

**Constitution of**  
**Evergreen Bible Church**  
**Approved on September 28, 2003**  
**Amended 04-24-16**

# Constitution of Evergreen Bible Church

Approved on September 28, 2003

Amended 04/24/16

**A. NAME:** The name of our church shall be EVERGREEN BIBLE CHURCH of Vancouver, Washington.

## **B. NON-PROFIT STATUS AND CORPORATE OFFICERS:**

1. Non-profit: Our church is a public benefit non-profit corporation organized for religious purposes under Washington's non-profit corporation law, for the private gain of no person, and was incorporated on June 18, 1946. (Articles of incorporation were amended on July 19, 1965.)

2. Corporate: Because Washington law requires corporate officers, our Leadership Team will assign church officers to the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer (normally our treasurer for this office).

**C. GOVERNING DOCUMENTS:** Our governing documents are as follows, with each successive document intended to be in agreement with those above. Where there is conflict, the one(s) above prevail.

1. The Bible: The principles of the entire Bible are our authoritative guide for teaching and living, and we hereby state our intention to conduct our individual and corporate affairs by the Bible, in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Declaration of Faith: We, as a New Testament church, believe in the historical belief that a Scriptural church is a democracy of believers meeting in some local place, sovereign and autonomous in deciding matters of church policy and affiliation, and composed only of persons who profess to have been born again.

3. Doctrinal Statement: The articles of our Doctrinal Statement are our basic beliefs which are drawn from Scripture.

a) **THE BIBLE** – We believe the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God; that the very words as well as the thoughts, in the original languages, were "God-breathed" and given by the Holy Spirit to God-chosen writers and that they are the final, supreme authority for the believers' faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

b) **GOD** -- We believe the Godhead does eternally exist in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature and attributes, being co-eternal and co-equal. (John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

c) **CHRIST** – We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. He lived and taught and wrought mighty works and wonders and signs exactly as is recorded in the four Gospels. (Luke 1:35; John 1:1,2,14; 20:30,31) We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into the heavens, and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)

d) **MAN** -- We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; that all human beings are born with a sin nature, and that in the case of those who reach moral responsibility become sinners in thought, word and deed; that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and therefore, because of universal moral and spiritual depravity, no one can possibly be saved and enter into fellowship with God here or hereafter except by means of the New Birth. (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 5:12; 3:10-23; Isa. 52:6; Eph. 2:1-3; John 3:3-5)

e) **SALVATION** – We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that our redemption and salvation and the only ground upon which sinful man can be forgiven and regenerated is the work of Christ on the Cross, and the atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This work he came to do by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and for this work He became "God manifest in the flesh" by means of the virgin birth and incarnation, and as the Divine Savior of sinners in a substitutionary work "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." (1 Peter 2:23,24; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:1-4) We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior by faith are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, become possessors of eternal life, and are baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ which is the Church. (John 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 12:13; John 5:24)

f) **HOLY SPIRIT** – We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit and that He, as God, regenerates repentant and believing sinners; that He indwells, sanctifies, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and fruitful service as they surrender to Him and walk in Him. (Heb. 9:14; John 16:8-11; John 14:16,17,26)

g) **LAST THINGS** – We believe that the souls of those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith do at death pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious blessedness until the resurrection of the body at His coming when the soul and the body will be reunited and in the glorified state be forever with the Lord. We believe also that the souls of all who reject the Lord will remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment at the Great White Throne when the soul, reunited with the resurrected body, will be cast into the Lake of Fire to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. (Phil. 1:23; I Cor. 5:6-8; Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:11-15) We believe in the imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to take away His Bride the Church, which is composed of all true believers, both those who are alive and those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. We believe also that our Lord will afterward return in visible form and in glory to this world, accompanied by all His saints, to subdue all His enemies and to set up His Kingdom and to reign on the earth during the Kingdom Age. (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-53; Acts 15:13-17; Isa. 35:4-10; Dan. 7:26,27)

h) **ORDINANCES** – We believe that there are two divinely instituted ordinances of the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe in baptism of believers only, by immersion, the mode most clearly taught in the Word of God, and that all who request baptism shall be baptized. (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:35-39)

4. Laws of our land: We intend to be law-abiding citizens. Insofar as we are convinced that there is no contradiction with Scripture, we will obey the laws of our land, and govern ourselves in accord with them.

5. This constitution: We establish this constitution, originally constructed by our congregation in 1947, but most recently revised on the date at the top of this document, as the basic rules of government for our church.

6. Policies and procedures: Our Leadership Team is hereby authorized to establish specific written policies and procedures as needed, in keeping with Scripture, state law, and this constitution. Furthermore, under the authority of our Leadership Team, our Ministry Teams are authorized to establish written policies and procedures pertaining to their area of ministry, but these must be approved by our Leadership Team. All policies will be contained in a policy book, and followed, but may be revised by the Leadership Team when circumstances dictate.

7. Statement on Marriage and Human Sexuality: We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of the Bible, the Word of God, which is our inspired, infallible, and inerrant guide. (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Since the Bible speaks to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We believe that God has wonderfully and immutably created each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

## **D. GOVERNING STRUCTURE:**

1. Independent church government: In keeping with biblical principles, our church shall remain its own highest authority, conducting its business through the business sessions of our congregation and Leadership Team, responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ and Scriptural principles.

2. Congregational authority: The congregation will decide the following, by vote: • Revisions to this constitution. • Affirmation of elders to our Leadership Team. • Calling of pastors. • Removal of pastors from office. • Approval of the annual budget. • Approval of unbudgeted expenditures (if not covered by other policy). • Decisions to take legal action. • Decisions to buy or sell real property. • Capital improvements and major

construction projects. • Decisions to begin or terminate regular financial support of a missionary. • Any other issue our Leadership Team chooses to place before the congregation.

3. Leadership Team and its authority: In keeping with New Testament principles of church government, we hereby establish a congregationally elected Leadership Team, to be comprised of a group of men whom we choose to call by the biblical term “Elders.” They will give direction, set policies, maintain standards, and make sure we function as a Bible-based church honoring our Lord Jesus Christ. The selection and responsibilities of this group is described further in section G of this constitution.

## **E. PURPOSE:**

1. Our purpose: The purpose of this church shall be to make fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ by:

- a) Leading believers to authentically WORSHIP God according to the instructions of Scripture.
- b) Training believers to MATURITY in Christ by teaching them the Bible and encouraging them to consistently live it out.
- c) Equipping believers to faithfully serve Christ in MINISTRY.
- d) Commissioning believers to boldly proclaim the Gospel on MISSION fields at home and abroad.

2. Our mission: Our Leadership Team is directed to word a working mission statement based on our above purpose, and to keep it current and appropriate for our community and times.

**F. MEMBERSHIP**: Membership in this church may be extended to anyone who has placed trust in Christ as personal Savior, who is living a life consistent with that decision, and who is in agreement with our constitution.

1. Expectations: Members will diligently work to develop the purposes of God in their lives as described in the Evergreen Bible Church Membership Covenant:

- a) Worship: I will faithfully worship God  
...By maintaining consistent private worship  
...By faithfully attending corporate worship  
...By giving regularly
- b) Maturity: I will learn and live the life of a disciple  
...By learning the foundational doctrines of the Bible  
...By consistently living out the instructions of Scripture  
...By maintaining regular fellowship with believers
- c) Ministry: I will serve the ministry of my church  
...By developing a servant’s heart  
...By being equipped to serve by my church leaders  
...By finding and serving in a ministry of the church
- d) Mission: I will help my church make disciples  
...By praying for its growth  
...By inviting the unchurched to attend  
...By warmly welcoming those who visit  
...By sharing the gospel with those around me  
...By supporting the missions of this church

2. Requirements: Membership into our church may be granted to any adult (18 years old or older) who confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who is living a life consistent with biblical Christianity, and is willing to affirm and live by our Lifestyle Statement, Membership Covenant, this constitution, and other policies of this church. A call to serve as a pastor assumes membership qualification for the pastor and his wife, and is automatically granted. Our Leadership Team is directed to maintain a membership list, including current members for current purposes, and the names of past members for historic reasons.

3. Application: Anyone interested in membership must attend membership class to learn the purpose, practices, and beliefs of EBC. Those desiring membership must then present their completed application to any member of the Leadership Team. Applicants will be expected to share a biographical testimony of faith in Christ with the Leadership Team. We do not require baptism for membership, but we do strongly urge obedience to our Lord in this important step of spiritual growth. Upon favorable consideration of the request, the Leadership Team will present the new member to the congregation at any worship service or business meeting. The person will be urged to share a testimony at some appropriate service, for the joyful encouragement of others. We neither accept nor

grant formal transfers of membership among other congregations, but will happily send notice of actions we have taken, or a letter of recommendation to another church.

4. Advantages: Any and all peaceable people are welcome to attend worship services. Regular attendees who are growing spiritually and honoring the Lord are generally welcome to participate in ministry, but not in leadership positions. The Leadership Team will determine if a ministry position requires membership. All active members are granted voting rights, and the privilege of holding leadership positions, so long as other appropriate spiritual and legal qualifications are met. Our Leadership Team reserves the right to limit, regulate, or discontinue an individual's ministry to or with our church for any reason, unless otherwise specified herein or in another policy. Furthermore, active members are granted the privilege of counsel and opportunity for peacemaking in case of disagreement, conflict, or lapse in conduct.

5. Associate: Any member who becomes unable to participate consistently in congregational life may continue to be included as an associate member by our Leadership Team. Associate membership means non-voting and not available for leadership positions. We will do all we can to provide pastoral services and a church connection for associate members. Associate members might include ones who have moved from the area but wish to continue membership; ones who are "shut-in;" ones away in the military, college, or serving on a mission field. Regular membership (voting and again available for ministry) may be reinstated at any time by our Leadership Team, if consistent participation resumes.

6. Peacemaking: Peacemaking refers to the process of bringing resolution in cases where sin or dissention is damaging the fellowship. Peacemaking will be based on such passages as Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-20. A more complete process may be set forth in a separate policy, but hearts are more important than procedures. The following is an outline of what we intend.

a) Approach: Peacemaking will never be regarded as punitive, always restorative. We recognize that any disgruntled member is free to walk away. However, one privilege of membership is the structured counsel, supportive prayer, and limiting guidelines of Christian brothers and sisters, especially those appointed to lead and protect the church. Therefore, members recognize the availability and privilege of biblical peacemaking, and agree to submit, in keeping with 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Matthew 18:15-20, and other pertinent passages. In all situations, our intentions will be to help, not harm members; to promote peace, not discord; and to protect, not afflict our flock.

b) Process: Ideally, a member will request intervention. However, if an issue comes to light wherein peacemaking may be in order, our Leadership Team—in keeping with 2 Timothy 3:16-17—is authorized to initiate peace by teaching and clarifying biblical truths, by holding conferences and consultations, by giving appropriate correction, and by providing advice for training in righteousness. In accord with Matthew 18:15-20, we affirm three overall steps to peace:

(1) The PERSONAL step: Whenever something comes between believers, the one who perceives the difficulty (whether apparent sin or mere disagreement) is expected to approach the other and no one else, and to make every honest effort to set things right. Both parties (or "sides") are expected to interact and respond with intentions of honoring the Lord, with Christlike love, and with the purpose of quitting sin and / or making peace. As much as possible, we prefer to keep peacemaking at an informal level of one-on-one or small group conferences.

(2) The PEACEMAKING step: When personal private conferences do not suffice, the aggrieved parties (or "sides") are expected to accept intervention by the Leadership Team, which may appoint a qualified peacemaking team, or refer for professional counseling, or enlist whatever other intervention would seem most likely to bring peace. When there are accusations of sin, the peacemaking team will consider evidence and circumstances in their effort to achieve agreement. When there is merely misunderstanding, the peacemakers will help to clarify issues to produce agreement. When there is disharmony over personal preferences, the peacemaking team will make recommendations to the aggrieved parties in hopes of bringing about agreement. The peacemaking team and all parties concerned are expected to act as promptly as is practicable and maintain confidentiality to avoid the spread of dissension and confusion.

(3) The PUBLIC step: When the peacemaking team is not able to produce a plan for peace nor bring the parties to agreement, they shall report their findings and recommendations to the Leadership Team. If the peacemaking team deems it appropriate, they may request the Leadership Team to consider further efforts at peacemaking. However, if one of the parties ("sides") is resistant to peace, the peacemaking team will report this to the Leadership Team. If discord continues, the Leadership Team will report this

to the full congregation. The congregation will be expected to treat the resistant one(s) with respect, yet with the sad recognition that the person(s) ("sides") is acting as an unbeliever, and has thus forfeited membership.

c) Appeal: As a congregational church whose leadership is entrusted to a Leadership Team, there is no higher place to appeal. However, should circumstances arise wherein the Leadership Team believes that outside intervention may be potentially valuable, then the Leadership Team may follow the way of prudence by requesting help from a qualified Christian mediation and peacemaking service outside our congregation. One such circumstance might be when someone(s) on our Leadership Team itself has become embroiled in conflict.

d) Non-members: The peacemaking process will be applied to non-member attendees in cases where sin or dissention is damaging the fellowship.

7. Discontinuing: Membership may be discontinued as follows:

a) Resignation of a member: A member may discontinue attending and resign membership by giving notice at any time.

b) Non-participation by a member: A member who neglects to attend, give, or participate over the duration of one year will be regarded as disinterested. The member may then be continued as an associate member, or discontinued by action of our Leadership Team, as seems most appropriate.

c) Release of a member: As a final step in the peacemaking process, our Leadership Team is authorized to discontinue membership, and to limit attendance and participation if the person has become disruptive, uncooperative, or a threat to the peace of our congregation.

## **G. LEADERSHIP TEAM and PASTORS:**

1. The Leadership Team: As stated in section D of this constitution, our Leadership Team is comprised of a congregationally affirmed group of men whom we choose to call by the biblical term "Elders." They will give direction, set policies, maintain standards, and make sure we function as a Bible-based church honoring our Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Leadership Team will arrange for the ongoing teaching and equipping of our church, for our bonding together as a family of believers, for maintaining our mission, and for fulfilling all the biblical duties of elders / overseers / shepherds.

a) Function: Because the Bible uses three terms for those on a church leadership team, we ask and expect our Team to function according to the three concepts inherent within the meaning of each. "Elder" refers to maturity and wisdom. "Overseer" refers to the administrative duties and tasks. "Shepherd" (pastor) refers to the caring heart and concern for the flock. Although we call our Leadership Team "elders," the other terms also apply.

b) Authority and responsibility: Authority is held by the Leadership Team as a group, not by any individual acting in isolation from the Team, except when duties and projects are delegated. For example, certain functions are delegated to the (paid) teaching pastor(s), but he is not allowed to make major decisions apart from Leadership Team approval.

c) Qualifications: Because we are a "congregational" church, we agree to elect and support godly members as our leaders, to meet with the Lord and direct our affairs. The qualifications for an elder are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. We will seek to elect men who commit themselves to these qualifications. Furthermore, we will expect our Leadership Team to review these qualifications at least once a year, and to hold one another accountable to maintain integrity in these areas.

d) Number and term: We affirm that qualification to hold this office is more important than how many are on the Leadership Team. However, we hope to have no fewer than five nor more than ten elders on the Leadership Team, including our Lead Pastor. Staff pastors may serve on the Leadership Team if elected separately from their placement as a staff pastor. The regular term of service will be two years. The aim will be to stagger terms so the Team never changes all at the same time. Alterations can be made to suit individuals or balance terms, as needed. The exception is our Lead Pastor, who will serve in permanent tenure until he resigns, or is asked to resign by the Leadership Team.

2. Nomination and placement: At least three months prior to the annual congregational business meeting, or at other times if any elective officer is needed, the Leadership Team will appoint a Nominating Committee to take charge of proposing candidates.

a) Nominating Committee: The Leadership Team will appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of the Lead Pastor, two elders, and three people from the congregation, at least one of whom should be a woman. To serve, these must be qualified by evident spiritual character, and know the people of the congregation well. They will meet, determine one(s) seemingly best qualified, interview them, and submit the name(s) to the Leadership Team. Unless there is strong reservation regarding the nominee, the Leadership Team will post the name(s) at least six weeks prior to the business meeting. If anyone in the congregation has strong reservations about the qualifications of a candidate, he is honor-bound to discreetly share reasons for his reservations with the Nominating Committee, who will investigate the challenge and withdraw the nomination if the committee determines that a misjudgment was made.

b) Election: The congregation will vote by secret ballot. The vote on each candidate will be a simple “yes” or “no,” with no one “running against” anyone else. The affirmative vote must be 90% for a candidate to be elected. Those elected will be publicly installed by the Lead Pastor and Leadership Team within 30 days.

c) Discontinuance: We expect those placed in leadership to fulfill commitments and faithfully serve the duration of a term, unless moving from the area or some other serious circumstance makes it impossible to continue. We expect a leader to resign if there is any lapse of character qualification. If someone detects any lapse of qualification on the part of a leader, they may initiate investigation by use of the Peacemaking clause of this document.

3. Decision making: The normal process for decision making shall be to come to consensus. This requires the Leadership Team and also each of our Ministry Teams to learn to think together, but not merely to think the same. Consensus means that all on the team are able to accept a decision, with no team member holding the view that the decision is immoral, contrary to conscience, or grossly inappropriate. If, after prayerful deliberation, exploration of biblical principles, and the application of Christian wisdom by the Team as a whole, there remains someone in sharp disagreement with an apparently developing consensus, then that individual is duty bound to explore and carefully explain to the Team his reasoning. If the issue at hand is one with major moral, spiritual, or legal implications, then further time for deliberation will be taken. If the decision is a standard judgment call, the consensus need not have the strength of unanimity. Leadership Team members (especially), and also Ministry Team members agree to carefully hear the wisdom of one another, and to defer to the consensus of thinking by supporting the final decision.

4. Professional pastoral staff:

a) Lead pastor: Our church will normally expect to call a professionally trained pastor to teach and lead by emphasizing the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, according to Ephesians 4:11-16. This includes teaching the Bible, training others to make disciples, and envisioning the future. We intend our pastor to work through others by delegating authority to serve. Upon call and placement to office, our lead pastor automatically becomes part of our Leadership Team. Additional specifics may be included in the annual “Pastoral Agreement.”

b) Staff pastor(s): As our Leadership Team and congregation deem appropriate, our church may call and support various staff pastors, to work in conjunction with and be responsible to our lead pastor and our Leadership Team. After call and placement, any staff pastor becomes eligible to serve on our Leadership Team, but may not necessarily be placed on the Leadership Team. In any case, he also remains accountable to our lead pastor, who is authorized to give directive, and is bound to promote pastoral team-work. The responsibilities and authority of a staff pastor may be further defined by his annual “Pastoral Agreement.”

c) Calling a professional pastor: When in need of a professional lead or staff pastor, the Leadership Team will determine a plan of action. An interim or transitional pastor may be engaged if deemed appropriate. To be proposed to the congregation, a candidate for any permanent professional pastor position must have the recommendation of the Leadership Team, as well as any committee which may have been engaged in processing options. The decision to call a pastor must be by congregational vote, by secret ballot. To issue a call, the affirmative vote must be 90% of those in attendance.

d) Annual pastoral agreement: A pastoral agreement will be written and updated annually for each pastor. It will contain confirmation of call, full details of compensation, an understanding of pastoral approach, key expectations, principles for evaluation, and other matters which the Leadership Team (including the pastor) may deem appropriate. This agreement will be accessible and available to be read by any member of our congregation.

e) Resignation: Once we place a professional pastor, tenure will be considered indefinite unless otherwise specified and agreed upon in the “Pastoral Agreement.” In all cases, it will be expected that a pastor will take initiative to tender his resignation if any one of three circumstances prevail: 1) He adopts beliefs contrary to our Declaration of Faith or our form of church government; 2) He violates his calling by gross immorality or sub-ethical behavior; 3) He loses credibility with the Leadership Team and/or congregation to the extent that he can no longer lead nor function effectively. Resignation will be discussed with the Leadership Team first, then offered to the congregation with Team acquiescence. Terms of departure will be worked out with the Leadership Team, and/or according to the Pastoral Agreement.

f) Termination: The Leadership Team is authorized to take action in the event that one of the above three circumstances occurs and the pastor does not take the initiative to tender his resignation. An action to remove a pastor from office must be confirmed by a majority vote of the congregation.

5. Specific Officers on the Leadership Team: The Leadership Team will organize itself internally by choosing a chairman, a clerk, and any other positions necessary to fulfilling the Team’s purpose. The one chosen to act as Leadership Team chairman will normally act as chairman at congregational business meetings. However, this position does not give additional authority in either forum. The Leadership Team will appoint one of its members to conduct congregational business meetings. Preferably, a lead or staff pastor will not serve as chair of the Leadership Team nor congregational business meetings, to help mitigate undue influence.

## **H. PROVISION FOR MINISTRY TEAMS and all other workers:**

1. Ministry Teams: The Leadership Team is authorized to create and commission, or de-commission and terminate the existence of Ministry Teams as needed, for tasks and duties which need to be done. All funding of Ministry Teams will be provided by items in the annual budget unless otherwise established by the Leadership Team. When a Ministry Team or person is commissioned, authority is delegated by the Leadership Team. Also, a coordinating tie or liaison between the Leadership Team and the Ministry Team (or person) will be established. When a Ministry Team is decommissioned, any residual duties revert to the Leadership Team. A Ministry Team may be “standing” (always needed), “ongoing” (a lengthy ministry but not expected to be permanent), or “ad hoc” (for a short-term specified task). The Leadership Team may grant a Ministry Team authority to create sub-ministries or committees, or appoint individuals for various ministries. The purpose is to allow as many people as possible to serve according to their developing areas of interest and expertise and their God-given “spiritual gifts.”

2. The role of women on Ministry Teams: In keeping with biblical principle, we believe that the Leadership Team (elders, overseers, pastors) is reserved for men. However, we also believe the Bible allows for wide ranging participation in ministry on the part of women. The primary principle is that anyone is eligible to minister, but authority finally goes back to the Leadership Team, who may delegate but not totally convey authority.

3. Terms and Qualifications: Once appointed, the usual expectation is that a Ministry Team member will serve faithfully for at least one year. The following are the qualifications for Ministry Teams or individual ministry positions.

- a) The person must have a sufficient level of spiritual qualification for the task. The Leadership Team is authorized to develop appropriate lists of qualifications for given ministries.
- b) The person must have sufficient credibility in the eyes of the church to do the ministry he or she is asked to do.
- c) The person must have sufficient wisdom and ability to perform the given ministry.
- d) A person must be a member of the church to serve as the chairperson of a Standing Ministry Team.

4. “Standing” (always needed) Ministry Teams: The following Ministry Teams are hereby established. However, if circumstances require, the Leadership Team is authorized to assume duties or reorganize the teams.

a) Finance Team: This Ministry Team will consist of the Treasurer and any others whom the Leadership Team may choose to add. The task of this Team is to safeguard our various funds, issue appropriate receipts to donors, pay bills, and maintain all things financial. This team will keep the Leadership Team and congregation apprised of our financial affairs on a monthly basis. Other fiscal policies are described in Section I. This Team must be diligent to help the Leadership Team maintain financial integrity.

b) Facilities Team: This Ministry Team will consist of individuals who will care for the property and possessions of our church, and make sure that facilities are maintained, utilities are in order, equipment is in

good repair, and maintenance projects are accomplished on a timely basis. The team will have responsibility to keep our facilities in a state of readiness for ministry.

c) Missions Team: This Ministry Team will consist of individuals who are charged with the task of looking after the various mission ministries we support. The team will have responsibility to keep our missions program running effectively.

5. Provision for non-clergy paid employees: To accomplish the work of our church, other workers may be employed as deemed necessary by our Leadership Team. Selecting employees, establishing terms of employment, defining responsibilities, evaluating performance, and terminating employment shall be the ultimate responsibility of the Leadership Team, but may be delegated to a Ministry Team by decision or policy.

## **I. FISCAL CONCERNS:**

1. Fiscal year: Our fiscal year shall be the calendar year. We may keep the books of the previous year open into the new year for the purpose of paying bills, but not for receiving contributions.

2. Contributions: All contributions are received only with the understanding that no stipulations are attached, and become the immediate possession of our church as a legal corporation. In keeping with state law: 1) Tax deductible receipts may be granted for legitimate charitable contributions. 2) Those designated for a stated purpose will be honored if possible, but contributors must realize that there is no obligation to do so, and the contribution may be redirected (not returned) if the church determines not to fulfill the designee's preference. 3) In compliance with IRS regulations, the church may not issue tax deductible receipts for donations or gifts made to individuals. 4) We consider giving to be an act of private worship, so we will not make the records of individual giving available to the congregation, pastoral staff, nor anyone lacking a legitimate need to know. 5) Non-cash contributions will be received according to policy compliant with IRS regulations.

3. Fundraising: The basic financial support for the ministries and operating costs of Evergreen Bible Church shall come through freewill offerings given regularly as unto the Lord. All fundraising activities must be approved by the Leadership Team.

4. Funds: We hereby establish a General Fund to be regulated by budget and a Missions Fund to be regulated by policy. Our Leadership Team may establish other funds and accounts, to be regulated by policy. No fund or account may be established for any program, by any person, or by any sub-group of our church, without specific Leadership Team approval, adequate governing policy, and final authority residing with our congregation. The books of all will be carefully monitored by our Finance Team; will be open (excluding contributions) to any member; will be reviewed regularly by our Leadership Team via financial reports and surveying of ledgers; and will be reviewed and reported to the congregation annually.

5. Budget: Our Leadership Team is authorized to propose an annual budget, which becomes policy to be followed once adopted by the congregation, in so far as contributions allow. The budget may be amended by Leadership Team proposal and congregational approval. The Leadership Team is authorized to spend up to but no more than 5% of a year's budget amount for unbudgeted needs, if the amount is available in our accounts and does not conflict with any other policies. Such an action will be reported immediately to the congregation.

6. Debt: Our Leadership Team will lead the church to refrain from burdensome indebtedness, enlarging the ministries of the church as God supplies the means.

7. Fiscal Accountability: All accounts will be reviewed in detail on an annual basis (as soon as possible after the close of the fiscal year) by at least two members appointed by (but not serving on) the Leadership Team. At least every third year, our Leadership Team will appoint someone outside our congregation to review the books and contributions records to make sure regulations and policies are being followed.

## **J. MEETINGS:**

1. Worship: Our primary purpose for meeting is worship. Therefore, our primary regular meeting will include the necessary components of worship, at least once a week (likely Sunday). All other meetings—for worship, teaching, training, planning, fellowship, or anything else—may be determined by our Leadership or Ministry Teams, as needed.

2. Annual business meeting: According to the requirements of state law, we will hold an Annual Business Meeting at a time set by our Leadership Team. At the meeting, we will vote on nominated elders, review a meaningfully informative financial report of the year gone by, decide on the proposed budget for the year ahead,

report to the congregation on church matters, and make decisions on any other business of a congregational nature which has been proposed in advance of the meeting.

3. Special business meetings: Business meetings may be called at any time by our Leadership Team, by giving notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Informational meetings (no business proposals need be included) will be held often enough to ensure that our membership is well apprised of the directions and decisions which our Leadership Team and Ministry Teams are pursuing.

4. Proposals: Our congregational business meetings will be “proposal driven.” This means that business will be conducted and decisions made only by specific proposals announced in advance, allowing for due deliberation and discussion.

5. Announcing meetings: Our Leadership Team will notify our congregation of business meetings by providing clear verbal or written announcements at regular public services, or by written notices conveyed to members, so information is available at least a full week in advance of the meeting, and preferably longer. The purpose and proposals of business meetings will be provided as part of the notice.

6. Quorums and voting: The Leadership Team will make sure the membership is well informed concerning all matters requiring decision or vote. A quorum for a business meeting will be those members attending. Decisions will be made by majority vote, unless otherwise provided in this constitution. Election votes will be by secret ballot. Other voting will normally be in the open, but any member may request that a vote be by secret ballot, subject to congregational approval.

7. Meetings of the Leadership and Ministry Teams: Our Leadership Team will meet regularly, normally once a month. Ministry Teams are also authorized to meet regularly, according to need or the policy established to give guidance to the Ministry.

8. Records: The Leadership and Ministry Teams will keep written records of their meetings, topics discussed, decisions made, and actions taken. Notes of recent meetings will be posted in a place easily accessible to the membership, and archived records will be available for viewing by any member upon request, EXCEPT records that may contain private and sensitive information about individuals. When the Leadership Team must discuss sensitive matters concerning people, records of such meetings will be kept in confidential church files, and only be made available to anyone outside the Leadership Team on a legitimate need-to-know basis. Church documents and records of all meetings are the possession of the church, not individuals, so the official file copy will be kept in church files, not personal files.

## **K. DISSENSION and DISSOLUTION:**

1. Dissension: If division occurs such that Peacemaking steps do not bring resolution, then we agree to ask Northwest Independent Church Extension (NICE) to provide outside leadership to moderate and give guidance. We agree that the name and all property and possessions shall be retained by those adhering to this constitution—especially the provisions including our Declaration of Faith.

2. Dissolution: If our church as an organization should ever come to the place where there are not enough qualified leaders in place to conduct any ministry or business, then the congregation may vote to ask NICE to provide temporary leaders until those temporary leaders (operating under authority delegated to NICE) determine that the church is able to govern its own affairs again. Should our church come to the place where it is no longer able to function at all, then our property and possessions would be distributed according to the directives of our articles of incorporation.

## **L. AMENDMENTS:**

1. Our Leadership Team may propose changes to this constitution at any congregational business meeting, by presenting the wording and reason for the change. The proposal will then be a matter of prayer and discussion for two months. Then, the Leadership Team may call another business meeting for the purpose of revising, or voting on, the proposed change. A three-fourths affirmation of the members present and voting is required.

2. The Declaration of Faith and the Doctrinal Statement are not subject to amendment.