

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF  
CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE**

**An Evangelical Free Church**

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**THE  
CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE**

**I**

NAME

The organization shall be known as the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE by which name it is incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter designated as the “Church”). The terms “congregation” and “membership” are herein used interchangeably and designate the corporate body of all members of the church.

**ARTICLE**

**II**

ARTICLES 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 by 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 grace.

### *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 in 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 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.

## **ARTICLE**

### **III**

#### **STANDARDS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

We believe that the scriptures enjoin a life in which a Christian gives witness to union with Christ by manifesting the fruit of the indwelling Spirit in all aspects of life.

We believe that the Christian life should be characterized by love for and obedience to God's Word; love toward all (even those considered to be enemies); humility; and honesty, fidelity and integrity in all family, social, business and professional relationships.

We believe that the Christian will be increasingly sensitive to the sin of his or her own heart and will yield to Christ as Lord of his or her life for victory over pride, self-seeking, jealousy, a critical spirit, bitterness and all other characteristics of the old nature. We

believe that, as the Christian permits God to work in his or her heart, the Christian will remain separate from those things which tend to hinder work of the Holy Spirit and which impair the capacities of body, mind or spirit, realizing these are gifts of God for which the Christian is accountable and which are to be separated unto Him for His purposes. Moreover, we believe that the Christian should desire to mature in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and become increasingly sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to any practices which hinder relationship with Christ.

As the Christian is made aware of such, he or she will, regardless of the standards of others, discontinue such practices. Further, the Christian realizes that “no man liveth to himself”, and will gladly forego anything which causes a brother or sister to stumble.

While it is understood that being born again through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior is the basis for membership in the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE, we recommend to all members and any who are seeking membership to prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit concerning their attitude toward the scriptural standards of the Christian life as outlined in this statement.

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Galatians 5:22-23  | 4. Romans 12:1-2 |
| 2. Philippians 1:9-11 | 5. Romans 14:13  |
| 3. Romans 6:11-13     |                  |

#### **ARTICLE**

#### **IV**

#### **GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

The government of this church is vested in its membership which constitutes the congregation and is facilitated through the Official Board of the church.

#### **ARTICLE**

#### **V**

#### **RIGHTS OF THE CHURCH**

The corporation of the church, through the Official Board, shall have sole title to its real property and shall be sole owner of any equity it may have in any real property.

**ARTICLE  
VI**

**AMENDMENTS**

This constitution, except Article IV, may be amended by the following procedure. Amendments may originate only in the Official Board. An amendment may be adopted by the Official Board only after consideration in at least two monthly meetings, of which all members of the Official Board of the church shall have been previously and duly notified in writing, including the text of the proposed amendment. Adoption of amendments shall require a favorable vote by three-fourths of the members of the Official Board. This shall then be taken to the congregation, but only after copies of the proposed amendment have been distributed to all active members. All of this must precede a vote on an amendment. A two-thirds majority of the congregation present and voting is required to carry such an amendment in keeping with Article VI of the Bylaws.

# **BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1 - Qualifications:**

The membership roll is open only to those who have personally received Jesus Christ into their heart as their personal Savior, and who give satisfactory evidence of this in the form of a life lived in accordance with scriptural principles, as determined by the Official Board (John 1:12 and Romans 10:9-10).

A prospective member will be asked if he or she is able to abide by the Constitution (including its Articles of Faith) and Bylaws of the church. In appropriate cases, the Official Board, or representatives thereof, may counsel with a person as to whether membership in the church would be wise and prudent where significant disagreements with the Constitution and Bylaws are present.

#### **SECTION 2 - Procedure:**

##### **1. Active Membership**

Persons desiring to unite with the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE are to contact either a member of the Official Board, one of the pastors, or the church office. A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws and an application blank will then be sent or given to the candidate so he or she might read and study it. This will precede a call by a pastor or one of the elders.

Upon discussing the matter of membership with the candidate, inquiring concerning his or her Christian relationship and ascertaining if the candidate is in agreement with the Constitution (including its Articles of Faith) and Bylaws of the church, the name shall then be presented to the Official Board of the church for approval. Following approval, acceptance of the candidate shall be communicated to the congregation in a timely manner.

##### **2. Active Membership of Children:**

Children who give evidence of having exercised saving faith in Christ may be received into membership according to Article I, Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws. The privileges of voting or carrying official responsibilities shall not be extended to them until they have reached the age of 18.

### 3. Affiliate Membership:

As there may be people in our area who are here only for a limited period of time, but who may desire a church home and yet do not want to sever relations with their home churches, such persons may become affiliate members by presenting a letter from their church or pastor showing that they are members in good and regular standing and recommending them for affiliate membership. Upon leaving the area, the names of such persons will be automatically dropped from the roll of affiliate membership.

Affiliate members shall be entitled to all the privileges and liable to all the rules, regulations and discipline governing regular members, except that they shall have no vote in congregational meetings, nor shall they hold positions on the Official Board. Procedure for affiliate membership shall be handled according to Article I, Section 2, Paragraph 1 of the Bylaws.

### SECTION 3 - Termination:

#### 1. Active Member:

When an active member in good standing unites with another church and desires a letter, he or she or the new church must request it in writing. Upon receipt of such a written request, the church office is authorized to grant a certification of dismissal and recommendation to the other church and to delete such name from our church roll.

#### 2. Inactive Member:

When a written request is made by an inactive member who unites with another church, a certificate will be sent stating that such a member has been inactive (according to Article I, Section 4, Paragraph 1 of the Bylaws) and recommendation will be made that the member be accepted on restatement of profession of faith.

#### 3. Joining Another Church Without Notification:

If and when it is learned that a member of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE has joined another church but has not notified us, such name will be dropped from our roll by majority vote of the Official Board.

### SECTION 4 - Change of Membership:

#### 1. Non-attendance:

When a person has not attended the regular services of the church for a period of six months and this absence has not been caused by either sickness or some other providential hindrance, then the person involved shall be contacted by either a pastor

or an elder concerning this lack of interest. Should the person indicate no renewal of interest and still prefer an association with the church, the Official Board shall direct the church office to place such name on the inactive roll of membership. If such persons have moved away, such procedure may be handled by mail. When such action is taken, the person involved shall be advised in writing by the church office. The vote needed for this action will be a majority vote of the Official Board.

## 2. Reinstatement:

Should a person on the inactive roll indicate a renewed interest by attendance at the public services and other participation, such person may request the Church to reinstate his or her active membership. Such reinstatement shall be made upon approval by the Official Board with a majority vote.

## SECTION 5 - Discipline, Dismissal of Members:

### 1. Discipline:

The pastors, with the elders, shall constitute the Discipline Committee of the church and are empowered to make their own decision in cases of discipline according to spiritual teaching. Such action must be exercised in the light and spirit of Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:16-17.

### 2. Dismissal:

Upon examination of the person involved, if the Official Board finds the member to be no longer abiding by the Articles of Faith of our church or living in accordance with scriptural principles, they can, with a majority vote, dismiss such a person from membership.

### 3. Restoration:

Should a dismissed member experience spiritual restoration and desire renewed fellowship with the church, such person may make such a request known to a pastor or member of the Official Board. Upon favorable consideration by the Official Board of the church, such person shall be called to give his or her testimony to the Official Board and upon their approval by a simple majority vote, shall be reinstated into membership.

## ARTICLE II

### THE LEAD SENIOR PASTOR

## SECTION 1 - Definition:

The lead senior pastor of the church shall be an ordained man, duly called by the membership and installed in due process.

## SECTION 2 - Qualifications:

The qualifications of the lead senior pastor of this church are enjoined in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). He shall be set apart to “labor in the Word and in doctrine.” Further, he shall conscientiously subscribe to the Constitution and Bylaws of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE.

His private and family life must be exemplary, thereby adorning his profession in the Gospel.

He must be a man zealous and industrious in the ministry, kind and loving toward all his people, compassionate and concerned for the lost and helpful and cooperative with the Official Board of the church.

## SECTION 3—Call and Tenure:

### 1. Formation of Search Committee:

When necessary or when the Official Board deems appropriate, the Official Board shall create a Search Committee whose function shall be to evaluate potential candidates to become the new lead senior pastor. This committee shall be composed of elders and members from the congregation at large. These members shall be selected by the Official Board. The committee shall meet under the direction of, and shall conduct its affairs pursuant to a written charge from, the Official Board.

### 2. Duties of Search Committee:

This Search Committee shall act prayerfully, expeditiously and tactfully to evaluate potential lead senior pastors. When the Search Committee has agreed by a two-thirds majority vote of its members on a prospective candidate to recommend, it shall then make its recommendation to the Official Board in a regular or duly called meeting. The Official Board can only present the candidate to the congregation after an affirmative three-quarters vote of those members of the Official Board present and voting.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Disposition:

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “those members of the Official Board present and voting” refers to all members of the Official Board present and voting, including by electronic means as permitted by these bylaws.

The Official Board will then call for a congregational meeting which shall be announced two Sundays before the meeting. In acting on such a recommendation of a pastoral call, an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of all members present and voting shall be required to approve such a call. Upon such a favorable vote, the congregation thereby delegates and empowers the Official Board to extend the call to the candidate to become lead senior pastor.

#### SECTION 4 - Office & Duties of Senior Pastor:

The lead senior pastor shall be the lead teacher and chief executive officer of the church. He shall also conscientiously perform such duties as may be arranged between the Official Board and himself as lead senior pastor. He shall be a voting member of the Official Board. He will be subject to an annual performance review by the Board and shall be responsible for all communications between the Official Board and all persons in the service of the church.

#### SECTION 5 - Terminating the Lead Senior Pastor's Services:

The services of the lead senior pastor may be terminated in three ways:

1. Upon his voluntary resignation made either to the congregation or to the Official Board. The lead senior pastor shall submit his resignation to the Official Board of the church, giving at least 30 days' notice. The Official Board shall act upon such a resignation; and upon acceptance of same shall call for a congregational meeting, to notify the congregation of the lead senior pastor's resignation.
2. Upon submittal of his resignation when so requested by the Official Board. The Official Board of the church by a two-thirds vote of all its members may, for reasons it deems valid and appropriate, consider asking the lead senior pastor to resign. The lead senior pastor shall be notified in writing of the reasons for such consideration. The Official Board and the lead senior pastor shall discuss these reasons. The Official Board may then ask for the lead senior pastor's resignation if the response is not deemed satisfactory. The lead senior pastor will then submit his resignation within 48 hours. Upon submission of his resignation, all duties may be suspended at the discretion of the Official Board. Submission of the resignation is to be followed by a congregational meeting duly announced two Sundays before the meeting; the meeting may be on the second Sunday. Acceptance will be by a majority of active members of the church present and voting. In this case, voting shall be by secret ballot.
3. By recommendation of the Official Board to the congregation that he be dismissed. Should the lead senior pastor refuse to submit his resignation, the Official Board may, for reasons it deems valid and appropriate, act to dismiss him. Such action will require a two-thirds affirmative vote of all members of the Official Board. Upon the Official

Board's vote for dismissal, all duties of the lead senior pastor will be immediately suspended. Should the Official Board take this action, it will then call a meeting of the congregation, duly announced two Sundays before the meeting and duly stated two Sundays before the meeting. The meeting may be on the second Sunday. The Official Board will recommend that the congregation take similar action. An affirmative vote by a majority of the active members of the church present and voting shall be required to confirm dismissal as recommended by the Official Board. Again, voting shall be by secret ballot.

### ARTICLE III

#### SENIOR PASTORS AND OTHER MINISTRY STAFF POSITIONS

Any senior pastor of the church shall be a candidate duly credentialed by the Evangelical Free Church or by a similar credentialing authority acceptable to the Official Board. He shall be subject to and meet all of the qualifications set forth in Article II, Section 2 of these Bylaws applicable to the lead senior pastor.

Subject to the foregoing, the establishment, qualifications, call, tenure, duties and all other matters pertaining to senior pastors shall be determined by the lead senior pastor and the Official Board and set forth in writing.

The establishment, title, qualifications, call, tenure, duties and all other matters pertaining to other ministry staff positions in the church shall be determined by the senior leadership and the Official Board and set forth in writing. Persons holding such other ministry staff positions shall not be members of the Official Board.

## ARTICLE IV

### THE OFFICIAL BOARD

#### SECTION 1 - Selection:

There shall be selected as members of the Official Board of the church elders taken from the active male membership of the church, in such number as shall be determined from time to time, by the Official Board. The lead senior pastor shall also serve as a member of the Official Board.

#### SECTION 2 - Responsibilities of Elders:

In line with the scripture (James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-3), elders are responsible to provide spiritual counsel; teach and defend the truth of the gospel; encourage the church, including pastoral staff; pray for healing and well-being; and to maintain moral, legal and financial responsibility for CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE.

#### SECTION 3 - Term of Office:

1. The term of office for elders shall be for three years. The term of office for elders shall be so arranged that, as nearly as possible, one-third shall retire each year.
2. An elder shall be eligible for reaffirmation for two consecutive terms. After completion of two consecutive terms of office, an elder shall be ineligible for reaffirmation to the Official Board until a full year has elapsed. This shall apply to a person affirmed to fill the unexpired term of an elder provided the unexpired term is two years or more in length.
3. When additions or deletions to the number of elders are deemed necessary by the Official Board, the length of the first term in office may be altered so that, as nearly as possible, one-third shall retire each year, provided that no adjustments shall be made which are contrary to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this section.

## ARTICLE V

### MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

#### SECTION 1 - Annual Business Meeting:

At the discretion of the Official Board, an annual business meeting may be called each year during the month of August to approve the budget for the ensuing year, affirm elder candidates for the coming term, and address any other business that is deemed appropriate by the Official Board. The annual business meeting may be held as part of a regular church service or as a separate meeting. In the event that an Annual Business Meeting is not called, the Official Board shall ensure that members of the congregation have the opportunity to ask questions of the Official Board at least one month in advance of a vote to approve the budget, affirm elders, and other business during the month of August. The vote may occur in a congregational meeting, following or during a Sunday morning service or some other appropriate time by written ballot.

#### SECTION 2 - Special Business Meetings:

Special business meetings of the church membership may be called by the lead senior pastor or by the Official Board. Special business meetings can also be called on written request to the Official Board by 25 or more active members. Notice of meetings shall be handled in the prescribed manner as stated in Article VI, Section 1 of the Bylaws.

#### SECTION 3 - Meetings of Official Board:

The Official Board of the church shall meet regularly on such schedule as shall be established by the Official Board. It shall also meet at other times as called by the senior pastor, the chairman or by request of four other members of the Official Board with a week's notice. Any other meetings of the Official Board can be called by common consent of a majority of the Official Board.

#### SECTION 4 - Participation by Telephone Conference or Other Means

Members of the Official Board may participate in meetings by means of a telephone conference or similar communication which enables those physically present at the meeting and those in attendance by such other means to hear and speak to each other, and such participation in a meeting by a person using such telephone or communication device shall cause such person to be deemed to be present at the meeting.

### ARTICLE VI

#### CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

##### SECTION 1 - Duly Called Meeting:

A duly called meeting of the membership shall be announced by the church's regular means of communication at least one week before the meeting. Such a call shall indicate the purpose of the meeting and only those matters announced therein may be considered.

##### SECTION 2 - Quorum:

A quorum of the membership shall be those present at a duly called meeting. There shall be no voting by proxy.

### ARTICLE VII

#### NOMINATION, AFFIRMATION OF ELDERS

##### SECTION 1 - Nominating Process:

The nominating process rests with the Official Board.

##### SECTION 2 - Procedure for Confirmation:

Selection of prospective candidates shall be the responsibility of the Official Board. If more names are submitted than necessary, the Official Board will prioritize the candidates by present evaluation of leadership. The candidates will be contacted and,

upon acceptance by the candidates, training by the Official Board and pastors will occur.

The final ballot shall have approval of at least two-thirds of the members of the Official Board before presentation to the congregation.

Should a member of the congregation have questions about, or uncertainty of, a candidate's qualifications for elder, then the Matthew 18 principle should be incorporated. The individual should go to the candidate first. If resolution is not satisfactory, then the member should bring his concerns or accusations to the Official Board.

#### SECTION 3 - Procedure for Affirmation:

Affirmation shall take place at a duly called congregational meeting following or during a Sunday morning service or some other appropriate time by written ballot. The ballot of elders shall contain the names of as many candidates as the Official Board has need of. Affirmation shall be determined by the candidates receiving at least two-thirds approval by members of the congregation voting.

#### SECTION 4 - Vacancies on Official Board:

Should vacancies occur in the office of elder due to any cause, the Official Board may fill, by appointment, the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

#### SECTION 5 - Failure to Hold Elections:

Should circumstances prevent the holding of a congregational meeting for the affirmation of members of the Official Board at the regular time, then all elders shall hold office until the affirmation process can be completed and their successors are affirmed.

## ARTICLE VIII

### GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

#### SECTION 1:

The government of this church is vested in its membership which constitutes the congregation and is facilitated through the Official Board.

## SECTION 2:

The Official Board shall consist of the lead senior pastor and all elders; each shall have an equal vote. The Official Board shall elect its own Chairman and recording secretary from time to time.

## SECTION 3:

The Official Board shall be the executive of the congregation in its dealings with pastors, employees, affiliate organizations, branch works and any outside organizations.

## SECTION 4:

The Official Board shall have supervision over the business transaction and general work of the church, its organizations and shall govern the church in accordance with law and the rights, powers, duties and responsibilities which may be granted by these bylaws or by any applicable laws and regulations.

## SECTION 5:

The Official Board may create whatever committees the Official Board considers necessary or appropriate to assist in fulfilling its governance accountability.

## SECTION 6:

The Official Board shall oversee and control all property belonging to the church. The Official Board shall not encumber with loans, transfer, sell or purchase any real estate for the church except by express authority conveyed through a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a duly called business meeting.

## SECTION 7:

The Official Board may appoint deacons, (as provided in the immediately following paragraph)–committees, councils, and individuals for the transaction of its business. Such committees, councils, and individuals shall have such authority and responsibilities as shall be validly delegated by, and shall be answerable and in subjection to, the Official Board.

The Official Board may appoint deacons, taken from the active membership of the church in such number as shall be determined from time to time by the Official Board. The deacons shall hold themselves in readiness to assist in guiding the spiritual life of the church, ministering its ordinances and performing any necessary calling. They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and to serve in full conformity with the standards found in the Word of God in I Timothy 3:8-13. The appointment of deacons may be made subject to such selection process as the Official Board shall determine. The deacons may, to the extent determined by the Official Board, serve terms consistent with those in Section 3 of Article IV of these Bylaws applicable to elders.

Except where expressly prohibited by the Constitution, Bylaws or the corporate charter of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE, or by applicable law, all authority and responsibilities of the Official Board may be so delegated, either by general policy or specific delegation of authority subject to the Official Board's continuing oversight.

#### SECTION 8:

The Official Board shall at all times be subject to the majority vote of the congregation as in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE.

### ARTICLE IX

#### THE CORPORATION OF THE CHURCH

##### SECTION 1 - Officers:

There shall be five corporate officers of the corporation elected by the Official Board at the beginning of each year. The corporate officers shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer.

##### SECTION 2 - Responsibilities of Officers:

The corporate officers shall perform all necessary legal functions of the corporation and keep proper records, legal papers, documents and the official seal of the corporation. They shall perform only such functions as directed by the Official Board on behalf of the congregation, provided they do not conflict with the foregoing Constitution or Bylaws or the corporate charter of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE.

### ARTICLE X

## THE CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall be September 1 through August 31.

## ARTICLE XI

### AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these Bylaws, not in conflict with the foregoing Constitution or the corporate charter of the CHURCH AT CHARLOTTE, may be made in accordance with the same procedure as making amendments to the Constitution.