

**CONSTITUTION
of the
DALE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH**

**Glorifying God
by
Exalting Jesus Christ
and
United Together
by
The Holy Spirit
to
Spread the Gospel**

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CONSTITUTION

of the

Dale Evangelical Free Church

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Dale Evangelical Free Church in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be “The Dale Evangelical Free Church of Harris, Minnesota.”

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this Church shall be to provide a place for the gathering of loving people committed to an in-depth, systematic study of God’s Word under the guidance and enablement of the Holy Spirit; to intimacy with God through a daily pursuit of God; to a meaningful worship experience in spirit and truth; to serving others empowered by the transformational work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of children, youth, and adults; to ministering in an orderly manner motivated by a spirit of excellence and to accept the global responsibility of the Great Commission.

This Church will follow the five characteristics found in Acts 2:42-47: Worship (Breaking of bread and prayer), Instruction, Fellowship, Evangelism, and Service.

ARTICLE III

Authority and Affiliation

Authority

The voting membership is the legislative and governing body of this organization. The Board of Elders, which is appointed by the voting membership, shall conduct the spiritual and business affairs of the Church. The voting membership shall make major decisions for the Church at the annual, quarterly, and specially-called business meetings.

Affiliation

This church shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and with its North Central District Association and shall make every effort to send delegates to their conferences, support their home and overseas missions, and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the congregation itself may decide. Such affiliation shall in no way abrogate the autonomy of the local congregation nor its right to hold title to its own property.

ARTICLE IV

The Statement of Faith

The Bible

We believe that both the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of God's will for salvation, the ultimate and final authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed, obeyed, and trusted in all that it teaches, requires, and promises.

(Rom. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 3:16)

God

We believe in one God, creator of all things, revealer, reconciler, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and 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.

(Gen. 1:1; Job 11:7; Ps. 8:1; Matt. 28:19; 1 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:5; 4:8)

Jesus Christ

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

(Is. 9:6; John 8:58; 10:30; Eph. 1:18-23; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13-14)

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit testifies of and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, regenerates, baptizes, and adopts regenerated sinners into union with Christ as heirs into the family of God.

We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells, gifts, illuminates, guides, equips, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

(Ps. 104:30; 139:7; John 14:16-17; 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:8-11; 12:13; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; Titus 3:5)

The Spirit World

We believe that there is a domain that exists beyond the human world that consists of angels who did not rebel against God and who minister to humans.

(Dan. 10:1-21; Matt. 18:10; Luke 2:13; 20:36; Heb. 1:14; 12:22)

We believe that there are angels who rebelled against God and are either in bondage or are free to corrupt the human world. These angels are called demons and have Satan as their leader. Satan's avowed purpose is to thwart the plan of God in every area and by every means possible.

We believe that angels and demons are organized and are involved in spiritual warfare for the souls of men.

(Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 13:39; Luke 10:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:3; Eph. 6:11-18; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Peter 2:4; Rev. 20:7-10)

Man

We believe that man was created in God's image with an intellect, emotion, and will and was given the responsibility of stewardship over God's creation. Man had the capacity to respond to God and mankind but because of rebellion against God's plan, when tempted by Satan, experienced a lost condition or state of total depravity. Adam's sinful nature was imputed to all mankind resulting in all mankind being under the condemnation of sin. The only way that man can be reconciled to God is through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit based on the propitiating work of Christ.

(Gen. 1:26-27; 1:28-31; 3:1-7; Matt. 22:37; Rom. 3:10-18; 5:12; Titus 3:3-7)

Sin

We believe that sin is both a nature and a choice of all mankind resulting in a state of being totally depraved and separated from God. This sinful nature created within man an eternal inner emptiness that longs for satisfaction and significance but settles for temporary values and covers up this emptiness by hiding and blaming both God and others for the condition. Since sin is an eternal problem, it has to be solved by the eternal God and not by temporary values, man-made solutions, or man's effort to appease God. Only the cross and total faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross can resolve the sin nature.

(Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 3:10-18; 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:3; 4:18; 1 John 1:8-10)

Salvation

We believe that everyone everywhere must first acknowledge their lost condition, believe the gospel message of God's grace and provision of deliverance, and turn to Christ in repentance to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their only hope of salvation.

We believe that God imputes His righteousness into the sinner's spiritually bankrupt account declaring him or her to be righteous and able to stand in the presence of a Holy God because of repentance and belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

We believe that salvation reconciles the believing sinner to God because of faith in the all-sufficient, atoning sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ and this salvation will be experienced in three different ways or tenses:

1. I have been saved from the punishment of sin through the work of Christ on the cross
2. I am being saved from the power of sin through the work of the Holy Spirit in my life
3. I will be saved from the presence of sin because I will be in the presence of the Father (John 3:16; Rom. 5:18-19; 8:31-38; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 5:10-15)

Christian Living

We believe that the Christian life is a supernatural life that can only be lived by the power of the supernatural Holy Spirit living in the believer, providing the power to live out this supernatural faith so that the believer can love God supremely and others sacrificially, have compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed, combat the spiritual forces of evil, obey the Great Commission, and make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.

(Rom. 6:10-14; 8:28-29; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 5:16; 22-23; Eph. 2:10; 5:15-21)

The Church

We believe that the Church is a universal entity composed of all who have been justified by God's grace through faith in Christ alone and are united by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ who is the Head.

We believe that the Church is both an organism and an organization composed of many different local congregations whose believing membership should decide the leadership and administration of its own affairs.

We believe that Acts 2:42-47 gives five characteristics of the early church and can be used as a present model: the teaching of God's Word; fellowship; worshipping (Breaking of bread and prayer); sharing of spiritual gifts and material possessions and evangelizing.

(Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42-47; 14:23; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Heb. 13:7, 17)

The Ordinances

We believe that the two ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Water Baptism are to be observed as outward rites and continual reminder of the cost of man's salvation.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the life and death of Christ. The bread symbolizes His perfect life and the body in which He bore our sin on the cross. The wine represents Christ's blood which was shed for the remission of our sins.

We believe that water baptism symbolizes the believer's identification with the Body of Christ and the mode of baptism by immersion best illustrates this concept.

These ordinances are not to be regarded as a means of salvation but are to be seriously observed by believers according to the warning in 1 Corinthians 11:27. Therefore, children should not participate in the observance of these ordinances until they understand their true meaning.

(Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 10:47; 16:32; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; 12:13; 1 Peter 2:24)

The Last Days

1. We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ to receive His Bride, the Church.
2. We believe that believers will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ and given rewards according to what was done while on earth.
3. We believe that the blessed hope of Christ's soon return should motivate individual believers toward daily Bible reading, prayer, godly living, constant expectancy, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.
4. We believe the Bible teaches that God has a future for ethnic Israel.
5. We believe that Christ will return to the earth a second time to separate the unbeliever from the believer, and reign on the earth for one thousand years.
6. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily, judge the unbelievers and condemn them to eternal conscious separation from Him.
7. We believe that believers will be eternally blessed with the Lord in the New Heavens, on the New Earth, in the New Jerusalem.

(Is. 35:1-10; 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:1-39:29; Dan. 9:24-29; Matt. 24:1-51; John 14:1-3; Rom. 9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Peter 2:8-14; Rev. 3:10; 19:1-22:21)

ARTICLE V Church Membership

Definition

1. People who are at least eighteen years of age and meet the qualifications stated in this constitution may be accepted into membership.

2. Individuals under the age of eighteen years and who meet the qualifications may be accepted as associate members.
3. Associate members are not part of the quorum and do not have voting privileges.
4. When a family joins the Church, the children under the age of eighteen are considered associate members if they meet the qualifications. Children under the age of twelve may become associate members when they meet the qualifications.
5. When only one parent joins the Church, that parent must determine, at that time, if his or her children should become candidates for associate membership.
6. A person who will be inactive for a period of six months or more will be considered an associate member.
7. Individuals desiring to become active members may do so by written notification and interview with the Board of Elders.

Goal

The goal of Church membership shall be to serve God and other members of the Church Body through the power of the Holy Spirit by:

1. Stimulating one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24)
2. Growing together in the knowledge of God's will, through prayer, regular reading and study of God's Word both publicly and in private (2 Peter 3:18)
3. Growing in Christian maturity (Eph. 4:13-16)
4. Becoming active in sharing his or her faith (2 Cor. 5:20)
5. Demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)
6. Becoming increasingly like Christ Jesus in faith and conduct in every area of life (Rom. 8:28)
7. Giving a portion of his or her income in a systematic manner for the support of the Church Body and the furtherance of the Gospel (1 Cor. 16:2)
8. Being equipped to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12)
9. Becoming involved in leadership (1 Tim. 3:1)

Qualifications

Any person shall be accepted into membership or associate membership who has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her own personal Savior and Lord, manifests the fruit of a true faith in God, embraces the essential doctrines of the Statement of Faith and abides by this Constitution.

Admission

1. Persons interested in church membership shall notify the Board of Elders, attend a membership class conducted by the Pastor or a designated person appointed by the Board of Elders, study the Statement of Faith and Constitution, prepare a

testimony that states how he or she became a Christian and what it means to be a Christian, and be interviewed by the Board of Elders.

The membership class shall consist of an examination of the Statement of Faith and Constitution, discipleship training, and future involvement in the Church Body.

2. The names of qualified candidates for membership shall appear in the church bulletin on two consecutive Sundays prior to a congregational meeting held to accept these candidates.

It is the responsibility of the voting membership to become acquainted with each of the candidates to determine qualification to membership.

3. Objections to any candidacy must be made in person to the Board of Elders within the two weeks of public notification of the candidates. Biblically sound, accurate, and vital evidence based upon the true conditions of life must be made to support the objections. If the objections are deemed true and valid, the candidate may be denied membership.
4. If there are no objections presented to deny membership, the candidate will be approved for membership by the Board of Elders and presented to the congregation.
5. The new member shall be received and welcomed into church membership by the voting members at a designated morning service.
6. No person who is a member of a cult, the occult, a non-Christian religion, or a secret society like Freemasonry will be considered for Church membership.

Discipline

If any member is found to live or teach in a manner that causes division and polarization within the Church Body, that member shall be interviewed and counseled by the Pastor and the Board of Elders after the manner clearly indicated in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; and Galatians 6:1-2. The restoration of the erring member demonstrated by love shall be the single purpose and sole motivating force in these interviews.

If, however, the member shall choose to continue in an unrepentant and divisive manner, his or her membership shall be revoked. This action requires a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or specially-called meeting of the Church Membership.

Termination

1. Withdrawal from membership will be granted upon request in writing to the Board of Elders and a letter of recommendation for transfer will be prepared if requested.
2. If a member has been absent for a period of twelve months or longer and a satisfactory effort has been made to determine the reason for the absence, this member will be notified that he or she is no longer a member of the Dale Evangelical Free Church.

ARTICLE VI

Government

The Pastor

1. The Pastor shall be a man of established and true Christian character, qualified to preach and teach God's Word. He shall meet the qualifications as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:12-15; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
2. The Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God, coordinate the public services of the Church, watch over its spiritual welfare, administer the ordinances, administrate the staff, provide leadership to the congregation as a whole, and lead the members in practical Christian living.
3. The Pastor shall disciple the members of the Board of Elders, challenge, and train members of the Church to take leadership responsibilities so that the work of the ministry is accomplished.
4. The Pastor shall be ex-official member and provide oversight to all boards, committees, organizations, and groups in the Church.
5. The Pastor shall be responsible to the congregation and shall be reviewed by the Board of Elders on an annual basis.
6. The selection of candidates for Pastor shall be made by a Pulpit Committee composed of the Board of Elders, the Christian Education Committee Chair, the Missions Committee Chair, and three active members chosen by the Church membership. After prospective candidates have been examined, the Church will decide the desired candidate for Pastor by a two-thirds vote of the Church Membership at a meeting called for this purpose.
7. The Pastor shall provide a written resignation to the Board of Elders at least thirty days prior to leaving the Church.
8. Termination or dismissal of a Pastor requires a two-thirds vote of the Church Membership. There must be a written and dated record documenting that the Pastor was informed of the performance or character problems, and given sufficient opportunity to correct the problems prior to the initiation of the dismissal action. The Board of Elders may, at its discretion, provide up to two months compensation to the dismissed person.

The Pastoral Staff

A Pastoral Staff may be added, as needed, guided by 1 Timothy 3:1-13, the Statement of Faith, and the Constitution and will be responsible to the Pastor and the Board of Elders

The Non Pastoral Staff

A Church Secretary, Custodian, Music Director, Youth Director, etc. may be added, as needed, guided by 1 Timothy 3:1-13, the Statement of Faith, and the Constitution.

The Non Pastoral Staff will be responsible to the Pastor and the Board of Elders.

The Elders

1. The Board of Elders shall consist of not fewer than three or greater than seven men who fulfill the requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
2. The Board of Elders will choose a chairman and secretary-treasure from its ranks.
3. The Board of Elders shall assist the Pastor in the overall care of the Church and the development of a vision, mission statement, and ministry direction for the Church.
4. A Nominating Committee shall be selected by the Board of Elders and will consist of the Pastor, two Elders, the Chair of the Christian Education Committee, the Chair of the Missions Committee, and two active members from the Church. This Committee shall select candidates for Elder who have been active members in the Body for at least one year and who fulfill the requirements presented in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
5. The names of prospective Elders must be posted two weeks prior to taking a vote at a meeting called for this purpose. Members are encouraged to contact the nominees personally to become better acquainted and to gain information on which to base a decision.
6. Serious concerns about a Candidate for Elder must be presented to the Board of Elders in person prior to the vote. If there are no concerns raised, the candidate should receive a two-thirds vote of the Church Membership at the meeting called for that purpose.
7. If there is a concern about a member of the Board of Elders, the procedure presented in 1 Timothy 5:19-20 should be followed.
8. An Elder will serve the Church for a three-year term at which time he can be re-elected by the congregation for a second three-year term. An elder who has served a period of six years must take a one-year sabbatical before being eligible to serve another three-year term.

Duties of the Elders

1. Table of the Lord
The Board of Elders will oversee the preparation of the table and will serve the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month.
2. The Elder's Fund
A freewill offering will be taken following the serving of the Lord's Supper to be used by the Board of Elders for special needs that arise within the Church body.
3. Ushers
The Board of Elders will be responsible for training and maintaining a group of men

and women who will minister to visitors, create an atmosphere of acceptance, make the building comfortable, and receive the offering at the weekly Sunday service.

4. Monthly Meetings

The chairman shall conduct a monthly meeting of the Board of Elders to administer the spiritual development, business, and financial progress of the Church.

5. Church Membership

The Board of Elders shall keep a record of the Church membership, encourage membership among attendees, and provide a membership class for people who desire to become members.

The Board of Elders will contact individuals who have not attended church for a period of time to determine their status.

6. Baptism

The Board of Elders shall encourage individuals to be baptized, provide instruction to those who desire to be baptized, and conduct baptismal services.

7. Annual Report

The Board of Elders shall continually evaluate the progress of the Church and prepare an Annual Report to be distributed to the Church at the Annual Business Meeting.

The report will highlight a summary of the accomplishments of various groups within the Church.

8. Emergency Fund

An emergency fund of \$2000.00 may be used by the Elders Board without prior approval from the Church Membership. The fund may be replenished by the Church Membership.

Executive Board

The Chairman and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Elders will be the Chief Officers of the Church and will act as the official representatives of the Church when dealing with all legal matters.

Ministry Committees

The Board of Elders will select people from the Church Membership guided by

1 Timothy 3:1-13 to chair each of the Ministry Committees for a period of three years. A Chairperson may serve a second three year term followed by a one year sabbatical. The

Board of Elders will give overall guidance and direction to each committee so that the mission and direction of the Church is accomplished. Each chairperson will select committee personnel, as needed, and take the initiative to carry out the responsibilities of his or her committee.

1. Care Committee

This committee will minister to the sick and shut-ins through prayer, visits, food, and flowers.

2. Christian Education Committee

This committee will focus on a ministry to Children, Youth, and Adults by being responsible for curriculum, organization, programs, activities, budget, and staffing.

3. Community Life Committee

This committee will focus on bringing about friendships, expressions of love and unity, and a greater cohesiveness through sports, small group activities, suppers, and a ministry to various interest groups.

4. Facilities Committee

This committee will maintain the buildings, grounds, and symbols of the Church to meet the physical needs of a growing community of believers.

5. Finance Committee

This committee will maintain the Church budget, keep accurate records, provide monthly budgetary reports, and coordinate yearly audits.

6. Missions Committee

This committee will promote both a foreign and local missionary mindedness among the various age groups in the Church through communication, visuals, conferences, giving projects, and missionary visits. The Committee will be guided by the following:

- a. We desire to develop a global missionary perspective endeavoring to support missionaries and missionary organizations on all the continents of the world.
- b. We will support missionary organizations with long-term commitment if we can have frequent individual contact, and the mission is biblically, organizationally, and financially accountable.
- c. We will support organizations with short-term projects if the money goes to advancing the gospel and supporting the poor but the people we support are faceless and nameless.
- d. We must be faithful to consistently honor our missionary commitments.

7. Worship Committee

This committee will develop a meaningful worship experience for the Church by:

- a. Honoring and glorifying God.
- b. Being consistent with the Bible and its doctrinal teaching.
- c. Being sensitive to a biblical standard of excellence in the praise and worship services of the Church.
- d. Being sensitive to the musical expression of the whole Church.
- e. Organizing the worship experience so that there is unity and a flow in the services.
- f. Providing opportunities for musical experiences for the different age groups.
- g. Encouraging personnel to lead the musical experience having had adequate practice and spiritual preparation.
- h. Encouraging the development and training of musical groups within the Church.

Church Committees

1. The Nominating Committee

This committee will select candidates for the Board of Elders. It shall consist of the Pastor, two Elders, the Christian Education Committee Chair, the Missions Committee Chair, and two active members chosen by the Church Membership.

2. The Pulpit Committee

This committee will be formed to secure candidates for the position of Pastor. The Committee will be composed of the Board of Elders, the Christian Education Chair, the Missions Committee Chair, and three active members chosen by the Church Membership.

ARTICLE VII

Miscellaneous

Business Meetings

1. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held during the month of February.
2. A Quarterly Business Meeting may be held in February, May, August, and November.
3. Special Business Meetings may be called at the discretion of the Pastor or the Board of Elders.

Quorum

In order to conduct business at a meeting of the congregation, two-thirds of the eligible voting membership must be present.

Voting

Each decision brought before the voting membership should pass by a two-thirds vote.

Church Business Meetings

All Church Business should be characterized by love and unity under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit so that the Body of Christ grows toward maturity. Since all business should be conducted decently and in an order manner, the use of Robert's Rules of Order will be followed.

Ownership of Property

In case of divisions or a split, the property shall belong to the party who remains, abides by the Word of God, and adheres to this constitution. If the Church should disband and cease to exist, the property shall be turned over to the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Amendments

The Church may make changes to this Constitution when deemed necessary.

1. The changes must be submitted in written form to the Board of Elders.
2. The written changes will be posted in a public location in the church building.
3. A Church meeting will be called to take place two weeks following the posting of the proposed changes.
4. The changes must be passed by a two-thirds vote of the Church Membership.