

**Constitution**  
**Church of the Canyons**  
*Approved 6\26\2016*

**ARTICLE I**  
**CORPORATE NAME**

The corporate name of this church shall be "The Evangelical Free Church of the Canyons," incorporated under the laws of the State of California and located in Santa Clarita, California.

**ARTICLE II**  
**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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

**God**

1. 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.

**The Bible**

2. 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.

**The Human Condition**

3. 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.

**Jesus Christ**

4. 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.

### **The Work of Christ**

5. 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.

### **The Holy Spirit**

6. 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.

### **The Church**

7. 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.

### **Christian Living**

8. 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.

### **Christ's Return**

9. 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.

### **Response and Eternal Destiny**

10. 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. *(Revised 6/28/09)*

**ARTICLE III  
MISSION**

To lovingly proclaim Jesus to everyone and to teach believers to love, obey, and serve Him (Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:28).

**ARTICLE IV  
AFFILIATION**

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) and locally with EFCA West. While being a member of the EFCA, it shall be independent, self-governed, and its own highest authority under God.

**ARTICLE V  
MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Evangelical Free Church of the Canyons (COC) shall be open to all persons who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who are in accord with the Statement of Faith, who subscribe to the Constitution and By-laws of this church, and who exhibit a desire to commit themselves to the mission, purposes, and programs of the church. The Board of Elders are the final authority when called upon to arbitrate disputes between fellow members within the church. Church members are subject to church discipline according to the precepts of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-20; Titus 3:10, etc.).

**ARTICLE VI  
OFFICERS**

**Section A. Church & Corporate Officers**

The Board of Elders is the Board of Directors for the Corporation. The officers of this church/corporation shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer selected from among the current Board of Elders. The four officers of the Board of Elders shall serve in these same capacities as corporate officers.

**ARTICLE VII  
GOVERNANCE**

Christ is the head of the church. The membership selects the Board of Elders to collectively exercise leadership and authority over them, yet the highest expression of the will of God for this membership is the mind of Christ as expressed through the membership.

The form of governance for this church shall be Congregational. The Board of Elders is empowered to oversee and administrate all church functions both spiritual and corporate except those reserved for the membership as specified in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may be enacted at any duly called business meeting of this church with a 30% quorum of the membership present as specified in the Bylaws and with a 75% majority of members voting, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE IX BYLAWS**

A supplement known as Bylaws shall embody procedures for operations in accordance with the Constitution. Procedures for amendments to the Bylaws shall be outlined in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE X PROPERTY RIGHTS**

### **Section A. Real and Personal Property**

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

### **Section B. Distribution of Assets**

If the church membership votes to dissolve and ceases to function as a church, or if the membership should be dissolved through some disaster, no member(s) shall be personally entitled to any assets of the church. All assets and property rights shall pass to EFCA West region of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

### **Section C. Merger**

In the event that this church shall vote to merge with another church, property rights shall be retained by the new, combined church.

### **Section D. Disputes**

In the event that a division occurs in the church, the name and all property rights shall be retained by those adhering to this Constitution and Bylaws.

When called upon by the Board of Elders, The Evangelical Free Church of America shall act as an arbitrator in any significant corporate dispute or division within the church. The decision of the arbitrator shall be binding and final.

It is expressly prohibited by the Scriptures to take church disputes to civil courts (1 Cor. 6:1-7). Therefore, any individual or group that introduces any action before any civil court forfeits any and all interest in church property.

**ARTICLE XI  
MEMBERSHIP VOTING PERCENTAGES**

**Section A. 75% of those voting**

The items requiring 75% are: approval or amendment of constitution; hiring of pastors; affirmation of elders, deacons, deaconesses; merger with another church; dissolution, insolvency, or petition for bankruptcy.

**Section B. 66% of those voting**

The items requiring 66% are: approval of annual budget (if a budget is not approved, the previous budget will remain in force until a new budget is approved); acquisition, divestiture, or encumbrance of real property.

**Section C. 50% plus one (simple majority)**

The items requiring a simple majority are: the removal of pastors, elders, deacons or deaconesses; approval or alteration of the bylaws

**ARTICLE XII  
CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Man was created by God as either male or female, biologically defined and distinct sexes (Gen. 1:27; 2:5-23; 1 Cor. 11:11-15; Rom. 1:26-27), set by God for each individual (Ps. 119:13-14). God defines marriage as between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5) and sex is only to be expressed in marriage (Exod. 20:14; Lev. 18:1-30; Matt. 5:27-32; 19:1-9; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-7).