

December 1, 2023

Dear BEFC Family,

2023 has been an exciting year, though many things have changed, the Lord does not. Our proposed mission at BEFC is: **To glorify God by; obeying his word, building each other up in truth, loving others by imitating Jesus and making disciples by proclaiming the Gospel.** The world is in flux, moral decline is rampant and people increasingly need Jesus. Thankfully, as we approach the celebration of Christ's birth, we are reminded that God is sovereign and has a plan for this world that includes redemption and reconciliation. What a great opportunity we have as Christians to reflect God's amazing glory to the world.

Each year we ask you to reaffirm your commitment to BEFC by signing our "Affirmation of Commitment". When we do this, we're saying that we're "All in" for each other. We'll be there to encourage each other, love one another, pray for one another, and work together for God's glory in the church.

Please take time to read through our Statement of Faith, the EFCA Affirmations and Denials, and the Membership Affirmation we are inviting you to sign. Pray over these things, ask any questions you have, and sign and return it by January 7th. The Pastoral Team will review and approve the entire list of members prior to the congressional meeting in January. If you have never been a member at BEFC before, we want to walk through the process with you and will set aside time to meet with you, so that you can learn more about us as a church. We want you to feel as informed as possible and to have every opportunity to ask the questions that are important to you.

We know that God has big plans for our church in 2024! God has called His church to display His Glory to the world through the Great Commandment, to love God and to love people, and through the Great Commission, to make disciples locally and globally.

This past year we have worked to lay the foundation for a new preaching pastor by; holding Leadership Community Meetings, proposing amendments to our constitution, and crafting a new vision, mission, and purpose for our church. This work has been driven by the desire for clarity and motivation to be rooted in God's word.

We look forward to partnering with you in these Kingdom efforts in 2024. Thank you for your continued support as we seek to make His name great.

BEFC Pastoral Team:

Joe Ley, Tony Dupay, Tucker Howse, Jason Pfingsten, Chris Salvevold, Hoka Bengtson, Jerry Gudim

FAQ: MEMBERSHIP AT BEFC

Q: Is membership at BEFC different than what I grew up with?

A: Yes! Unlike many other churches, we have no lifetime membership. In most churches you become a member and you're considered locked in for life. Here at BEFC, membership is an annual affirmation of our commitment to four things: personal growth, regular attendance, financial support and serving the church. It is simply an opportunity to affirm our gospel partnership with this local church for one year.

Q: Is membership required?

A: No. Membership is not required to participate here. You can get baptized, take communion, join a small group... everything... without being a member. For those who would hold a position of influence, membership is strongly encouraged. We desire the focus that comes from knowing that those who are shaping our church are committed to it and have submitted to its leadership for accountability.

Q: Is membership Biblical?

A: The New Testament (NT) describes two levels of church connectedness. One is the Universal Church. If you're a Christian, you are a member of the universal church because you are united with Christ. The NT also talks about local churches. Most of the NT is written to or about specific local churches. It becomes clear that some people were part of each church and some were not. Whether they wrote down membership lists like churches do today; we don't know. We do know that the church leaders and the community knew which people were part of each local body and which were not. Some form of local church membership was obvious. How formal that process was is less clear.

One aspect that is biblical is compliance with the instructions of our national and state laws needed to operate our church as a non-profit organization. Having a constitution and formal membership requirements with specific instructions for governing our organization meets these requirements. As such, when we hold elections and cast ballots, we are required to consider the member votes as legally binding.

Thank you for your Partnership for the Gospel!

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the 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.

2. The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

3. The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

4. Jesus Christ

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

5. The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

6. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in

the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

7. The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8. Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

9. Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

10. Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

EFCA – Denials and Affirmations – 06/21/2023

- *We are not adherents of the secular “Social Justice” movement as held in progressive circles, but we do believe that biblical justice has social implications, particularly in protecting those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.*
- We are not “woke” in the sense of having embraced a progressive ideology that is grounded in critical theory rather than the Bible, but we do see the need to be awakened to the global and indeed cosmic impacts of sin, including racial injustice, and to be attuned to the biblical call for gospel-driven efforts toward reconciliation and restoration.
- We are not adherents of “Critical Race Theory” that reduces all racial inequities to a struggle between oppressor and oppressed and presents a worldview that is contrary to the Scriptures, but we do believe that the questions and challenges it raises stir us to recall critical biblical truths that we may have neglected and require our attention.
- We are not “Christian Nationalists” who believe the federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation or who believe that Americans are “God’s chosen people,” but we do believe that a patriotic love of one’s nation is appropriate and that Christians should be good citizens who may freely advocate for God-honoring public policies.
- We do not believe that political means can establish the kingdom of God, but we do believe that God has appointed governing authorities to do good and that, for citizens in Christ’s kingdom, King Jesus’ rule and reign transcends all other citizenships and partisan ideologies and transforms how we live in the world.
- We do not believe that a person’s biological sex should be separated from their self-perception as a man or a woman nor that the body should be altered when it does not conform to that self-perception, but we do believe that some people experience a distressing struggle between these two and that we must treat those who struggle in this way with love and compassion as we seek to help them, with the truth and power of the gospel, toward the wholeness of a biologically-sexed identity grounded in God’s “very good” design in creation as male and female.
- We are not egalitarian in our understanding of the roles and functions of men and women in the church, but we do believe that the gifts and ministries of women are essential to the health and fruitfulness of churches and ought to be sought out and multiplied in ways that arise from and are consistent with our complementarian convictions, as reflected in our EFCA ordination policy.
- We do not believe in the annihilation of those who die apart from Christ, but in their eternal conscious punishment. Among the kinds of suffering we ought to seek to alleviate, this is the most grievous, and it is our urgent duty and God-given privilege to seek to alleviate it by proclaiming the gospel and calling all people to believe the gospel by repenting and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ.

2024 AFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT TO BECKER EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

This is my affirmation of commitment to Becker Evangelical Free Church.

As a member of this body of believers I will, through God's enabling, endeavor to be faithful and accountable in the following areas:

1. PERSONAL GROWTH

I commit myself to the regular reading of God's Word (Psalm 119); prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17); self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5); obedience (John 14:21,23); victory over sin (Galatians 5:16); a constant looking to Christ in faith (Hebrews 12:1-2); and the filling and control of the Holy Spirit in my own life (Ephesians 5:18).

2. REGULAR ATTENDANCE

I will make it a priority to attend worship services (Hebrews 10:25). I will obey Jesus' new command to "Love one another" (John 13:34-35) by faithfully connecting with my brothers and sisters in Christ in a small group or in other intentional, relational venues. I will seek to build personal relationships for mentoring and accountability (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I will faithfully support the ministry of Becker Evangelical Free Church. My giving will be motivated from a heart of gratitude to God and as an act of worship to Him (Philippians 4:18). I recognize that giving should be regular and proportionate (I Corinthians 16:2); voluntary; cheerful; intentional; and abundant (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

4. SERVING

I desire to discover and develop my spiritual gifts and use them to serve the body of Christ for mutual edification (Ephesians 4:11-13), discipleship of believers (I Corinthians 12:7-13:13) and outreach to those not yet saved (Matthew 28:18-20).

Please initial below:

_____ I have read and affirm the EFCA Statement of Faith.

I look forward to worshipping and serving Jesus Christ as a member of Becker Evangelical Free Church in 2024!

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print: _____

Pastoral Team Affirmation: _____

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[Please return to the church office by January 7]