

**CONSTITUTION OF OAKBROOK
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
PREAMBLE**

We, the members of Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church, in order to carry out the commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church, establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

The name of this church shall be: Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, hereafter referred to in the Constitution and Bylaws as OEFC.

**ARTICLE II
AUTHORITY AND AFFILIATION**

Authority: The congregation, at its annual, quarterly and special business meetings is the governing body of this organization.

Affiliation: This Church shall be affiliated with the Forest Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America and shall, by God's grace send delegates to their conferences and support its efforts of church planting and foreign missions.

**ARTICLE III
PURPOSE AND MISSION STATEMENT**

Our purpose is to know and honor God and enjoy Him forever. Our mission: Oakbrook exists to build a loving community that obeys Christ to reach our community that desperately needs Him.

**ARTICLE IV
STATEMENT OF BELIEFS**

A. CONFESSION OF FAITH We believe...

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, 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 Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally in existing in three persons: Father, Son and holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now 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 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 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 judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

B. STATEMENT OF DISTINCTIVES

"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ." -Chrysostom

"Distinctives" refer to elements that make up the 'character' or 'personality' of Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church. The distinctives of OEFC are:

1. Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church is inclusive, not exclusive.

The great heritage of the Evangelical Free Church people around the world includes the fact that fellowship and ministry opportunities in the local church are based solely on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However; a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.

2 Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church is evangelical but not separatistic. Oakbrook EFC was born out of a heritage of commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatistic.

3. Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church is ecumenical in spirit though not in structure. We believe in the spiritual unity of the Church though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians and other denominations of like precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commission. But we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctives. We recognize that union in structure does not guarantee unity of spirit. Our foremost concern is unity of spirit with our Lord, with each other and with other Christians.

4 Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church believes in liberty with responsibility and accountability. We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom. The Apostle Paul wrote

forcefully about Christian liberty in the book of Galatians. He shattered the legalists with the doctrine of grace. But in First and Second Corinthians and Romans, the apostle also rebuked believers when liberty was abused. He declared boldly the principles of Christian liberty but spoke with equal forcefulness about Christian accountability. Oakbrook EFC desires to preserve our freedom in Christ. We encourage our people to be responsible, godly men, women and young people who desire to live under the control of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to the principles and precepts of God's Word and in harmony with God's will for life as revealed in the Scriptures.

5. Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church believes in both the rational and relational dimensions of Christianity. We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid Biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith, but it is equally important to have a dynamic, vital relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound Christian doctrine must be coupled with dynamic Christian experience. Ours is a ministry of love and spiritual reconciliation. By our tradition or heritage, in the modern sense of the word we are non-charismatic. But we are not anti-charismatic.

6. Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs. Oakbrook EFC is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in Article 10 of our Confession of Faith: "We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs."

Strong pastoral leadership coupled with discerning and well-equipped Christian lay people can produce spiritual growth as well as significant church growth. The New Testament emphasizes the importance of the Body of Christ ministering through the spiritual gifts that have been given to each believer. Congregational in government means that Oakbrook EFC governs its own affairs. Within Oakbrook EFC the highest human authority under Christ and His will rests in the congregation.

C. OTHER MATTERS OF FAITH

1. Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of (the organization)'s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Council of Elders is our final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

2. Oakbrook Statement of Beliefs on Sexuality and Marriage

The Oakbrook Church family loves its community. We believe that the people who live in our community have many different backgrounds and life experiences in our pluralistic environment. Though we do not agree with everything, we respect each other and we welcome different views in the public square. Respect does not require agreement but it does mean that people are permitted to sincerely hold beliefs and convictions that others find offensive. The Oakbrook Church family will show respect and kindness to those with whom they disagree. This civility is foundational and serves the common good of our community.

Oakbrook Church recognizes that within the Oshkosh Community and our surrounding area there are many different views regarding human sexuality. Oakbrook Church will approach this subject with charity, humility, and clarity. With that attitude, certain convictions guide our thinking on this matter.

Oakbrook Believes in the Dignity and Worth of Every Person

Because all people are created in the image of God, we seek to treat all people with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their sexual identity or practices. We seek to demonstrate our high regard for the worth and dignity of every individual in our thoughts, speech, and behavior. Speech, including humor, which demeans the worth of others including those who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) has no place in the Oakbrook church family. We oppose any bullying violence against those who identify themselves as LGBTQ. This is our guiding posture on the issue of human sexuality.

Just as Jesus Christ invited all people to come to Him, as a

community of Christ-followers we welcome all people. Similarly, we also affirm that all people must be willing to submit their desires to Christ if they choose to follow Him, since Jesus said to His followers, "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). For Jesus, a person's desires do not determine their identity. Instead, Jesus calls anyone who might follow Him to find their primary identity in Him above any other identity.

Oakbrook Believes that

Jesus, and the Scriptures to which He assigned authority, speak to many aspects of human experience, including human sexuality (Matthew 4:4; 5:17; 22:29; John 10:35). Regarding these authoritative Scriptures we believe the Scripture teaches that:

- 1) marriage between a man and a woman was created by God and is good;
- 2) marriage within the Church is a rite and institution tied directly to our foundational beliefs that God is the Creator who made us in His image, male and female;
- 3) marriage is a sacred institution which mirrors the mysterious and wonderful relationship between Christ and His Church and between the members of the Godhead;
- 4) marriage is the first and foundational institution of human society and was established by God as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman; God's design and desire is for marriage to be life-long (until separated by death), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), and generative in nature (designed for bearing and rearing children); and, 5) marriage is not for everyone: some, like Jesus and Paul live complete and fulfilled lives as celibate singles. The only sexual relationship that is positively affirmed in the Bible is between one man and one woman in a loving marriage. Any sexual relationship outside of the bounds of biblical marriage is contrary to God's design (Genesis 2:23-24; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Romans 1:24-27; 7:2; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 7:7, 10; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Eph. 5:22-33).

Oakbrook's expectations for sharing the public square:

We understand that the Church shares in the public arena. In the public square, biblical marriage is controversial today. As a church, Oakbrook Church will not endorse or discourage efforts to inscribe biblical marriage in public laws. Oakbrook Church expects in our pluralistic society that our convictions will be respected and not ridiculed, punished or censored. Oakbrook Church will demonstrate humility, charity, and kindness to those who disagree with our convictions regarding human sexuality and biblical marriage.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the organization as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by or who represents Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church in any capacity, agree and abide by this Statement on Sexuality and Marriage. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.).

3. Oakbrook's Policy Regarding Use of Facilities and Staff for Weddings:

Oakbrook staff will only perform services for biblical marriages and Oakbrook Church facilities will only be available for biblical weddings.

Oakbrook's view of biblical marriage is intimately connected to the foundational matters of our Statement of Beliefs and By-Laws. Therefore, we regard any restrictions and definitions applied concerning marriage to be an exercise of the freedom clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

This policy is intended to help us faithfully live out the truths of God's Word and to apply them consistently in and through the ministries of our local church context. We fully acknowledge that our church policy is applied in the lives of specific people, which means we implement them with grace and truth.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the organization as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by or who represents

Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church in any capacity, agree and abide by Oakbrook's Statement of Beliefs, Article IV – C Statement on Sexuality and Marriage. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.) and by this statement of marriage and building use policy.

This policy is directly connected to our Statement of Beliefs and became effective immediately and replaced all former statements of position and policy on January 22, 2015 by unanimous approval of the Council of Elders and adopted by a unanimous vote of the congregation at the church's annual meeting on Wednesday, April 22, 2015

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Any person who confesses personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, who has the assurance of salvation, who agrees with the Church's statement of doctrine and distinctives and who desires to be committed to Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church as a local body of believers may become a member of OEFC. (More details about membership, the admission procedure, qualifications, etc are explained in Article II of the By-Laws.)

ARTICLE VI GOVERNMENT

This Church shall function under a congregational form of government. This means that the highest authority, under Christ and His will, and the responsibility for ministry resides in the collective will of the local church membership. Annual, semi-annual and quarterly congregational meetings are held according to the By-Laws. Congregational government also means that:

- a. The congregation in a constitutionally called business meeting selects its own leadership by affirmation or election.
- b. The congregation can delegate responsibility as it wills but can change or withdraw that responsibility.
- c. The congregation can select or remove its leadership.
- d. The congregation does not permit life-time lay appointments or elections.

**ARTICLE VII
BOARDS AND OFFICERS**

1. The Elders' primary responsibility delegated to them by Christ and His Body is the shepherding ministry of the Church and they are charged with the ultimate responsibility for "oversight" in the Church as prescribed in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2, etc). They shall meet the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

2. The Executive Committee shall consist of the pastor(s) and at least two members of the congregation. They must meet the qualifications of an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7), be spiritually minded and have practical wisdom (Acts 6:3). They serve at the request of the Council of Elders and affirmation of the Congregation. The Executive Committee functions as a "think tank". They are charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to be "mission, vision and value" driven. They will advise and assist the Elders and Ministry Team in business and legal affairs affecting the church. Until there is a functioning Board of Elders these men will serve as the corporate officers/trustees of the Church.

3. The Ministry Team functions as a 'general board' and shall consist of those who chair or direct major areas of ministry in the Church. They serve at the request of the Council of Elders. They are charged with the responsibility of praying for the various areas of ministry; implementing ministries and programs; developing budgets; planning and coordinating calendars; determining needs and use of facilities; and providing clear communication between the various areas of ministry.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH PROPERTY

This Church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase and to hold such real or personal property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Wisconsin and is deemed necessary for the ministry and business of the Church.

The corporate officers/trustees shall have the power to receive, purchase, acquire, sell, lease, convey, mortgage, deed or otherwise transfer property of the Church, but only after having been duly authorized by the Church at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. All contracts, notes, mortgages, conveyances, assignments, leases, releases and other documents and papers on behalf of the Church shall be held in the name of the Church and shall be executed by the corporate officers/trustees.

ARTICLE IX - DISSOLUTION

In case of a division in the church, from which we pray for God's protection, the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by this constitution. In the event of dissolution the net assets of the Corporation shall go to the Forest Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America or to organizations which are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and whose statement of faith shall be determined to conform to the statement of faith of Oakbrook Evangelical Free Church. All such distribution shall be determined by majority vote of the church members. Under no circumstances shall any of the assets be distributed to members of the church or its officers.

**ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution was drafted by faithful but fallible people. Therefore, changes in this constitution may be desired from time to time. The following procedure is specified:

1. Any member may submit in writing a proposed amendment to the Elders at least four weeks prior to any regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting of the congregation.

2. After consideration the elders, by two-thirds affirmative vote will recommend to the congregation the proposed amendment . Notice of such proposed changes must be made in writing to active members of the congregation two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Approval requires affirmation by two-thirds of the members present.

3. Minor revisions not effecting change in the beliefs, values, philosophy of ministry or overall structure and government shall be made at the discretion of the elders (i.e. grammar, clarification of ideas considered to be confusing, added Scriptural support, etc.).

**BY - LAWS OF
OAKBROOK EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH**

ARTICLE I: MEETINGS

Section I

The Church fiscal year shall begin January 1. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held the third Wednesday of April. At this time the affirmation or election of officers and the transaction of such business as concerns the work of the year shall take place. The agenda shall be published with the church bulletin at least two weeks prior to the meeting, but other matters may be considered.

Section 2

The Semi-annual meeting of the congregation shall be held the third Wednesday of October. Its primary purpose will be to review and adopt a budget for the following year.

Section 3

Quarterly meetings of the congregation are recommended in January and July for the purpose of facilitating communication in the congregation. Special business meetings may be called for stated purposes by the Council of Elders or must be called by the Council of Elders upon written request to them of at least 10 voting members of the church. Notice shall be given from the pulpit on at least two Sunday mornings immediately preceding the date of the meeting. Matters considered shall be limited to those contained in the notice.

Section 4

Robert's Rules of Order shall be flexibly used as a guide at all business meetings. A quorum shall consist of the voting members present. All members at least eighteen years old shall be eligible to vote except on financial matters where State Corporation laws specify a minimum age of twenty-one years.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Purpose

Membership is voluntary. At OEFC membership is considered to involve a deep level of commitment to the Lord and His Church. It is a concrete way for a Christian to say, "Oakbrook is my church home and I am committed to its mission and ministry."

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, voluntarily identified

themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body (Acts 2:44, 46; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; 1 Timothy 5:9)

In order to implement the principles of commitment and accountability to the Lord and to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, OFC recognizes the need for formal membership

Section 2: Requirements

Membership in the body of Christ requires submission to Christ - a desire to bring each phase of one's life under His Lordship. It therefore involves obedience to the Scriptural principles of commitment and accountability to the Lord and the Body of Christ expressed practically in the following ways:

1. Give testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, verbally or in writing.
2. Attend membership orientation classes ("Friendship" Class) that foster sincere and warm friendships and provides teaching on:
 - a. Oakbrook's doctrine and distinctives
 - b. Scriptural principles of commitment
 - c. Philosophy of ministry (mission, vision, values, and strategy)
3. Be in agreement with the doctrine, distinctives, mission, vision, values and philosophy of ministry statements of Oakbrook, Phil 2:1-3.
4. Be committed to obey Christ and to love His Body evidenced by a commitment to the 5 "G's".
 - a. **Grace**, Eph 2:8,9; John 1:12; 3:16; Rom 3:22-24; 4:5; 5:1 professes personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation and committed to living the Christian life by grace through faith
 - b. **Growth**, Jn 15:1-7; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; Heb 10:24,25 is committed to growing spiritually through prayer, Bible study and regular participation in corporate worship
 - c. **Group**, Acts 2:41-46; Eph 4:1-3 as much as possible is actively involved or would like to be in a small group of 3-12 for growth, support, ministry, etc. and is committed to unity in the church family in the bond of peace

d. Going, Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 3:15; Col 4:5-6 is praying and caring for unbelievers to come to faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord enables

e. Gifts, Rom 12:1-6; I Cor 12; Eph.4:11-16; Matt 6:19-21,33 25:14f;Lk 12:31-34, Micah 3:8-10; is using their time, talents and treasure to worship and serve Christ.

Section 3: Procedure

It is the desire of OEFC to freely extend its fellowship to all individuals. At the same time OEFC desires to uphold the principles of commitment to Christ and to the Body that the Scriptures teach must accompany membership. All individuals 12 years of age or older' who have attended OEFC for a period of 6 months wishing to be received into membership shall:

1. Attend membership orientation classes (offered periodically)
2. 2. Read Oakbrook's `foundation documents' consisting of statements of doctrine, distinctives, mission, vision, values, philosophy of ministry and constitution and by-laws.
3. Fill out a membership information form.
4. Meet with an elder(s) or appointed leader(s) for a personal interview.

Those who meet the requirements and go through the process shall be officially received into fellowship at a regular congregational meeting.

Section 4: Distinctions

a. Full Membership includes members of the church who are 18 years of age and have full responsibilities and privileges of church membership.

b. Associate members are members without the privileges of voting or holding office. Membership includes the following:

1. Those who desire membership at OFC and who fulfill all requirements, are 12 years old but have not reached 18 years of age. Upon turning 18, these associate members who desire full membership must meet the requirements and go through the process of membership at that time. (All individuals under 18 who desire to become members of OFC must receive written permission from their parents or legal guardians.)
2. Those desiring to fellowship at OEFC during a limited time of residence in the area while retaining full membership in another church outside the area.

3. Former regular members of OEFC who cannot regularly fellowship with us due to their present situation but who desire to retain their association with us.

Section 5: Pastoral Staff

By virtue of their call and installation pastoral staff and their wives shall become members of the church.

Section 6: Revision of the Membership Roll:

There shall be an annual review and revision of the church membership roll by the Elders. Those who have not been in attendance for 6 months shall be dropped from the membership.

Members identified shall be notified in writing four weeks prior to the annual business meeting and given opportunity to renew their commitment.

Exceptions to this policy will be made for those traveling, hospitalized or shut-in.

Section 7: Discipline

Members of this congregation shall refrain from conduct and/or doctrine that is not consistent with the moral guidelines of scripture or the teachings of the Bible and this church. If this situation occurs the member shall be approached using the guidelines in Matthew 18 and Galatians 6. The process shall be as follows:

1. The member who has knowledge of the situation shall pray for the person involved and approach him personally and directly to admonish him through the Word of God.
2. If the erring member does not take heed the member shall take another member to admonish him to repent.
3. If he continues to err, the Elders shall be notified and shall review the case. If found in error they shall admonish the person in brotherly love and exhort unto good works (Matthew 18:15-18; I Romans 16:17; Corinthians 5:13; Ga1.6:1,2).
4. Should such member continue living in conflict, in sin or in heresy, the elders shall take the matter to the congregation. The elders shall make their recommendation to the congregation. After deliberation, the congregation shall dismiss such person from membership by two thirds majority vote.

The member involved shall be notified of the congregational meeting and invited to attend.

5. If such a person sincerely repents he may be reinstated by appearing before the elders and upon their recommendation be reinstated by a two thirds majority vote at a congregational meeting.

6. Discipline of a pastor shall be according to the above guidelines along with those added in 1 Tim. 5:19-20 which states that no accusation shall be received unless there are two or three witnesses. The process shall be in public in the presence of the congregation and the Forest Lakes District Superintendent.

ARTICLE III: ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: The Headship of Christ

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (Eph.1 :22-23; 4:12,15; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18,24; 2:19; Rev.2-3) He is the One Who builds His Church. (Matt 16:18; 1 Cor.3:6). He is the true source of all the church is and does and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. If He is not the head of OFC then we do not have a real church. And to the extent that Christ functions as the head to that extent there will be unity in the Body (1 Cor.1:10; Phil. 2:2; Acts 15).

The leadership of OEFC has but one function and that is to discern the Mind of Christ and obey Him.

Section 2: The Senior Pastor

a. The Search Committee

In the event of vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor a Search Committee shall be appointed by the Elders and affirmed by the congregation. The Search Committee shall be chaired by Chairman of the Elders or the Elders' designee and consist of two elders and at least three other members from the congregation. All individuals forming the committee shall be members of the church. The presiding chairman's duties along with the committee shall include:

- 1) developing an application and/or questionnaire form
- 2) establishing criteria for the screening of applicants
- 3) securing names of prospective applicants; screen and interview potential candidates .
- 4) visiting applicants and their churches as deemed necessary
- 5) present to the Elders by three-fourths majority committee vote, a candidate for congregational consideration

6) and the Elders shall make appointments to fill any vacancies on the Search Committee

b. Calling

The Council of Elders shall review the candidate and shall by unanimous affirmation recommend him to the congregation. The pastor shall be called by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a special church meeting called for that purpose.

c. Qualifications

He shall be a man of unquestionable character living a life in accordance with the Word of God. He must meet the criteria outlined in Acts 6:2,3; 1 Tim.3:1-8; Tit 1:5-9 and Mk 10:42-45. He shall be in agreement with OFC's statements doctrine, distinctives, values and Constitution.

d. Responsibilities

1. In addition to his pastoring role as an elder, the senior pastor is a `teaching elder' and is primarily to be a teacher of the Word of God. He shall give himself to the ministry of the Word and to prayer. He is to teach and exhort by precept and example. As a teacher he must stress both understanding and application of God's truth. Acts 6:4; 1 Tim 5:17; 1:3; 4:13-16; 5:7; 2 Tim.4:1f; Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 5:1-5

2. One aspect of his teaching ministry is that he is responsible to train the church family to be true `ministers' in the Body (Eph.4:11-16); to disciple faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim2:2); and to lead in and train others for the shepherding ministry of the congregation (1 Peter 5:1-5).

3. The senior pastor, like any member of the body, is uniquely gifted and should seek to minister within his gift area. He is not responsible to minister in areas unrelated to his primary function as a teaching elder and/or not in his gift area. He shall seek to minister within his gift area. Acts 6:2; 1 Tim 4:14; Eph.4:11 f

4. Under the Lordship of Christ, the authority of God's Word and guidance of the Holy Spirit the pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church. It is recognized that in the NT there were a plurality of elders (Acts 11:30; 16:4; 20:17, etc.). It is also clear that God intended for there to be strong, primary, pastoral leadership in the church (Acts 2:14; 12:17; 15:7-11; 1 Tim 1:3; 4:6,11,17; 5:7; 2 Tim 4:1f; Titus 2:15) As such he is to set an example of love and devotion to Christ; will lead the church in implementing the church

mission, will develop and communicate the ministry vision for the church; and will lead and supervise the church staff.

5. The Senior Pastor shall have responsibility for the proper functioning of the church staff and day to day oversight of their ministry. In this regard, he shall be responsible for delegating responsibility and authority where appropriate and for establishing the priorities of ministry. He shall assist the Elders in their review process of staff members.

e. Accountability

The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Council of Elders. They are his spiritual counsellors and advisors. He serves as their pastor and leader. He is ultimately accountable to the Lord and to the Congregation.

f. Termination

The pastor shall serve until his pastorate is terminated by resignation or by request of the congregation. The pastor shall give a minimum notice of thirty days before terminating his services. Termination of the pastor's services may be effected by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a special congregational meeting called by the elders. If termination is sought by the congregation the salary involved shall continue for ninety days unless termination is due to sin or immorality. In which case, termination is immediate and without pay.

Section 3: Other Pastoral Staff

a. Authorization:

As the church grows additional staff will be required. The Elders shall recognize this need and shall ask the church as a body to authorize the employment of these additional personnel by two-thirds majority vote.

b. Calling

The senior pastor and the elders shall together select and screen the candidates and shall by unanimous vote hire the person to fill the ministry position authorized by the congregation. This is will.be in consultation with those involved in the area of ministry in which the new staff member will work.

c. Qualifications

They shall qualify for their positions according to the standards of Acts 6:2,3; 1 Tim.3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9 and Mk 10:42-45; according to giftedness and experience in the ministry position to be filled; and

shall be in full accord with OFC's Statement of Doctrine, Distinctives, Mission, Vision, Values, Philosophy of Ministry and Constitution and By-Laws.

d. Accountability

Other ministerial staff members shall work in conjunction with and be responsible to the Senior Pastor on a day to day basis and ultimately to the Elders.

e. Termination

Termination of their ministry shall be by resignation or by recommendation of the senior pastor and/or two-thirds vote of the elders. In matters of resignation the staff member shall give 30 days notice. If termination is effected by the elders, salary shall be extended for 90 days unless termination is due to sin or immorality. In which case termination is immediate and without pay.

Section 4: Support Staff

a. Authorization:

As the church grows additional staff will be required. The Elders shall recognize this need and shall ask the church as a body to authorize the employment of these additional personnel either specifically or in the budgetary process. This authorization shall be by two-thirds majority vote.

b. Hiring

The person responsible for oversight of the support staff shall screen and hire the person. One example is the...

c. Church Secretary (Administrative Assistant)

The church secretary shall be hired by the senior pastor, shall function under his oversight and may be terminated at his discretion. When the Senior Pastor resigns or is terminated the secretary will also submit her resignation. The secretary may be asked by the Council of Elders to stay on in the interim period. The secretary's resignation will be effective immediately upon the call of a new senior pastor.

Section 5: Council of Elders

1. Qualifications

The elders shall have been members of this church for at least two years, who are godly men, who fully support the Bible, the Confession of Faith, the Statement of Distinctives, the church's vision and values, philosophy of ministry and its Constitution and

By-Laws. They shall manifest the qualifications stipulated by the Scriptures (1 Tim.3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). They shall have been active members of and shall have lead a small group for one year. They shall have served in an elder apprenticeship prior to nomination.

2. Selection

a. Selection will be made on the basis of demonstrated spiritual and leadership qualifications and commitment to OEFC and to unity in the church. (See Section 5:1)

b. Prior to the annual congregational meeting the congregation will be provided with teaching regarding the Biblical qualifications for elders and their Scriptural role. With these qualifications in mind the congregation will be given 30 days to submit prayerfully the names of members for consideration.

c. The existing elders shall appoint a nomination committee consisting of two elders and three members of the congregation. Each committee member shall meet the qualifications of a deacon (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13). The elders will meet with the nominating committee to review qualifications for elders and their Scriptural role.

d. The Nomination Committee shall conduct interviews with each nominee and shall evaluate and review the suggestions according to the qualifications. After prayer consideration the nomination committee shall make final recommendations to the Council of Elders. Those nominees not recommended shall be personally informed by the committee as to the reason.

e. The Council of Elders will review those nominated and unanimously recommend all who meet the qualifications of an elder to the congregation. Nominees must then be affirmed by the congregation by three-fourths majority vote by closed ballot at the annual or special meeting.

3. Term of Service

Each lay elder shall serve a term of three years and may be re-elected for a second term of office. He must step down for at least 12 months before serving a third term. The terms of the elders shall be staggered with approximately one-third retiring each year.

4. Organization

a. The elders primary responsibility delegated to them by Christ and His Body is the shepherding ministry of the Church and are charged with the ultimate responsibility for "oversight" in the

Church as prescribed in the New Testament (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2, etc). The elders also function as the corporate officers/trustees of the church.

b. The Council of Elders will meet a minimum of once a month and shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

c. They shall appoint a chairman and treasurer to serve on the Ministry Team. They shall appoint other positions and committees as needed.

d. The Senior Pastor is an elder and is a voting member of the Council of Elders. He shall chair congregational meetings with the assistance of the Chairman of the Elders..

e. The elders shall cooperate with the pastor for the spiritual welfare of the church. They shall assist the pastor in shepherding the congregation and in leading the congregation to fulfill its mission. This includes teaching God's Word, praying, discipling, counselling, evangelizing, personal care of the church family, oversight of the church ministry, administering the ordinances, restoring the erring, resolving spiritual, personal and doctrinal disputes, caring for the needy and leading the congregation by example and precept. In the absence of the pastor, they will share with the chairman the responsibilities of leading public worship.

5. Evaluation, Discipline, and Accountability

The Council of Elders shall evaluate itself and its members. The elders are directly accountable to Jesus Christ, for all their actions and decisions (Hebrews. 13:17). They are also accountable to the congregation and to each other and should listen to the godly counsel of EFCA Forest Lake District leaders.

Any elder who does not fulfill the qualifications or duties of his office, fails to attend three consecutive council meetings or does not regularly attend the worship services of the church without good reason shall, after notice and attempt to restore said member be asked by the Council of Elders to resign. The Council of Elders may, with 3/4 congregational affirmation, appoint someone to fulfill a vacancy on the council for the remainder of a term.

Section 6: Ministry Team

a. The Ministry Team will function as a 'general board' or 'leadership community' and shall consist of those who chair or direct major areas of ministry in the Church. They are charged

with the responsibility of praying for the various areas of ministry, implementing ministries and programs, developing budgets, planning and coordinating calendars, dealing with facility needs and providing clear communication between the various areas of ministry.

b. The Ministry Team shall meet a minimum of quarterly.

c. Those who serve on the Ministry Team must be a member of OFC and meet the qualifications of `deacons' (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13). They serve at the request and affirmation of the Council of Elders and serve indefinite terms.

Section 7: Executive Committee

a. The Executive Committee serves at the request of the Council of Elders and affirmation of the congregation.

b. The Executive Committee shall consist of the pastor(s) and at least two members of the congregation. They must meet the qualifications of an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7), be spiritually minded and manifest practical wisdom(Acts 6:3).

c. Members of the Executive Committee serve three year terms. They meet monthly and shall have whatever internal organization they deem appropriate to carry out their responsibilities and act as legal representatives of the Church.

d. The Executive Committee functions as a `think tank' and has two responsibilities: First, they shall be specifically delegated by the Elders and congregation to appraise and approve new and existing programs in light of OEFC's mission, vision, values and philosophy of ministry. They are charged with the responsibility of assisting the church. to be "mission, vision and value" driven.

Second, they will advise and assist the Elders and Ministry Team in business and legal affairs affecting the church. They shall `think through' issues such as fund raising needs, salary and benefits, etc.

e. The recommendations of the Executive Committee goes directly the the Council of Elders for action. Upon approval by the Council of Elders the decision is sent to the Ministry Team for implementation or to the Congregation for affirmation.

f. Until there is a functioning Board of Elders these men will serve as the corporate officers/trustees of the Church.

Section 8: Qualifications for those involved in Leadership

The following qualifications apply to everyone involved in leadership at OEFC as an Elder, Staff, Ministry Team Member, Executive Committee Member, Small Group Leader, Teacher or Chair-person of a committee:

1. Spiritual life - They must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Beyond knowing Christ they must have a lifestyle that demonstrates having a heart for God, and an interest in spiritual growth.

2. Character - None of us are perfect. But those who are involved in leadership are leading others by example. Therefore, they must have a character of honesty, integrity, responsibility, faithfulness and moral purity.

3. Unity - They must be a loyal team player dedicated to the unity of the church and those in the area of their ministry. They must be in agreement with the confession of faith, the statement of distinctives, the vision, values and direction of the church and must be enthusiastic in their ministry. They must be approachable, teachable and flexible.

4. Relationships - Those in ministry must value people and with humility view others as more important than themselves. They must be committed to building authentic, loving relationships.

5. Training - Those involved in ministry must complete any initial training that is made available and must participate in both in-service training throughout the year and in a special training event in their area of ministry once a year.

6. Excellence - Those involved in leading an area of ministry be must be committed to pleasing God, to serving Him in an area of ministry where they can best use their gift(s), to limiting their service to doing one or two things well.

ARTICLE IV

Amendments to the By-Laws

Amendments, additions or changes to the By-Laws may be made at any meeting of the congregation. The following procedure is specified:

1. Any member may submit in writing a proposed amendment to the Elders at least four weeks prior to any regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting of the congregation.

2. After consideration the elders, by two-thirds affirmative vote the proposed amendment will be recommended to the congregation. Notice of such proposed changes must be made in writing to active members of the congregation two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Approval requires affirmation by two-thirds of the members present.

3. Minor revisions not effecting change in the beliefs, values, philosophy of ministry or overall structure and government shall be made at the discretion of the elders (i.e. grammar, clarification of ideas considered to be confusing, added Scriptural support, etc.).