

EMMANUEL FREE CHURCH

Membership Class

Session 2

LESSON ONE: EFCA

The EFCA began in the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Since 1950 the EFCA's commitment to "multiplying healthy churches among all peoples" is seen in its growth from 275 churches to about 1500 in over 75 countries. *Evangelical* refers to the denomination's commitment to proclaim the Gospel and the authority of Scripture as the only guide to faith and practice. *Free* refers to the autonomy of local churches and the congregational form of government (which stresses participation of members to decide church matters). Six distinctives of the EFCA are:

- 1) A believer's church
- 2) Evangelical
- 3) Orthodoxy while partnering with others of like faith
- 4) Christian freedom with responsibility and accountability
- 5) Christianity is both head and heart
- 6) Independent but interdependent local churches

EFC is part of the Great Lakes District of the EFCA, which is supervised by Chuck Warren (Yes, Jim Warren's dad!)

LESSON TWO: EFC HISTORY

Emmanuel Free Church ("EFC") began in December of 1986 when a group of believers started meeting at Ferrysburg School. The following year the group called Greg Howard as pastor, incorporated and purchased 7 acres at 17737 West Spring Lake Road. After joining the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) they became the newly formed "Tri-Cities Evangelical Free Church". Over the next few years excitement filled the young congregation as a building project ensued until in September of 1989 the finished building was formally dedicated to the Lord.

Changes came in 1990 as Pastor Howard resigned and the church withdrew from the EFCA. But in 1991 Pastor Duane Adams was called and led the congregation for the next 5 years. Subsequent to Pastor Adams' resignation, 1998 saw the

church re-joining the EFCA and changing its name to “Emmanuel Free Church”. With a new name the people of EFC called Pastor Jim Calkins to pastoral leadership in 1999. In 2007 a purchase was made of the adjacent 3 acres with a spacious building which became the “EFC Family Center”. In February of 2009, after almost 10 years of shepherding the flock at EFC, Pastor Jim Calkins resigned.

Later in December of the same year, the church called Justin Smith to become the new pastor. In 2016 the Family Center was sold.

LESSON THREE: EFC TODAY

Read EFC’s “Culture” page from the website. Direct people to check out the website pages (“Experience EFC”, “Discipleship”, etc.). Also, here is a “snapshot” of different areas of interest at EFC:

Attendance: 40-50

Membership: 29

Annual Budget: \$107,508 (FY Ending June 30, 2017)

Debt Load: \$59K (as of Fall 2016)

Property: In 2016 sold Family Center & 400’x35’ sliver of property

Spiritual Climate/Tone: Have members and attenders and visitors discuss

Missionaries: *Condras (Silent Word) and Escobars (One Challenge International)*

Evangelism: *Don Lubbers, MSC, Downtown tracting, personal lives*

Teaching: *preaching, Website, study guides, TRACK, men’s ministry (men leading), women’s ministry, Sunday School, one on one*

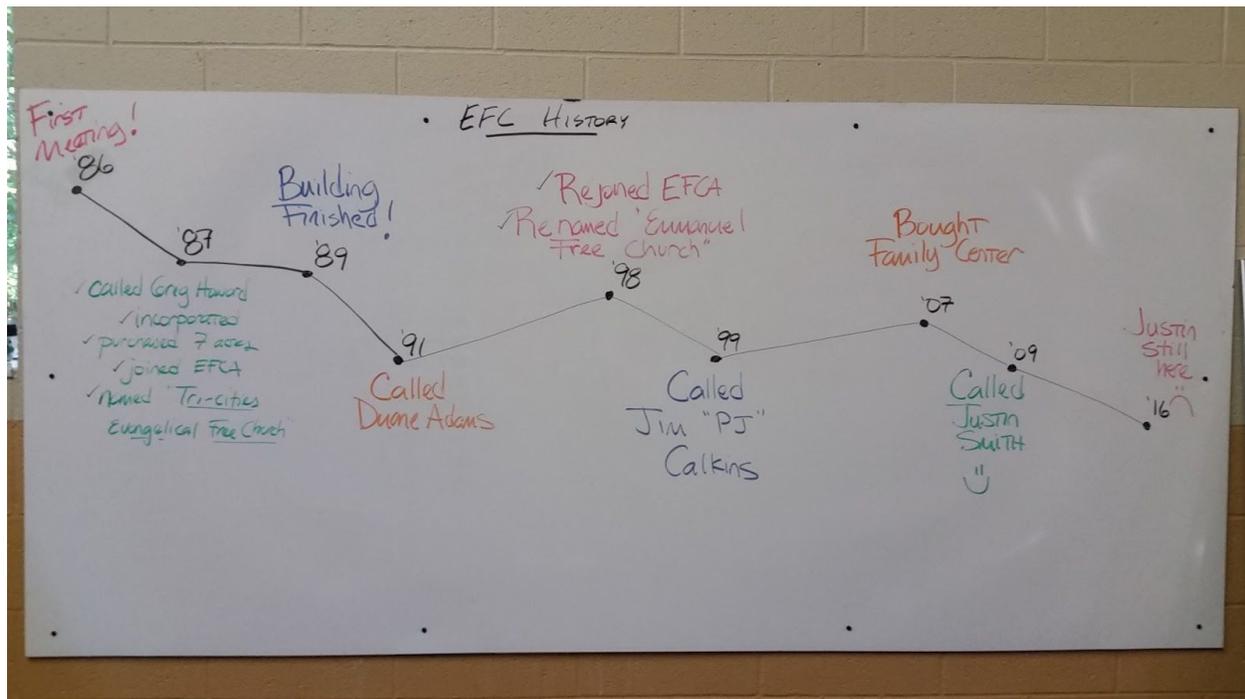
LESSON FOUR: EFC POLITY

What kind of polity does our church have? How are we governed? Emmanuel Free Church, as a part of the EFCA, believes in the autonomy of local churches. This means we decide what’s going on here at EFC. We are not part of a denominational hierarchy where a central governing body determines the course of our church here in Spring Lake. Issues such as pastors, property, doctrine, membership, policies and so forth related to this local church are decided by the membership of this local church.

Emmanuel Free Church is also congregational in polity, meaning authority for conducting church business rests with the membership. The Pastor and

Deacon(s) take leadership in church business, but, decisions are voted on by the membership as a whole (quorum). Neither the Pastor nor the Deacons make decisions on behalf of the congregation concerning issues related to the whole congregation. Each member has the right and the responsibility to be informed on church business, and, cast their vote to participate in the governing of their home church.

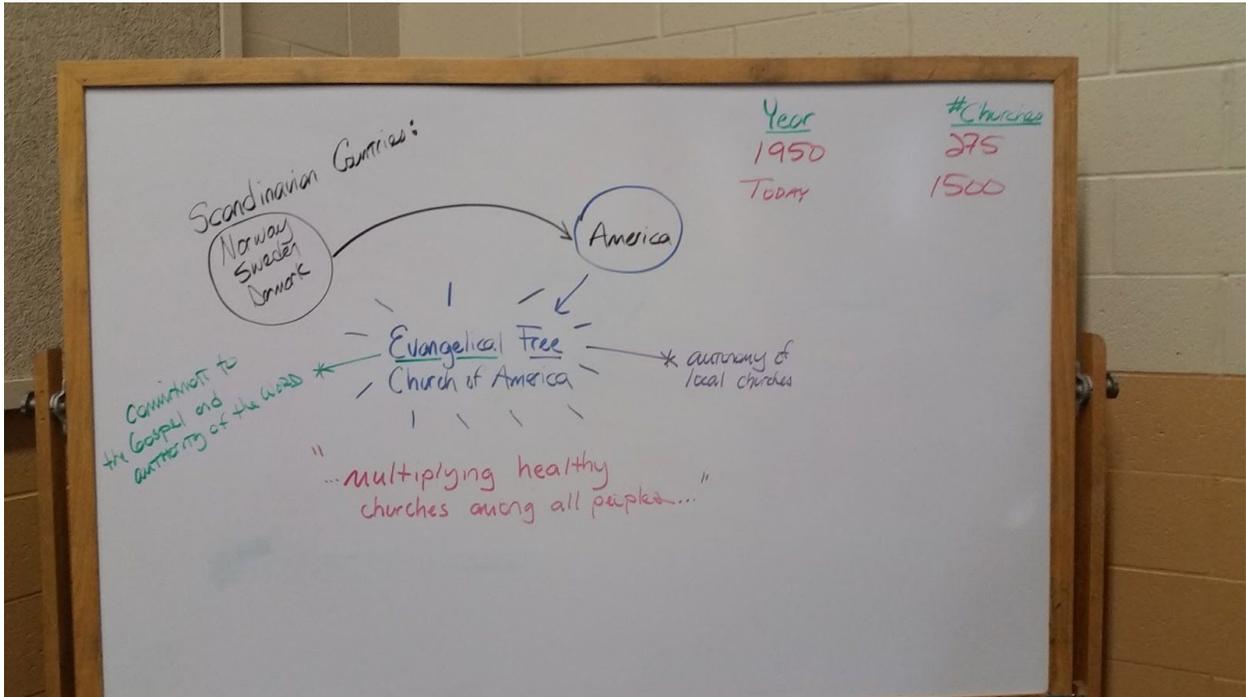
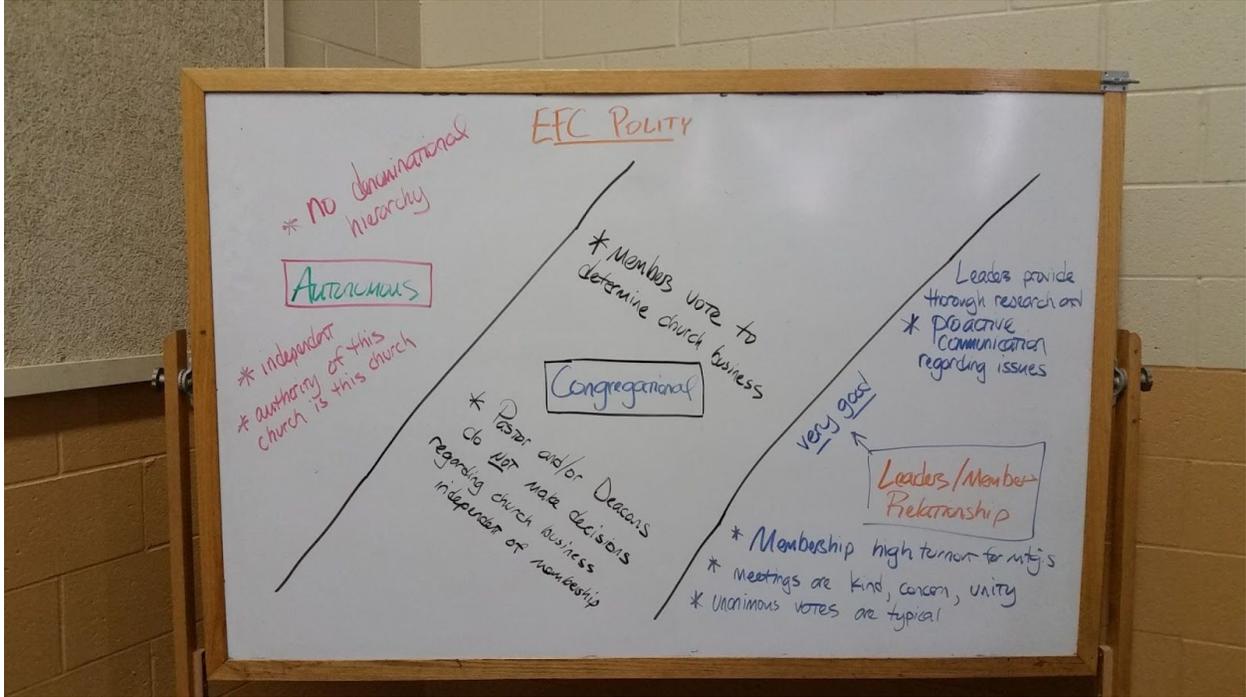
We have enjoyed a great relationship between leaders and members in recent years. Through thorough research and proactive communication leaders have sought to make the membership sufficiently informed for every decision on church matters. Meetings are held regularly and are typically efficient, focused and educational. On the other side, the members have also shown their devotion to governing the church by high rates of participation in meetings and staying informed and concerned about each matter. The spirit of our meetings have been characterized by kindness, concern for our body and remarkable unity. It is common for us to far exceed our quorum and have universal agreement in voting.



EFC TODAY: < 30 years!!

* Members 3 attendees discuss your views





First
Meeting!

'86

'87

- ✓ called Greg Howard
- ✓ incorporated
- ✓ purchased 7 acres

EFCA SIX Distinctives:

- ① Believer's Church
- ② Evangelical
- ③ Orthodoxy while partnering with others of like faith
- ④ Christian freedom w/ accountability and responsibility
- ⑤ Christianity is both head & heart
- ⑥ Independent but interdependent local churches