

Constitution and By-Laws Of Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church (2014)

ARTICLE I - NAME

That subject to the provisions and conditions hereinafter mentioned, the name of the Congregation is and shall remain EVANGELICAL ZION CHURCH, at Payson, Illinois, all as originally designated under date of May 26, 1892, entered of record in Fall Creek Township, Adams County, state of Illinois in the decree of incorporation as a RELIGIOUS SOCIETY by the name of EVANGELICAL ZION CHURCH and on file in the office of the County Clerk at Quincy, Illinois, provided and EXCEPT HOWEVER, that inasmuch as said congregation during the past many years from its incorporation by virtue of its affiliation from time to time with Associations, Conferences and National bodies, and mergers thereof in North America, has been known and carried on its religious activities and the business administration of said corporation not only under its original name, but also under the name of Bluff Hall German Congregational, Bluff Hall Congregational Christian Church, Bluff Hall Church of the United Church of Christ, and now being known as Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church at Payson, Illinois, and such name shall be used, substituted and utilized as the current and contemporary name of the Congregation all being one and the same organization as originally incorporated as a Religious Society in Adams County in the state of Illinois.

ARTICLE II - MISSION STATEMENT and CORE VALUES

The Mission of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in making His will dominant in the lives of people, individually and collectively, as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Core Values of this church are:

1. Biblical preaching and worship is the catalyst for transformation in individual lives in the church.
2. Loving church family relationships will impact every aspect of church life.
3. Through discipleship, we will function as a unified community of servants for fellowship and outreach.

ARTICLE III - POLITY

1. This church is in an affiliation with the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America.
2. "Evangelical" refers to our commitment to the proclamation of the gospel and to the authority of Scriptures as being inerrant and the only safe and sufficient guide to faith and practice.
3. "Free" refers to our form of church government which assures that our local churches are free from a central controlling body. EFCA churches depend upon the active participation of pastors and lay people in

the decisions and direction of the local church, subject, however to the Laws of the State of Illinois relating to the ecclesiastical corporations.

3. Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church is eligible to send voting delegates to the National and District Conferences as allowed by EFCA delegate formula. Pastoral staff and other non-voting members may also attend. Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church shall support all denominational activities in accordance to the best interests and welfare of the Evangelical Free Church of America and its instrumentalities as well as that of the local church in order that the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be made known to men throughout all the world.

ARTICLE IV - FAITH AND COVENANT

FAITH: This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of humanity. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments/Ordinances: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. All members, volunteers and paid staff must agree to abide by this Constitution and By-Laws.

The doctrinal position of The Evangelical Free Church of America is summarized in the ten-article Statement of Faith.

STATEMENT OF FAITH OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA

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

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

DISTINCTIVES OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA

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

1. The Evangelical Free Church of America is a believers' church—membership consists of those who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

The great heritage of EFCA 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 the EFCA, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.

2. The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical—we are committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible and the essentials of the gospel.

The EFCA 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 separatists.

3. The Evangelical Free Church of America embraces a humble orthodoxy in partnership with others of like faith.

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 Commandment and 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. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in Christian freedom 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. The EFCA 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. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational, i.e. the head and the heart, 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.

6. The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs with a spirit of interdependency with other churches.

The EFCA is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in our Articles of Incorporation: "The Evangelical Free Church of America shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government..." Strong

pastoral leadership coupled with discerning and well-equipped Christian lay people can produce spiritual growth as well as significant church growth. While the EFCA affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs, we also believe in the biblical values of interdependence and cooperation.

We are a movement of churches committed to working with one another in order to fulfill the Great Commission in the United States and abroad. This is only possible when there are strong ties with other EFCA churches, with local district organizations and with the national EFCA ministries.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church Constitution and By-Laws, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and By-Laws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. The membership of the Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Constitution and By-Laws.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. A person, who has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ for his or her salvation, may be duly received into membership by meeting the requirements for members. A person who is a member of another organized Christian church may also apply for membership by providing a Letter of Transfer from that church together with his/her profession of faith. Any person who is 18 years of age or younger, must complete a Bible Instruction Class (BIC) or Confirmation Course before making application for membership.

A. The church reserves the right to require anyone seeking membership to meet in a Membership class one or more times in order that they may acquaint themselves with the beliefs, practices and basic membership requirements of the local church, as well as the responsibility of the church to the "Total Mission of the Church in the world."

B. All seeking membership must sign an "Acknowledgement of Agreement" to indicate understanding, and willingness to abide and uphold this Constitution. All being granted membership will be received into the church through a formal welcome and charge during a worship service.

C. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into a unity faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races, membership is open to all without regard to race or color."

2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence according to their ability; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

3. A. All members shall promote and assist religious education at home, in the Sunday school and through other agencies for that purpose.

B. All members shall support all proper functions and activities within the congregation.

C. All members shall, if elected to an office or appointed to a committee, not decline without good and sufficient reason, but shall accept the honor, and promote the welfare of their church to the best of their ability.

D. All members shall avoid strife and dissension within the congregation and shall abstain from all detrimental criticism. All complaints, between brothers/believers, shall be attempted to be worked out privately. If they cannot work it out on their own, either an individual or both parties, may bring the issue to the deacons in person or in a written and signed letter/statement. The individuals involved shall then discuss the problem with 2 or 3 deacons as witnesses with the goal of resolving the problem and restoring fellowship. If this is unsuccessful, the deacons, together with the congregant, will take the matter to the deaconesses and church council, still with the goal of resolving the problem and restoring fellowship. (Matthew 18:15-17)

E. In sickness or distress, all members' spiritual wants shall be gladly ministered to by the Pastor if he is duly notified.

4. Termination of membership:

A. Any person in good and regular standing, who desires a letter of transfer and recommendation to another church, is entitled to receive such by vote of the church. Their membership is terminated after a letter of transfer has been approved. Letters of transfer shall be to a particular church and not to churches in general.

B. If, because of the change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member wishes to be released from the obligations of their covenant with the church, the Church, through pastors and others, shall endeavor to secure a continuance of their relationship; but if this is impossible, the Church may grant their request and terminate their membership.

C. A member, whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two years, in spite of spiritual care, has not attended the church's worship services or contributed to its support, may, by joint recommendation of the Board of Deacons and the Church Council, be removed from the membership roll and placed on a conditional list. If, after the expiration of a year, the relationship remains unchanged, their name may

be dropped from the conditional roll by a further vote of the Church Council. A simple majority suffices for this vote.

D. If a member persistently breaches their covenant vows, the Deacons shall after due notice had been given to them, and a hearing before the Church Council has been offered them, and all faithful effort has been made to bring them to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ, may censure them, or suspend or terminate their membership.

ARTICLE VI - SACRAMENTS/ORDINANCES AND SERVICES

We consider Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper as Holy Sacraments/Ordinances instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. These Sacraments/Ordinances attain their greatest beauty and their fullest blessing and meaning at a public service; therefore, private administration shall be resorted to only when absolutely necessary.

1. In Baptism we participate in the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it is the sign of God's grace to us and it gives us the status of children of God and incorporates us into the body of Christ.

The church acknowledges in the new birth sealed in baptism a real event in the sense that God really makes a beginning with the persons baptized. In this event baptism may be administered either by immersion or sprinkling, as the person making the confession of faith may desire.

2. Preparation for Baptism:

A. The congregation through the pastor is responsible for ensuring that parents/guardians requesting baptism for their children are appropriately aware of the meaning of baptism, that they recognize the necessity for the baptized child to be nurtured and guided in the Christian faith.

B. (For those who present themselves for baptism). The congregation through the pastor is responsible for ensuring that persons seeking baptism are appropriately aware of the meaning of baptism and that they recognize the necessity for the baptized person to grow in faith.

C. The congregation will be responsible for helping people to take seriously their baptismal promises through responsible worship practices and the nurture of their faith through study and prayer.

3. The Lord's Supper, instituted by our Lord as he was facing the cross is grounded in his self-sacrifice through which the kingdom of God is inaugurated. In a special sense, it is the sacrament of the cross, the sacrament in which he gives himself to us with the bread and cup. It is the crucified and victorious Lord's pledge of forgiveness of sins and resurrection from the dead. Christ himself is the host at his supper; therefore all who desire to sit at his table may do so.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly the first Sunday in the months of January, July and October, and in connection with Easter and Christmas. Holy Communion may be observed at other times at the discretion of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons and Deaconesses.

4. We consider the covenant of marriage to be a Rite of the Church open to church members. In accordance with the Scriptural definition of marriage, we hold to the belief that marriage is only between one man and

one woman. (Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:6-9, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:30, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Timothy 1: 8-11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11,). Further the covenant of marriage is available to those of non-church member standing upon their request, upon approval of the Pastor and/or upon the consent of the Deacons of Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church.

5. Regular service of worship shall be held every Sunday, if at all possible, at such hours as may be determined by vote of the church from time to time. Other services of worship, Bible Study, or other times of Christian fellowship may be held, as the church shall decide from time to time.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of the church shall be held the first Sunday in February. At this meeting, reports of officers and boards shall be heard and acted upon, officers shall be elected, and any matter pertaining to the welfare of the church may be discussed and acted upon. Officers elected shall begin their services immediately, after the annual meeting.

2. Quarterly meeting shall be called in April, July, and October. Such meetings shall be convened by the 15th of these months. Reports of officers and boards shall be heard and acted upon. Any matter pertaining to the business and welfare of the church may be discussed and acted upon at these times.

3. Special Meetings: Meetings for routine and minor decisions may be called in connection with any regular worship service without previous formal notice.

A. Special meetings for the transaction of business other than routine or minor decisions may be called by the pastor, moderator, deacons, trustees, church council, or by ten members signing a request for a meeting and delivering it to the clerk. The clerk shall call all special meetings of this kind. In the call for such a meeting the purpose shall be clearly stated and no other business may be transacted except reports may be heard from the church council.

B. Notice of such special meetings must be read at least one week before the date of the meeting, or by notifying each member by mail at least three days before the date of the meeting, except as provided in ARTICLE VIII, Section 10, regarding dismissal of the pastor.

4. Quorums for all business meetings of the church shall be ten voting members except as otherwise provided in the constitution.

5. All members in attendance shall be entitled to vote.

6. A majority vote shall be decisive, except as otherwise provided in the constitution. Matters pertaining to the call or dismissal of a pastor shall be by ballot.

7. The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE VIII -STAFF

A. Senior Pastor: The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the deacons and deaconesses. He shall, as a true ambassador of Christ, preach the Word of God without fear or favor. He shall administer the sacraments/ordinances, care for and give pastoral counsel to the troubled and distressed when the desire for such services has been duly brought to their attention, and seek to win people to Christ. He shall have charge of all the services of the church. It shall be their duty to give confirmation instruction or Bible Instruction Class, to direct the work of Christian education along with the Board of Christian Education, and to administer and perform all such duties as belong to the Pastor in the Evangelical Free Church of America.

He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the Church, having advisory capacity without vote in such Boards and Committees.

If at all possible the pastor shall be present at the business sessions of the congregation and of the Boards. In the event, however, where matters pertaining to the pastor are to be discussed, the pastor and members of their family may be excused at the time of the discussion.

1. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate it shall be the responsibility of a Pastoral Search Committee to seek a candidate for the pastorate.

2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Placement Committee of the Great Lakes District.

3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for the period of vacancy, the Pastoral Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Regional Office.

4. The Pastoral Search Committee may request the Regional Superintendent to secure relevant information about any pastor whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.

5. Any Pastor may confer with the Regional Superintendent concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the pastor's request their name shall be submitted for consideration by the local church committee.

6. The Pastoral Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. Only one candidate shall be presented at a time, and wherein the congregation shall vote by ballot for or against their election. A favorable vote of those present voting constitutes a call. (This depends upon a prior agreement between the candidate and the Pastoral Search Committee).

7. In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated as agreed upon between the candidate and the Pastoral Search Committee. This written call, signed by the Moderator and the Church Clerk, shall be presented to the Pastor, the Church, and the Regional Superintendent.

8. When a Pastor accepts a call to this church, the church and he shall join in requesting the Regional Office to arrange for a service of installation or recognition. At the installation service the new pastor's membership shall be formally transferred to Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church with a member's voting rights, as well as advisory capacity in congregational meetings.

9. The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, three month notice shall be given by either party in writing. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Evangelical Free Church.

10. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by action of the church council, and notice of such termination shall be sent by the Chair of the Council to the Regional Office for appropriate action. If the question of dismissing the pastor arises, no action shall be taken except at a special meeting, two weeks' notice must be given, and the subject for such meeting shall be specified, by mail, to all members.

11. Any pastor who is not an EFCA credentialed pastor, who accepts a call must secure EFCA credentials within three years of commencement of ministry.

B. Music Minister: This position provides vocal music leadership at all Sunday morning and special worship services. Utilization of musical instruments is welcomed and acceptable. Music is to be coordinated with the pastor and organist and he/she is directly accountable to the Pastor.

Compensation will be reviewed annually at budget committee with final approval at October quarterly meeting.

When a vacancy occurs, an ad hoc committee shall be appointed to search for a candidate to fill vacancy.

Music minister may be asked to provide music at weddings, funerals, etc. and agreements shall be made directly with requesting parties regarding expectations and financial compensation.

C. Organist: This position provides organ and/or piano music at all Sunday morning and special worship services. Utilization of other musical instruments is welcomed and acceptable. Music is to be coordinated with the pastor and music minister and he/she is directly accountable to the Pastor.

Compensation will be reviewed annually at budget committee with final approval at October quarterly meeting.

When a vacancy occurs, an ad hoc committee shall be appointed to search for a candidate to fill vacancy.

Organist may be asked to provide music at weddings, funerals, etc. and agreements shall be made directly with requesting parties regarding expectations and financial compensation.

ARTICLE IX - OFFICERS

New officers and board members, elected at the annual, meeting shall assume their respective duties immediately following the meeting.

An installation service of all newly elected officers and board members, along with Sunday school teachers shall be done on the Sunday following the Annual Meeting.

The officers of the church shall be the following:

MODERATOR: The moderator shall be elected for a one year term. He/She may be re-elected three consecutive terms, thereafter he/she may not be re-elected until one year has elapsed. The moderator must be a church member. He/She shall be considered to be the representative of the lay members of the church. He/She shall preside at all meetings of the church. It shall be their responsibility to counsel with all officers, boards, and committees, and organizations of the church, in cooperation with the pastor, and to seek to preserve Christian harmony and love within the church. The moderator shall be responsible for appointing ad hoc committees as needed.

VICE MODERATOR: The vice moderator shall be elected for a one year term. The vice moderator must be a church member. The vice moderator shall act for the moderator when the latter is absent from the chair. He/She shall assist the moderator whenever possible. He/She shall fulfill an unexpired term of the moderator.

CLERK: The clerk shall be elected for one year and shall keep the faithful record of the proceedings of the church and the Church Council. The clerk must be a church member.

1. He/She shall keep a register with the addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of reception and removal.
2. He/She shall keep a record of baptisms, dedications, marriages, deaths, and confirmations with dates and other pertinent information.
3. He/She shall issue letters of transfer voted by the church, notifying the churches to which the transfers have been made.
4. He/She shall preserve on file all communications addressed to the church and conduct all correspondence for the church; give legal notice of all meetings of the church, and do such other work as is usually associated with this office.

ASSISTANT CLERK: An assistant clerk shall be elected for one year and shall aid the clerk as per agreement between the two officers. The assistant clerk must be a church member.

TREASURER: The treasurer shall be elected for one year and shall receive all moneys of the church and give receipts for the same. The treasurer must be a church member. The Church shall furnish the treasurer such bond for the faithful performance of his/her duties as the Board of Trustees may require.

1. He/She shall deliver and deposit such funds which he/she receives in the bank as determined by the trustees.
2. Under the Trustees, he/she shall have charge of all papers relating to the property of the church.
3. He/She shall pay all bills for the church as authorized by the Trustees.
4. He/She shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and report these regularly to the Trustees and at the annual and quarterly business meetings of the church.

ASSISTANT TREASURER: An assistant treasurer shall be elected for one year. The assistant treasurer must be a church member. The assistant shall aid the treasurer as per agreement between the two officers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT: The Church shall biannually elect a superintendent of the Sunday school. The Sunday School Superintendent must be a church member.

An ASSISTANT shall also be elected biannually, who shall cooperate with the Superintendent and who shall have charge of the Superintendent's responsibilities in the absence of that officer. The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent must be a church member. It shall be the primary duty of the Sunday School Superintendent to act as coordinating officer of the Board of Christian Education.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS AT-LARGE: Two church council members at-large shall be elected annually and must be members of the church. They will serve on the church council and on the budget committee.

RETREAT HOUSE DIRECTORS: The church, as a member of an incorporated body known as the RETREAT HOUSE CORPORATION OF THE ADAMS COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES shall provide two directors, who shall act as the church's agent at business meetings of such corporation. One member shall be elected each year for a term of two years and be eligible for re-election for one additional term after which one year must elapse before re-election to directorship. They shall attend the meetings of this incorporated body and report its actions at annual business meetings and they may be heard at any time by the Church Council.

ARTICLE X - BOARDS

CHURCH COUNCIL: The Church Council shall be the executive body of this church. It shall consists of the following: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Church Sunday School Superintendent, two members elected at-large by the church as well as one representatives from each of the following bodies: Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, Board of Deaconesses, Board of Christian Education and Sunday School Teachers, Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Cemetery Committee, and Community Outreach Committee. It is recommended that no council representative be representing two boards or offices.

1. The moderator shall be Chair of the Council. If he/she is absent from the meeting the Vice Moderator shall act as the Chair.

2. The Clerk shall be the Council Secretary and he/she shall keep accurate accounts of all the proceedings of the council.

3. Special sessions of the Council may be called by the pastor, the Moderator, or it may be called into special session at the request of any Board, committee or organization, or by five members of the council. The Clerk shall call all special meetings and shall specify the called purpose of such meeting.

4. Seven members shall constitute a quorum for any meeting.

5. The Council shall seek to promote the total welfare of the church. In order to facilitate the work of the Council, it may call for reports from any officer, board, committee, or organization. It may give counsel to any of these groups. Any officer, committee or organization may seek counsel of the Council.

As executive body, it shall act upon questions which may arise between various officers, boards, committees or organizations within the church, especially those questions which have to do with the maintenance of harmony in the total function of the congregation.

6. The Council may inaugurate or approve any new organizations or function which promote or sustain the welfare of the church.

7. The Council may make decisions in minor matters which may arise between regular meetings of the church and which pertain to the whole church. It shall report all actions and decisions at the regular church meetings, and it may make reports at special meetings if it seems expedient to do so, and the church may act upon any such report at any special meeting, in addition to the subjects for which the special meeting was called.

8. The Council shall not consider itself to be above the Church nor to be the church except in the performance of its prescribed capacities as the executive body of the church. In all matters the Council shall endeavor to further the Church's spiritual and material welfare to the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: The board of trustees shall consist of nine members elected at the annual business meeting of the congregation. Three members shall be elected each year for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election for one additional term. Thereafter he/she may not be re-elected for such office until one year has elapsed.

1. The Board shall organize itself by the election of a chairman and a secretary and by the appointment of a Building and Grounds committee and a Finance committee. These procedures shall then be reported to the church clerk as quickly as possible after the annual business meeting.

2. The Board of Trustees shall have the care; custody and supervision of all present and future property of the congregation and in its name make contracts and conduct all the business with reference thereto.

A. The Trustees shall have authority to incur obligations and to make expenditures which it deems necessary, not to exceed the amount of \$1000.00.

B. All obligations or expenditures, including loans or encumbrances affecting the property or credit of the congregation or the church property which shall exceed \$1000.00 including any sale, lease, transfer or other disposition of real estate or improvements thereon of the congregation shall not be made or be authorized, without specific approval of the Church Council and a majority vote of those present at a meeting of the church duly called and authorizing such action.

3. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at such time as shall be specified by the board. At such meetings they shall consider all matters pertaining to the maintenance and supervision of the real estate and property of Bluff Hall Church.

A. The Building and Grounds committee shall make complete inspection of all properties owned by the church at least once each year and so report to the total Board their findings and their recommendations thereof. It shall be the duty of this committee to make necessary repairs or replacement of any of the physical property of the church as is necessary, and to report their actions at the regular Board meetings.

B. The secretary shall keep accurate records of all proceedings of the Board and so make such reports to the Church at the regular business meetings.

4. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees shall act as stewards of the Church. It shall be their duty to prepare the annual church budget with the help of the following people: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, two members of the Church Council elected as members-at-large, and the Pastor as member ex-officio.

A. This committee, responsible for the budget, will function and have available a proposed budget ready for consideration at the October business meeting.

B. This committee, shall act as a Stewardship committee, shall avail itself of the services of the Evangelical Free Church of America and its recommended procedures for total Christian Commitment programs.

C. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees shall act as an auditing agent for the church and so they shall audit the books and records of the treasurer during the month of January, at such time that

the Treasurer may then have a correct statement of receipts and expenditures to report at the annual meeting.

BOARD OF DEACONS: The Board of Deacons shall consist of six members elected at the annual congregational meeting. Two members shall be elected each year for a period of three years and be eligible for re-election for one additional term, thereafter he may not be re-elected until one year has elapsed. Deacons must be church members. In the event of vacancies the church shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

1. Men, who serve as deacons, shall be sincere and earnest Christians, in good standing, and whose character and ability are in harmony with the dignity and importance of their office. Paul lists their qualifications as "self-control, temperate, blameless, hospitable, conciliator, managers and not lovers of money". (Titus 1: 5-9)

A. The deacons shall assist the pastor in the spiritual interests of the church and the community and shall do all in their power to enable the church to envision and achieve its spiritual possibilities and goals.

B. The deacons shall assist in the administration of Holy Communion and Baptism, in the caring for the poor, and in the calling upon the sorrowing or indifferent and the visitors.

2. The deacons shall elect one member of their board annually to serve on the Community Outreach Committee.

3. The Deacons shall, together with the Board of Deaconesses, make an annual study of the rolls of the church, and recommend any changes which seem right to them. This procedure shall be governed by the church constitution and in all things, the Deacons shall be guided by the Holy Spirit and by Christian concern and love for others.

4. In the event of serious difficulty between the church and the pastor or between members of the church or in the case of open scandal in the lives of members, the Board of Deacons, working with the Board of Deaconesses, and the Church council, shall seek to bring the situation to a peaceful solution and hopeful conclusion, in the spirit of Christian love and humility and in the framework of Matthew 18: 15-17, always working in close cooperation with the pastor herein. In order to maintain the integrity of Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church, when an irreconcilable division occurs within the body which threatens its unity and/or existence, the Superintendent, along with other members of the Great Lakes District Board of Directors, has the prerogative of taking the initiative to mediate the situation.

5. Deacons will serve as ushers of the Church unless they make other arrangements for the performance of this duty.

6. The church may, if it seems advisable, institute a Junior Diaconate. This will be composed of young people of adolescent age, who are elected to serve in order that the spiritual interests of youth may be furthered and during their term of office they shall obtain training in churchmanship and leadership. Confirmands and older youth may assist in

the gathering of the offering. Children may assist with lighting and extinguishing of candles and bell ringing with oversight from the deacons.

BOARD OF DEACONESSES: The board of deaconesses shall be composed of three members. One member shall be elected each year for a period of three years and be eligible for re-election for one additional term, thereafter she may not be re-elected until one year has elapsed. Deaconesses must be church members.

1. They shall visit the sick and the needy and the visitors.
2. Deaconesses shall especially seek to call upon new members and seek to introduce new families into the full fellowship of the church.
3. They shall cooperate with the deacons in the matters of church membership as elsewhere set forth in this constitution.
4. They shall be responsible for the preparation of the elements of Holy Communion and with the dressing of the altar.
5. The Deaconesses, like the Deacons, shall endeavor to live the Christian life in order that youth and adults alike will admire and try to emulate their example.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: To further the building of the kingdom of God through education of all ages in the congregation, a Board of Christian Education shall be maintained. The Board shall consist of the Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Sunday school teachers, and four members elected by the congregation at the annual business meeting. Two members shall be nominated and elected each year for a two year term, and be eligible for re-election for one additional term, thereafter one year must elapse before re-election. This Board shall elect one council member.

1. The primary duty of this Board shall be the planning and administering of the education program for the congregation, with special emphasis in the following areas:
 - A. Select and approve curriculum and personnel for the Sunday school. This should be planned in order to implement and supplement the confirmation as taught by the pastor.
 - B. Initiate, develop and coordinate a complete and harmonized program of Christian education for the total church, including the provision of proper supplies and equipment.
 - C. Direct and supervise the various educational units of the congregation in the effective execution of a coordinated program.
 - D. Provide counselors for the youth in their various activities such as their weekly meetings and summer school programs. In all respects they shall work with the pastor in providing for such programs for the youth of the church and the community.
 - E. Non-member teachers must meet with Board of Christian Education to discuss beliefs and assure they are consistent with those of Bluff Hall EFC.

F. The Board and the pastor shall provide confirmation instruction for those persons seeking church membership; such classes shall be taught by the pastor, in the absence of a pastor the board of Christian Education shall provide a mature and responsible person to instruct the confirmands. Confirmation classes will be held for at least a period of one school year. These confirmands shall be at least in junior high school unless special cases receive approval from the Board of Christian Education and the pastor.

2. The Board shall keep diligent records of all meetings and so make reports at the business meeting of the church, and if the need arise it may be heard by the Church Council at all times.

3. A majority of the members of this board constitutes a quorum at all meetings with all members having an equal voice and vote.

4. Sunday school departmental meetings shall be held annually and as needed with the pastor with emphasis on teacher training. The Board shall be responsible for the calling of such meetings.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE: The committee shall consist of seven members. Six members shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the congregation. Three members shall be elected each year for a term of two years and be eligible for unlimited re-elections. Annually the deacons will appoint one of their own to serve on this committee for a one year term.

The committee shall elect a chairman and treasurer annually. They shall be responsible for fund raising and maintaining their own finances. The committee is responsible for responding as they deem appropriate, to all requests for emergency financial support, identifying community needs and potential projects and coordination of projects, and determine missions/missionaries to support whether it be local, national or international.

When a 5th Sunday occurs during a month, this is designated as 'Mission Sunday' and an extra collection will be taken to support mission funding. All mission giving shall go through the Bluff Hall Community Outreach Committee.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: A nominating committee consisting of seven members shall be elected with the other slate of officers at the annual business meeting of the church. These members shall be representative of the various interests of the church. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate and secure acceptance from the nominees for all the various positions necessary for the operation of the church's program and cemetery committee. In the case of delegates for district and national meetings, those nominated shall be voted upon at the quarterly meetings prior to the denominational meeting at which place they shall represent the church. The committee shall perform their duties in love and wisdom giving thought to the Christian character, wisdom, loyalty, and representative factors of all candidates, with the purpose of seeking to secure faithful officers, board members, teachers and delegates of the church. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting, or in the case of delegates or members to

finish unexpired terms of office, such nominations may be made from the floor of any quarterly meeting.

BLUFF HALL CEMETERY COMMITTEE (formerly known as BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ZION BLUFF HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION): The committee shall consist of six members elected at the annual church congregational meeting. Two members shall be elected each year for a period of three years and be eligible for re-election. The committee will elect their own officers annually, which will consists of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Superintendent and the Church Council representative. The committee will have charge of their own financial affairs ie: the perpetual fund and collection of that fee when lots are sold, paying for the mowing of the cemetery as well as responsibility for the maintenance of the cemetery.

DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: These people shall be elected annually to serve as voting representatives for the church for meetings such Great Lakes District Meetings and EFCA Annual National Leadership Conference. Reports by those attending shall be provided to the congregation by way of Newsletter, Annual or Quarterly meeting or from the pulpit.

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE: The committee shall be organized as follows: Each of the following organizations shall elect one of its members and report them to the church clerk within two weeks after a vacancy occurs: Trustees, Deacons, Deaconesses, Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Board of Christian Education, Youth fellowship, and Community Outreach Committee. The Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Sunday school Superintendent are also members. All members of the committee shall be members of the church and have equal voice and vote. The moderator will convene the committee, as soon as feasible, and the committee shall elect a chair and a secretary. Thereafter the chair will act as convener and the secretary shall record all transactions.

In the event of a vacancy, the church council shall immediately instruct the boards and other organizations to follow the above procedure for the organization of the Pastoral Search Committee.

ARTICLE XI - PROPERTY

1. This church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and as is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be in the name of the church. The Board of trustees shall act as agent of the corporate body in matters pertaining to the real and personal property of the church as defined by the constitution; otherwise the Church Council as the executive body of the church shall act as the agent of the church.

2. In case of dissolution of the church organization, the assets shall be assigned to the Great Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the church, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

[This paragraph is meant to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service regulations...I.R.S. Sec. 501 (c) (3)]

ARTICLE XII - ORGANIZATIONS

The following are accepted and approved as valid organizations of the church and under the care of the church: Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, and the Youth Fellowship. These organizations shall be in charge of their own life and elect their own officers, always bearing in mind that they are part of the Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church. All organizations shall make a report at the annual meeting and at such other business meetings as may be deemed necessary for the welfare of the total church. The Church Council may ask for and receive reports from these organizations at any time. The organizations may also bring matters of concern to them to the attention of the Church Council.

ARTICLE XIII

While all things are always to be done decently and in order and out of Christian love, the parliamentary procedures shall be according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any of the regularly scheduled meetings of the church or at a special meeting called for that purpose. In all cases, notice of the amendment shall be delivered to all members of the church two weeks in advance of the meeting and the notice shall give clear specification of the amendment desired. The notice shall also be read from the pulpit for two Sundays in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE XV - USE OF CHURCH PROPERTY

Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and always to God's glory. We make our facilities available to members and approved non-member persons and groups as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

Use of church facilities will not be permitted to persons or groups, holding, advancing, advocating or engaging in beliefs or practices in conflict with this church's faith or moral teachings. Material cooperating with activities this congregation believes are sinful is a violation of our faith and religious practice (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22). Such cooperation would also provide inconsistent witness to the community, as well as confusion and scandal among church members because they may be reasonably perceived that by allowing use of our facilities, the church is in agreement with the beliefs or practices of the person or groups using church facilities.

The Church Council shall establish rules and regulations with reference to the personal property, equipment, buildings and real estate owned by the congregation and its use for other than church purposes.

Such rules shall be publicized and posted for the information and guidance of the membership. In general, the following guidelines shall be used:

1. Those wishing to use Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church for any function must contact the Pastor and/or the Board of Deacons. The pastor or deacons will make the final decision of whether or not a person or group may use the church facilities. This policy applies to all church facilities, including, but not limited to the sanctuary, basement, fellowship hall, kitchen, storage areas, parking lot, log cabin, cemetery property, and all outdoor land owned by the church because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God.
2. A refundable damage/clean up deposit of \$100.00 for use of the premises will be required. Parties using the sanctuary, dining hall, outdoor areas, cemetery property, or any other premises are required to clean up and remove all items (including trash) from facility prior to the Sunday worship service. Determination of the amount of refund or any additional costs incurred for damage and/or clean-up will be made by the trustees.
3. The damage deposit is payable to the church 1 month in advance.
4. The present pastor shall officiate at all weddings held in the church. With the pastor's consent, another ~~minister~~ pastor may assist Bluff Hall's pastor if he/she agrees to abide by the pre-planned order of worship.
5. The wedding couple involved is responsible for obtaining and paying organist, pianist, soloists, etc.
6. Any party wishing to use the church or its property for weddings and/or receptions must sign the attached contract.
7. The use of rice, bird seed, confetti or similar material is prohibited.
8. No bands, mobile entertainers, or dancing is allowed in the church. No smoking, alcoholic beverages, or recreational drugs are allowed in or on any of the church property.
9. Bluff Hall EFC is not responsible for any accidents or injury to wedding party of guests.
10. Donations for use of the facilities are appreciated.
11. Bluff Hall Church buildings and grounds shall not be used for posting of signs, posters, or literature, involving or advertising matters not pertaining to Bluff Hall Church or their religious activities.

ARTICLE XVI - INDEMNITY

Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church shall indemnify all staff and volunteers serving on its behalf and are named parties or witnesses in any legal action, whether threatened or taken. This indemnification shall protect them against all expenses (including attorney's fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlements, actually and reasonably incurred in connection with such legal cases. Such right of indemnification shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any such person may be entitled apart from the foregoing provisions.

This Constitution and By-Laws were revised and approved by the congregation of Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church in February 1984, July 1996, February 2006, June 2008, December 2010 and May 2014.

The current revision supersedes all previous revisions.

Contract for Usage of Sanctuary and/or Other Church Premises for Weddings/Receptions

Those wishing to use Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church for wedding/receptions must contact the Pastor and/or the Board of Deacons. The pastor or deacons will make the final decision of whether or not a person or group may use the church facilities. This policy applies to all church facilities, including, but not limited to the sanctuary, basement, fellowship hall, kitchen, storage areas, parking lot, log cabin, cemetery property, and all outdoor land owned by the church because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God.

The present pastor shall officiate at all weddings held in the church. With the pastor's consent, another pastor may assist Bluff Hall's pastor if he/she agrees to abide by the pre-planned order of worship.

A refundable damage/clean-up deposit of \$100.00 for use of the premises will be required. Parties using the sanctuary, dining hall, outdoor area, or any other premises are required to clean up and remove all items (including trash) from facility prior to the Sunday worship service. Determination of the amount of refund or any additional costs incurred for damage and/or clean-up, will be made by the by the trustees.

The damage deposit is ~~are~~ payable to the church 1 month in advance.

The wedding couple involved is responsible for obtaining and paying organist(s), pianist(s), soloist(s), etc.

No bands, mobile entertainers, or dancing is allowed in the church.

No smoking, alcoholic beverages or recreational drugs are allowed in or on any of the church property.

The use of rice, bird seed, confetti or any similar material is prohibited.

Bluff Hall EFC is not liable for any accidents or injury to wedding party or guests.

Donations for use of the facilities are appreciated.

_____	_____
Groom	Bride
_____	_____
Pastor	Date