

PROCEDURE FOR AN EXISTING CHURCH TO AFFILIATE WITH THE FOREST LAKES DISTRICT

Definition: A church according to this definition is one which is autonomous in terms of being self-supporting, having duly elected membership and leadership and a full legal status in terms of incorporation, constitution and by-laws. This is distinct from a church plant, which is still in the developmental stages. The goal of the process is to have an ample time for review, relationship building and understanding of mutual commitments and possible restructuring.

1. Initial Informational Meeting with District Staff or Representative and Church Leadership

A meeting is set up between the church leadership and a representative of the Forest Lakes District (usually the Director of Church Planting) and invited Free Church pastors from the area. During this meeting several key areas will be communicated:

- a. The Nature, Vision and Values of the FLD and EFCA
- b. The Benefits and Responsibilities of Affiliating with the FLD
- c. The Process of Affiliation including forms:
 - 1) Affiliate Church Application for Membership
 - 2) Pastoral Questionnaire – The pastor of the church will eventually be asked to meet with the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Forest Lakes District as part of the process.
- d. Possible required changes to the church's constitution and by-laws

2. Preliminary Decision by Church Leadership to Proceed

Following strong church board approval, the Church leadership will contact the District Office and communicate their desire to pursue affiliation with the FLD. This request should be in writing. The church chairman and the Sr. pastor should complete the Affiliate Church Application for Membership and the Pastoral Questionnaire and mail to the FLD office (the section pertaining to the congregational vote can be completed later).

3. SEED Commission Review & Initial Approval

The SEED Commission (the FLD Board which oversees church planting and affiliations) will review the applications and hear the report of the Director of Church Planting or other FLD representative. If they give tentative approval, the church may proceed with a congregational meeting. If there are further issues which prevent approval, the SEED Commission will ask for the senior pastor and some of the church leadership to attend a SEED Commission meeting.

Suggestions will be made regarding organization and documents to help align the church with Free Church doctrine and distinctives. These suggestions will be communicated with the leadership who will have the responsibility of making changes in preparation for final approval. Congregational interaction is encouraged regarding this part of the process.

4. Congregational Meeting

A representative of the FLD and an area pastor or SEED Team member will meet with the congregation to share some of the same items as in the initial informational meeting. An opportunity will be made for the congregation to interact.

5. Congregational Decision to Proceed with Relationship

The results of the congregational meeting in terms of vote will be communicated in writing to the FLD. The Church should at this point finalize and submit to the FLD any approved changes to its constitution and by-laws.

6. Mutual Responsibilities During Affiliation Process:

The Forest Lakes District will:

- Keep the church informed of all District activities and provide materials normally sent to all district churches.
- Invite the church to attend all district functions including ministerial, district conferences and fellowship activities.
- Inform neighboring Evangelical Free Churches to encourage mutual interaction.
- Assist the church with review and revision of its organization and documents including constitution and bylaws.
- Be available to assist in the ministry of the church through the district staff including pastoral search if the church is looking for a pastor.
- Be available to the church leadership for consultation

The Affiliating Church will:

- Provide the FLD Office with minutes of congregational meetings during the period of its affiliation request.
- Inform the District office of meetings they would like FLD representatives to attend.
- Send occasional publications (bulletins, newsletters) to the FLD office for communication purposes.
- Work on amending its constitution and bylaws and organization to reflect Free Church distinctives. See below for particular areas to include in the constitution and bylaws.
- Make sure that any pastoral candidates sought during affiliation procedure will either have EFCA credentials or commit to seek credentialing with the EFCA
- State their intentions to financially support FLD & EFCA ministries. (The EFCA Fair Share Plan details this.)
- Fill out the Application for Affiliation.
- Complete the Natural Church Development Survey.

The Pastor of the Affiliating Church will:

- Work with Church and District to facilitate the relationship.
- Fill out the Pastoral Questionnaire and prepare for an interview with the Pastoral Relations Committee of the FLD.
- Commit to seeking Free Church Credentials, either licensing leading to ordination or transfer of ordination.

Areas of consideration for constitution and by-laws of the church:

- If part of the church's name reflects a denominational affiliation, that part of the name should be amended. For example, if a Baptist church, Baptist would no longer appear in the name.
- Adopt the 12 point doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Free Church as the church's statement of faith.
- Agree with the Free Church's Distinctives as listed in "This is the EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH of America". This includes abiding by a form of congregational government.
- Add a statement of affiliation in the constitution that the church "is in affiliation with the Forest Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church of America".
- Add church property rights, division and dissolution statements to the constitution as follows:
 - ✓ "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 laws of the State of _____ and as is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be in the name of the Church."
 - ✓ "In the case where there is an irreconcilable division within the church, which threatens its unity or existence, the Superintendent and the FLD Board shall have authority in such a case to decide which group will remain as the Evangelical Free Church."
 - ✓ "In case of dissolution of the church organization, the assets shall be assigned to the Forest Lakes District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the church, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain."

7. SEED Commission Approval & Recommendation

The Director of Church Planting or FLD representative shall report on his meeting with the congregation and present the results of their vote and changes to the constitution and by-laws. If the SEED Commission grants approval, it shall stand as a recommendation to the FLD Board.

8. FLD Board Approval

The FLD Board shall grant or deny approval for affiliation. It is strongly recommended that the Board have all pertinent information at least one meeting prior to the District Conference.

9. FLD Conference Approval

Upon recommendation of the FLD Board, delegates at either a spring or fall conference will vote on the application for affiliation. If approved, the church will at the same conference be welcomed into the Forest Lakes District.

Make a copy of your amended constitution & by-laws and send one copy to:

Forest Lakes District
2309 Eagle Summit
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Any questions? Please call us at 715 344-4288

**Application for Affiliation with the Forest Lakes District
of the Evangelical Free Church of America**

To be completed by church chairman.

(Please type, and enlarge sections as needed. If you would like this on a disk, call us.)

Name of Church _____

Address of Church _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Mailing Address if different than location _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Church Chairman _____ Address _____

Phone _____

When was the church begun and what were the circumstances under which it was begun?

What is your church's mission?

Please provide a list of all current pastoral staff & official board members

Has the church been affiliated with another denomination or local church? _____ If yes, what are the reasons for desiring to leave that denomination or local church?

Why do you desire to be part of the Evangelical Free Church?

Carefully read the EFCA 12-point doctrinal statement and then use the following responses to indicate your church's position on each statement.

		<i>Responses</i>		
		1. Completely agree without reservation.	2. Agree with some reservations.	3. Disagree
<i>Point One</i>	Inerrancy of all of the Bible, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Two</i>	The Trinity, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Three</i>	The person and work of Jesus Christ, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Four</i>	The person of the Holy Spirit, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Five</i>	The identity and state of man, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Six</i>	The basis of salvation, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Seven</i>	The ordinances, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Eight</i>	The universal church, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Nine</i>	The local church, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Ten</i>	Congregational government, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Eleven</i>	Premillennialism, etc.	1	2	3
<i>Point Twelve</i>	The eternal state, etc.	1	2	3

Are there any doctrinal positions of your church which might be regarded as outside the mainstream of the EFCA? (If yes, please explain,)

Is your church incorporated? _____ Date of Incorporation: _____

Please attach a copy of your incorporation papers, constitution and bylaws and the last two years of Annual Reports.

Which phrase best describes your church?

- Growing in attendance
- Has been plateaued for _____ years
- Is in a period of decline
- Is dying and desperately needs to turn around
- Other _____

Statistics:

Average Morning Worship Attendance _____ Average Sunday School Attendance _____

Church Membership _____ Do you have small group ministries? _____

Value of Properties:

Church Building _____ Parsonage _____ Other Assets _____

Present Indebtedness _____

Total Income: Last Year \$ _____ Previous Year \$ _____ Prior Year \$ _____

Describe the neighborhood in which your church meets:

What are some issues/convictions your church would not compromise on?

Please explain briefly the church's stand on:

The Charismatic movement

Women's role in ministry

Racism

Abortion

Homosexuality

What was the last major issue your church struggled with and how was it resolved?

What changes have you made in your church in recent years that have made that ministry more effective?

Is your church willing to become financially involved in supporting Free Church District, National and Missions ministries?

Give a preliminary indication of what this support will be. (*Recommended giving is according to the EFCA Fair Share guidelines.*)

Congregational action regarding affiliation: Date of Meeting _____

Number of members present _____ Votes in favor _____ Against _____ Abstain _____

SIGNED: _____ Pastor Date _____

SIGNED: _____ Church Chairman Date _____

SIGNED: _____ Church Secretary Date _____

For FLD use only:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Initial meeting with church leadership date: _____ | 2. Church Board approval date: _____ |
| 3. SEED Commission initial approval date: _____ | 4. Congregation/FLD meeting date: _____ |
| 5. SEED Commission approval date: _____ | 6. FLD Board approval date: _____ |
| 7. FLD Conference approval date: _____ | |

**NEW CHURCH
PASTOR'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

To be filled out by the Pastor

(Please type and enlarge sections as needed. If you would like this on disk, please call us.)

1. Date:
2. Name: _____ Spouse: _____
3. Home Address:
4. Telephone:
5. How long at present position? _____ years _____ months
6. Date of Birth: _____ Are you a citizen of the USA? _____
7. Marital Status: ____ Single ____ Engaged ____ Married ____ Divorced ____ Other
8. Are you, or have you ever been divorced? _____ Remarried? _____ (If yes, give circumstances on separate sheet.)
9. Has your spouse/fiancee ever been divorced? _____ (If yes, give details.)
10. Are you: _____ Baptized _____ Licensed _____ Ordained?
13. Who is the credentialing body?
14. Formal Education: ____ Grammar School ____ High School ____ College/University ____ Seminary ____ Graduate School ____ Other
15. In what school(s) did you take theological training?
16. Give a brief testimony of your conversion experience.
17. Share briefly your call to ministry.

18. What worship style do you feel most comfortable with:

Traditional Traditional/Contemporary Contemporary Charismatic
 Liturgical Other (Explain)

19. Do you speak in tongues?

20. Share briefly your personal philosophy of ministry.

21. What form of church government do you feel most comfortable with?

Congregational Congregational/Elder Authority Elder Rule Other

22. Should your church family decide to affiliate with the EFCA, would you be willing to transfer your credentials and join the EFCA Ministerial Association?

23. Please explain briefly your stand on:

The charismatic movement -

Women's role in ministry –

Abortion –

Homosexuality –

24. Please enclose, if available, a personal doctrinal statement.