

# **New Life Evangelical Free Church**

## **Constitution and By-Laws**

(Date of first rectification December, 2002)

(Date of second rectification September, 2005)

### **Article 1**

The name of the church shall be: New Life Evangelical Free Church, hereafter called the Church.

### **Article 2: Statement of Belief**

We believe:

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Devine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, Creator of all things, indefinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is the true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross as sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become the children of God.
7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
8. That the true church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head.
9. That only those who are thus members of the true church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
10. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
11. In the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this *blessed hope* has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
12. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgement and everlasting conscious punishment.

### **Article 3: Purpose**

The purpose of the Church shall be:

1. To worship and to glorify God
2. To preach and teach the Word of God
3. To encourage mutual edification and spiritual growth
4. To win the unsaved to Christ
5. To assist the spread of the Gospel in the mission fields at home and abroad

### **Article 4: Membership**

The Church will receive into membership those who:

1. Confess Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and have also been baptized
2. Accept the Bible as the final authority for their life
3. Desire to share in the Church's fellowship and ministry by attending regularly the Sunday worship and cell group/fellowship activities
4. Are willing to *learn* to tithe
5. Will abide by the Church's Constitution and By-laws
6. Are willing to share the Gospel with others

### **Article 5: Government**

The Church shall be independent or self-governing, and shall remain its own highest authority under Jesus Christ. The government of the Church is vested in its membership and executed through the Church Board.

### **Article 6: Affiliation**

This Church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of Canada, and with the Prairie District Conference.

### **Article 7: Property Rights**

This Church shall have power to buy, own, and sell real and personal property in its own name with the consent of at least three-fourth of the members present in a congregational meeting. In the case the Church is dissolved either by its members or other reasons, no member(s) will personally be entitled to any assets of the Church. All assets and property rights will pass to the Prairie District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada. If a division occurs in the Church, the name and all property shall be retained by those adhering to the Constitution. In the event of a dispute as to which faction is adhering to the Constitution, the Prairie District Conference shall review the dispute and make a decision binding to both factions.

Any surplus generated through the operation of the Church shall be used for achieving the said purposes of the Church; members shall have no claim whatsoever.

### **Article 8: Congregational Meeting**

The Church shall hold quarterly congregational meeting with one of them designated as the annual meeting for the election of officers, approval of the budget, consideration of membership, as well as any other business which concerns the work of the Church. Other

congregational meetings can be called by the Church Board with two weeks advance notice at the written request of at least one-third of the membership.

#### **Article 9: By-laws**

Internal rules and appendixes used to supplement the Church Constitution are known as By-laws.

#### **Article 10: Amendments**

On three-fourth affirming majority of all the members of the Church Board, said proposed amendment shall be presented to the membership and at said membership meeting, on three-fourth affirming majority of all the members present thereat, said proposed amendment shall be a part of this constitution. Motion to amend the Constitution has to be submitted in writing to the Church Board who shall notify the membership of the said motion at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

### **By-law (1) of the New Life Evangelical Free Church**

#### **Article 1: Membership**

##### ***Section 1: Eligibility***

- A. Any person who accepts Article 4 of the constitution on membership, having been baptized, is eligible for membership consideration.
  
- B. All those brothers and sisters who are baptized at this church automatically become members of this church. The Church welcomes and encourages transferred brothers and sisters to apply for membership, but only those who have been regularly attending church activities for at least six months will be considered for acceptance into church membership. This is to ensure that both the Church and the applicants have sufficient time to understand each other; this knowledge will enable these future new members to find suitable positions where they would best serve the Church.
  
- C. Only members who are 16 years or older are eligible to vote at congregational meetings or to hold church offices.

##### ***Section 2: Admission***

Applications shall be made to the Church Board by completing the Church's membership application form. The Church Board will review and after three-fourth majority had passed, it will make recommendations of membership to the congregation in any public meeting. The applicants' names will be posted for at least one month before becoming members, unless valid objections in writing are received and dealt with by the Church Board.

### ***Section 3: Membership Status***

#### **A. Active Members**

All members in good standing and who regularly attend church services are considered active members. Only active members can vote in church meetings.

#### **B. Inactive Members**

All active members who have not regularly attended church services for the past six months will be considered inactive members. They will not be eligible to vote or hold church offices.

#### **C. Any inactive member who regularly re-attends church services for one month shall once again become an active member.**

### ***Section 4: Discipline***

Any member who is found to live with persistent actions or sustained attitudes that contradicts the Bible should be pointed out by a member who comes to know about it. If the subject member refuses to repent, the counselling member should bring along two other members to offer further advice. If such effort still fails to bring about changes in behaviour, this matter should then be brought to the attention of the pastor or the Church Board. Matthew 18:15-20, Luke 17:3, and Galatians 6:1 shall be used as basis for discipline. If after being counselled, the member continues to live in an unrepentant condition, the Church Board shall implement disciplinary action with the intent to restore the subject member into fellowship. The disciplinary action includes but not limited to the removal of the subject member from positions of leadership or teaching, the prohibition of offending conduct, the requirement that an apology be given, the requirement that the subject member evidences an attitude of submission to the authority of the church or a spirit of contrition or the termination of membership upon approval at a congregational meeting. However, the notice of termination of membership to the member being disciplined will only take effect after all disciplinary actions have been taken.

## **Article 2: Church Organization**

### ***Section 1: The Congregation***

The organization structure is congregational in nature. Thus the highest and final authority in administrative matters is vested in the congregation.

### ***Section 2: The Church Board***

All administrative function of the Church shall be the responsibility of the Church Board. It consists of pastor and pastoral staff, and deacons.

**A. Pastor**

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time (except during “suitability” or probation period). He becomes a member of the church when called. The calling is executed through the Church Board with the approval of three-fourth majority from the congregation in a general meeting. The procedure pertaining to the calling of the pastor, term of service, pastoral ministry, feedback, salary adjustment and disciplinary procedure are detailed in By-law (2) titled “Articles pertaining to pastoral calling”.

**B. Other Pastoral Staff**

Other pastoral staff may be added when deemed necessary by the Church Board, pending approval by the congregation. They shall work in conjunction with, and under the direction of the Pastor.

**C. Deacons**

Deacons are elected from the active members to assist the pastor to serve the Church. The deacons shall be divided to fulfill the following functions:

**1. Chairperson**

The Church Board shall appoint a chairperson from within itself. The chairperson shall preside over the Church Board and all church business meetings.

**2. Secretary**

The Church Board shall appoint a secretary from within itself. The secretary’s duties shall include keeping records of all church business meetings as well as of the Church Boards, and attend to correspondence of the church and preserve all records of the Church.

**3. Treasurer**

The Church Board shall appoint a treasurer from within itself. The treasurer shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to record keeping, banking, disbursement and reporting in regard to church funds.

All the above 3 positions should be held by different members of the congregation.

**4. Deacons With Other Duties**

Other elected deacons shall assist the church in functions such as Christian Education, management of facilities, mission, fellowship, and other spiritual/administrative matters.

***Section 3: Board of Trustees***

Board of Trustees is made up of the Church Treasurer and two other members elected from the Church membership. The trustees ascertain and act on behalf of the Church in

connection with all Church agreements. They also ensure that all Church documents are kept safely and properly; that a year-end documentation of all Church properties be made and reported to the congregation.

#### ***Section 4: Auditor***

An auditor is to be elected from the membership and whose duty is to audit the Church's finance. The result of such audit will be reported to the membership at the annual congregational meeting.

#### ***Section 5: Term and Election***

##### **A. Qualification of Deacon and Trustee**

Base on the general qualification laid out in 1 Tim 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, the following requirements are set for church deacons:

1. Faithful to the church by regularly attending church sponsored services and make themselves available when the need arises.
2. Strive toward unity by having a teachable spirit, attending church prayer meetings and support the decision made by the Church Board.
3. Give generously toward the work of the Church as the Lord enables.

##### **B. The Term**

Deacons and trustees are elected for a term of one year. They can be re-elected twice more for a maximum of three years total.

##### **C. The Election**

Deacons are nominated by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee consists of the pastor, one member appointed by the Church Board and an elected member from the congregation. Any active member can nominate any other active member, provided the nominee is willing to stand for election. The election of deacons is held at a congregational meeting, for which a three-fourth majority is needed. For the calling or termination of a pastor or the amendment of the Constitution or its By-laws, a three-fourth majority is needed. In all other cases a simple majority shall carry motions and decide all elections.

##### **D. Building Committee & Pastoral Search Committee**

The Church Board may propose to form the above-mentioned committee when the need arises. Members of the committee are to be made up of elected members, Church Board representative, pastor or chairperson of the Church Board.

#### ***Section 6: Quorum***

A quorum shall consist of one-third of active voting members.

### ***Section 7: Amendments***

A motion to amend the By-laws must be presented in writing to the Church Board two weeks in advance of the congregational meeting. On three-fourth affirming majority of all the members of the Church Board, said proposed amendment shall be presented in advance to the membership and at said membership meeting, on three-fourth affirming majority of all the active members present thereat, said proposed amendment shall be a part of the Church By-laws.

## **By-law (2) of the New Life Evangelical Free Church Concerning the calling of Pastor**

(Date drafted: Dec 2002; First revision: September, 2005)

Rules pertaining to the calling of a Pastor to New Life Evangelical Free Church are as followed:

### ***Section 1: Calling Procedure***

- 1) Decision on the calling of a pastor, including the related budget, shall be made at the recommendation of the Church Board and approved by the congregation.
- 2) The Pastoral Search Committee will be responsible for all the work related to the selection and calling of prospective pastor. The Pastoral Search Committee shall comprise the current pastor (or Chairperson of the Church Board), a deacon and three elected representatives from the congregation.
- 3) The Pastoral Search Committee shall advertise, call and select appropriate prospective pastoral candidate for initial interview.
- 4) Upon successful initial interview, the Pastoral Search Committee shall make arrangement to provide the necessary opportunity for the members of the congregation to understand and to come to know the pastoral candidate better in order to decide whether or not to call the candidate. The following steps may be considered for checking a candidate's suitability:
  - (1) Invite the pastoral candidate to preach several times at church
  - (2) Ask the pastoral candidate to teach Sunday school
  - (3) Ask the pastoral candidate, including the spouse of the candidate, to have several sessions of face-to-face dialogues with members of the congregation.
  - (4) Arrange a dialogue session between the pastoral candidate, Church Board members and co-workers.

How the above process is to be carried out, the actual numbers of preaching and dialogue sessions to be arranged are at the discretion of the Pastoral Search Committee.

- 5) The Pastoral Search Committee shall present to the Church Board, in writing, their opinions including all those collected from members of the congregation.
- 6) The Church Board shall only recommend the pastoral candidate to the congregation for consideration upon the approval of at least three-fourth of the

Church Board members. The Church Board shall be responsible for reporting to the congregation on all collected opinions in order that the congregation may make an informed decision

- 7) During congregation meeting, there must be an affirming majority of at least three-fourth of the active membership present before the prospective pastoral candidate may be called to pastor at New Life Evangelical Free Church

### ***Section 2: Term of Service of Pastor***

- 1) Our church constitution by-law 1 article 2 section 2A states that: “The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time”. However, after considering the actual needs of the Church and the pastor being called, it is felt that it is in both party’s interest that the first twelve months of the called pastor’s service at church be considered the “suitability or probation period”. During this period of time, either the Church or the newly appointed pastor may unconditionally terminate the employment relationship unilaterally. After successfully completed the “suitability or probation period”, the pastor’s term of service at Church shall be indefinite.
- 2) After the suitability or probation period, if the pastor decides to resign, at least three months’ notice has to be served to the Church.
- 3) After the suitability or probation period, if the Church decides to terminate the services of the pastor, a notice of termination of no less than three months has to be served. However, this requirement does not apply in the case where “Pastor’s Reprimand Procedure” as outlined in section 4 of this by-law has to be implemented.

### ***Section 3: Feedback of Pastor’s Performance and Salary Adjustment***

- 1) In order to encourage communication and sharing among pastor, the Church Board and members of the congregation with the end purpose of improving church ministries, church members may express their opinions to the Church Board or to the pastor directly. The Church Board or its representatives (two or more) must meet with the pastor at least once a year to honestly provide feedbacks concerning his/her ministry. Any discussions, suggestions and agreements made should be documented for future reference and follow up.
- 2) Upon completion of the feedback process, the Church Board should discuss the pastor’s salary adjustment to be based on changes in inflation rate, the pastor’s performance, salary of equally qualified pastors at other churches, the church’s financial ability to fund adjustment etc.

### ***Section 4: Pastor’s Reprimand Procedure***

- 1) Should there be concerns relating to the pastor’s ministry by members of the congregation, such concerns have to be brought to the Church Board in writing by at least two members before any action will be taken by the Church Board (1 Timothy 5:19).

- 2) Upon investigation, discussion and understanding by the Church Board, if the pastor has indeed be found to be against the bible in faith, character, deeds or in carrying out his/her ministry in error or wilful omission, the Church Board shall send three representatives to humbly, sincerely and lovingly advise the pastor (Mathews 18:16). Should such action fails to improve the situation, the Board may consider writing to the Evangelical Free Churches' Prairie District office for help (if warranted, to the Evangelical Free Church of Canada also as the next step). Should the problem still fails to be resolved, the Church Board may consider termination of service of the Pastor. The termination recommendation by the Church Board shall be presented to the congregation for approval and upon an affirming majority of at least three-fourth of the members present at the congregational meeting called for the purpose, the pastor's services with the Church can be terminated.
- 3) Should the pastor be relieved of his or her service based on the above reasons, the Church Board may consider paying the pastor an appropriate severance of up to a maximum of three months' salary.