

REFUGE CHURCH

**CONSTITUTION
AND BY-LAWS**

4801 Montañó Rd NW A-2
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	2
CONSTITUTION	3
PREAMBLE	4
ARTICLE 1: NAME AND LOCATION	4
ARTICLE 2: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND AFFILIATION	4
ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH	4
ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP	4
ARTICLE 5: GOVERNMENT	4
ARTICLE 6: PROPERTY	5
ARTICLE 7: AMENDMENTS	5
BY-LAWS	6
Definitions:	7
A.Membership	7
B.Discipline	9
C.Governance	9
D.General Policies and Procedures	11
E. Meetings	11
F. Special Committees	12
G.Delegates	13
H.Amendments to the By-Laws	13

CONSTITUTION
OF
REFUGE CHURCH

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

ADOPTED 2/25/2019
REVISED 4/3/2022

PREAMBLE

Believing the Church to be the body of Christ to which only believers in Jesus Christ belong, and that the organized Church is the visible reflection of that body, and that all things should be done decently and in order, and that a consistent testimony should be offered to the world, as members of this church we adopt and affirm the following:

ARTICLE 1: NAME AND LOCATION

The name of this church is Refuge Church. This church is located in the greater Albuquerque area, New Mexico.

ARTICLE 2: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND AFFILIATION

The purpose of Refuge Church is to provide a place of worship for Christians, to preach and teach the Bible as God's Word, and to spread the knowledge of salvation through Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. The church will remain autonomous and will support and cooperate with the Evangelical Free Church of America to the extent deemed mutually beneficial.

ARTICLE 3: STATEMENT OF FAITH

Refuge Church has adopted the Evangelical Free Church of America Statement of Faith, including any future amendments.¹

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

Any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord; who desires to live in conscientious obedience to the Word of God; who is in agreement with this Constitution and will abide by the by-laws of this church; and who desires to participate in the worship, fellowship, and ministries of this church, shall be eligible for membership herein. Procedures for membership and removal shall be as provided in the bylaws.

ARTICLE 5: GOVERNMENT

Refuge Church shall be a self-governing congregation responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ who is its head. The ultimate human authority of the church shall be vested in its members. An elected Church Board shall be responsible for the general supervision of all the spiritual, physical, and financial affairs of the church, subject to the final authority of the congregation. Annual and other congregational meetings shall be held in order for the congregation to give directions and authorizations to the Church Board and other officers. The government of the Church is further prescribed in the by-laws. The Church Board is the Board of Directors of the corporation, as filed with the Secretary of State of New Mexico.

¹¹ The current version is available at:
www.efca.org/resources/document/efca-statement-faith.

ARTICLE 6: PROPERTY

- 6.1 Refuge Church shall have full power and authority to purchase, lease, rent, borrow, receive as gift, or otherwise acquire and hold property, both real and intangible, as needed for carrying out its functions. All Refuge Church assets are permanently dedicated to an exempt purpose.
- 6.2 The church shall be dissolved if so decided by a 4/5 majority vote at a congregational meeting called for this specific purpose.
- 6.3 In the event of the dissolution of Refuge Church, all real estate, buildings and other tangible assets of the Corporation shall be disposed of by the Church Board in any manner necessary to meet the financial obligations of the church. The Church Board shall attempt to assure that the remaining property and assets become the property of some other non-profit Christian, charitable, or educational organization. Unless another designation is made, all real estate, buildings and other tangible assets of the Corporation shall become the property of the EFCA West District or any successor district of the Evangelical Free Church of America, and the Church Board then in office shall execute and deliver all papers of transfer to them.

ARTICLE 7: AMENDMENTS

- 7.1 This Constitution, except for the Statement of Faith, may be amended by calling a meeting. The meeting shall be communicated to the Congregation at least two weeks preceding the date of the meeting. The announcement shall include the purpose of the meeting and a written copy of the proposed amendments shall be made available to all members at that time. Only the announced subject(s) can be considered at such a meeting. To be adopted, a 2/3 majority of the present members must vote in favor of the amendment.
- 7.2 In order to amend the Statement of Faith, the amendments must be presented at an Annual Congregational Meeting. The vote on the amendments shall be taken at the following year's Annual Congregational Meeting.

BY-LAWS
OF
REFUGE CHURCH

4801 MONTAÑO RD NW A-2
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87120

ADOPTED 3/11/2019
REVISED TBD

BY-LAWS OF REFUGE CHURCH

4801 Montañó Rd NW A-2, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87120

A. MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person age 18 or older desiring to become a member of Refuge Church shall meet the requirements for faith and conduct set forth in article 4 of the Constitution and these bylaws of Refuge Church.
2. Applicants shall indicate their desire to become members of Refuge Church by completing and submitting a membership application form.
3. Applicants shall have completed a church membership course approved by the Church Board, in which they have been instructed in the doctrine and ministry of Refuge Church.
4. Applicants shall be interviewed by at least two Church Board members to provide an opportunity to share their testimony regarding:
 - a. Their relationship with Jesus Christ
 - b. Their agreement with and support of Refuge Church's Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws
5. Applicants shall sign a membership covenant approved by the Church Board, affirming their willingness to serve and support the ministry of Refuge Church through use of their time, talent and resources.
6. To review and approve new members, the Church Board will:
 - a. confirm completion of the membership course and receive signed Membership Covenant, then
 - b. interview applicants in accordance with Section A.4, then
 - c. review acceptable applicants at any board meeting, then
 - d. publish the names of prospective members at least two weeks prior to the board meeting at which the membership vote will be taken. Any issues that might disqualify one from membership should be brought to the Church Board before the voting meeting.
 - e. Finally, the Church Board will vote to approve the new members.
7. In response to God's grace, out of love for God's church, for the glory of God's name, and with a commitment to God's mission, each member is expected:
 - a. To Worship God at the Center of their Life

- i. To enjoy the good news of their salvation in Jesus and not live out of fear, regret, bitterness or legalism. (Romans 8:1; 1 John 4:18; Gal. 5:1)
 - ii. To nurture and sustain an authentic relationship with God through reading His Word, prayer, and participation in weekly corporate worship (Mt 4:4; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - iii. To live out their identity as a child of God, which frees them to be honest and transparent about weaknesses, failings, ignorances, and doubt with other people. (Gal 4:1-7; Romans 8:14-17; 1 John 1:8-10)
 - iv. To submit themselves underneath the authority of the Bible, trusting in God's wisdom and design for their life. (Ps 119:73; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - b. To Live in Gospel-Centered Community
 - i. To love, serve, pray for, encourage, exhort, and build up the members of Refuge Church (Romans 12:3-21; 1 Cor. 12:12-13:13).
 - ii. To cultivate godly relationships of mutual encouragement, love, trust, care, and accountability within Refuge Church (John 13:34; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
 - iii. To preserve unity within God's church by following Biblical principles of conflict resolution and by submitting themselves to the leadership God has chosen for his church (Hebrews 13:7,17; Ephesians 4:1-3; Matthew 5:21-26; 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2).
 - c. To Join Jesus in His Mission
 - i. To share Jesus in word and deed in their homes, neighborhoods and places of employment (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 9:1-6; Acts 1:8; Colossians 4:5-6).
 - ii. To support the mission of Refuge Church in our city and world through their prayers, sacrificial service and generous financial support (2 Corinthians 8:1-15 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
- 8. When it is determined by the Church Board that a member has not attended worship or participated in any activities of Refuge Church for a period of at least six months or moved out of the area, an inquiry will be initiated by the Church Board to determine the status of the member and their intention regarding active membership.
 - a. During the inquiry period, if the absent member fails to respond to the inquiry or offer an explanation that indicates why active membership should continue, the Church Board may terminate the membership by majority vote.

- b. A member may withdraw their membership by written communication to the Church.
 - c. Members may be dismissed from membership as a result of church discipline as set forth in Section B. Discipline, of these By-Laws.
9. Lead Pastor shall become a voting member upon acceptance of the pastoral call. Membership may be terminated when the Lead Pastor resigns or is dismissed.
10. The Secretary of the Church Board or designee will ensure that a complete roll of church membership shall be kept in the church records.

B. DISCIPLINE

1. As the local body of Christ, we understand it to be our responsibility to pray for and encourage one another to spiritual maturity. Accordingly, any member of this church who is found to be walking in unrepentant sin, or who is teaching in a way contrary to the Word of God or the Statement of Faith of this church, shall be lovingly admonished by fellow members according to the Word of God with the hope of full restoration. (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2)
2. If repentance and reconciliation are not achieved the matter will be referred to the Church Board.
- a. The Church Board will make a careful investigation and pursue resolution using Matthew 18:15-17 as a guide.
 - b. If repentance and reconciliation is not achieved, the Church Board may remove the member from membership.
 - c. Disciplinary termination of membership shall require a majority vote of the Church Board.
 - d. If a dismissed member repents and when appropriate, makes restitution, the person may re-apply for membership according to the regular procedure for church membership.

C. GOVERNANCE

1. The Congregation
- a. The following authority is reserved by the people who are active members as defined in Section A:
 - i. Approval of the Church Board
 - ii. Selection/removal of a Lead Pastor, which shall require a 2/3 majority vote of members present at a congregational meeting
 - iii. Approval of Pastors
 - iv. Approval or alteration of the Constitution or By-Laws

- v. Approval of the annual church budget. Should the approval of the annual church budget not occur before the start of the next fiscal year, the church shall operate under the previous year's budget.
- vi. Approval of an increase in spending that results in a greater than 10% increase to the annual church budget during the budget year.
- vii. Approval of any transfer, purchase, sale, lease, or encumbrance of real property which shall require approval by 2/3 majority vote of membership present and voting at a meeting to consider real property transactions
- viii. Dissolution or combination with another church. Refer to section 6.2 of the Constitution.

2. Church Board

- a. The following authority includes but is not limited to the Church Board.
 - i. Approval and removal of members
 - ii. Approval of fiscal and administrative policies
 - iii. Approval of salaries, benefits, and initial job descriptions for all pastoral and non-pastoral staff
 - iv. Approval of non-pastoral staff
 - v. Removal of non-Lead Pastors, removal of non-pastoral staff, and removal of Church Board Members
 - vi. Selection and approval of Church Board officers
 - vii. Form committees as needed. (e.g. Facilities)
- b. Responsibilities:
 - i. Develop, alongside the Lead Pastor, the strategic goals and priorities
 - ii. Safeguard the spiritual welfare of the church staff and congregation
 - iii. General supervision of financial affairs of the church
- c. Composition: The Church Board consists of a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10 male and female Members, presented by a Nominating Committee, confirmed by the current Church Board Members, and approved at a Congregational meeting, plus the Lead Pastor. The number of Board members will be determined by the current Board's wisdom as they weigh factors such as size of church, needs of the church, and the availability of qualified board nominees.
- d. Qualifications: Board members shall be elected by the membership and must be members of the church in good standing. They shall be persons of mature Christian experience and established Christian character as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 5-9.

- e. Term: Church Board members will serve up to two three-year terms with a minimum of a one-year sabbatical before additional terms (beyond the two) may be served.
 - f. Officers: The Church Board shall select from among the Board members a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to serve a term of one year. These officers shall also act as corporate and congregational officers. The Lead Pastor shall not be an officer. These positions are renewable during the tenure of a Church Board member. The selection of officers will occur each year as soon after the annual meeting of the church as practicable, but no later than the first regular meeting of the Church Board following the annual congregational meeting of the church.
 - g. Removal of Church Board members: Any Church Board member who has willfully violated the membership covenant may be removed from the Church Board by a majority vote of the Church Board and their office shall be declared vacant.
 - h. Vacancies: Vacancies occurring on the Church Board in the course of the year may be filled by appointment by the Church Board for the remainder of the fiscal year. The membership shall confirm a Church Board member to complete the vacated term at the next annual meeting.
 - i. Quorum: A majority of the members of the Church Board shall constitute a quorum sufficient to transact business.
 - j. Meetings: Meetings of the Church Board may be held at any time and place, including virtual, in the manner the Board shall determine. Minutes of all meetings of the Church Board shall be accurately kept and secured in a safe place.
3. Lead Pastor
- a. Lead Pastor Shall:
 - i. Be a full voting member of the Church Board on all matters except those concerning him.
 - ii. Administer the leadership team, which shall include all pastors, church staff and ministry directors.
 - iii. Initiate the hiring of Pastors and non-pastoral staff.
 - iv. Be held accountable to the Church Board for the leadership and management of ministry and operational affairs of the church.
 - v. Lead in a manner consistent with the values and mission of the church.
 - vi. Act in accordance with his job description as established by the Church Board.

D. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Any issue not specifically addressed in the Refuge Church Constitution or By-Laws may be covered under a specific or general policy document or procedural statement as deemed necessary by the Church Board. Current policies and procedures will be maintained in the church records.

E. MEETINGS

1. There shall be an annual congregational business meeting in the 4th quarter of the fiscal year to fulfill congregational responsibilities.
2. Additional congregational meetings may be held during the calendar year, with at least one additional meeting occurring during the year. These additional meetings may be called to receive state of the church updates from the Church Board and any other business deemed appropriate by the Church Board.
3. Congregational meetings will occur when called by the Church Board.
4. Congregational meetings will be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order.
5. An agenda for each meeting will be published and made available to the Congregation no later than the Sunday one week prior to any called meeting. No agenda items requiring a vote of The Congregation may be considered at any meeting unless previously published in the agenda. Any member may request that a particular item be included in the published agenda of a congregational meeting. If the initial request is not granted by the Church Board, it may be resubmitted bearing the signatures of not less than 10% of the active membership to force inclusion. Such requests must be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the meeting.
6. A quorum will consist of twenty percent (20%) of the Congregational members eligible to vote and shall be required to conduct business at any congregational meetings. Informational meetings (those not requiring a vote of The Congregation) do not require a quorum.
 - a. All congregational votes shall require a majority approval of the members present and voting unless specifically stated otherwise in these by-laws.
 - b. Each member shall be entitled to one vote; voting by proxy or absentee shall not be permitted.
7. Any member of the Congregation may request that the Church Board call a congregational meeting. Any such requests bearing the signatures of 20% of the eligible members must be honored and the Chairman shall call a congregational meeting.
8. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded, approved by the Congregation and secured in a safe place.

9. The fiscal year of the church will commence on October 1st of each year and end on September 30th of the following year.

F. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. Nominating Committee
 - a. The Church Board shall appoint a nominating committee as necessary. The committee shall consist of at least one Board member and at least two additional Members who are not Church Board members. The committee will present to the Church Board, for review and concurrence, any nominee(s) to fill vacancies on the Church Board. The nominees will be presented to the Congregation at a congregational meeting, for approval, in accordance with these By-Laws.
2. Pastoral Search Committee
 - a. When a congregation is without a Lead Pastor, the Board will form a Pastoral Search Committee with at least one Board member and at least two additional Members who are not Church Board members. The committee will consult with EFCA West, the Church staff and the Board to develop an appropriate search strategy.

G. DELEGATES

1. The Church Board may appoint any delegates that represent Refuge Church at any official meetings of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

H. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

1. The By-Laws may only be amended at a congregational meeting called for that specific purpose. A written copy of all proposed amendments shall be made available at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.
2. Adoption of any proposed amendments to the By-Laws shall require 2/3 majority of the voting membership present at the meeting.