

Proposed NEBC Constitution & By-Laws Changes

September 5, 2021

Over the past several years the Elders have been discussing needed amendments to our By-Laws in order to better serve our ministry and meet the current demands of leading a changing and growing church. Our Constitution and By-Laws were adopted during the first years of Northeast's inception when it was a new and much smaller church. Over the past 40 years our staff, congregation and even our campus have grown significantly; yet much of our Constitution and By-Laws remain unchanged.

In keeping with the guidelines in our Constitution, the following revisions are being presented to the membership of Northeast for consideration and discussion prior to their formal presentation at our annual meeting in December at which time the Elders will call for a vote.

Members at Northeast will be given the chance to dialogue with the Board of Elders concerning this statement at an informational meeting this fall. Should any member care to discuss this issue personally or privately prior to (or apart from) that gathering you may contact the elders directly at: elders@nebc.ch.

Concerning our Constitution, the following revisions are being proposed:

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF BELIEF, Section 7: The Believers Relationship to God, Part B:

Regarding “Sanctification Present” the current constitution states:

“that God has already perfected our sanctification because our position toward God is the same as Christ's position (I Cor 1:30);”

The proposed revision:

“that God is perfecting our sanctification because our position toward God is the same as Christ's position (I Cor 1:30);”

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH PROPERTY, Section 2:

Regarding our Church Property the constitution states:

“Should the church be dissolved, all property and funds held by the church shall belong to the South-Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America or, in event said organization shall have ceased to exist, to the Evangelical Free Church of America.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Should the church be dissolved, all property and funds held by the church shall belong to the Texas-Oklahoma District of the Evangelical Free Church of America or, in event said organization shall have ceased to exist, to the Evangelical Free Church of America.”

Concerning our By-Laws, the following revisions are being proposed:

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 1: Process Of Admission to Membership

The current by-laws state:

“All membership processes shall honor the guidelines in the Northeast Bible Church Constitution and shall be approved by the Board of Elders. NEBC membership candidates shall submit Appendix A and Appendix B within these By-Laws.”

The proposed revision reads:

“All membership processes shall honor the guidelines in the Northeast Bible Church Constitution and shall be approved by the Board of Elders. Persons seeking NEBC membership shall request membership by completing a membership application in keeping with current membership processes.”

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 2: Classification of Membership

The section heading of the current by-laws state:

“THE MEMBERSHIP SHALL HAVE FOUR (4) ROLL CLASSIFICATIONS: active roll; inactive roll; nonresident roll; and associate roll.”

The proposed revision reads:

“THE MEMBERSHIP SHALL HAVE THREE (3) ROLL CLASSIFICATIONS: active roll; inactive roll; and nonresident roll.”

* This revision removes the associate roll which is outdated and unused membership classification. Section 2, Part D defines the “Associate Roll” as: *“An individual who has membership in another church and desires to retain that membership, but wishes to worship and serve with this church shall be placed on the associate membership roll. Associate members may neither vote nor hold an elected office.”* At Northeast, someone who has membership in another church but wishes to worship and serve with us is simply considered a “Regular Attender.” There is no membership distinction between an “associate member” and a “regular attender” since neither may vote nor hold elected office.

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 2: Classification of Membership, Part B: Inactive Roll

Regarding the “Inactive Roll” the current by-laws read:

“Any member who has been absent from the church for a period of three months, without manifesting an interest by attending services of the church or by contributing to its support, may be placed on the inactive roll by the Elder Board. The individual shall be notified of such action and not be counted as an active member, forfeiting his/her rights of membership. When a person on the inactive roll begins to participate again, such a member may be placed on the active roll by vote of the Elder Board.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Any member who has been absent from the church for a period of six months, without demonstrating an interest by attending services of the church or by contributing to its support, may be placed on the inactive roll. Individuals shall be notified of such action and not be counted as an active member, forfeiting his/her rights of membership. When a person on the inactive roll begins to participate again, such a member may be returned to the active roll.”

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 2: Classification of Membership, Part C: Nonresident Roll

Regarding the “Nonresident Roll” the current by-laws read:

“Any member who is not able to attend services regularly for reason of temporary residence in another locality, (e.g., duty in the Armed Forces, foreign missions or other Christian work), shall be carried on the non-resident roll of the church. Non-resident members shall be expected to communicate with the church at least every twelve months. Non-resident members may neither vote nor hold an elected office.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Any member who is not able to attend services regularly for reason of temporary residence in another locality, (e.g., duty in the Armed Forces, foreign missions or other Christian work), shall be carried on the non-resident roll of the church. Non-resident members may neither vote nor hold an elected office.”

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 3: Withdrawal from Membership, Part B

The current by-laws state:

“Any individual absent more than one year from whom no communication has been received (after reasonable attempts to notify) may be removed from the membership roll by the Elder Board.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Any individual absent more than one year from whom no communication has been received (after reasonable attempts to notify) may be removed from the membership roll.”

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP, Section 4: Discipline

The current by-laws state:

“If any member actively espouses a doctrine or conducts themselves in a manner which in the studied opinion of the Elders is not in harmony with scriptural principles, and for which he/she does not show evidence of repentance, he/she shall be interviewed and counseled by the Elders after the manner clearly indicated in the Word of God (Matt 18:15-17; I Cor 5:11-13; Galatians 6:1-5; II Thes 3:6-15; I Tim 5:20, and Titus 3:10-11).

The purposes of these interviews are the restoration of the erring member and the protection of the spiritual life of the church, and the main motivating force is love.

If, however, the member cannot be confronted or chooses to continue in an unrepentant condition, he/she shall be removed from membership. This removal can be done only by the church upon a recommendation from the Elder Board and by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members present at any annual, semi-annual, or special business meeting of the church. Such a vote shall be taken by secret ballot.”

The proposed revision reads:

“If any member actively espouses a doctrine or conducts themselves in a manner which in the studied opinion of the Elders is not in harmony with scriptural principles, and for which he/she does not show evidence of repentance, he/she shall be counseled by the Elders after the manner clearly indicated in the Word of God (Matt 18:15-17; I Cor 5:11-13; Galatians 6:1-5; II Thes 3:6-15; I Tim 5:20, and Titus 3:10-11).

The purposes of this counsel is the restoration of the erring member and the protection of the spiritual life of the church, and the main motivating force is love.

If, however, the member cannot be confronted or chooses to continue in an unrepentant condition, he/she shall be removed from membership. This removal can be done only upon a recommendation from the Elder Board.”

ARTICLE II – BUSINESS MEETINGS, Section 5: Reports

Regarding “Reports” the current by-laws read:

“Written reports shall be presented to the congregation at the annual and semi-annual business meetings by the Pastor(s), Treasurer, and Chairman of the Elder Board. The Chairman’s annual report shall evaluate the year’s activities, giving special emphasis to the spiritual aspects. This report also shall include any recommendations of the Elder Board directed to program and/or organizational improvement.”

The proposed revision reads:

“An annual report shall be presented to the congregation at the annual business meeting by a pastor and/or Elder. The annual report shall evaluate the year’s activities, giving special emphasis to the spiritual aspects. This report shall also include any recommendations of the Elder Board directed to program and/or organizational improvement (if applicable).”

ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT, Section 4: Duties of Officers

Regarding “Part B: Elders” the current by-laws read:

“Elders: The Elders shall constitute the Elder Board, and are responsible for governing the church between congregational business meetings. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Elders shall exercise oversight of the church, shepherding the flock without lording it over them, guarding the purity of doctrine, and establishing policies consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws. They shall act for the church in the reception and discipline of members. They shall minister in teaching the Word, counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick, and making disciples of believers. They shall appoint committees and leaders to accomplish the work of the ministry. The ministries of all pastoral staff, the Deacons, and all other officers and leaders are subject to the Elder Board. The Elders shall inform the church of major

decisions they have made within thirty (30) days of the decision. (Matt 18:15-17; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim 3:1-6, 4:13, 5:17; Titus 1:9-11; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4)”

The proposed revision reads:

“Elders: The Elders shall constitute the Elder Board, and are responsible for governing the church between congregational business meetings. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Elders shall exercise oversight of the church, shepherding the flock without lording it over them, guarding the purity of doctrine, and establishing policies consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws. They shall act for the church in the reception and discipline of members. They shall minister in teaching the Word, counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick, and making disciples of believers. They shall appoint committees and leaders to accomplish the work of the ministry. The ministries of all pastoral staff, the Deacons, and all other officers and leaders are subject to the Elder Board. The Elders shall keep the church informed of any major decisions they have made through regular reporting as stipulated at annual and specially called business meetings. (Matt 18:15-17; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim 3:1-6, 4:13, 5:17; Titus 1:9-11; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4)”

Regarding “Part C: Deacons” the current by-laws read:

“Deacons: The Deacons are responsible for the administrative oversight of the finances and property of the church, and specific programs as assigned by the Elders. The Deacons shall prepare the annual budget in consultation with the Treasurer, provide an annual financial audit, and keep the physical properties of the church in good repair. All actions of Deacons are subject to review and approval by the Elder Board.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Deacons: The Deacons are responsible for the administrative oversight of the finances and property of the church, and specific programs as assigned by the Elders. The Deacons shall ensure the timely preparation of the annual budget in consultation with the Finance Team and/or Executive Pastor, provide an annual financial audit, and keep the physical properties of the church in good repair. All actions of Deacons are subject to review and approval by the Elder Board.”

Regarding “Part D: Financial Secretary” the current by-laws read:

“Financial Secretary: the Financial Secretary shall receive all moneys and incomes for the church, keeping accurate records of their source, and depositing them as soon as practical into the appropriate church bank account. The Financial Secretary shall provide regular reports of church income to the Treasurer, Elder Board, Deacons, and the Congregation. The Financial Secretary shall hold the giving records of individuals in the strictest confidence.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Church Business Administrator: the Church Business Administrator shall receive all moneys and incomes for the church, keeping accurate records of their source, and depositing them as soon as practical into the appropriate church bank account. The Church Business Administrator shall disburse all moneys for the church, keeping accurate records of the disbursements. The Church Business Administrator shall assist the Executive Pastor, Deacons and staff in preparing the annual budget. The Church Business Administrator shall provide regular reports of church income to the Executive Pastor, Pastor, Elder Board, Deacons, and Congregation. The Church Business Administrator shall hold the giving records of individuals in the

strictest confidence. The Church Business Administrator shall be responsible for training an assistant who is approved by the Executive Pastor and Pastor under the oversight of the Elder Board.”

Regarding “Part E: Treasurer” the current by-laws read:

“Treasurer: the Treasurer shall disburse all moneys for the church, keeping accurate records of the disbursements. The Treasurer shall assist the Deacons in preparing the annual budget. The Treasurer shall provide regular reports of disbursements to the Elder Board, Deacons, and the Congregation. The Treasurer also shall hold the giving records of individuals in the strictest confidence. The Treasurer shall be responsible for training an assistant who is approved by the Elder Board.”

The proposed revision reads:

“Part E: Executive Pastor. Executive Pastor: The Executive Pastor shall oversee all disbursements of moneys on behalf of the church, keeping accurate records of the disbursements. The Executive Pastor shall assist the Deacons and staff in preparing the annual budget. The Executive Pastor shall provide regular reports of incomes and disbursements to the Pastor, Elder Board, Deacons, and the Congregation. The Executive Pastor shall hold the giving records of individuals in the strictest confidence.”