

CONSTITUTION
Creekside Evangelical Free Church of Merced
Merced, California

Adopted 03.06.1983
Amended 05.20.2012
Amended 11.17.2013

Preamble

Believing the kingdom of God can best be served by an organization known as a local church, and having faith that Jesus Christ guides the church as its Head, we hereby covenant together in order to carry out more effectively the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ and do ordain and establish the following constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be Evangelical Free Church of Merced doing business as Creekside Evangelical Free Church of Merced.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every way commanded by the Holy Scriptures, and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable and benevolent activities as the constitution and the by-laws of this organization allow. The organization will maintain such property and equipment as may be required to carry out the above stated purpose.

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith

Adopted by the National Conference on June 26, 2008

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

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 manifested 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 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.

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 IV - AFFILIATION AND GOVERNMENT

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with the West District of that association. While cooperating with the Evangelical Free Church of America, this church shall remain its own highest authority under God and shall govern its affairs through its own business meetings. This church shall have a congregational form of government.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who is at least 12 years of age and has received Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, having been born again, and in whose life the fruits of true faith in God are being manifested. (Acts 2:41-47; John 3:3; John 15:5)

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall consist of the chairman, secretary, and treasurer. The authority of the officers shall not extend beyond that established by the church by-laws.

ARTICLE VII - BUSINESS MEETINGS

The fiscal year for this church shall be the calendar year. Two ministry meetings shall be held annually. The Fall ministry meeting of this church shall be held during November at a time and place determined by the church by-laws. At the Fall ministry meeting the approval of the annual budget and transaction of such business as concerns the work of the year shall take place. At the Spring ministry meeting the election of Church Council members and transaction of such business as concerns the work of the year shall take place. Additional regular and special business meetings may be held during the year as set forth in the by-laws of the church.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH PROPERTY

Section A

This church shall have the power to buy, own, and sell real and personal property in its own name.

Section B

If a division occurs in the church, the name and all property shall be retained by those who submit to the authority of this constitution.

Section C

All church property, real and personal, shall be held, and the debts of the corporation shall be contracted, by the officers of the corporation in the name of the corporation.

Private property, real and personal, of the church members and corporate officers shall not be subject to payment of the corporate debts.

Section D

If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, no member shall personally be entitled to any property of the church. All assets of the church shall automatically become the property of the Evangelical Free Church of America West District. The church will be dissolved by a vote of the membership, providing three (3) months notice is given to the members before the vote is taken.

Article IX - MARRIAGE

Section A

We affirm marriage as the original and foundational institution of human society, established by God as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman that is life-long (until separated by death), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), and generative in nature (designed for bearing and rearing children), and it is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Section B

Only such marriages as fit the above definition (Article IX, Section A) may be conducted on church property and/or officiated by members/staff of our congregation.

Section C

While acknowledging the state of confusion which exists in our culture with regard to human sexuality, relationships, and marriage, our affirmation of marriage is intended to help us live out faithfully the truths of God's Word and to apply them consistently through the ministries of the congregation relationally and pastorally with grace, mercy, and love.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

Section A

The church may make any changes in the constitution which may seem necessary. Such changes must be submitted to the membership in writing at least two weeks prior to a regular business meeting. A vote at this meeting will decide if the proposed amendment shall be presented for a final vote at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Such changes may be fully adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the church membership given that a quorum of membership is present.

Section B

The Church Bylaws may be revised at any regular or special Congregational Meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members present when the proposed revisions have been presented to the Church members in writing at least two (2) Sundays prior to meeting where discussion and voting will take place.