

## All About the Association of Evangelical Churches, Inc.

Hello and Welcome! It is likely the Lord has directed our paths to cross and so we hope your time here is helpful and informative.

### Who Are We?

The Association (AEC) is a not-for-profit, IRS incorporated 501(c)3 organization founded in 1981 by former Evangelical United Brethren Churches in Northcentral Pennsylvania, USA. We are descended from the New Constitution branch of the United Brethren in Christ churches, founded in 1800. We are not affiliated with the Old Constitution branch of the United Brethren churches in existence today.

The Association is composed of independent evangelical churches, Christian organizations and ministries, and individuals. It organizes an annual slate of ministry events that evangelize the lost, enrich the saints, and unite churches for missions and outreach.

The Association is different from a Denomination. We have the community of member and affiliate churches like a denomination, but without the hierarchical controls. Aside from requiring doctrinal agreement, the Association exercises no authority or control over its churches. The Constitution and By-Laws assure that each church retains complete ownership of their property. In addition, all financial support from the churches is voluntary.

A church is not “locked in” when it is a member of the Association. Departure is as simple as the church taking a duly announced vote to depart and informing the Association Chairman.

### What is Our Doctrinal Background?

We are in the Wesleyan-Arminian camp of theology. The Association agrees with the Scriptural interpretations of two individuals from the Reformation era, Jacob Arminias (1560-1609) and John Wesley (1703-1791).

From Arminias we believe a person’s free will is intrinsically connected to their salvation and life of faith and fellowship with God. We believe that God loves the world, and through His Son Jesus Christ extends prevenient grace to all, even while spiritually dead in trespasses and sin; and that most will by their own free will reject this initial awareness of sin and its consequences, but many will choose to embrace the grace that enables them to believe. Additionally, we believe the believer's walk of faith and fellowship with God is maintained by the partnership of God's grace and the believer's free will.

We also believe it is possible to choose to leave the grace of God and return to sin, and that unrepentant sin can lead to hardness of heart, and unbelief; at which point a person’s salvation is in jeopardy, since “without faith it is impossible to please God”. But we are glad for the grace of God that forgives over and over to complete the work He begins in us.

From Wesley we believe that God desires loving fellowship and stewardship from all believers. To enable this the Holy Spirit moves a believer from infancy to maturity in Christ, whereupon a full consecration of oneself to God results in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We believe this baptism fully develops the fruit of the Spirit in a believer and empowers them to love both God and others selflessly. We also believe the Spirit educates believers in God's truth and emboldens them to share the Gospel fearlessly with all. We believe the Spirit also equips believers with gifts to edify the body of Christ.

### How Are We Organized?

The Association is administrated by an Executive Board on behalf of its members and churches. Its elected officials are amenable to the membership and accounts to them at an annual conference. The Executive Board oversees annual ministry events that spiritually challenge and refresh its members and churches. To minister comprehensively to its members and churches, the Association currently organizes an annual Family Camp, Men’s Retreat, Ladies Retreat, Youth Retreat, and Ministry Retreat. It

had in the past, and is planning to restart an annual Young Adult Spiritual Advance. The Executive Board also provides administrative and pastoral search assistance to churches when requested.

The Association also guided by a Board of Ministry, which maintains adherence to Association doctrine and core values by its members and ministries. The Board of Ministry also provides training and credentials for Christian service and ministry.

Churches, Christian schools, Camp Associations, Ministries, Para-church Organizations, Ministers and Individuals considering membership in the Association must send a letter to the Association Chairman stating they agree with the Association's doctrinal statement. The letter should include historical, doctrinal, and by-law documents of the church or organization for review by the Executive Board and/or Board of Ministry. After review and approval, the Association requires a majority vote by church or organization applicants in a meeting duly announced two weeks in advance to its members or Board to join the Association. See the Contact menu above to set up arrangements with the Association or its Chairman.