majority vote.
- g. Present the candidate to the elders for final approval. A three-quarter majority vote among the elders is required.

Clause 5. The search committee and the Elders shall then identify the best time for the candidate to visit in person. They shall give the membership at least two weeks advance notice of the candidate's arrival.

Clause 6. The candidate's visit shall be no shorter than five days so they can meet with as many committees and congregants as possible. Thus, providing maximum exposure of the candidate to the membership (and congregation), as well as the candidate to the church at large. During this time the church shall carefully consider the candidate's gifts in both preaching and teaching, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of the church in light of God's Word.

Clause 7. If any member has concerns or believes the candidate to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the Elders.

Clause 8. When the candidate's visit has concluded, the Elders and search committee shall meet to consider the merits of the candidate's visit and discuss any concerns that have been raised. After this, the Elders shall decide, by a three-quarter majority vote, whether or not the candidate's name shall be presented to the membership.

a. Upon approval, the Elders shall at the next scheduled members meeting, present the candidate's name to the membership, who shall vote Yea or Nay on a closed ballot for the candidate's selection (including provisions of II.E.2). The moderator or his delegates shall count the votes.

b. If the candidate receives the approval of at least three-quarters majority, the elders shall extend an official call to ministry to the candidate.

c. Upon his acceptance and subsequent installation, he shall be a member of the church, an Elder, and pastor, whom the church shall in due haste publicly recognize as such.

Section C-5. Resignation and Removal of Pastors

Clause 1. The relationship between a pastor and the church may be dissolved at the option of the pastor through his **resignation**. The resigning pastor shall provide the church at least one month's notice. Normal duties and compensation shall be continued during this period of transition unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the elders.

Clause 2. A Pastor may be removed from office and his employment terminated through **church discipline** (see IV.B.2), a **verified grievance** (see IV.B.3), or **dismissal** (see below).

a. In the event of any disagreement between fellow pastors or a pastor and the elders, and before the **dismissal** of a pastor, the Elders shall counsel with the pastor and utilize the services of the District Superintendent or other appropriate counselors in this process.

b. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

c. Following these actions, a pastor may be **dismissed** at any members meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of three-quarters of those members present and voting with at least **fifty percent (50%)** of the active membership of the Church present at such meeting (including the provision of II.E.2).

Section D. The Diaconate

Clause 1. Particular service to the church shall be provided by the Diaconate (Deacons/Deaconesses abbreviated hereafter as Deacon(ess)), the number of which shall vary as the church has need, and who shall satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.¹

Clause 2. The Diaconate shall not meet together regularly as a body. Rather, each deacon(ess) shall be appointed to serve a particular need of the church; their position shall be created or dissolved (as necessary for the needs of the church) upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members meeting.

Clause 3. At least once in every year, the Elders shall at any regular members meeting solicit private recommendations from the congregation for new diaconate positions and for qualified persons to fill new or vacant positions. No provision shall be made for open nominations.

a. The Elders shall carefully and prayerfully assess the spiritual qualifications of every recommendation received (1 Timothy 3:8–13; Acts 6:3).

b. In this process, the Elders shall solicit input from the Diaconate who shall provide personal insight from their interactions with the potential Deacon(ness)—specifically, whether or not, in their opinion, the potential Deacon(ness) is Biblically qualified for the position (1 Timothy 3:8–13; Acts 6:3).

¹ For the exegetical (not pragmatic) rationale behind male and female deacons see, “May Women Serve as Deacons?” in Matt Smethurst, *Deacons: How They Serve and Strengthen the Church*, 9Marks: Building Healthy Churches (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 135–152.

c. The Elders shall then prayerfully consider the Deacons' input. Upon a three-quarters majority vote among the Elders, they shall pursue further conversations with biblically qualified candidate(s) to determine their calling and desire to serve as a Deacon(ness).

Clause 4. Deacon(ess)s shall be selected from the membership of the church as follows: The Council of Elders shall present the membership with a list of nominees to specific Diaconal positions at any regular members Meeting or through either physical and/or electronic means. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office.

a. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees.

b. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular members meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay on each of the nominees *on a private ballot*.

c. The Moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and any nominee having the approval of two-thirds of the members present and voting (including provisions of II.E.2) on their nomination shall be a Deacon(ess).

d. The church shall in due haste publicly recognize and set apart those who are approved.

Clause 5. Deacon(ess)s shall be reaffirmed biennially by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2). Deacon(ess)s that have served three consecutive two-year terms shall be required to take a one-year sabbatical.

Clause 6. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, the Diaconate shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but shall support the Elders' ministry of the Word, work to maintain the unity of the church, and care for the physical needs of the church. The church may create Deacon(ess) positions to:

a. See that the widows, the orphans, the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the infirm receive spiritual and physical comfort;

b. Coordinate the hospitality ministries of the church;

c. Attend to the normal care and maintenance of church properties;

- d.** Receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, and for reporting from time to time on the use of such funds to both the Elders and the church;
- e.** Attend to the accommodations for public worship (i.e., preparing communion elements, overseeing worship technology, organizing seasonal decorations, etc);
- f.** Assist in distributing the elements during the Lord's Supper; and
- g.** Serve in other specific capacities as the church has needs.

Clause 7. In the event a diaconate position becomes vacant, the Elders may appoint a qualified member to fill that position and assume its responsibilities, until such time as a permanent replacement can be duly recommended by the elders and recognized by the membership of the church.

Clause 8. Removal from office, see IV.B.

Article V. Administration

Section A. Maintaining Records

Clause 1. The Church Secretary (or other appointee if unavailable) shall record the minutes of all regular and special members meetings of the church, keep an accurate roll of the membership, and give reports as requested by the Elders, Deacon(ess)s, or the church membership.

Section B. Budget and Church Resources

Clause 1. The elders and deacon(ess) of finance will prepare and present a yearly budget proposal to the membership at least two-weeks before the Annual Meeting.

a. The budget shall be adopted upon the motion of the Deacon(ess) of Finance and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2).

b. In the event of a failure by the Church to approve a new budget by the beginning of the new Fiscal Year, the church will continue to operate under the most recently adopted budget, with its amendments, until a budget is approved.

c. Once adopted, the budget shall not be overspent unless an unforeseen need arises (e.g., an increase in utility/insurance rates, a new ministry need, or an emergency need). By a vote of the Elders, a new budget category may be created or an existing budget category may be increased by up to 1% of the annual budget. In the event of an emergency, the elders may allocate necessary funds to address the emergency itself. In all cases, the elders must inform the congregation at the next members meeting.

Clause 2. Oversight of and authority over all other resources of the church shall be vested in the membership. Upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members meeting, the congregation may fund certain designated accounts, distinct from the operating budget, which shall be under the oversight and authority of the Elders.

Clause 3. No person or group shall solicit money on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders and the Deacon(ess) of Finance.

Section C. Deacon(ess) of Finance

Clause 1. The church shall select a Deacon(ess) of Finance, who shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the church.

Clause 2. As per IV.C.3, neither Elders nor their spouses shall be eligible for the office of Deacon(ess) of Finance.

Clause 3. He/she shall ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.

Clause 4. He/she shall render to the Elders at least once in every year, or whenever they may require it, an account of all financial transactions and of the financial condition of the church, in addition to presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at regular members meetings.

Clause 5. He/she serves as the Church/Employer Representative in administering the FCMM Benefits and Retirement programs.

Clause 6. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Washington, he/she shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

Clause 7. He/she shall be reaffirmed every two years, but shall not be subject to the diaconal term limitations of IV.D.5.

Clause 8. He/she may be removed from office as per IV.B.

Section D. Church Financial Secretary

Clause 1. The Deacon(ess) of Finance shall, with the approval of the Elders, have authority to appoint and remove a member as the Financial Secretary who shall abide by the policies and procedures established by the Elders and Deacon(ess) of Finance for the accurate accounting, recording, depositing, and reporting of the weekly tithes and offerings. (Note, this is not a diaconal office).

Clause 2. The Financial Secretary shall report directly to the Deacon(ess) of Finance.

Clause 3. The duties of the Financial Secretary shall include but are not limited to:

- a. Counting the cash offerings and number of checks with the assistance of another member, recording the results on the offering count sheet, signed by both.
- b. Recording the giving each week by donor and fund/purpose (whether in person, direct deposit, or online) in the giving tracking program.
- c. Making a weekly deposit into the church's bank account of those funds received.
- d. Providing a copy of the offering count sheet and copies of the deposit slip and deposit summary of funds as printed by the giving tracking program, as well as the deposit receipt from the bank to the Deacon(ess) of Finance or bookkeeper, if appointed, weekly.
- e. Provide annual giving statements at the close of the year to donors.

Clause 4. The Financial Secretary shall be evaluated every two years by the Deacon(ess) of Finance and the Elders, but shall not be subject to the term limitations of IV.D.5.

Article VI. Ratification

This Constitution shall be ratified upon the approval of three quarters of the members present and voting (including provisions of II.E.2) on the question at a regular members meeting of the church, and shall take effect upon the recognition of at least three Elders.

Article VII. Amendments

Section A. Statement of Faith

In keeping with the requirements of the EFCA, the Statement of Faith may not be amended unless an amendment is proposed and officially approved by the member churches of the EFCA. The church may but is not required to adopt such amendments.

The Statement of Faith may be amended to accept changes proposed by the EFCA upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of three-quarters of the members voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2) at any regular members meeting, provided the Amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular members meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

Section B. Constitution

This Constitution may be amended upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of three-quarters of the members voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2) at a regular members meeting, provided the Amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular members meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

Section C. Covenant, Policies

The member and Elder Covenants, and policies may be amended upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of two-thirds of the members voting on the question (including provisions of II.E.2) at any regular members meeting, provided the Amendment is in alignment with I.B and has been offered in writing at any previous regular members meeting,

and has been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

Article VIII. Policies

Section A. Policy on Marriage and Sexuality

Clause 1. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

Clause 2. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other.

Clause 3. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

Clause 4. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual contact, bestiality, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

Clause 5. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, who are members, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement of Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

Clause 6. Any group, organization, or individual that does not agree with this statement on Marriage and Sexuality, shall not be allowed to rent [or host an event on](#) Church property.

Clause 7. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Clause 8. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

Section B. Policy on Baptism

Clause 1. As members of the EFCA, we recognize that interpretations of Scripture regarding the two positions on baptism differ with one another and are in some ways incompatible.²

Clause 2. Yet, our doctrinal statement allows for different interpretations, not because we think Scripture is intrinsically ambiguous on the matter, nor because we think Scripture provides so little information that it is unwise to hold any opinion, but because some of us think believer's baptism is in line with Scripture and that the infant baptism position is mistaken, and some think the infant baptism position is in line with Scripture and that the exclusively believer's baptism position is mistaken.

Clause 3. In other words, both sides hold that Scripture speaks to the matter, but each side holds a view that excludes the other.

Clause 4. However, in the EFCA, we do not believe that our differing views on this ordinance should prevent our unity in the gospel as members of the local church.

Clause 5. Therefore, it is in this sense, and only in this sense, that our Statement of Faith "allows" for both views of baptism.

Clause 6. In regards to membership (see article II), this means that this church shall receive candidates for membership who were baptized (in a Protestant, gospel-preaching church) *either* as infants or as professing believers after they came to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Clause 7. In regards to the administration of baptism in this church:

a. We shall reserve the ordinance of baptism for those who demonstrate a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ (see II.A.1–2).

b. We shall normally administer the ordinance of baptism by means of immersion. If baptismal candidates have medical conditions that would make immersion unsafe, the elders may agree, on a case-by-case basis, to administer baptism through pouring or sprinkling.

Section C. Policy on Indebtedness

² Clauses 1–6 are adapted from, *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*, (170, n. 40)

Clause 1. It is the intent of Olympic Evangelical Free Church to operate free from financial debt with respect to mortgages, loans, and any other form of financial indebtedness. Incurring debt is not prohibited but is discouraged and will be allowed only under exceptional and carefully planned out conditions which limit both the amount and term of indebtedness.

Clause 2. If indebtedness is being contemplated, the circumstances will first be made known to the congregation so they may take the matter before the Lord through prayer and fasting.

Clause 3. Prior to voting, the monthly payment and total interest cost during the life of the obligation of any proposed debt shall be clearly presented to the Elders and the membership.

Clause 4. Any debt obligation shall require a simple majority of the votes of the Council of Elders and a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the votes cast at a duly authorized members meeting (including provisions of II.E.2).

Clause 5. These limitations on debt are not intended to prohibit the use of routine charge accounts needed to conduct regular church affairs as long as those accounts are paid in full within the specified time wherein no interest or carrying charges are incurred.

Article IX. Church Property

Section A. Inconsolable Division

In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership, provided such group is loyal to this constitution. Otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the North-West District of the EFCA, and their decision shall be final.

Section B. Inability to Continue

Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be either donated to a like-minded church or the property may be sold and the proceeds donated to a like-minded ministry. This decision must be approved by 2/3 vote of the remaining members present (including provisions of II.E.2).

Section C. Provision for Merger

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another like-minded church be advisable, the Elders shall be authorized by the church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this church is concerned. This decision must be by 2/3 vote of the remaining members present (including provisions of II.E.2).