

Becker Evangelical
Free Church

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Presented at Community Mtg:
September 19, 2023



Meet the Constitution Review Team

BEFC Pastoral Team Representative

- Joe Ley, Pastoral Team

BEFC Lay Members

- Danae Giebenhain
- Rick Hendrickson
- Theresa Sieg
- Brian Smart
- Matt Westin

Background on Constitution

A Few Considerations from the Constitution Review team:

- Jesus Christ and His revealed Word through the Holy Bible ultimately governs the church.
- A constitution is not a creed and does not supplant the Holy Bible.
- A constitution is intended to clearly establish the governance structure of an organization so all members understand how the work of the organization is completed.
- A constitution also establishes the reason for the organization's existence.

General note:

- In Minnesota, a constitution is not a recognized legal document by the state. As such, BEFC's constitution is an agreement within the church of why we exist and how business will be conducted between membership and leadership.

Overview of Change Groupings

Change A: Changes proposed by Pastoral Team

- a. Revises Purpose / Mission / Vision statements
- b. Replaces “Pastoral Team” with “Elders”
- c. Terms of Office of Pastoral Team increases from 2 terms to 3

Change B: Related to new pastor job description

- a. Replace Senior Pastor with Preaching Pastor
- b. Other changes related to the Preaching Pastor job description

Change C: Recommendations from Constitution Team

- a. Clarifies and modifies Constitutional change process
- b. Establishes a definition of quorum

Proposed Change A

A-1	<u>Current reading:</u> Blank	<u>Proposed Change:</u> OUR PURPOSE To glorify God by displaying His manifold wisdom. (Eph 3:10, 1 Peter 2-9)
A-2	<u>Current reading (under OUR MISSION):</u> To make every willing person a healthy, reproducing believer.	<u>Proposed Change:</u> Our mission is to glorify God by; obeying His work, building each other up in truth, loving others by imitating Jesus, and making disciples by proclaiming the Gospel. (Eph 5:1-2, 1 Peter 2:4-5, 1 Thess 5:11, John 13:34-35, John 17, Col 3:12-17)
A-3	<u>Current reading (Under OUR VISION):</u> To produce measurable spiritual development and maturity in our church family and those entrusted to our care.	<u>Proposed Change (Under OUR VISION):</u> To be united in the ultimate, joyful worship of God for His glory. (John 17:1-26, Rev 7:9-17, Rev 21-22:4, Jer 31:33-34)
A-4	<u>Current reading (throughout document):</u> Uses term of “Pastoral Team” or “Pastoral Team Member”	<u>Proposed Change (throughout document):</u> Replaces “Pastoral Team” or “Pastoral Team Member” with “Elders” or “Elder”
A-5	<u>Current reading (under GOVERNMENT/Terms of Office):</u> Each member shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.	<u>Proposed Change (Under GOVERNMENT/Terms of Office):</u> Each member shall serve no more than three consecutive terms.
A-6	<u>Current reading (under Function):</u> The Pastoral Team is accountable to the congregation for:	<u>Proposed Change (Under Function):</u> The Elders are accountable to the congregation for:

Proposed Change B

B-1	<u>Current reading (under Government):</u> The Pastoral Team will consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor(s) and an elected group of godly men.	<u>Proposed Change (under Government):</u> The Elders will consist of the Preaching Pastor , Associate Pastor(s) and an elected group of godly men.
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Note that the use of Elders here assumes Change A carries.</i> <i>The job description is specifying a Preaching Pastor. This wording replaces Senior Pastor with Preaching Pastor.</i>	
B-2	<u>Current reading (under Government/Leadership):</u> The Pastoral Team shall yearly choose among themselves a chairman, other than pastoral staff, who will work alongside the Sr. Pastor and give leadership to the Pastoral Team.	<u>Proposed Change (under Government/Leadership):</u> The Elders shall yearly choose among themselves a chairman from the Lay- Elders , who will give leadership to the Elders .
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Note that the use of Elders here assumes Change A carries.</i> <i>The job description for the open position specifies a Preaching Pastor, not Sr. Pastor. This change clarifies the intent that the chairman will come from the non-vocational Elders of the Pastoral Team and removes the reference to Sr. Pastor.</i>	
B-3	<u>Current reading (under Pastoral Staff):</u> All members of the pastoral staff shall qualify for their respective offices according to the standards of I Timothy 3:2-7.	<u>Proposed Change (under Pastoral Staff):</u> All members of the pastoral staff shall qualify for their respective offices according to the standards of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Revising Biblical references to match job description.</i>	

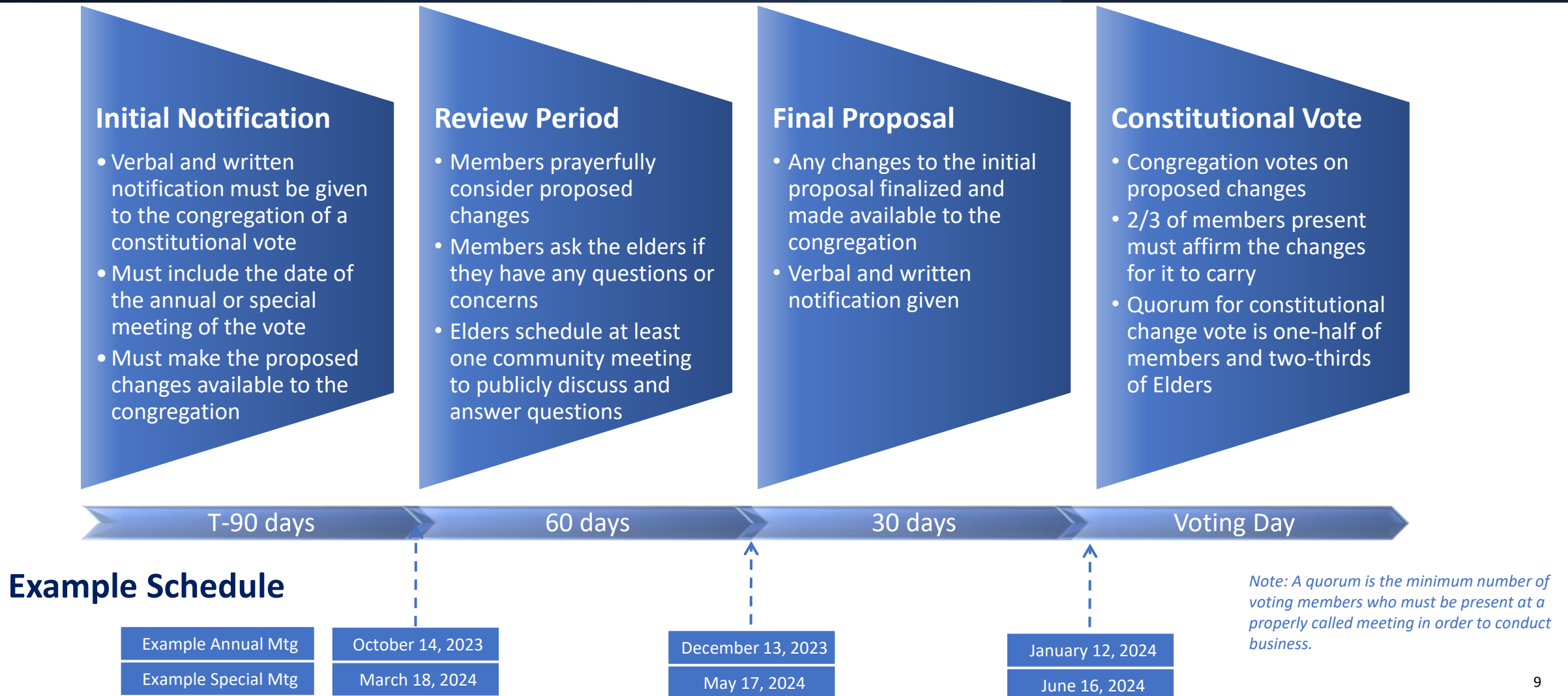
Proposed Change B

B-4	<p><u>Current reading (under Pastoral Staff):</u></p> <p>As the size and demands of the congregation increase, the church may add associate pastors. Additional pastoral staff will work in conjunction with and be responsible to the senior pastor. All associate pastors become non-voting members of the Pastoral Team.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Change (under Pastoral Staff):</u></p> <p>As the size and demands of the congregation increase, the church may add associate pastors. The Preaching Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) are voting members of the Elders.</p>
	<p><u>Rationale for change:</u></p> <p><i>Note that the use of Elders here assumes Change A carries.</i></p> <p><i>There are two fundamental changes here. The first is removing the reference to senior pastor and the staff reporting to him. The second change is that the Preaching Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) are fully active Elders who can vote in Elder meetings.</i></p>	
B-5	<p><u>Current reading (under Pastoral Staff):</u></p> <p>The Sr. Pastor has the authority to seek for and recommend to the Pastoral Team additional pastoral staff candidates of his choice.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Change (under Pastoral Staff):</u></p> <p>*Line item removed</p>
	<p><u>Rationale for change:</u></p> <p><i>Removing this statement to be consistent with the lack of Senior Pastor position.</i></p>	

Proposed Change C

C-1	<p><u>Current reading (under Amendments):</u></p> <p>Any motion to amend this constitution shall be voted upon at an Annual Meeting of the church and shall require a two-thirds majority to be considered carried. Such motion shall be brought to the Pastoral Team in writing for presentation at a Special Business meeting at least three months prior to the annual meeting. At the Special Business meeting the motion must again be presented in writing and a copy distributed to each member present.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Change (under Amendments):</u></p> <p>Any motion to amend this constitution shall be voted upon at an Annual or Special meeting of the church and shall require a two-thirds majority to be considered carried. Such a motion shall be brought to the Pastoral Team in writing for presentation at a Special meeting at least 90 days prior to the Annual or Special meeting where the final vote on the changes will take place. The first 60 days of this period are intended for the Elders and Members to pray over the proposed changes and seek clarification and understanding if there are any questions. Any changes must be finalized and presented in writing or electronically to the Members at least 30 days before the scheduled vote.</p>
	<p><u>Rationale for change:</u></p> <p><i>There are two changes proposed in this section. The first proposed change is adding a Constitutional vote option at a Special meeting, so we're not limited to annual changes. This change keeps the 90-day window between formally starting the process and the final vote. We changed to days from months for clarity. The second proposed change is to use the first 60 days of the 90-day window for communication sessions between the Pastoral Team and Members and allows changes to be made to the proposal without resetting the 90-day window so long as the changes are published to the membership at least 30 days prior to the voting meeting. See following slide.</i></p>	

Becker Evangelical Free Church Constitutional Change Process



Proposed Change C

C-2	<p><u>Current reading (under Quorum):</u></p> <p>The quorum for congregational meetings consists of members and at least 2/3 of the Pastoral Team.</p>	<p><u>Proposed Change (under Quorum):</u></p> <p>The quorum for congregational meetings (annual or special) where a constitutional change is being voted on consists of one-half of members and two-thirds of the Pastoral Team.</p> <p>The quorum for all remaining congregational meetings (annual and special) consists of one-third of members and at least two-thirds of the Pastoral Team.</p> <p><i>Note: A quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present at a properly called meeting in order to conduct business.</i></p>
	<p><u>Rationale for change:</u></p> <p><i>The current definition of quorum doesn't require a minimum number of members to attend to conduct a vote. The team recommends a separation in requirements for a constitutional change and for other business. A constitutional change should have a higher threshold and is represented in the 50% of members to have a quorum. The percentage of Pastoral Team required remains unchanged.</i></p>	
C-3	<p><u>Current reading (under Special):</u></p> <p>Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastoral Team. Notification of the date and place of each special meeting shall be by public announcement on at least one Sunday service, or by written notice to the members</p>	<p><u>Proposed Change (under Special):</u></p> <p>Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastoral Team. Notification of the date and place of each special meeting shall be by public announcement on at least one Sunday service prior to the meeting and by written or electronic notice to the members at least one week before the meeting.</p>
	<p><u>Rationale for change:</u></p> <p><i>Given the potential significance of a special meeting, the team recommends the addition of written notification as well as the verbal. This is to ensure everybody has reasonable opportunity to hear about the meeting.</i></p>	

Proposed Change C

C-4	<u>Current reading (Under Annual):</u> Notification of the date and place of the meeting shall be by public announcement on two successive Sundays, in regularly scheduled services.	<u>Proposed Change (Under Annual):</u> Notification of the date and place of the meeting shall be by public announcement on two successive Sundays, in regularly scheduled services, and two consecutive weekly written or electronic notifications.
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Given the significance of the annual meeting, the team recommends the addition of written notification as well as the verbal. This is to ensure everybody has reasonable opportunity to hear about the meeting.</i>	
C-5	<u>Current reading (under Government):</u> changing the constitution, approving the annual budget, adding salaried personnel adding to the facility.	<u>Proposed Change (under Government):</u> changing the constitution, approving the annual budget, adding salaried personnel, and adding to the facility.
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Correcting punctuation</i>	
C-6	<u>Current reading (under Membership):</u> The Statement of Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm ones desire for membership,	<u>Proposed Change (under Membership):</u> The Statement of Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm one's desire for membership,
	<u>Rationale for change:</u> <i>Correcting punctuation</i>	

Back Up

- Letter to Pastoral Team from Constitution Team
- Copy of Current Constitution
- Considerations for future changes

Letter from the Constitution Review Team

Pastoral Team
Becker Evangelical Free Church
Becker, MN 55308

September 6, 2023

RE: Assembly of Constitution Review Team

This team is thankful for the opportunity to review and make suggestions to the existing Constitution of Becker Evangelical Free Church. This team has been meeting regularly, working through the document, and prayerfully considering any proposed changes. We understand our charge from the Pastoral Team included the following considerations:

- Thorough review of the current document
- Make recommended changes to improve clarity

After review and discussion, the team is presenting the Pastoral Team with three sets of proposed changes. All three changes are to be incorporated into the Constitution if approved. The changes are presented in three groupings to provide clarity to the BEFC Community and to identify the three different sources of the changes.

- A. Changes proposed by Pastoral Team
 - a. Revises Purpose / Mission / Vision statements
 - b. Replaces "Pastoral Team" with "Elders"
 - c. Terms of Office of Pastoral Team increases from 2 terms to 3
- B. Related to new pastor job description
 - a. Replace Senior Pastor with Teaching Pastor
 - b. Other changes related to the Teaching Pastor job description
- C. Recommendations from Constitution Team
 - a. Clarifies and modifies Constitutional change process
 - b. Establishes a definition of quorum

The Constitution review team recognizes there are more modifications needed than could be effectively completed in time for the Annual meeting in January 2024. If the Pastoral Team is supportive, we propose the Pastoral team nominate and the church vote on a committee to review additional changes in further detail. Following are some example items that should be examined further:

- Inclusion of EFCA Statement of Faith (to protect against revisions outside our control)
- Do we need to consider having by-laws and/or a constitution?
- Membership section doesn't require approval of Pastoral Team
- The Leadership Community section needs to be revised or removed (currently unclear or unnecessary)
- Recommend listing positions with job roles in the document (Elders, Staff, Deacons, Pastor, etc.)
- What is the timing of voting vs membership? (Should a '22 membership allow voting at the '23 Annual mtg)

We are thankful for this opportunity and look forward to reviewing the proposals with you.

Constitution Review Team,
Danae Giebenhain, Rick Hendrickson, Joe Ley (Pastoral Team), Theresa Sieg, Brian Smart, Matt Westin

Current Constitution

Last Amended:
January 2011

(1 of 4)

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Becker Evangelical Free Church, in order to more effectively carry out the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church (Matthew 28:18-20), do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

NAME

The name of this organization shall be "Becker Evangelical Free Church."

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We accept and adhere to the statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America. (see page 4 of this manual)

OUR MISSION

To make every willing person a healthy, reproducing believer.

OUR VISION

To produce measurable spiritual development and maturity in our church family and those entrusted to our care.

GOVERNMENT

PASTORAL TEAM

The church will be governed by the Pastoral Team. The Pastoral Team will consist of the Senior Elder, Associate Pastor(s) and an elected group of godly men. (See terms of office). Except in cases of emergency, the Pastoral Team will expend money in accord with the budget guidelines as approved by the members of the congregation. Expenditures other than cases of emergency may not exceed the budget except as approved by majority vote of those present at a congregational meeting.

Ultimate authority in the church will reside in the members of the congregation in the sense that they will approve Pastoral Team members. Once this approval is given, the authority of the congregation will be considered delegated to the Pastoral Team except for the following: changing the constitution, approving the annual budget, adding salaried personnel, adding to the facility.

Pastoral Team meetings are not normally open to the members of the congregation. However, any member may request to speak to, or bring a matter before the Pastoral Team at any regularly scheduled meeting.

Qualifications

Pastoral Team members must be mature, godly men of character and integrity, who display biblical qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). All must be members of Becker Evangelical Free Church.

Leadership

The Pastoral Team shall yearly choose among themselves a chairman, other than pastoral staff, who will work alongside the Sr. Pastor and give leadership to the Pastoral Team.

Function

The Pastoral team is accountable to the congregation for: Building, discipling, and developing themselves and their own families spiritually. (I Tim.3:4,5); Positively imparting truth, refuting error, and administering discipline; Assessing the needs of the Church; planning, implementing, and evaluating the entire ministry in light of overall congregational Goals; Evaluating and protecting the entire ministry and staff; Overseeing and empowering the Leadership Community to carry out their specific areas of ministry.

Terms of Office

The terms of office for the Pastoral Team are to be staggered. Each member shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Each term of office is to be two years in length. Should a team member resign prior to the completion of their term, a qualified person may be appointed by the pastoral Team to fill the vacancy until the vacant term is completed. This person shall be presented to the congregation for approval at a special meeting.

Current Constitution

Last Amended:
January 2011

(2 of 4)

LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

The Leadership Community is the place for active ministry leaders (i.e. small groups leaders, children's ministry leaders, youth leadership leaders, etc.) to gain personal support, expand their vision, develop ministry skills, and intern new apprentices into active ministry leadership.

Personal Support: This is a time for the shepherds of our church to become sheep and be cared for.

Expand Vision: A place to express our core values, paint the big picture, and plan for future growth in ministry.

Develop Skills: Time is set aside to train and prepare people to use their leadership gifts for effective service.

Intern Apprentices: A place to bring newly identified apprentices into entry-level leadership, to nurture them in the use of their giftedness.

Qualifications

The Leadership Community must be comprised of mature, godly men and women.

Nominations for Pastoral Team

Prior to the annual meeting, and at other times when new or additional Pastoral Team members are needed, the Pastoral Team will ask the members of the congregation for suggestions of persons, who, in their estimation, meet the qualifications of a Pastoral Team member.

The pastoral Team will prayerfully select from these persons those who meet the qualifications. Interest and the ability to fulfill a ministry function needing to be filled, will be secondarily considered. If there are not enough qualified candidates, the Pastoral Team will wait for God to supply qualified candidates rather than lower the standard. The Pastoral Team will then submit their selections to the congregation for approval. Each candidate proposed must receive at least 75% of the votes cast.

PASTORAL STAFF

All members of the pastoral staff shall qualify for their respective offices according to the standards of I Timothy 3:2-7. They and their wives shall be members of the church by virtue of their positions and be in full accord with the church statement of faith.

As the size and demands of the congregation increase, the church may add associate pastors. Additional pastoral staff will work in conjunction with and be responsible to the senior pastor. All associate pastors become non-voting members of the Pastoral Team.

The decision to begin the search for pastoral staff must be approved by the congregation. The Pastoral Team will determine whether a candidate is to be presented to the congregation for a vote of approval or if the selection process needs to be repeated. The Sr. Pastor has the authority to seek for and recommend to the Pastoral Team additional pastoral staff candidates of his choice.

Upon recommendation of a candidate to the congregation a candidate for any pastoral position must receive ninety percent (90%) of the votes cast at a special congregational meeting to be extended a call.

OTHER SALARIED EMPLOYEES

In order to accomplish the work of the church, other workers may be employed as deemed necessary. Approval of such a position must first be granted by the congregation. Selection and evaluation of other salaried employees, establishing the terms of employment, and termination of employment shall be the responsibility of the Pastoral Team.

Current Constitution

Last Amended:
January 2011

(3 of 4)

PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

All individuals 18 years of age or older, who have personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord, who desire to be committed to Becker Evangelical Free Church may become members by attending a BEFC inquiry class and signing a Statement of Commitment.

The Statement of Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm ones desire for membership, and to serve as a formal record of one's membership.

ANNUAL RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Each member shall sign a yearly Statement of Commitment to reaffirm his or her continued desire for membership. This shall take place by mail six weeks prior to the annual meeting. In the event that membership is terminated for disciplinary purposes, the process for reinstatement shall be the same as for a new member (see above).

DISCIPLINE

All members of this church are subject to disciplinary action if they are found to live or teach contrary to the church's understanding of the Scripture (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5). The procedure which will be followed for disciplinary action is delineated in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:19. This responsibility for church discipline ultimately belongs to the Pastoral Team (Hebrews 13:17). It is desirable however, that the first two steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 will be carried out by church members without official action. *The purpose of church discipline is to lovingly restore those among us who have chosen to walk outside God's revealed will as presented in Scripture.*

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Annual

The church as a whole will have at least one scheduled business meeting per year. This will be the annual meeting which will be held during the month of January. Notification of the date and place of the meeting shall be by public announcement on two successive Sundays, in regularly scheduled services.

Special

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastoral Team. Notification of the date and place of each special meeting shall be by public announcement on at least one Sunday service, or by written notice to the members.

Quorum

The quorum for all remaining congregational meetings (annual and special) consists of members present and at least 2/3 of the Pastoral Team.

Current Constitution

Last Amended:
January 2011

(4 of 4)

PROPERTY

This church 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 State of Minnesota and as deemed appropriate for the ministry of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed, or otherwise.

In case of a division of the church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), the property of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and by-laws. The North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America shall be given authority to make this judgment.

In case of dissolution of the church organization, all property shall be assigned to the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America

AMENDMENTS

Any motion to amend this constitution shall be voted upon at an Annual Meeting of the church and shall require a two-thirds majority to be considered carried. Such motion shall be brought to the Pastoral Team in writing for presentation at a Special Business meeting at least three months prior to the annual meeting. At the Special Business meeting the motion must again be presented in writing and a copy distributed to each member present.

Considerations for further changes

(not an exhaustive list)

- Inclusion of the EFCA Statement of Faith in full text
 - Intended to protect against changes by the association outside of our control
- Do we need to consider having by-laws and/or a constitution?
 - In light of the fact that constitutions aren't legally recognized by the state, should we formally adopt bylaws?
- Membership section doesn't require approval of Pastoral Team for membership
 - Team recommends document line up with current process
- The Leadership Community section needs to be revised or removed
 - The team had several discussions, and this entire section is unclear on intent and application
- Recommend listing positions with job descriptions in the document
 - It is standard to list in bylaws the formal roles in the church along with the expectations of the roles. (i.e.: Elders, Staff, Deacons, Pastor, etc.)
- What is the timing of voting vs membership?
 - Document should clarify if a '22 membership should allow voting in the '23 annual meeting.
- Current process requires all voting to be in person. Determine if absentee voting is allowed and if so, how it will be administrated.