



## BY-LAWS

### OF

## THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH ALLIANCE

Revised 11/19/13

"That in all things Jesus Christ might have the preeminence," and that "all things be done decently and in order," as enjoined by the Apostle Paul, the Evangelical Church Alliance is to be governed by its Constitution and these By-Laws in the administration of all matters of business and concern.

The purpose of the Evangelical Church Alliance is to promote Evangelical Christianity throughout the world, in all meetings of the International Conventions, the deliberations of the Board of Directors, the Regional Conventions, the District Meetings, and the work and activities of the staff at Headquarters and the Evangelical Church Alliance officers, this purpose shall be the motivating principle.

Will this action tend to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ? Will it incline to the "edification, exhortation and comfort" of the body of Christ? Will it serve to bring men and women into a saving knowledge of our Lord? Will it promote the best interests of the Evangelical Church Alliance, its churches and its individual members? These questions shall be the uppermost considerations in all activities of this Evangelical Church Alliance.

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### ARTICLE I

1. In the letters of the Apostle Paul we read about the various members of the Body of Christ functioning in different capacities, and that God has prescribed certain offices in the Church, and designated specific ministries, and the ECA acknowledges these services. However, it is not the objective of this body to cultivate and support all of the various orders of Christian Service.
2. We recognize two categories in Christian work:
  - A. Ordained Minister
  - B. Licensed Minister
3. We issue the following to those who qualify:
  - A: License to minister
  - B: Ordained to the ministry
4. All classifications of ministry such as: Pastor; Evangelist; Missionary; Mission Worker, and Chaplain, will be under the above classifications.
5. A certificate will be issued to all licensed, and a certificate of ordination will be issued to all who are ordained by the ECA. Ministerial credentials and identification cards will be sent to all licensed and ordained members of this body at the beginning of each new year.

## ARTICLE II

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance is not an inherent right guaranteed to all who desire such membership, but is a granted privilege which may be bestowed or withheld according to the qualifications of the applicant and the judgment of the Committee on Standards and Credentials or the Board of Directors.
2. All individuals desiring membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance, though licensed or ordained, or transference of credentials from another ecclesiastical organization shall fill out our application form for individual membership.
3. Each applicant must meet the following requirements:
  - A. Subscribe fully to the Tenets of Faith of the ECA.
  - B. Engage in a ministry which warrants the applicant receiving credentials based on Ephesians 4:12.
  - C. Submit four references, two ministerial and two personal, which respond to questionnaires regarding the applicant and his or her ministry.
  - D. Have a minimum of two years practical Christian work experience for those applying for licensing (full-time, part-time, compensated or volunteer) and a minimum of four years practical experience for those applying for ordination (full-time, part-time, compensated or volunteer). For those who do not meet the minimum years experience requirement, the Credentials Committee reserves the right to review these on an individual basis.
  - E. Satisfy educational requirements as set forth by the Executive Board. These may be waived in the following circumstances:
    1. The applicant has attended seminary, Bible College or other learning institutions and has completed the equivalent of the educational requirements of the ECA.
    2. The applicant has been licensed or ordained by a denomination or organization, which is acceptable to the Credentials Committee, and has satisfied the equivalent of the educational requirements of the ECA.
    3. If the applicant does not meet items 1 & 2, the Credentials Committee would determine what courses would be required to satisfy the equivalent of the educational requirements of the ECA.
  - F. Submit to an oral interview conducted by an ECA Ordained Minister and two additional ordained ministers. The interview may be conducted locally or at an ECA Regional or International Convention. It is recommended for those being ordained, that the interview be conducted prior to the day of the Ordination Ceremony.

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- G. No candidate will be ordained until such time as he or she shall be able to meet with an ordination council approved by Headquarters, and has met all written requirements.
- H. After having been satisfied as to his or her gifts and calling, the council will then conduct a divine service in a decent and orderly fashion, and with due regard for the significance of the occasion set the candidate apart to the Christian ministry.
- I. The question uppermost in our minds when considering an applicant for membership is not as to the number of college and seminary degrees he or she may have, but: "Is the applicant's daily life a convincing testimony to his or her having been born again? Is there evidence of a genuine call to the ministry and a God given ability to preach the Gospel in such a way as to win souls to Christ?" On the other hand, we place no premium on ignorance and urge all Christian workers to qualify themselves for God's work as fully as they possibly can.
- J. No persons will be received into membership or ordained to the ministry by the Evangelical Church Alliance who, for reasons affecting his or her moral or religious character, have been refused ordination elsewhere, unless by the unanimous concurrence of the members of the Board of Directors present in a duly called meeting such refusal shall be deemed uncharitable.
- K. If the candidate has previously been ordained by an organization or denomination, acceptable to the Credentials Committee, the candidate may be accepted by transfer on the basis of his or her previous ordination if all other requirements have been met.
- L. Each member must submit an annual report of activities.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

##### **1. Churches**

- A. To qualify for membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance, a local church should either be incorporated or properly organized, and have a governing body such as a board of directors or trustees and a constitution which will satisfy all the requirements of the state in which it is organized. Churches will not be covered by the ECA's tax exemption.
- B. Any church, properly organized and having a membership of not less than twenty-five members, subscribing to our Tenets of Faith, and meeting all other requirements, an application for membership and being approved by the Committee on Standards and Credentials, may be received into membership.
- C. A Certificate of Membership shall be issued after all requirements have been met.

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- D. The autonomy and sovereignty of local churches of the Evangelical Church Alliance shall be recognized and guaranteed by this same body. In order to preserve this autonomy, churches shall act in accordance with the government and tenets of faith of the Evangelical Church Alliance and will be subject to the ECA's Disciplinary Procedure.
- E. Each member church must submit an annual report of its activities.
- F. Each member church is allowed one delegate to vote during the International Convention.
- G. Any church may be removed from membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance for any cause for which an individual member may be removed, or when in the judgment of the Board of Directors it is in the best interest of the ECA to do so.

## **2. Christian Organizations**

- A. To qualify for membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance a nonprofit organization must be incorporated or properly organized and have a governing body such as a board of directors or trustees and a 501(c)(3) which will satisfy all the requirements of the state in which it is organized. Organizations will not be covered by the Evangelical Church Alliance's tax exemption.
- B. Nonprofit organizations must subscribe to the ECA Tenets of Faith, submit their FEIN #, and meet all other requirements during the application process before being approved by the Standards and Credentials Committee.
- C. A Certificate of Membership shall be issued after all requirements have been met.
- D. The autonomy and sovereignty of organizations shall be recognized and guaranteed by the ECA. In order to preserve this autonomy, organizations shall act in accordance with the government and Tenets of Faith of the ECA and will be subject to the Evangelical Church Alliance's Disciplinary Procedure.
- E. Each organization must submit an annual report of its activities.
- F. Organizations are allowed one delegate to vote during the annual International Convention.
- G. Any organization may be removed from membership in the Evangelical Church Alliance for any cause for which an individual member may be removed, or when in the judgment of the Board of Directors it is in the best interest of the ECA to do so.

**ARTICLE IV**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES AND OFFERINGS**

1. All members of the Evangelical Church Alliance shall be required to pay annual membership dues, the amount of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The Board shall also have the authority to exempt members in certain categories from payment of dues.
2. Inasmuch as the payment of annual membership dues is not sufficient to meet the operating expenses of the ECA, all members are asked and expected to send to the Headquarters office each year gifts and offerings in addition to their annual dues.
3. Members who have not paid their dues for a period of eighteen months or not contacted the Headquarters office shall be removed from membership.
4. All churches and Christian organizations belonging to the ECA shall be required to pay annual membership dues, the amount of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors. In addition to the annual dues, all churches and Christian organizations are requested to send in special gifts and offerings to the Headquarters office each year.

**ARTICLE V**

**PUBLICATIONS**

The Headquarters shall publish and make available to all members an Annual Directory of the membership, a Minister's Manual, a periodical entitled the Evangelical Church Alliance Evangel, and a brochure. The price of such publication shall be issued as the need shall arise.

**ARTICLE VI**

**KEEPING OF MINUTES**

1. Accurate and complete minutes shall be made and preserved at Headquarters of all meetings of the Board of Directors, business meetings of the International Convention, and a record shall be kept of all other sessions of the International Convention and Regional Conventions.
2. Copies of the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors, and business meetings of the International Convention shall be sent to every Board Member within a reasonable amount of time after such meetings, and a report of the business meetings of the International Convention shall be included in the first issue of the Evangelical Church Alliance Evangel published after the Convention.
3. A record of all meetings of the Headquarters Committee, the Committee on Standards and Credentials, and all other special committees shall be kept at the Headquarters.

**ARTICLE VII**

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

1. All corporation records, documents, correspondence, and files; and all records, documents, correspondence and files of all applicants and members are privileged information, and shall be restricted to the examination and use of members of the Board of Directors, employees of the Evangelical Church Alliance and persons authorized by law to examine them.
2. The release of information concerning members of the Evangelical Church Alliance shall be at the discretion of the President/CEO, or the Chairman of the Board, or members of the Headquarters Committee.
3. Personal references concerning the character and ability of an applicant for license or ordination, or membership shall be kept in strict confidence, and information contained therein is not to be divulged to any unauthorized person, including the applicant, without the consent of the person giving the reference.

**ARTICLE VIII**

**SALARIES**

All employees of the Evangelical Church Alliance shall be paid salaries in keeping with the cost of living and standards set by the Federal Government in its minimum wage schedule. The Board of Directors shall determine the wages and benefits of ECA employees.

**ARTICLE IX**

**ADDRESSES OF EVANGELICAL CHURCH ALLIANCE MEMBERS**

1. All members who have a change of address shall immediately report that change to the Headquarters.
2. The home address given in the last communication of any member with the Headquarters shall be assumed to be the present address of that member.
3. Any communication from Headquarters mailed to the last known place of address of any member shall be considered as having been received by that member.

**ARTICLE X**

**MINISTERIAL ETHICS  
MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS**

Every member of the Evangelical Church Alliance is required to subscribe to and live according to the following code of ethics:

- A. Members affirm their personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and are called by God's grace and power to the ministry of the Gospel. They commit to lives of daily obedience and service to glorify God and enrich his people.
- B. Members should reflect the example of Christ in personal behavior and character, avoiding any appearance of unethical or immoral behavior.
- C. Members are never to use their position or ministry for unethical financial gain.
- D. Members should maintain good relationships with others engaged in ministry, while being respectful and sensitive in dealing with different denominations and faith groups.
- E. Members should be wise and discreet in all conversations and personal interaction, regardless of time, circumstances or location.
- F. Members should be respectful, sensitive and alert with all persons, regardless of differences.
- G. Members will join together in marriage one man and one woman in accordance with Biblical teaching.
- H. Members should inform themselves of the current ECA Policy on Clergy Penitent Privilege.
- I. Members must subscribe to the Biblical teaching and standards of conduct found in the Tenets of Faith and Disciplinary Procedures in the ECA Constitution.

**ARTICLE XI**

**CONCERNING THOSE WHO DIFFER**

1. We will not lower the standard of our Tenets of Faith as set forth in the Constitution of the ECA. All uniting with us must subscribe to these fundamentals. However, we recognize that there are differences on those points of doctrine not essential to salvation. We urge our members to be tolerant toward those whose modes of worship and doctrinal views may vary from their own.
2. We practice the principles of the well-known aphorism: "In things essential, unity; in things non essential, liberty; and in all things, charity."

**ARTICLE XII**

**AMENDMENTS**

Any proposed amendment to these By-Laws shall be submitted in writing to Headquarters for consideration by the Headquarters Committee, which shall decide whether or not the proposal shall be submitted to the Board of Directors. If the Committee shall so decide, the proposal shall be submitted in writing to each member of the Board of Directors three months in advance of the next Annual Meeting of the Board. The proposal shall be considered at the next annual meeting of the Board of Directors, "provided that a two-thirds majority of the Board shall approve such consideration in writing. Such proposal shall require a three-fourths majority of the Board of Directors present for passage.