



Affiliation

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF THE EFCA

On behalf of the Evangelical Free Church of America, the Eastern District Association will receive into affiliation churches that request membership and meet the following requirements:

- The [Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America](#) shall be adopted verbatim as a part of their constitution.
- Churches shall have **Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws that are consistent with** the policies and practices of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The congregation, after being informed and educated about the policies and distinctives of the Evangelical Free Church of America, shall vote to seek affiliation.
- Churches shall have a **policy consistent with congregational government** defined as “that form of government wherein the highest authority under Christ in a local church resides in the corporate understanding of the mind of Christ and in which a realistic process and reasonable opportunity exists by which that understanding is determined and carried out, especially as it affects such matters as: determination of membership, selection or appointment of the principal governing board (elder, deacon, etc.), selection of the senior pastor, approval or alteration of constitution/by-laws, approval of any major purchase or dissolution.”
- Churches shall have read and subscribe to “[What It Means to Be an Evangelical Free Church](#)” (see link or contact district or national office).

Having met these requirements, the church shall be **received into affiliation by vote of the EFCA Eastern District Association (EDA)** Board of Directors. This will initiate a transition period of membership during which all rights and privileges attendant to affiliation with the EFCA applies. Permanent affiliation will be granted when the Board of Director's decision is ratified by delegates of the member churches of the EFCA Eastern District Association at the next scheduled business meeting.

Procedure

Introductory Reading

- [*What It Means to Be a Free Church*](#)

Theological Compatibility

- [*EFCA Statement of Faith*](#)
- [*EFCA's Noted Distinctives*](#)

Church Constitution Compatibility

Note: While the form of church government is flexible, ultimate authority must rest in the congregation under Christ, the Head of the Church.

Church Health

- Provide mission & vision statements, and current strategic plan.
- Provide last two annual reports.

Credentialing Capacity

- Pastor's application for [EFCA credential](#).

Transition Period

- Up to a twelve month time period.

District & Denominational Commitments

- Agreement to meaningfully participate the life of the district and national ministries.

Application

- Complete and submit Application to office@edaefca.org.

EASTERN DISTRICT FULL STATUS CHURCH APPLICATION

Please return the completed application to office@edaefca.org or mail to Eastern District Association, PO Box 3547, Camp Hill, PA, 17011.

An EFCA church plant desiring to become a full status church as well as a church outside of the EFCA desiring to transfer their affiliation can apply to join the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) and its area representative organization, the Eastern District Association (EDA). In either case the leadership of the local congregation should complete this application. Upon approval by the EDA staff and District Board of Directors, the application will be ratified by the delegates representing the Eastern District churches at the Eastern District annual conference business meeting.

DATE _____

CHURCH NAME _____

Is this a new name? Yes No

If this is a new name, what was the old name _____

CHURCH ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

MAILING ADDRESS (If different than above.)

PHONE (_____) _____ FAX (_____) _____

WEBSITE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please read the "Appendix" information sheet before answering the following questions. If you answer any question with a "No," please explain on a separate sheet of paper.

- A. Can you sign without reservation Appendix C - The Statement of Faith of the EFCA? This will become the official Statement of Faith in your Constitution and Bylaws.

YES NO

- B. Can you sign Appendix D, the statement on Congregationalism? YES NO

- C. Do you agree to include in your Constitution and By-Laws the dissolution clause as outlined in Appendix E?

YES NO

- D. Will you, in case of serious conflict, permit the Eastern District/EFCA to be the final arbiter?

YES NO

IS YOUR PASTOR CURRENTLY CREDENTIALLED? YES NO

If yes, with whom?

If no, will your pastor be credentialed in the EFCA? YES NO

DO YOU HAVE A VISION/MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES? YES NO

Please attach a copy with this application.

WILL YOU FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT AND THE EFCA? Currently, we encourage churches to give 1% of the total budget to the Eastern District, 1% to the national EFCA, and 1% to District Church Multiplication.

YES NO

WILL YOU ENCOURAGE GIVING TO REACH NATIONAL AND REACH GLOBAL MISSIONARIES?

YES NO

ARE YOU WILLING TO SUPPORT BY YOUR ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, THE DISTRICT AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?

YES NO

DO YOU HAVE ANY PRACTICES OR BELIEFS THAT ARE CONTRARY TO THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA? If yes, please use the reverse side of this sheet to describe them.

YES NO

We have completely read the CHURCH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION form and we are in agreement with all of the requirements for the application process as answered in the affirmative above.

_____ Senior Pastor Signature	_____ Print/Type Name	_____ Date
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_____ Church Chairman Signature	_____ Print/Type Name	_____ Date
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_____ Board Member Signature	_____ Print/Type Name	_____ Date
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_____ Approved by Church Development Team	_____ Print/Type Name	_____ Date
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APPENDIX A

Church Status in the EFCA

1. **Church Plant Status.** Pioneer church plants and newly-forming launch teams that seek to grow into a church begin at this level. The decision to grant church plant status is made at one of the regular meetings of the Eastern District staff upon receiving the application to become a church plant. Requests for that application should be made to the office of the District. office@edaefca.org

3. **Full Member Status.** This recognizes that a church has come through the church planting process to full maturity. The church is self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. The Eastern District Superintendent will bring the application request to the District Board who upon approval at a regular business meeting will bring a recommendation for a vote to be taken at the Annual District Conference, held each October. This process extends all the rights and privileges of full membership according to the qualifications as stated in the Eastern District By-Laws, Article V, Section 1.

APPENDIX B

Name of the New Church

A church is required to indicate that the church is an “Evangelical Free Church” in the constitution and bylaws. Many, if not most, of our churches self-identify as a member of the “EFCA.”

An existing church, having had an established identity in a community for a period of time may, at their own option, continue to use their primary name with “Evangelical Free Church” in the literature and anywhere else potential members will be interested.

An example of how titles work: Faith Church, a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America, has all of its literature branded with Faith Church, but has EFCA infused in its legal documents and ethos.

Names should be avoided that might be misinterpreted as being associated with another denomination or religious movement. Examples: Baptist, Charismatic, Wesleyan, Church of Christ, etc. All names must be approved by the Eastern District Association.

APPENDIX C

By becoming a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America, the 2008 Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith will be the Statement of Faith for your local congregation.

The 2008 Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith

Preamble

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. **NOTE: The word "premillennial" will be voted on by delegates sent by member churches at the 2019 EFCA national conference to be replaced with "glorious."**

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.

APPENDIX D

Church Government: A Statement on Congregationalism

Congregationalism is the only acceptable form of government in the Evangelical Free Church of America and the Eastern District.

*“Congregationalism is that type of church government which holds: 1) that the local church’s highest authority under God and His Word resides in the collective will of the local church membership, and 2) that the responsibility for ministry also belongs to the entire local church membership. We affirm that God has sovereignly given various spiritual gifts to all believers and that those gifts should be esteemed valuable by all members of the Body of Christ. We deny, however, that the responsibility which Scripture assigned to leaders for the oversight and ministry in the local church in any sense places them above accountability to the local congregation.”*¹

Under this form of government, the leadership of the local church is to be nominated by committee and approved by the membership. Other areas that would require a vote of the membership include the calling and releasing of the senior pastor, the annual budget, the building of a new facility, large capital outlays, and the accepting and removal of members.

In any area of disagreement, the local church’s highest authority under God and His Word resides in the collective will of the local church membership.

Between elections, the congregation can delegate any amount of “authority to function” to the leadership and/or official board, but it can never relinquish its right or responsibility to govern.

Any change in a church’s constitution regarding church government should be submitted and approved by the Eastern District.

APPENDIX E

Dissolution Clause

This dissolution clause or one very similar must appear in your Constitution and By-Laws.

If division occurs in the church, the name and all property rights are retained by those adhering to the Articles of Incorporation. If the church ceases to function and its organization is dissolved, all property rights shall be assigned to the Eastern District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

NOTE: Please send us a copy of your Constitution and Bylaws. In the future, the Eastern District should be notified if any changes are being made in your Constitution and By-Laws with regard to identification, doctrine, government, and dissolution.