

**CONSTITUTION
OF
LAKELAND EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
440 North Hunt Club Road
Gurnee, Illinois 60031**

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PREAMBLE

We, the members of Lakeland Evangelical Free Church, in order to carry out more effectively the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to His Church, do establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I – NAME

- 1.1 The name of this corporation is Lakeland Evangelical Free Church, hereinafter referred to as “Lakeland.”

ARTICLE II – DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 For purposes of this Constitution, the following alphabetically listed terms shall have the respective meanings shown below, with the Article, Section and Sub-Section of the first appearance of each term listed in parenthesis at the end of the definition.
- 2.2 “**Associate pastor**” shall mean any pastor, other than the senior pastor, called by Lakeland for either full or part time salaried ministry. (3.1.1)
- 2.3 “**Board**” shall mean Lakeland’s governing committee consisting of the Senior Pastor, all elders so recognized in 8.1.4 while in their term of service and any pastoral staff members while invited to serve by the Board. An approximate ratio of no greater than one pastoral staff member for every two elders who are not on staff should be maintained on the Board. (3.1.1)
- 2.4 “**Caring Fund**” shall mean a benevolence account that is funded by designated gifts and a monthly offering used to help those in financial need, primarily within Lakeland. (3.1.1)
- 2.5 “**Consensus**” shall mean the degree of agreement required to approve a motion/proposal in which all members present at an official meeting, including any with some uncertainty or dissent about a matter, in good faith and conscience, agree to embrace the collective opinion of the majority when voting on that motion/proposal. (7.2.1)
- 2.6 “**Deacon**” shall mean an approved servant assisting in official capacities as needed within the church. Deacon as used herein shall refer to both men and women. (3.1.1)
- 2.7 “**Elder**” shall mean the Senior Pastor, any man so recognized in 8.1.4 while in their term of service and any pastoral staff members serving on the Board. (3.1.1)
- 2.8 “**Elder Stewardship Fund**” shall mean an account funded by all surplus monies in the General Account at the end of a fiscal year in excess of one-twelfth of the annual operating budget adopted for the next fiscal year that is to be used for a variety of purposes, such as benevolent, charitable and other stewardship causes. (3.1.1)
- 2.9 “**Ex officio**” shall mean any elder assigned by the Board to any ministry/committee of Lakeland who will have the same rights/authority/status (including voting) as any other ministry/committee member but not the obligation to attend the meetings of that ministry/committee, and is therefore not counted in determining if a quorum is present. (10.1)
- 2.10 “**Small Group**” shall mean a body of people recognized by the Board who gather together to grow into the fullness of Christ Jesus as they grow in love for God, love for His church, and love for their neighbors. (6.2.3)
- 2.11 “**Interview Team**” shall mean the group of individuals, under the oversight of the Board, who conduct interviews with people at Lakeland as needed and requested. They shall be members in good standing who are appointed by the Board. (6.2.1)
- 2.12 “**Officer**” shall mean the Board Chairman, Board Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Church Treasurer. (3.1.1)

- 2.13 **“Operations Handbook”** shall mean the so-named document(s) that include(s) job descriptions, policies/protocols for handling all staff supervision, evaluations and grievances and all pertinent information and instructions for efficiency in the day-by-day operation of the church. (8.2.3 f)
- 2.14 **“Ordinances”** shall mean water baptism and the Lord's Supper. (5.7)
- 2.15 **“Pastoral staff”** shall mean those pastors called via the Lakeland Constitution selection and voting processes to either full- or part-time salaried ministry. (3.1.1)
- 2.16 **“Present”** shall mean members physically present, whether they vote “for,” “against” or “abstain from,” or do not cast any vote on, a motion/question. Absentee/proxy ballots are not recognized as votes. (8.1.4)
- 2.17 **“Staff”** shall mean all those identified as such in Board minutes. (8.1.5)
- 2.18 **“Super-majority”** shall mean the degree of agreement required to approve a motion/proposal in which at least 75% of all members present at an official meeting vote in support of that motion/proposal. (8.1.5)
- 2.19 **“Unanimous”** shall mean the highest degree of agreement required in which there is no dissent among all members present when voting to approve any specific motion/proposal. (8.1.4)

ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT & AFFILIATION

- 3.1 We believe that it is critical that we be led and directed by the head of the church, Jesus Christ. Our structure of government is meant to achieve that end, to produce theocracy (government by God), not democracy (government by the people). Only in that end will our structure of government have meaning. It is in that spirit and based on our understanding of the pattern of Scripture that our governance is structured.
 - 3.1.1 Under Christ, our government shall be congregational in its form in the sense that all leaders are accountable to the membership. The membership, at its business meetings, is the legislative and governing body of Lakeland. The members shall entrust the policy matters of church leadership to a group of godly men called elders, and day-to-day administration to the pastoral staff and their designees. The elders will be members who by virtue of giftedness and character can be trusted to act in accordance with the mind of Christ. All elders, church officers and deacons must be chosen from among members of the church. The Board is empowered to make decisions in all matters except the following, which must be brought before the members for approval:
 - a) hiring the senior and associate pastors
 - b) buying and selling real estate
 - c) building new buildings or remodeling existing structures in excess of \$100,000
 - d) incurring debt in excess of \$50,000
 - e) changing the Constitution
 - f) approval of the annual budget (12.9)
 - g) increasing any budgeted line items by, or creating new line items of, amounts that exceed the amount that can be increased by the Board as permitted in 12.10 (except for the Elder Stewardship Fund and Caring Fund)
 - h) recognizing elders
 - i) initial recognition of deacons
 - 3.1.2 Under God, Lakeland is independent and free so far as relates to its internal organization and the regulation of its own affairs. It is subject to no ecclesiastical body, except by its own consent. It controls the admission, discipline and removal of its members according to its own understanding of the Word of God.
- 3.2 Realizing the necessity and advantage of united effort, and being in general accord with the aim and scope of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), Lakeland shall be affiliated with the EFCA and

its Great Lakes District Conference (GLDC). It shall send delegates to their conferences, support their missions and unite in mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ, in the measure that Lakeland itself may officially decide.

ARTICLE IV – MISSION STATEMENT

- 4.1 **Our mission is to worship Christ in all things as we share Him with all people.**

ARTICLE V – STATEMENT OF FAITH

EFCA Statement of Faith

Adopted by the Conference on June 26, 2008

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

God

- 5.1 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

- 5.2 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

- 5.3 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

- 5.4 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

- 5.5 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

- 5.6 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

- 5.7 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

- 5.8 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

- 5.9 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

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

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 **THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL:** Lakeland recognizes that all who have accepted Christ Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior are part of the Church universal and are welcome to participate in our fellowship and receive the Lord's Supper with us, though they are not members of Lakeland.
- 6.2 **LAKELAND MEMBERSHIP:**
- 6.2.1 **Qualifications:** Membership at Lakeland is open to all persons 18 years of age or above who, in the sole estimation of the Board, have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and have a lifestyle and testimony that demonstrates the desire to conform to Scriptural standards. Such individuals must be baptized after profession of Christian faith. (Exceptions to this requirement may be made by the elders on a case-by-case basis.) They are to consider Lakeland as their home church and shall faithfully strive by God's guidance and assistance to live out, and benefit from, the responsibilities of membership cited in 6.2.3. They must complete the membership process cited in 6.2.2. They should have and be familiar with a current copy of Lakeland's Constitution and must consent in writing to be bound by all of its provisions. They must believe all articles in the Statement of Faith, except for the belief that the return of our Lord Jesus Christ will be "premillennial." (5.9) They must discuss any disagreement they have with any Statement of Faith articles with at least two members of the Interview Team or elders. The interviewers, in consultation with the Board, may recommend that membership would be inadvisable or they may recommend it providing that the individual will never try to publicly or privately seek to persuade anyone contrary to any portion of the Statement of Faith. If a potential member is currently under church discipline, the circumstances of this must be fully disclosed and discussed in detail with the Board before he or she will be accepted for membership.

6.2.2 **Membership process:** An individual who desires to meet the above requirements may pursue membership by attending and completing Lakeland's membership class. He or she must then complete an application for membership before meeting with two or more members of the Interview Team or elders to share his or her testimony of faith in Christ Jesus and discuss his or her membership, areas of giftedness, and past and potential ministry areas. The name of the individual seeking membership will also be published in Lakeland's bulletin for at least two weeks before the Board considers approval of his or her membership. Any Lakeland member with a reservation/objection to the candidate's membership on Biblical or constitutional grounds must immediately inform an elder of his or her reason(s) for such reservation/objection. Upon receiving the recommendation of the interviewers, the Board shall vote on the candidate's membership, taking all information known into account. Any candidate accepted into membership by Board vote shall be introduced and recognized as a member before the congregation during a subsequent Sunday service.

6.2.3 **Responsibilities:** Strive by faith to:

- a) Continue growing in personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus through means of regular prayer, meditation on the Word of God, and faithful obedience to His will.
- b) Seek immediate help if struggling repeatedly with sin or feeling perpetually stagnant in spiritual growth.
- c) Attend Congregational Business Meetings and our public services of worship in which we corporately encounter God, bring praise to Him, receive His Word, unite in prayer, and respond in offerings and decisions of obedience.
- d) Enter into the lives of other Christians in the church for the purpose of mutual, God-centered encouragement, applied teaching, accountability, service, prayer and joint outreach such as occurs in a Small Group or similar expression of body life.
- e) Support and build up the church through contributions of prayer, use of gifts, talents, time, self-denying acts of kindness, mercy, love, financial support and being active in serving and benefiting other people in the Body of Christ.
- f) Guard the unity of the church by being slow to take offense, quick to forgive, and careful in speech as well as never allowing matters of personal taste to be a basis of division within the Church.
- g) Walk with discretion in the world, being just in our dealings, God-honoring in our activities, and exemplary in our manner and speech.
- h) Raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord through biblical instruction, loving discipline, modeling of Christ like behavior, and regular prayer.
- i) Follow and support the leadership as they follow Christ.
- j) Assist in the decision making process of the church as we seek to discern the leading of our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- k) Join the mission of the church through prayer and participation in reaching the unchurched at home and abroad with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- l) Abide by the Constitution of Lakeland Evangelical Free Church.
- m) Unite with another Bible believing church as soon as possible upon leaving Lakeland in order to continue in the work of Christ.

6.2.4 **Privileges of membership:** Only Lakeland members may participate in the governance of the church by casting votes in Congregational Business Meetings and serving as officers, Small Group leaders, search committee members, and other roles as determined by the Board. See Article VIII on Leaders.

6.2.5 **Loss of Membership:** A member may be removed from membership once his or her written request has been received by the church, if it is required by church discipline, or when he or she has not attended at least 50% of Lakeland's worship services or Small Group meetings over a six-month period without reason given to the Board. Every such member will be sent documented notice of the Board's intent or

decision to remove him or her from membership. However, a member may not withdraw his or her membership if he or she is under formal corrective discipline by the Board as defined in 7.2.

- 6.2.6 **MEMBERSHIP LIST:** The Board shall ensure that a list of Lakeland members is kept current on at least a quarterly basis.
- 6.3 **ASSOCIATES:** Associates may not vote or hold a Lakeland office but are recognized as having a close relationship with Lakeland. A person may request of the Board and be granted associate status if he or she is a member who leaves the area, but desires to continue a formal relationship with Lakeland; or he or she faithfully attends Lakeland and is under the age of 18. Such a youth would go through the same process required for becoming a member in 6.2.2. An associate who reaches 18 years of age and wants to be a member of Lakeland shall again go through the same process required for becoming a member in 6.2.2, except for the membership class. The Board may also grant associate status to an individual who, due to special circumstances in his or her ministry, needs to have such an affiliation but finds it difficult to maintain the attendance requirements of membership.

ARTICLE VII – DISCIPLINE

- 7.1 **FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE:** God has ordained that through the comprehensive and faithful preaching of His Word, the church is to be taught to live in a mutually sanctifying manner pleasing to Him. The church is to “preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (II Timothy 4:2). As Lakeland faithfully lives out its purpose, we will “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)
- 7.2 **CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE:** Corrective discipline becomes necessary because of continued conduct and/or doctrine contrary to Biblical standards. Such discipline always aims for the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the local church and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender. Sin may not be overlooked, lest God’s name be defamed, other saints be emboldened to sin and the offender be harmed by a failure to test his or her own soul and appreciate the gravity of the sin. Any form of corrective discipline, such as those included in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, may be enacted without prior corrective steps if the Board or its designated ad hoc committee of elders (both in this article and hereinafter being referred to as the committee), deems the sin is of a sufficiently serious nature. The corrective disciplinary process is considered formally initiated on the date the Board authorizes two or more elders to become involved with one or more identified Lakeland attenders whose conduct and/or doctrine are apparently contrary to Biblical standards. The committee may authorize prudent, two-way communication about the sin and resulting disciplinary process of any Lakeland member under such discipline with any and all churches where that member is reasonably believed to attend at least occasionally. (*Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:1-13, II Corinthians 2:6-11, II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, I Timothy 1:19-20; 5:19-20*)
- 7.2.1 **Restriction:** Restriction is a corrective discipline of a less severe nature than a disfellowship (7.2.2). Restriction of an attender may occur when exhortation has not brought about appropriate repentance from unbiblical conduct and/or doctrine (*II Thessalonians 3:6, 11, 14-15*). In such cases, the committee has the right and responsibility to restrict the offender’s involvement at Lakeland. This may include restriction from: membership or its privileges, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, service in the church and/or other similar restrictions. It may also involve a public rebuke of a member at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting. The offender is not to be treated as an enemy but admonished as a fellow believer. The majority vote of the committee and consensus ratification by the Board is sufficient to restrict such a one.
- 7.2.2 **Disfellowship:** Any attender, who fails to appropriately respond to corrective discipline or is unwilling to settle differences in the manner set forth in Matthew 18:15-20, may rightfully be excluded from all intentional involvement with Lakeland members and activities, if that involvement, in effect, would undermine/diminish the intended consequences of such discipline.
- 7.2.3 **Disfellowship Process:** If the attender persistently refuses to repent of: a) personal conduct that is contrary to Biblical standards, b) espousing doctrine that is contrary to Scripture, and/or c) not settling

relationship differences in the manner set forth in Matthew 18, the committee, with consensus ratification by the Board, has the right and responsibility in obedience to the Scriptures to disfellowship such a one. In any case, the committee shall present to the offender a written recounting of the unbiblical conduct and/or doctrine, and shall provide the offender an opportunity to demonstrate to the committee that he or she is not engaging in such conduct or espousing such doctrine. The accused shall have the right to present his or her defense in person (or waive such a right, either explicitly or by default) at a duly called meeting of the committee. If, after a fair and impartial hearing of all the accessible witnesses (who function as eye witnesses or as investigators) and a review of all the facts ascertainable, the committee, by a consensus vote, determines that the accused has engaged in and remains unrepentant about such unbiblical conduct or espousing such unbiblical doctrine, the committee shall, with Board consensus ratification, initiate disfellowshipping of the offender. If the accused is absent from this meeting, a record of the proceedings, including the findings and discipline conditions determined by the committee, shall be hand delivered or sent to him or her with proof of mailing. The committee's ratified determination, along with a brief description of the sin and the required nature and time frame for repentance of such sin to avoid disfellowship, must then be presented only to the membership at a promptly and duly called Congregational Business Meeting. The committee, with consensus ratification by the Board, will determine the nature, extent and means of any discussion of the matter at the meeting. The membership will then be given the opportunity to prayerfully interact with the individual to encourage his or her repentance before actual disfellowship takes effect. If the defined period elapses without the offender repenting as required, he or she shall then be disfellowshipped with such enacted discipline being promptly announced to the membership (*Matthew 18:15-20*).

- 7.3 **RESTORATION:** The church must forgive and will progressively, if not immediately, restore to fellowship those persons who show satisfactory evidence of repentance as determined by a majority vote of the committee and consensus ratification by the Board (*II Corinthians 2:5-11*).

ARTICLE VIII – LEADERSHIP

8.1 ELDERS

Lakeland elders are those men who demonstrate the Holy Spirit's gifting and calling to provide spiritual oversight, shepherding and organizational governance for the congregation. It is our conviction that an elder is recognized on the basis of biblical qualifications as delineated herein. It is not on the basis of worldly talents, popularity, intelligence, wealth or other possible factors.

- 8.1.1 **Qualifications:** An elder must be a member of the congregation, and be committed to carrying out the listed duties in 8.1.3. The spiritual qualifications are outlined in Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. In summary they are:

- a) to have a lifestyle above reproach
- b) if married, to be demonstrating a Biblical pattern of faithfulness to his wife
- c) to be stable in personal characteristics
- d) to be hospitable
- e) to be able to teach and shepherd
- f) to lack worldly characteristics
- g) to be the spiritual leader in his own family
- h) not to be a recent convert
- i) to have a good reputation with non-Christians
- j) recognition by the membership of the Holy Spirit ministering through him at Lakeland

- 8.1.2 **Term of Office:** Elders who are recognized according to this article shall have a term of office beginning on the date he is officially recognized by vote in a Congregational Business Meeting until the

date of the next elder recognition vote approximately two years later. There is no limit to the number of terms an elder may serve.

8.1.3 **Duties:** The duties of the elders are listed in John 21:15-17, Acts 6:2, 4, Acts 20:28-31, Hebrews 13:7, 17 and I Peter 5:1-4. In summary they include:

- a) the ministry of the Word by ensuring that the church is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching in both public meetings and individual contacts
- b) guarding the doctrine of the church by establishing Scripturally sound policy and doctrinal positions to be held by the church and by confronting false teaching and behavior contradictory to biblical truth and implementing appropriate corrective measures when needed
- c) a commitment to regularly pray for the church and its members
- d) overseeing the pastoral staff and activities of the church by monitoring mission effectiveness and ministry alignment while providing discernment and direction regarding the purpose, goals and priorities of the church and ensuring that the life of the church is being well managed by competent, godly leaders
- e) providing, developing and overseeing shepherding of individuals within the church while encouraging ministry to the poor and distressed
- f) being an example for the church
- g) chairing, if not facilitating, preparing for and/or participating in the Congregational Business Meetings
- h) recommending deacon candidates to the membership for initial recognition, and reappointing deacons for additional terms
- i) selecting pastoral staff Board members and their term of office on the Board
- j) meeting together on a regular basis for carrying out their duties

8.1.4 **Recognition: A)** The Holy Spirit appoints elders over the church (*Acts 20:28*). The church may recognize any willing man whom it sees as possessing the qualities and doing the work of an elder as one called by the Holy Spirit. Normally, recognition of all new and current elders, except the pastoral staff invited to serve on the Board as provided in 8.1.4B, will be by a membership recognition process held every two years. During January of each odd year the Board will appoint a nominating committee to consist of the senior pastor, at least two other elders, and at least two members of the congregation. There must be at least one committee member for every 25 households comprised of one or more regular attenders, including members. During February of each odd year, information/instruction will be given to the congregation as to the qualifications and responsibilities of elders. The committee will receive a suggested list of candidates from the Board and will request suggestions from regular attenders, including members. They will review the names submitted to them and compile a list of men whom the majority believe are capable of serving as elders. They will submit this list by April 1st to the Board who will render a final determination of appropriate candidates after further examination. The Board will submit to the congregation the list of elder candidates they have unanimously approved by no later than the second Sunday in May. Prayerful consideration of all currently serving and proposed elder candidates will be encouraged. The members will then be asked to vote by ballot on or before the second Sunday in June at a Congregational Business Meeting. Any candidate who receives a "yes" vote from at least 75% of those members present and voting either "yes" or "no" on that candidate will be deemed recognized as an elder. Abstentions involving any candidate will not count in determining the minimum 75% vote required. The Board will propose and manage its own size by considering factors like current and anticipated need and the availability and willingness of qualified men, since not all men who are actively shepherding are expected to be elders.

If at any time there are fewer than three elders or an inadequate number of elders to fully carry out the duties required, the present Board will submit directly to the congregation the names of suggested elder candidates. These candidates will serve as elders until the next, regular, odd year recognition vote, if

approved by at least 75% of the members present and voting either “yes” or “no” on that candidate at a Congregational Business Meeting. This meeting must be held no less than two weeks and no greater than six weeks after the suggested names have been submitted to the congregation. If an elder who has resigned or taken a leave of absence during his term of office for non-character reasons later requests to serve out the remainder of his term, he may be reinstated by the consensus vote of the Board.

B) The Board may invite pastoral staff members who are not recognized as elders according to 8.1.4A to serve on the Board. While serving on the Board, such pastoral staff members shall be elders.

- 8.1.5 **Board Functioning:** The Board will be self-organizing in that it will elect its own Chairman and Secretary and delegate the other various functions and areas of responsibility of the Board. The Board will appoint and maintain adequate committees, subcommittees and personnel as needed for effective and efficient service to the church. The Board shall approach decisions in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, seeking earnestly to reach a unanimous decision without coercion. As a last resort, unless otherwise stated herein, the Board will decide matters on the basis of a super-majority. Non-staff elders must constitute at least half of any majority vote when the vote is not unanimous.
- 8.1.6 **Board Meetings:** The Board shall meet a minimum of once each month of the year with all elders being notified in advance by the Chairman of the Board or his designate of the time and place for every meeting. Additional meetings may be held whenever called by the Senior Pastor, Board Chairman or any two members of the Board. Special circumstances, as agreed to by the Board, will be sufficient reason for suspending the requirements of this section for any one-month period.
- 8.1.7 **Quorum and Order:** In order to have a quorum for any official, binding vote, all Board members must have been notified in advance of the meeting and a majority of Board members must be present. In order to facilitate orderly and satisfactory meetings, appropriate and accepted rules and procedures will be used.
- 8.1.8 **Visitors:** The meetings of the Board are not open to the public. However, the Board has the right to invite relevant individuals to attend their meetings. At times when non-elders are present and personal matters are discussed which would deserve confidentiality, it is the responsibility of the elders to ask non-elders in attendance to be excused.
- 8.1.9 **Reprimand or Termination of Ministry:** See section 8.5 “Reprimand and Termination Procedures.” The following reasons for termination of service or reprimand will be accepted:
- a. resignation
 - b. continued behavior which violates the Biblical qualification for the office
 - c. continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith (Article V) or policies of the Elder Board
 - d. continued ineffectiveness of his ministry as demonstrated by failing to carry out successfully the duties set forth in 8.1.3 and/or other similar biblical duties

8.2 SENIOR PASTOR

The senior pastor/elder, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, shall faithfully execute the work of a shepherd by guiding and serving Lakeland’s congregation.

- 8.2.1 **Qualifications:** He must be qualified to be an elder. In addition, he must be gifted in and have a philosophy of equipping as articulated in Ephesians 4:11-16.
- 8.2.2 **Term:** There is no set term of service.
- 8.2.3 **Duties:** In addition to those obligations already stated for elders (8.1.3), the senior pastor shall:
- a) give himself to the studying, preaching and teaching of God’s Word and to prayer (Acts 6:4)
 - b) be an example to the believers in his personal, family, and public life (1 Timothy 3:1-7)
 - c) equip believers to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12)
 - d) ensure that the congregation is led in: 1) worship and prayer, 2) the study of the Scriptures, 3) the administration of the ordinances, 4) watching over the spiritual needs of the body, 5) seeking the salvation of unbelievers and 6) fulfilling the purpose of the church

- e) teach the congregation: 1) the greatness of pursuing God, 2) the doctrines of Scripture and 3) Biblical principles of Christian living (II Timothy 2:2)
- f) be responsible for the supervision of the staff in accordance with the Operations Handbook. He shall be responsible for the hiring and termination of the non-pastoral staff in consultation with the elders and where appropriate, in consultation with the staff
- g) recommend candidates for deacon to the Board
- h) in consultation with the Board, and in accordance with Scripture, formulate the strategy whereby Lakeland fulfills its purpose
- i) facilitate the relationship between Lakeland, the EFCA's Great Lakes District and local evangelical churches
- j) commit to seeking and securing EFCA credentials by transfer of ordination or obtaining a license leading to ordination or Christian Ministry within 30 months of commencement of ministry or as further extended by the Board.

8.2.4 **Organizational Relationships:** He shall be directly responsible to the Board in performing the duties as outlined. He shall be a member of the Board with voting privileges, except he shall not have the right to vote on any motions regarding his termination. He shall work with the elders, deacons, staff and church leadership in formulating goals and objectives and implementing their ministries.

8.2.5 **Selection:** A nominating committee comprised of at least two elders, at least one deacon or staff person and at least three members at large shall approve the senior pastor candidate. The candidate must have the super-majority support of the committee, and then meet with the Board. He must have the unanimous support of the entire Board. The candidate will preach and meet with the congregation. His name will then be submitted to the membership who will have at least two weeks but no greater than six weeks to prayerfully consider the nomination and then must give at least 75% positive responses from those members present at a Congregational Business Meeting called for the purpose of extending a call to the candidate. He must have submitted his completed Lakeland membership application. He will then be immediately recognized as a member and elder of Lakeland.

8.2.6 **Reprimand or Termination of Ministry:** The senior pastor may resign. A 60-day notice is required for a resignation unless modified at the discretion of the Board. The service of the senior pastor may be terminated for reasons of: continued behavior that violates the Biblical qualifications for the office, continued agreement with doctrine that violates the Statement of Faith (Article V) or policies of the Elder Board, and/or ineffectiveness of ministry as demonstrated by failing to carry out successfully the duties set forth in 8.1.3 and 8.2.3 and/or other similar biblical duties. Following one year of service, the terminated senior pastor may be granted severance pay, as determined by the Board. See 8.5 for further reprimand and termination procedures for this leader. (*I Timothy 5:19-20*)

8.3 ASSOCIATE PASTORS

The membership at any time may call associate pastors, both full- and part-time. They will be immediately recognized as members and approved for service on the Board, upon completing the requirements of 8.3.5.

8.3.1 **Qualifications:** Their qualifications are the same as those of the senior pastor (8.2.1).

8.3.2 **Term:** Their term of service is indefinite.

8.3.3 **Duties:** Their duties may differ by their job descriptions but shall always include a priority on their personal study, prayer time and desire to equip others for the work of the ministry.

8.3.4 **Organizational Relationships:** They will be responsible to the Board through the oversight of the senior pastor.

8.3.5 **Selection:** Associate pastor candidates shall be nominated by the Board or a nominating committee comprised of at least two elders (one of whom must be the senior pastor), at least one deacon or staff member, and at least three members of the congregation at large. A candidate must have the super-majority support of the committee and then meet with the Board. He must have the unanimous support

of the entire Board. His name will then be submitted to the congregation who will have at least two weeks but no greater than six weeks to prayerfully consider the nomination and then must give at least 75% positive responses from those members present at a Congregational Business Meeting called for the purpose of extending a call to the candidate. Upon accepting the call, he must sign Lakeland's membership application.

8.3.6 **Reprimand or Termination of Ministry:** Conditions for reprimand or termination of employment for an associate pastor are identical to those described in 8.2.6 and 8.5. In addition, the ministry of an associate pastor may also be terminated for budgetary reasons if approved by at least 75% of the Board and subsequent approval by a super-majority of the members present at an official meeting.

8.4 DEACONS

Deacons are gifted by the Spirit and recognized by the Board and congregation as approved servants assisting in official capacities as needed in the church.

8.4.1 **Qualifications:** Deacons must be members of the congregation who are committed to harmonious cooperation with the elders in the ministries entrusted to them. Deacons must also evidence the spiritual qualifications prescribed for that office in I Timothy 3:8-13. (*Acts 6:3, Romans 16:1*). In summary they are:

- a) respectability
- b) self-control
- c) financial integrity
- d) doctrinal conviction
- e) moral-marital faithfulness
- f) exemplary home management

8.4.2 **Term of Office:** Every deacon's term of office will expire on December 31st of every odd year, unless renewed by the Board.

8.4.3 **Selection and Recognition:** Names for deacon candidates may be submitted to the Board by the Senior Pastor, congregation and/or by the Board itself. The Board will ensure that such candidates are examined for deacon ministries. Upon their examination and approval, the Board will recommend the candidate(s) to the congregation for consideration at least two weeks prior to recognition by a simple majority of members present at a Congregational Business Meeting. Such a meeting must be held within six weeks of the candidate's recommendation to the congregation. Once recognized by the congregation, any deacon can serve additional terms of office as appointed by the Board.

8.4.4 **Ministries:** Generally, deacon ministries fall into the broad category of supporting and assisting the elders in whatever areas may free them to shepherd and oversee the church more efficiently and effectively. In this support role, they render an invaluable service both to the elders and to the congregation. Specifically, deacons may be appointed to such ministries as finances (church treasurer), buildings and grounds maintenance, committee chairing, Small Group leadership, youth ministries and special caring ministries. Written ministry descriptions are to detail the expectations for deacon positions as needed. As servants/assistants to the elders and the congregation, deacons are called upon to implement policy, not set policy. Theirs is a delegated ministry with limited decision making. The only authority residing with the deacons is that authority delegated to them by the Board. For their invaluable contribution to the efficient and orderly ministry of the church, deacons occupy an honorable office (*I Timothy 3:13*).

8.4.5 **Organization and Accountability:** Due to the nature of their office and the diversity of their ministries, deacons do not constitute as a group an official board or committee. However, on occasion some of the deacons with similar responsibilities may wish to combine their efforts in teamwork fashion for the accomplishing of a particular ministry. The Board must preapprove any combined effort such as a task force, committee or work group. The Board will define reporting and accountability relationships for each deacon before that deacon begins his or her term of service.

- 8.4.6 **Number:** Qualifications, personal desire and church need determine the number of deacons.
- 8.4.7 **Reprimand or Termination of Ministry:** See section 8.5 “Reprimand and Termination Procedures”. The following reasons for termination of service or reprimand will be accepted:
- a) resignation
 - b) continued behavior which violates the Biblical qualification for the office
 - c) continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith (Article V) or policies of the Elder Board
 - d) continued ineffectiveness of his or her ministry
- 8.5 **REPRIMAND AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES:** Termination or reprimand of any leader may be initiated by the Board or by any member of the congregation. There is not to be any charge made against any leader in a public meeting unless it is brought as the official result of an investigation process (described below), which has determined the charge to be valid. In the case of the Board initiating reprimand or termination procedures, it may be accomplished with the simple majority vote of the Board, excluding any implicated leader. In the case of a member of the congregation initiating reprimand or termination procedures, a letter must be addressed to the Board. The letter must clearly present any charge against the leader with supporting evidence, including the names of any others who could serve as witnesses. Two or more witnesses (who function as eye witnesses or as investigators) are required to consider and establish the veracity of any accusation against a leader. (*Deuteronomy 19:15-19; Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:16; 1 Timothy 5:19-20*)
- 8.5.1 Regardless of which entity brings a charge against a leader, the Board may conduct the investigation itself or establish a seven-member investigative committee made up of Lakeland members, including at least two elders. The Board must establish such a committee if any charge directly implicates three or more elders. Elders must not make up the majority of any investigative committee. In either case, the Board or the investigative committee must rule by at least a 75% vote of all of its members (excluding any implicated member), as to whether the charge is valid beyond a reasonable doubt, based on applicable testimony, evidence and biblical principles.
- 8.5.2 If any charge based on continued behavior which violates the biblical qualifications for office, or continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith (Article V) or policies of the Elder Board, is deemed valid by the Board or its investigative committee, the Board shall initiate the corrective discipline process as delineated in 7.2. If the process results in a determination of disfellowshipping by the committee of elders, with consensus ratification by the Board of Elders, such recommendation shall include a determination of reprimand or termination of ministry.
- If any charge not specifically addressed elsewhere in this section (including a charge against the senior pastor based on ineffectiveness of ministry) is deemed valid by the Board, the Board must call for a Congregational Business Meeting to be held within two weeks during which any validated charge and recommendation for reprimand or termination are presented. The elders, excluding any implicated, will determine the nature, extent and means of any discussion of the matter. There will then be a one week period during which the congregation is to prayerfully consider the matter before a second Congregational Business Meeting is convened specifically for the purpose of voting on the recommendation of the Board or its investigative committee. The service of the leader will be immediately reprimanded or terminated by a two-thirds minimum vote of the members present.
- If any charge against an associate pastor based on ineffectiveness of ministry is deemed valid by the Board, an investigative committee shall be established by the Board (8.5.1). The associate pastor may recommend people to serve on the investigative committee. The investigative committee shall make a non-binding recommendation to the Board. After considering the recommendation of the investigative committee, the service of the associate pastor may be reprimanded or terminated by super-majority vote of the Board.
- 8.5.3 Any leader may be put on administrative leave at the discretion of the majority of Board present during an investigation or consideration of grounds for termination. Any salaried leader will receive full pay

until such time as his or her service is terminated. In any case, the Board or the investigative committee will notify the initial complainant of the results of their investigation.

- 8.6 **RELATIONSHIP TO THE MEMBERSHIP:** In their oversight ministries, all leaders, under God, will seek to be sensitive to the leading of Christ Jesus in and through the entire membership (*Matthew 18:17; Acts 1:23, 6:3, 15:22; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5*). Therefore, the Board at its discretion will bring before the members matters of major importance for their evaluation, guidance, and/or vote.
- 8.7 **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP:** The Board shall maintain a current copy of the Operations Handbook, amending its contents as needed. If areas of unresolved disagreement or tension persist among any leadership, these areas must be brought promptly before the Board for their intervention. (*Psalms 133; Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15-17*)

ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS

- 9.1 **CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS:** Congregational Business Meetings will be held at least quarterly each year to transact business, pray and/or provide a forum for ministry planning and evaluation. Additional Congregational Business Meetings shall be held whenever called by the Board or if required under Article XIII.
- 9.1.1 **Notice:** Notices for all Congregational Business Meetings must be published in the Sunday bulletin and supplemented by a verbal announcement for at least two Sundays (not less than 14 days) preceding the scheduled meeting. Such notice may be waived if the Board determines that an emergency Congregational Business Meeting should be held requiring less than a two-week notice.
- 9.1.2 **Quorum:** In order to have any official, binding vote, at least 25% of Lakeland members must be present to establish a quorum at the beginning of any Congregational Business Meeting with that quorum remaining valid for the duration of the meeting unless challenged. Non-members may attend and speak at these meetings at the discretion of the presiding leader or members. A super-quorum of at least 50% of Lakeland members will be required when the membership was not notified at least two weeks in advance as prescribed in 9.1.1.
- 9.1.3 **Approval:** A simple majority vote of those present is required to approve any motion or proposal, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution. Under special circumstances, when the membership is not notified at least two weeks in advance of a Congregational Business Meeting as prescribed in 9.1.1, a super-majority vote will be required.
- 9.1.4 **Order:** In order to facilitate orderly and satisfactory meetings, appropriate and accepted rules and procedures will be used. No accusation against an elder or member shall be considered at any such meeting unless it has been supported by two or more witnesses (*1 Timothy 5:19*) and has been approved for such consideration by a committee as described in Article VII.

ARTICLE X – MINISTRIES & OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

- 10.1 Lakeland may develop and provide for any ministries needed to fulfill its purpose. All such ministries shall be accountable to and consistent with the purpose and values of Lakeland and shall contribute to its harmony and development. The Board may structure, staff and provide general supervision over these ministry teams and their personnel, whether appointed or employed. All such ministries may have at least one elder appointed to it as an ex officio member.
- 10.2 No organization shall be recognized to be a part of Lakeland or its activities before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the Pastoral Staff and/or the Board and received their formal approval.

ARTICLE XI – PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 11.1 Lakeland 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

functioning of Lakeland. It shall have the power to dispose of such property by sale, mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the corporate name of Lakeland.

- 11.2 The purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or any other disposition of real property must be preauthorized by at least a super-majority of the members at any Congregational Business Meeting called for this purpose. The Board may authorize the purchase and sale of personal property that does not exceed five percent of the gross annual income of the immediate past year.
- 11.3 The senior pastor and/or Board designated signatories shall certify that any such conveyance, lease or mortgage included in 11.2 has been duly authorized by the vote of the membership as required. Such certifications shall be considered evidence of such authorization.
- 11.4 Any member who has withdrawn or has been excluded from Lakeland loses all corporate property rights to Lakeland.
- 11.5 The private property of the individual members of Lakeland shall be exempt from Lakeland debt and corporate legal liability.

ARTICLE XII – FINANCE

- 12.1 Funds received by Lakeland shall be counted and certified by at least two persons and deposited by one or more persons approved by the Board.
- 12.2 All monies received by any or all ministries for any purpose shall be properly accounted for and deposited in the account(s) of a financial institution designated by the Board under the supervision of the Financial Secretary.
- 12.3 All checks for amounts over \$5,000 shall be signed by two of the persons authorized by the Board.
- 12.4 All monies will be collected after each gathering and placed in a Board approved safe or deposited in a Board approved account.
- 12.5 **Audits:** An outside, independent audit by a registered CPA will be done at least once every two years within 90 days of the close of the fiscal year. The results of any audit should be submitted to the Board within 60 days of its completion.
- 12.6 **Staff Compensation:** The Board must approve the amount and manner of compensation for all staff.
- 12.7 **Missions Support:** Support to missionaries, projects, causes and other persons within the limits established by the current budget, shall be decided on by the Board. A Missions Committee may make recommendations regarding such support to the Board.
- 12.8 **Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year shall begin on September 1st and end on August 31st.
- 12.9 **Approval of budget:** The annual budget shall be approved by the members (3.1.1(f)). If possible, the annual budget should be approved before the end of the previous fiscal year. If a new budget is not approved by the beginning of the new fiscal year, then approved monthly budget levels will continue until a new budget is adopted by the members, which must occur no later than the first two months of the new fiscal year.
- 12.10 Any expenditure in excess of the annual budget limit for that category and/or any budget limit may be raised by no more than the lesser of 10% or \$1,000 if approved by at least two of the following: the senior pastor, the elder designated to oversee finances, and the assigned ex officio elder for the pertinent budget category. The Board may increase any budgeted line items by, or create new line items of, amounts that do not exceed 2% of Lakeland's total annual operating budget per occurrence, not to exceed 5% in aggregate of the total annual operating budget in any fiscal year.
- 12.11 **The Treasurer**, who serves as a deacon (and may also be an elder), shall: (a) oversee the management of all moneys and securities of the church; (b) monitor the financial books of the church; (c) keep regular books of account; (d) render to the Board from time to time as may be required an account of the financial condition of the church, including reports of income, disbursements, and assets; and in general, (e) discharge all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties as may be

assigned by the Board Chairman or by the Board. The Treasurer shall make quarterly reports to the church.

- 12.12 **The Financial Secretary**, who serves as a deacon (and may also be an elder), shall be responsible for the receipts of the church. The Financial Secretary shall keep an account of all gifts, donations and offerings received by the church and shall keep a record of all individual contributions. The Financial Secretary shall make annual reports to the Board, and at other times as may be required. The Financial Secretary shall oversee the deposit of all funds to the credit of the church in such depositories as the Board may select and shall, in general, discharge all duties incident to the office of Financial Secretary, and such other duties as may be assigned by the Board Chairman or by the Board. The Financial Secretary shall not have authority to disburse funds.

ARTICLE XIII – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- 13.1 In order to maintain the integrity of Lakeland, when an irreconcilable division occurs within the body, which threatens its unity and/or existence, the Superintendent, along with other designated members of the Evangelical Free Church of America's (EFCA) Great Lakes District Conference (GLDC) Board of Directors, has the prerogative of taking the initiative to mediate the situation. In all such cases, the GLDC, through its assigned designates, will then convene and chair all hearings and meetings necessary for them to determine the facts and offer any nonbinding recommendations on how best to resolve all outstanding concerns. The GLDC designates will determine the nature, extent and means of any discussion and presentation of these matters at any meeting they convene.
- 13.2 Any case of continuing division within Lakeland's membership that has not been resolved by prayerful Board and congregational efforts, including those mediation efforts in 13.1, must be resolved by designates from the GLDC Board of Directors who shall arbitrate the dispute, with their decision(s) being binding and final on all parties. The determinations and recommendations of the GLDC designates, including those for corrective discipline, must then be presented to the involved parties and if needed, to Lakeland's membership at a duly called meeting as prescribed in 9.1.1. The property of Lakeland shall remain corporately with those members who most closely abide by this Constitution, as determined by the GLDC designates.

ARTICLE XIV – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

- 14.1 In the case of dissolution of Lakeland's organization, the assets shall be assigned to the Great Lakes District Conference of the EFCA, to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. Lakeland shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the membership, or when Lakeland has not held a Congregational Business Meeting for two years, or when fewer than six members remain.

ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS

- 15.1 This Constitution may be amended at any Congregational Business Meeting provided that the amendment has been approved by the Board and presented to the congregation for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. Any amendments must receive the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.

The members of Lakeland in Gurnee, Illinois officially adopted this Constitution on October 14, 2012.



Chairman of the Board