

DRAFT CONSTITUTION 11-1-2020

ARTICLE I

Church Name

[in current Constitution Article I]

This church shall be known as The Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church of Wethersfield, Connecticut.

ARTICLE II

Statement of Faith

[in current Constitution Article II]

Language adopted by Congregation on July 19, 2020

God

1. 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.

The Bible

2. 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.

The Human Condition

3. 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.

Jesus Christ

4. 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.

The Work of Christ

5. 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.

The Holy Spirit

6. 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.

The Church

7. 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.

Christian Living

8. 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.

Christ's Return

9. 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.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. 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.

ARTICLE III

Affiliation

[NEW]

Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church (WEFC) shall maintain membership with the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) and with the New England District Association (NEDA) of the Evangelical Free Church of America. WEFC supports the EFCA and NEDA in its work to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IV

Purpose

[in current Constitution Article III]

The purpose of this church is to glorify God through the worship of Jesus Christ, through the spiritual growth of its church members and through the equipping of church members to make Jesus known in the Central Connecticut River Valley and beyond.

ARTICLE V

Covenant of Membership

[in current Constitution Article IV]

Language Adopted by Congregation on July 19, 2020

At the reception of new members they shall be required, along with all members present, to publicly enter into the following Covenant:

We do, in the presence of each other, confess Christ as our Savior and Lord. We do heartily give ourselves to His service, and take His Word as the rule of our lives. Having been united with Him by faith, we do now, as a church of Christ, humbly rely on His grace and unite with one another in this Covenant.

We shall habitually observe private prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, earnestly seeking therein the help of the Holy Spirit.

We who are heads of families shall maintain the worship of God in our homes, and shall endeavor to lead our children and others committed to our charge to faith in Christ and growth in the Christian life.

We shall attend regularly, as far as Providence will permit, the public worship of God on the Lord's Day, and other meetings of worship as the church may appoint, and we shall faithfully observe together the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

We shall walk together in brotherly love, with Christian sympathy and kindness, and shall tenderly and faithfully admonish and help one another as may be needful. We shall not bring to the church a complaint against any member for personal trespass or offense until we have taken the first and second steps pointed out by Christ, Matthew 18:15-17, thus endeavoring to settle all private offenses without publicity.

We shall participate, as the Lord shall enable us, in supporting a faithful Christian ministry among us, proclaiming the gospel to the whole human family; and as we have opportunity we shall seek, by example and word, to lead people to Christ.

We shall endeavor to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, abstaining from whatever is unbecoming the Christian character. As baptism signifies death to sin and resurrection to holiness, so we shall seek to walk in newness of life.

ARTICLE VI

Membership

[in current Constitution Article V – moving majority of membership section to bylaws]

Only those persons who have reached the age of thirteen years, who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, who embrace the church's Constitution and Bylaws, and who are not members of another church may be admitted to membership in this church.

[removed Article VI (Ordinances) from old constitution in its entirety this section is covered under the Statement of Faith section]

ARTICLE VII
Bylaws
[in current Constitution Article VII]

The bylaws of the church shall be a part of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII
Governance
[NEW]

The ultimate authority of WEFC lies in Christ as the head of the church and in Scripture as the basis for all faith and practice. WEFC operates under a congregational form of governance. The members of the congregation approve major decisions in the life of the church. The Elders shepherd and oversee the ministry of the church.

ARTICLE IX
Amendments
[in current bylaws Article VIII]

Any article of the constitution may be amended at a congregational meeting by a ballot vote of two thirds of the voting members present at a duly-called meeting. The proposed amendments must have been discussed at a previous congregational meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose of amending the constitution. No proposed changes shall be presented to the congregation for approval unless three months have passed since it was discussed at a previous regular or special congregational meeting.

If action regarding a proposed change to the Constitution is not taken within one year after the date of a formal motion at a duly-called congregational meeting, the motion shall be dropped and may not be initiated again for a period of at least one year.

ARTICLE X
Dissolution
[NEW]

Should the WEFC church membership vote to dissolve and cease to function as a church, all buildings, real property and all other assets belonging to WEFC shall be transferred to the New England District Association of the Evangelical Free Church of America as long as WEFC maintained an affiliation with the New England District Association. If an affiliation was not maintained then all buildings, real property and all other assets belonging to WEFC shall be transferred to the Evangelical Free Church of America. Such entities must be qualified as tax-exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding provision of any future federal tax law.