

HOPE CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP

There are 3 membership sections, with time for question and answer at the end of each

Section #1:

WHY Become a Member? CENTERING ON THE GOSPEL, HOPE CHURCH'S HISTORY, STRUCTURE, MISSION & VISION

Why become a member?	.....
Membership Process	.....
The centrality and application of the gospel	.....
Mission and Vision of Hope Church	.....
Hope Church Core Ministries	.....
How Sunday Worship is viewed differently	.....

Section #2:

THE BIBLE, STATEMENT OF FAITH, DISTINCTIVES HOPE'S STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

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Section #3:

MATURE DISCIPLESHIP, OUR COMMITMENTS, FINDING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MEMBER AGREEMENT

Relational Commitments of Hope Church	.....
Mature Discipleship	.....
7 Commitments of Hope	.....
Sharing Your Story	.....
Giving at Hope Church	.....
How Do I Find My Spiritual Gift?	.....
Membership Agreement	.....

REDEPTIVE HISTORY

The Bible is a redemptive story. It answers the big questions: How did we get here? Who are we?

What is wrong with the world? How are things made right? This story begins with God, creating mankind in a garden and ends in a garden. The Bible follows Hebrew storytelling (beginning, middle, new beginning)—which is different than western storytelling (beginning, middle, end). Every passage in the Bible must be seen in light of the larger story, otherwise it is prone to misapplication and abuse.



CREATION: God created this world and everything in it by the power of His word and is therefore the rightful King. God is the giver and sustainer of life, worthy of unending worship. He declared creation and everything in it “very good.” He created one creature uniquely to bear His image and rule over the world under His reign (Gen 1:27-31). That creature was mankind. The first man, Adam, was given the task of filling the earth with the glory of God by filling the earth with God’s image-bearers. As he and his wife Eve obeyed the word of God, they would serve as an extension of God’s powerful and loving rule. Adam and Eve had perfect fellowship with God, with each other, and with the rest of creation.



FALL: The brokenness of this world stems from what is known as original sin. Adam and Eve rejected the voice of God and the commands of God and chose to obey another voice, the voice of the serpent (Gen 3). In an effort to rule themselves, they chose slavery to an evil master. This act of rebellion brought about brokenness to everything, their relationship with God, each other, and creation. Adam and Eve were banished from the presence of God’s blessing and experienced the curse of sin. Sin brought with it an inclination of the heart to reject God as King.



FUTILITY: Much of the OT shows the futility of living apart from God. No matter how much God spoke and rescued, His people continued to rebel. Israel failed miserably at keeping the law of God and instead continually gave themselves to the worship other gods and the rejection of God as their King. Throughout history God raised up kings, prophets and priests to serve and rescue the people. Prophets spoke God’s word to His people, kings served as rulers and deliverers of the people, and priests functioned as intercessors for the people, each mediated the presence of God in some way. Each of these roles were done by weak and broken men, showing our need for a perfect King, Prophet & Priest – which Jesus perfectly fulfilled (Heb 1:1-4).



REDEMPTION: Man was unable to save himself, yet God, out of love, sent Jesus to bring salvation! Through the miracle of the incarnation we see the missionary heart of God. As God made man in His image (the first Adam), Jesus is God made in the image of man (the 2nd Adam). Where the first Adam (Gen 1-3) failed to live in full dependency on God, the second Adam (Jesus) lived in perfect fellowship with, dependence on and obedience to the Father! Through Jesus’ life we see the Kingdom of God breaking back into the kingdom of darkness as Jesus shows His authority over sickness, disease, nature, demons, Satan, sin and death. We see the full extent of God’s heart for His people through the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus substituted Himself in our place; the perfect and sinless one was treated like an enemy so that we who are enemies could be treated like sons and daughters!



RESTORATION: Jesus did not stay and fully inaugurate his Kingdom after his resurrection. He ascended to heaven and promised to come back. God poured out His Holy Spirit on His people, uniting them to the person and work of Jesus (Acts 2). Jesus calls His people to be witnesses of His gospel and to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey His commands and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even though the decisive victory has been achieved, His reign has not been fully inaugurated. He is waiting for all those who will, to repent and believe. We live in light of His redemption, yet long for His return and complete restoration. When he comes, he will right all wrongs and His Kingdom will come in full, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord!

HOPE CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

EFCA DISTINCTIVES

"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ."

- 1. The Evangelical Free Church of America is a believers' church—membership consists of those who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ.** The great heritage of EFCA people around the world includes the fact that fellowship and ministry opportunities in the local church are based solely on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However, a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within the EFCA, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.
- 2. The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical—we are committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible and the essentials of the gospel.** The EFCA was born out of a heritage of commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatists.
- 3. The Evangelical Free Church of America embraces a humble orthodoxy in partnership with others of like faith.** We believe in the spiritual unity of the Church though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians and other denominations of like, precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. But we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctives. We recognize that union in structure does not guarantee unity of spirit. Our foremost concern is unity of spirit with our Lord, with each other and with other Christians.
- 4. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in Christian freedom with responsibility and accountability.** We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom. The apostle Paul wrote forcefully about Christian liberty in the Book of Galatians. He shattered the legalists with the doctrine of grace. But in First and Second Corinthians and Romans, the apostle also rebuked believers when liberty was abused. He declared boldly the principles of Christian liberty, but spoke with equal forcefulness about Christian accountability. The EFCA desires to preserve our freedom in Christ. We encourage our people to be responsible, godly men, women and young people who desire to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the principles and precepts of God's Word, and in harmony with God's will for life as revealed in the Scriptures.
- 5. The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational, i.e. the head and the heart, dimensions of Christianity.** We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid, biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith, but it is equally important to have a dynamic, vital relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound Christian doctrine must be coupled with dynamic Christian experience. Ours is a ministry of love and spiritual reconciliation.
- 6. The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs with a spirit of interdependency with other churches.** The EFCA is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in our Articles of Incorporation: "The Evangelical Free Church of America shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government..." Strong pastoral leadership coupled with discerning and well-equipped Christian lay people can produce spiritual growth as well as significant church growth. While the EFCA affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs, we also believe in the biblical values of interdependence and cooperation.

Evangelical Free Church of America Distinctives: <https://www.efca.org/resources/document/efca-distinctives>

HOPE CHURCH STRUCTURE

As part of the Evangelical Free Church of America, Hope Church is congregationally led – Jesus is the lone Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). This means the church is governed preeminently as a Christocracy, not a democracy. Based on the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:9), Hope believes the will of Christ or his church is best discerned through the collective understanding of the congregation. Therefore, the congregation is the highest governing authority under Christ for the local church (Matt 18: 15-18; 1 Cor 5:4).

Hope elects elders at our annual meetings. There is a group of men from among the congregation who serve 2-year terms (taking a year of rest after 3 consecutive terms). Elders are men of established Christian character and meeting the qualifications outlined in Scripture (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9). Elders at Hope oversee the spiritual nurture of the congregation, assisting and supporting the pastoral staff, ministry team leaders, membership and benevolence ministry. The Administrative Team is responsible to oversee the corporate priorities of the congregation, the A-Team consists of the Church Chairman, Financial Controller, Senior Pastor, Trustee and Secretary. The A-Team is authorized to approve non-budgeted expenses that do not exceed 10% of the annual budget as well as mission critical and facility related expenses up to \$10,000 in agreement with the elders. All other non-budgeted expenses as well as the budget must be approved by the congregation.

HOPE CHURCH HISTORY

The first meeting of what would become Westbrook Evangelical Free Church was held at the Downtown YMCA on July 25, 1957 with 15 people attending a prayer meeting. Six families, along with others began moving towards organizing in early 1958. LeLand Asa was appointed to the Omaha area in answer to requests that the Free Church begin a work in this vicinity, and he became the first pastor of the church. The first Sunday gathering was held in the new building on August 28, 1960.

Pastor James Means was installed as the second pastor of Westbrook in 1961 and throughout the early 60s a renovation and addition were done to accommodate the growing congregation. Westbrook/Hope enjoyed the ministry of 4 other lead pastors leading up to Denny Brechbill becoming lead pastor in 1981. Just prior to that in 1980 a prayer group formed for the purpose of establishing a new work in Omaha and subsequently a small group was sent out to begin Brookside Church. Unease grew within the congregation as Westbrook suffered through the first of what would be two major divisions. The functional outworking of being ‘elder ruled’ was the cause of this unease and was not resolved until the late 1980s. The original Westbrook building was sold in 1991 and the church leased space until the current building was purchased in 1993.

When the congregation moved to 9313 Binney, the building needed much renovation work (*which was completed in 1996 with much labor done by members*) at that time the name was changed to Hope Evangelical Free Church to reflect the attitude of the people. About 35 people made the move and after stabilizing grew to around 90. The late 90s was the second major division in Hope’s history which led to a resignation by the lead pastor, this was followed with much pain and heartache. In August 2000 Don Moore accepted a call to become lead pastor. The second major renovation to the building happened in 2013 with half of the building getting a thorough makeover to make the building more accessible and streamlined.

Hope Evangelical Free Church has a long history of faithfulness to God and a core group of people who desire to follow God well and see His work continue and thrive. The people of Hope Church have always loved one another well and have been welcoming to those who visit – caring for needs and willing to lend a hand when needed. In June 2018 Eric Svoboda became the 8th lead pastor of Hope in its 60-year history. As with any new lead pastor the vision of the church was assessed, and adjustments were recommended by the elders and approved by the congregation. These adjustments are designed to motivate and encourage the people of Hope to increasingly become people who magnify our mighty and awesome God.