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# Bylaw #1

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of the  
Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church

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Constitution  
*Preamble to the Constitution*

The local Church is the visible representation of the Body of Christ; therefore, it is of utmost importance that all areas of the Church operate in a clear and honest manner. This charity, Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church, (the “Church” or the “Corporation”) shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other gains to this charity shall be used in promoting its purpose(s) as per the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency. The Scriptures make it clear that we are to *abstain from all appearance of evil*. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

The Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada is congregational in its church government. This means that the membership of the local church carries out its own business. Those in leadership are elected by the membership to represent the people and make decisions between congregational meetings that are based soundly on the Holy Bible for the good of the Church. In this form of government, the majority decision is final.

This local autonomy makes it vital to have a local constitution because:

1. it provides a system of checks and balances regarding issues of government in the Church;
2. it provides protection from litigation for the leadership and the membership;
3. it provides clear, established guidelines as opposed to “oral tradition”;
4. it helps to clarify how the local church will conduct its business according to the standards of Scripture;
5. it helps to work towards the unity of the Spirit and of the faith (Eph. 4:3,13);
6. it prevents many situations that cause hard feelings because the rules are written down and easily accessible to all church members, adherents and potential members.

1 Corinthians 14:40 exhorts: *“But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.”*

## **ARTICLES**

### **Article I Name and Objects**

- I.1** The name of the Church shall be "PALMERSTON EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY CHURCH". All subsequent references to "this church" or "the church" or "congregation" shall refer to PALMERSTON EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY CHURCH.
- I.2** The objects of this church are to:  
Advancing religion to adherents of the faith and the public by:  
(a) preaching and advancing the teaching of the Christian faith;  
(b) establishing, maintaining and supporting a house of worship with services held in accordance with the tenets and doctrines of the Christian faith; and  
(c) supporting and maintaining missions and missionaries to propagate the Christian faith. and thus fulfill the command of our Lord and Saviour that His Gospel be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and shall endeavour to propagate other churches of like faith and practice.

### **I.3**

### **Article II Fundamental Relationships**

- II.1** Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in obedience to His Word, this church is ruled by her membership, governed by the Church Board, led by her Pastor (and her other recognized spiritual leaders) and does its ministry through her people, individually and collectively and, further, cooperates in the greater cause of the Great Commission within the family of local churches called the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.
- II.2.** This bylaw is consistent with these fundamental relationships.

### **Article III Doctrine, Practice and Affiliations**

#### **III.1.1 Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada**

This church is a member congregation of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada and shall maintain its membership in good standing, and affirms the Articles of Faith and Practice\* of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada ("EMCC") as outlined in the Bylaws of the EMCC.

- III.1.2** This church covenants that to the best of her ability she shall advance the purpose, promote the values, and support the projects and ministries of the Evangelical Missionary Church, and to abide by the Bylaws of the Evangelical Missionary Church, insofar as they shall apply to a local EMCC church.
- III.1.3** This local church shall do her best to support the shared ministries of the EMCC, using the denomination's recommended principle of 5% of our general givings (excluding missions, building and special offerings) as our goal.
- III.1.4** As a full member of the EMCC, this church shall have the rights and privileges that pertain thereto.

**III.1.5** As a full member of the EMCC, this church shall be amenable to the leadership of national denomination leaders and maintain cordial and cooperative relationships with her sister churches.

### **III.2 Essential Statement of Faith**

**III.2.1** The following articles are the non-negotiable Essentials of the Christian faith and fully consistent with the Articles of Faith and Practice of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. The statement is *Orthodox* and *Evangelical*. *Orthodox* means in agreement with the historic teaching of the Christian faith as expressed in the historic creeds. *Evangelical* means an emphasis on the biblical gospel about salvation by faith in Christ and new life (regeneration) by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This new life is essential to the Christian walk.

**III.2.2** We believe that the following Statements of Faith are essential and non-negotiable essentials of the Christian Faith:

- THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- ONE GOD, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.
- THE SALVATION of lost and sinful people through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit
- THE HOLY SPIRIT by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ
- THE UNITY in the Spirit of all true believers, the Body of Christ. The local church as the tangible expression of the Body of Christ, an organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together for public worship and evangelism, teaching the Word, fellowship with the saints, observance of the ordinances, exercise in prayer, and who are commissioned with the responsibility to administer discipline.
- THE RESURRECTION of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

### **III.3 Definition of Marriage**

We resolve that as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church reserves the term “marriage” for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

### **III. 4 Participation of Clergy in Solemnizing Marriage**

We resolve that members of our staff or clergy will be allowed to arrange for, officiate at or take part in the solemnization or celebration of a marriage only when it conforms to the EMCC and Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church statements on marriage.

### **III.5 Conduct of Staff and Volunteers**

Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church believes that inappropriate staff and volunteer behaviour is deemed to be any conduct that is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His followers as recorded in the New Testament and does not accept such conduct as:

- Homosexual sexual relations
- Drunkenness
- Adultery or Fornication
- And the like

\* These statements of doctrine, practice and faith are in accordance with EMCC's published Documents (as seen in the Appendix):

Assurance of the Believer  
Christ at the Centre  
Gifts of the Holy Spirit  
Articles of Faith & Practice



# **1 Membership in the Church**

## **1.1 Members are persons who:**

- a) give clear testimony to saving faith in Christ
- b) have been examined and publicly received by the Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church,
- c) upon profession of faith, covenant to actively participate in the life and work of the local congregation.
- d) give evidence of that faith in discipleship and obedience to the commands given in God's Word.

We teach and practice two ordinances as commanded by Christ: Believer's Baptism and Lord's Supper, both intended as expressions of faith and obedience on the part of the believer.

Baptism by water is the symbol of one's union by faith with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. It constitutes the public confession of these spiritual realities to the world and is the answer of a good conscience toward God. While baptism is preferably administered by immersion to those who have made confession of born again faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we also recognize that some godly, passionate Christians have roots in other traditions where baptismal practice differs.

We are, therefore, persuaded that the timing and mode of water baptism ought not to prevent born again believers from being accepted into membership of our church. We want to receive all whom Christ receives.

## **1.2 Persons desiring to become members of this church shall give credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. They shall give evidence of compliance with the biblical standard of Christian practice and manifest spiritual growth by giving evidence of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22,23 NIV).**

## **1.3 They shall refrain from "acts of the sinful nature: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:19-21NIV). Sexual immorality shall be interpreted to mean common-law marital relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships (I Corinthians 6:15-18, 7:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Hebrews 13:4), all forms of homosexual and lesbian activity along with other practices deemed inexcusable for Christian conduct and which place a person under God's judgment (Romans 1:26, 2:11).**

## **1.4 They shall indicate a desire to live in harmony with this body of believers, shall accept the doctrinal standards as set forth in this bylaw, and shall be regular financial supporters of this church.**

## **1.5 Only members 18 years or older, in good standing of Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church, are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting and Special Meetings.**

## **1.6 A member in good standing is understood to mean someone who has been accepted into membership of Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church by formal action of the church leadership, and who is not under church discipline and who is habitually living a consistent**

Christian life as expressed in the Covenant of Church Membership and the Bylaws of the EMCC. See Covenant on page 26.

- 1.7** A regular adherent is someone who attends the public meetings of the congregation and who may be involved in other aspects of community life and ministry but who has not formalized the relationship by a formal action.
- 1.8** Where an Individual has withdrawn, without notice or was under discipline at the time of withdrawal, a letter of membership transfer will not be issued until the Church Board has determined that satisfactory closure of the issues giving rise to the withdrawal has been achieved.
- 1.9** In the event that a Member is habitually absent from the Church for a period of six (6) consecutive months without a reasonable explanation, the Deacon Board may, after first having attempted to make personal contact with the Member, place that person's membership on the inactive roll, with the result that such member shall not have the right to vote at Meetings of Members, provided that the Deacon Board has first sent written notice by regular mail to that person. A member who is placed on the inactive roll shall be deemed suspended from any office or position held in the Church, effective the date of the Resolution made by the Deacon Board. A Member that has been placed on the inactive roll may request in writing that his or her Membership in the Church be reinstated onto the active roll of Members, and the Deacon Board in its sole discretion shall determine whether to grant this request.
- 1.10** In the event that a Member has been on the inactive roll for a period of one (1) year, then that Person's Membership may be terminated by resolution of the Deacon Board, and written notice shall be sent by regular mail to the inactive Member's last known address. The Membership shall cease on the date of the Resolution made by the Deacon Board as ratified by the Church Board.
- 1.11** Every person who makes application for membership, or who maintains membership in this Church, consents to submit to the process of church discipline as outlined in these bylaws and/or in the Bylaws of the EMCC, and also waives the right to take legal action against this church or its leaders or any member or officer of the EMCC.
- 1.12** Alternatively, in disputes where the individual is not attempting to circumvent or undermine disciplinary action according to the process in the bylaws and/or the Bylaws of the EMCC, the individual may request that the issue be settled by the following process of mediation and arbitration.

## **2 Mediation and Arbitration**

**2.1** In the event that a Member is dissatisfied with any proceedings or the results thereof or any other matter arising out of this bylaw involving the Member and the Church, if the Member does not violate or circumvent the waiver contained above or attempt to do so, then that Member or Adherent may petition the Church Board to have his or her concerns resolved through a process of Christian dispute resolution in accordance with Matthew 18:16 as follows. In the event that the Church Board consents to the petition:

- a) The matter shall first be submitted to a panel of Christian mediators whereby the Member or Adherent appoints a mediator, the Church appoints a mediator, and the two mediators so appointed jointly approve a third mediator. In the event that a mediator cannot be agreed upon, the Church shall ask a denominational leader (or the pastor of a church of like faith and practice) to appoint the third mediator.
- b) The number of mediators may be reduced from three to one or two upon the agreement of both the Church and the Member.
- c) The mediators so appointed shall then meet with the Church Board in combination with the Pastor (and any other deacons or spiritual leaders) and the Individual in an attempt to mediate a resolution.
- d) If the matter is not resolved through mediation, then the mediators shall arbitrate and decide all issues in accordance with due process and procedural fairness, and the award of the mediators in their role as arbitrators shall be final and binding upon the parties, and the judgment once given may be entered by any Court having jurisdiction.
- e) All reasonable costs of the mediators appointed in accordance with this section shall be borne equally by the Individual and the Church.

**2.2.** The Church Board may choose, in its sole discretion, to accept an Adherent's appeal to enter this process of mediation and arbitration.

### **3 Discipline**

#### **3.1 Scriptural Standard for Discipline**

All Members are expected to stay true to sound doctrine and the Statement of Faith, and to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture and in keeping with the Standards of Conduct and Practice. Such conduct includes moral purity, personal honesty, and biblical fidelity (I Corinthians 6; 9-11, II Timothy 3:1-17). Members are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as they seek to emulate the character of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:28-29). Members shall promote the unity of the Church rather than seeking to divide it (Ephesians 4:3-13, 25).

#### **3.2 Purpose of Discipline**

The Church is commanded by the Scriptures to discipline its members when they continue in open and habitual sin. The biblical purpose of Church discipline is to bring reconciliation and restoration of the offender to fellowship with God and with the Church consistent with the instruction of the Old and New Testament. The pattern of Matthew 18:15-19 and the principles and spirit of Matthew 5:23, 24 are commanded and commended to us by our Lord. As such, only those matters that cannot be resolved on a personal and/or private level, or that have failed to be resolved through a mediation process, shall advance to a formal process of discipline in which the Church Board in combination with the Pastor and Deacons shall adjudicate.

#### **3.3 Circumstances Giving Cause for Discipline**

**3.3.1** An Individual shall be deemed to be under the Discipline of the Church if the Church Board determines by resolution that any of the following circumstances have occurred:

- a) an Individual has evidenced unethical or immoral conduct or grievous behaviour that is otherwise unbecoming of a Christian and/or contrary to biblical principles;
- b) an Individual's conduct evidences an unwillingness to either comply with, adhere to, or submit to the Scriptural authority and procedures set out in this bylaw herein;
- c) an Individual has propagated doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith or the general teachings of the Church, or has propagated any doctrines or practices in such a way as to cause discord or dissension;
- d) an Individual has wronged another Individual causing discord or dissension in the Church, with or without malicious intent, and has not repented and been willing to enter into a process of reconciliation.

#### **3.4 Process of Discipline**

**3.4.1** In the event that an allegation against a Person gives causes to disciplinary action as outlined above, a process whereby a fair and equitable investigation shall be undertaken to consider the merits of the allegation and, if warranted, the Church Board, in combination with the pastor and any deacons, upon a seventy-five (75%) percent majority vote shall establish the nature of the discipline to be imposed. Due process, procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice shall be complied with in relation to all aspects of the process. The Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons may delegate the

investigation and adjudication of the matter to a tribunal composed of at least three members of a combined board (Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons).

- 3.4.2** Termination or suspension of Membership as disciplinary action shall be deemed appropriate only where no other reasonable alternative is available.
- 3.4.3** In the case where the best interest of the church is served by making the decision of the Combined Board known to the membership, a meeting specifically convened for that purpose shall be called. A brief statement of the cause for discipline shall be made, an explanation of the decision made shall be given, but it shall not be the purpose of this meeting to retry the case.
- 3.4.4** In the event that the decision is to terminate the Individual's Membership in the Church then the Individual shall automatically cease to be a member of the Church upon the date that the decision is made.
- 3.4.5** This process shall inform any disciplinary proceedings involving adherents inasmuch as they can be applied.

### **3.5 Discipline and Attendance at Public Worship**

An Individual who has been disciplined or whose membership has been terminated shall not be barred from public worship unless his presence is disruptive to the peaceful proceedings of the public worship service as determined in the sole opinion of the Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons in which event such Individual agrees that he may be removed from such public worship service without the necessity of legal action, whether or not such Individual is at that time a Member of the Church. This same provision applies to non-members whose presence likewise has been judged disruptive.

### **3.6 Discipline and Individuals under age 18**

In the event that the Individual in question is under the age of 18 when an allegation is made, then the Discipline procedure provided for by the Combined Board shall require that notification of any Discipline process shall be given to the Individual and the parents or legal guardians of the Individual, and such persons shall be entitled to attend and speak on behalf of such Individual at any such proceedings.

#### **4 Intervention by the Denominational Leaders of EM Churches**

It is our understanding that recognized representatives of the Conference of churches and recognized leaders in sister churches can and may exercise their Christian duty to admonish and exhort, and counsel leaders in matters that are bringing disrepute or disharmony to the EMCC family.

It is our understanding that this church has a covenant obligation to conduct her affairs in a way that brings no disrepute to the family of EMCC and that promotes harmony among the churches. As such this church recognizes the right of the EMCC Conference of churches to intervene with authority to act for the conference through her elected representatives but only in certain prescribed cases:

- 4.1** The local church ceases to function as an organized EMCC local church or is no longer able to maintain the organizational standards of a local EMCC church.
- 4.2** The local church is at risk of or contemplating closure.
- 4.3** The local church leadership board, by a majority vote in a formal resolution, invites the intervention of the EMCC. The specific cause for the invitation to intervene must be specified.
- 4.4** There are reasonable grounds to suppose that the financial affairs of the church are not in order, in which case the EMCC may audit the financial records of this church and take such steps as necessary to set things in order.
- 4.5** There has been an appeal process using the bylaw of the EMCC, in which case the minutes and other relevant documentation of this church shall be made available for the purposes of investigating the matter under appeal. This shall include the right to interview members and leaders of this church in order to ascertain the facts of the matter under appeal.
- 4.6** There is a moral or ethical problem which has not been resolved by ordinary means and where the local leadership has been unable or unwilling to deal satisfactorily with these matters.
- 4.7** There has been protracted divisive or disruptive teaching or conduct which is bringing disharmony or disrepute to the family of churches.
- 4.8** There have been credible reports of teachings and/or practices which are incompatible with the Articles of Faith and Practice and which have not been amenable to ordinary means of correction and where the local leadership has been unable or unwilling to deal satisfactorily with these matters.
- 4.9** There have been formal allegations brought against a credentialed minister in which case the EMCC shall be authorized to proceed in keeping with the provisions governing the discipline of ministers and can expect the full cooperation of our leadership and Congregation in pursuing the investigation of its appropriate conclusion. The allegation must be made in writing and endorsed by two signatures. The allegation shall be filed in writing both with the Church Board of this church and with the EMCC Office.

It is our understanding that any such Intervention is an interim measure taken for the purpose of returning the local church to a condition in which it is once again able to govern its own affairs.

It is our understanding that any such intervention shall proceed in consultation with the Church Board of this Congregation inasmuch as this is possible.

It is our understanding that, in keeping with the principles of natural and biblical justice and due process, any such intervention by the EMCC shall be communicated in writing in a timely way and supported by other appropriate documentation.

## **5 Meetings of the Membership**

### **5.1 Annual Meetings**

**5.1.1** There shall be an Annual Business Meeting of Members at such time and place in Canada as determined by the Church Board. The purpose of the Annual Business Meeting, which shall be held as early as practicable after the end of each calendar year and before February 28, will be to do the following:

- a) Hear or receive necessary reports from the Pastor(s), Church Board and other boards and committees.
- b) Review and approve the financial statements for the immediately preceding year including the Accountant's report thereon.
- c) Approve the budget for the coming year.
- d) Appoint an accountant for the coming year.
- d) Transact any other necessary business.

The following shall report in writing to the Business Meeting: Pastor(s), Chairperson of Deacons, Chairperson of Trustees, Church Board Secretary; Business Administrator, and Heads of Ministry Groups (e.g. Women's Ministries, Men's Fellowship, Youth and Seniors) and Heads of Congregational Committees. Other reports may be requested by the Church Board.

The Church Board shall require that the written reports referred to above be submitted to the Church Secretary at least three Sundays prior to the Business Meeting in order that they can be prepared for distribution at that meeting, or before if possible.

**5.1.2** There shall be an Annual Electoral Meeting of Members at such time and place in Canada as determined by the Church Board. The purpose of the Electoral Meeting, which shall be held in late May or early June, is:

- a) The election of Church Board members, deacons, officers and other committee members for the upcoming terms.
- b) Transact any other necessary business.

### **5.2 Special Meetings**

A Special Meeting may be convened at the request of the Chairperson of the Board or a majority of the Board, or upon the request of at least five percent (5%) of the members in good standing. It shall be convened by the Secretary within twenty-one (21) days of the request.

The purpose of any Special Meeting shall be stated clearly.

### **5.3 Notice of Meetings**

#### **5.3.1.**

Notice of the time and place of a meeting of Members shall be given to each member entitled to vote at the meeting by affixing the notice, no later than 30 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held, to a notice board on which information respecting the corporation's activities is regularly posted and that is located in the church building. In



addition, the date of the meeting will be announced from the pulpit and, when reasonably possible, published in the Church bulletin for at least two Sundays preceding the meetings.

- 5.3.2.** Members may waive notice and the meeting shall be considered a duly called meeting. If notice does not fully comply with the above statement a member may waive notice and the meeting shall be considered a duly called meeting. If a member attends the Members' meeting, this attendance shall constitute a waiver of notice of the Meeting, except where the member attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the grounds that the meeting is not lawfully called.

## **5.4 Quorum**

- 5.4.1.** A quorum for an annual, special election, or other special Meetings of Members shall be constituted by the presence of at least twenty per cent (20) of members who have the right to vote (save and except inactive Members) immediately prior to the meeting in question. No business shall be transacted at any Meeting of Members unless the requisite quorum is present at the time of the transaction of such business.
- 5.4.2.** If a quorum is not present at the time appointed for a Meeting of Members or within such reasonable time thereafter, the Members present and entitled to vote may adjourn the meeting to a fixed time and place but may not transact any other business.

## **5.5 Elections**

- 5.5.1** The members of the Church Board shall be elected by a majority ballot from a slate prepared by the Nominating Committee and from those nominated from the floor at such meeting. In the case where only the required number of Board members is nominated, an election with majority support is required and not mere acclamation of the slate of candidates.
- 5.5.2** All positions listed in the Policy and Procedures manual under Nominating Committee shall be nominated by the Nomination Committee, approved by the Church Board, and ratified by the membership at a duly called Annual Electoral Meeting in the second quarter of the calendar year.

## **5.6 Term of Elected Positions**

- 5.6.1** A maximum of six deacons shall be elected for non-concurrent three-year terms.
- 5.6.2** Five trustees shall be elected to non-concurrent two-year terms.
- 5.6.3** All other elections and appointments shall be a one-year term.
- 5.6.4** Church Board members and Deacons shall serve no more than seven consecutive years and shall step down for a year before becoming eligible for re-election.

## **5.7 Rules of Order**

All business meetings of the Church and the various committees shall be governed by the

rules of order outlined in such standard guides as Robert's Rules of Order. Notwithstanding, it is fitting that all boards and committees demonstrate the spirit of unity and brotherly love, and that consensus is a worthy goal in the conduct of business in the Lord's work.

## **6 The Church Board**

### **6.1 General Duties**

- 6.1.1** The affairs of the Church shall be governed by a Church Board elected by the membership of the Church at the Annual Meeting. They are otherwise known as the directors of the Church and fulfill the function of the board of directors of a corporation.
- 6.1.2** The Church Board shall conduct its business on behalf of the congregation in keeping with the bylaws of the EMCC and any duly approved policies or procedures.
- 6.1.3** The Church Board shall report on its activity on behalf of the congregation at least once a year to a meeting of the local church members.
- 6.1.4** All Church Board members serve without remuneration.
- 6.1.5** The Church Board, after reviewing and approving the Budget and Finance Committee's proposed budget, shall present it at the annual business meeting for adoption.
- 6.1.6** The Church Board may appoint other committees as are deemed necessary.
- 6.1.7** The Church Board is responsible to ensure adequate insurance coverage is obtained for all assets and against general liability.
- 6.1.8** The Church Board shall annually appoint a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of officers for the coming year.

### **6.2 Composition**

- 6.2.1** The Church Board shall have a minimum of five voting members and no more than nine, and shall be composed of a chair, who will also function as the president of the Corporation, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, one or more deacon(s), and such other members as may be needed. Less than 50% of the board members can be related, with the term "related" being defined as any of the following: spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild or sibling.
- 6.2.2** The Chair of the Church Board shall chair all meetings of the Board and also chair all Annual and Special Meetings of this church.
- 6.2.3** No remunerated staff person shall be a voting member of this Church Board.
- 6.2.4** All salaried pastoral staff and other paid employees (i.e. Business Administrator) may be invited to attend Church Board Meetings. They are not permitted to vote at any meetings which they attend. Their spiritual and general counsel shall in any case be sought and considered.

### **6.3 Qualifications**

- 6.3.1** All Church Board members must be active members in good standing, but not members of the paid church staff.

**6.3.2** Where a local church cannot maintain a minimum of five voting members, it shall request the President or his designate to appoint additional board members from a sister church. When a majority of the Church Board is composed of appointees outside the local membership, it shall be called a Steering Committee, and the congregation shall be termed and considered a "Church in Transition" if the EMCC Board of Directors so decides by resolution.

#### **6.4 Removal from the Board**

Any Church Board member may be removed from serving who fails to regularly attend services or Board meetings, or becomes subject to disciplinary action of the Board or Church.

#### **6.5 Board Vacancies**

All Church Board vacancies are filled by Church Board appointment until a meeting of the membership can elect a replacement.

#### **6.6 Church Board Meetings**

**6.6.1** At least seven days' notice of all business (whether regular or special) sessions of the Church Board is to be given to all members (elected and advisory) of the Board. If notice does not fully comply with the above statement, a Board Member may waive notice and the meeting shall be considered a duly called meeting. If a member attends the Board meetings, this attendance shall constitute a waiver of notice, except where the Board member attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the grounds that the meeting is not lawfully called.

**6.6.2** The Church Board shall meet not less than 6 times a year and as often as necessary to accomplish its goals.

**6.6.3** All Church Board meetings require the presence of a majority of the members of the Board to act on matters of business.

**6.6.4** All business sessions of the Church Board shall record in the minutes the actions taken and these shall be reported for approval at the next meeting.

## **7 Officers and Other Elected or Appointed Positions**

### **7.1 Officers**

#### Description of Offices

Unless otherwise specified by the board which may, subject to the Act modify, restrict or supplement such duties and powers, the offices of the Corporation, if designated and if officers are appointed, shall have the following duties and powers associated with their positions:

- a) Chair of the Board - The chair of the board, if one is to be appointed, shall be a director. The chair of the board, if any, shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the board of directors and of the members. The chair shall have such other duties and powers as the board may specify.
- b) Secretary – If appointed, the secretary shall attend and be the secretary of all meetings of the board, members and committees of the board. The secretary shall enter or cause to be entered in the Corporation’s minute book, minutes of all proceedings at such meetings; the secretary shall give, or cause to be given, as and when instructed, notices to members, directors, the public accountant and members of committees; the secretary shall be the custodian of all books, papers, records, documents and other instruments belonging to the Corporation.
- c) Treasurer - If appointed, the treasurer shall have such powers and duties as the board may specify.

The powers and duties of all other officers of the Corporation shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the board or president requires of them. The board may, from time to time and subject to the Act, vary, add to or limit the powers and duties of any officer.

### **7.2 Deacons**

**7.2.1** The Deacons elected by this church are elected by a 2/3 vote of the membership. They shall serve with the pastoral leadership in directing the congregational care and spiritual ministry of the congregation.

**7.2.2** A Person may be considered for appointment as a Church Deacon if he fulfills all of the following qualifications:

- the Person must be a Member of the Church in good standing;
- the Person must be over the age of twenty-one (21);
- the Person must demonstrate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, faithfulness over a period of time, and a good reputation among believers and before the community;
- the Person must fulfill the spiritual qualifications of an Elder as set out in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-10, I Peter 5:1-5 or a Deacon as set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. These biblical provisions are not intended to provide an exhaustive or exclusive check list but rather to set out the kind of things to look for in a leader – whose character is godly, whose conduct is worthy of emulation, whose doctrinal soundness is known to be mature and whose reputation is a credit to Christ and His Church.

**7.2.3** Where there is more than one deacon they shall meet with the pastor and, in consultation with the Church Board, organize to effectively carry out their duties of spiritual leadership

and congregational care. The specific duties shall be defined by the leadership team but shall include spiritual leadership, vision casting, congregational care, church discipline, assuring the doctrinal and ethical soundness of the teaching and preaching, and leading the church in its fulfillment of the Great Commission.

**7.2.4** The Deacon Board shall appoint a Committee to review the Church Membership Roll, at least every second year.

### **7.3 Bookkeeper**

The Bookkeeper elected by this Church shall transact and keep records of financial dealings on behalf of this Church.

### **7.4 Business Administrator**

The Business Administrator shall oversee the Church's financial affairs, and in consultation with the Bookkeeper, file all required Returns on behalf of this Church.

### **7.5 Nominating Committee**

A Nominating Committee, whose duties shall include the preparation of a slate of nominees for election by the Church, shall be appointed by the Church Board.

### **7.6 Other Committees**

Other committees and groups shall be formed as needed to achieve the Mission of this Church and in accordance with these bylaws.

## **8 Pastoral Staff**

### **8.1 Full-time/Part-time Pastor**

**8.1.1** There shall normally be a pastor (or pastors) who is (are) charged with leadership in the spiritual life and the work of the Church and in the ministry of the Word of God.

#### **8.1.2. Pastoral Selection**

The pastor shall be chosen from candidates approved by the Evangelical Missionary Church. When a candidate has been cleared by the President or his designate and upon the majority vote of the Church Board recommending a candidate, a ballot vote of the membership shall be held at a duly called meeting. A call shall be extended to a Pastor when he/she receives a majority vote of 80%. When a candidate has received less than 80% but 60% or more, the Church Board may consult with the Regional Minister on the merits of presenting the candidates a second time. The results of the vote shall be communicated without delay to the EMCC through the Regional Minister. The Church shall pay the moving expenses of an incoming Pastor. The Pastor and the Church Board shall negotiate the terms of an employment agreement, keeping in mind the yearly guidelines published by the Denomination.

#### **8.1.3. Duties**

The Pastor shall be considered the spiritual overseer and shepherd of the Church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, but not of the Church Board, and shall be responsible for all regular and special Services, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach without the pastor's consent.

#### **8.1.4. Review/Evaluation of Pastoral Ministry**

Each pastor's ministry shall be reviewed and evaluated by the Deacon Board on at least a yearly basis and a report submitted to the Church Board. The review shall be done on the basis of a mutually agreed to and current ministry description and upon the stated goals and expected outcomes of the yearly ministry plan. It shall be the prerogative of either the pastor or the Deacon Board, or the Church Board to invite the Regional Minister or his designate to assist in this process.

#### **8.1.5. Resignation**

The Pastor may resign by giving a minimum of 30 days written notice to the Church Board. Terms of separation shall be agreed upon by the Church Board and the Pastor. The Regional Minister shall be informed immediately of the resignation.

#### **8.1.6. Vacancy**

When the pastorate becomes vacant, the Church Board shall continue to give leadership and congregational care, shall arrange suitable pulpit ministry and shall undertake a search for a suitable pastor.

#### **8.1.7 Removal of a Pastor**

(a) The Regional Minister of the EMCC shall be consulted first before any removal process.

(b) A Pastor may be suspended, with pay, from his/her position within the Church in the event of moral failure or ongoing breach of integrity; including but not limited to embezzlement, adultery, abuse of persons, etc. upon an 80% or more vote of the joint Deacon Board and Church Board, hereby referred to as the Total Board.

The Pastor has the option to terminate employment and negotiate terms with the Total Board or be subject to a Congregational Vote, provided full disclosure of the moral failure and/or breach of integrity is made known to the congregation. Should the Pastor choose a Congregational Vote, the terms outlined in 8.1.7 c shall be followed.

(c) In the case where failure of morality or integrity is not involved, the Total Board shall call a Special Meeting of Members in order to take a vote of confidence (special meetings and quorum, sections 5.1 and 5.4). A 2/3 majority vote in favour of removal shall be required for the pastor to be removed from his/her position. In the case where the pastor receives a 2/3 majority, termination of employment will be effective immediately. Additional terms and conditions of termination will be deferred to the board.

i) Where a Pastor fails to maintain EMCC credentials in good standing and the EMCC has informed the church board of either the suspension or termination of credentials, the board shall act to suspend or remove the pastor as the situation may require.

ii) Nothing contained herein shall preclude a Pastor from receiving whatever notice or equivalent monetary settlement as may be legally appropriate in the circumstances. In the event of a disagreement between the Local Fellowship and the Pastor concerning the amount of notice or monetary settlement that is appropriate, before any legal action is commenced, the matter shall first be referred to a person or persons mutually acceptable to the Local Fellowship and the Pastor to resolve such dispute through mediation in a spirit of conciliation worthy of maintaining a Christian witness to the Church and the community.

iii) The removal of a Pastor from the Local Fellowship shall be deemed to constitute his removal as a Member of the Local Fellowship and, where applicable, as a member on all committees and boards.

## **8.2 Interim Pastor**

When there is need for an Interim Pastor, this church shall appoint one after consulting with and obtaining the authorization of the Regional Minister.



## **9**     **Finances**

- 9.1**     Bank accounts of the Church and all auxiliary organizations shall be in the name of the church and/or organizations, and not in the name of the Bookkeeper and/or the Business Administrator "in trust".
- 9.2**     All monies shall be handled in such a way that no room shall be left for the temptation, opportunity, or appearance of wrongdoing. Offerings shall be counted and tabulated in a clear and documented fashion and no less than two tellers shall be used when counting and recording amounts.
- 9.3**     The financial records of the church shall be made available for examination by an EMCC staff person upon the request of the EMCC when the matter of the good standing of this church in the denomination is under review or when a request for a loan or financial assistance has been made to the EMCC.
- 9.4**     The Church Bookkeeper and at least one other person, appointed by the Church Board, shall be designated signing officers for the church bank accounts. The signature of two signing officers shall be required on cheques and other bank documents.
- 9.5**     The Church Bookkeeper or Recording Steward shall be the only signing officer on receipts for Income Tax purposes, unless otherwise designated by the Church Board.
- 9.6**     Any capital expenditure over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) requires approval by a two-thirds majority vote of a duly called Meeting of the Church. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The question for the ballot must be clearly worded to admit only a YES or NO answer.
- 9.7**     Any expenditure over one thousand dollars (\$1,000), not included in the approved budget, requires Church Board approval.

## **10**    **Property**

- 10.1**    This church will exercise due diligence in capital projects so as not to jeopardize, injure or encumber her own ministries nor the shared or individual ministries of sister local churches and shall take such steps as necessary to ascertain that its actions have the blessing of and engender goodwill from sister churches.
- 10.2**    This church has the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own and use any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its objects, all in accordance with its constitution and bylaws, or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended, but shall sign a waiver absolving the EMCC of financial or legal liability.
- 10.3**    The property deed of this Church shall contain the following words: "The said lands shall be held for the use and benefit of the said Congregation or other entity as part of the EMCC. Save as otherwise herein provided, the said lands may be sold, conveyed, mortgaged, leased or exchanged, or otherwise dealt with only with the consent of the local congregation of the church and the consent of the Evangelical Missionary Church, which latter consent may be given by the Board of Directors thereof."
- 10.4**    The EMCC shall have authority over the final disposition of these properties in accordance with the laws of the land, the Bylaws of the EMCC and any bilateral covenant agreement signed with this member church.

## **11 Conflict Of Interest**

Any person on any board or committee, who stands to profit financially because of a decision by that board or committee, or who cannot otherwise act in a decision consistent with the trust implicit in election or appointment to that board or committee, shall declare his or her conflict of interest and shall withdraw from involvement in that decision.

**12 Amendments**

- 12.1** This bylaw may be amended or repealed, and new bylaws or Articles of Incorporation may be adopted by a majority vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of Members present at Annual or Special Meetings of the Church Membership. The Church Board shall publish recommendations for amendment, repeal or adoption of new Bylaws or Articles at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting at which they are to be voted on.
- 12.2** Any amendments that substantially change the substance or intent of this bylaw in regard to the relationship of this church to the EMCC shall come into force only and if the Board of the EMCC shall approve them and so notify this church of its approval.

**13 Policies and Procedures**

- 13.1** The Church Board shall be responsible to maintain a Policy Manual.
- 13.2** The Membership may adopt Policy Statements, rules and guidelines not inconsistent with this bylaw when necessary and from time to time. These Policy Statements may be rescinded or modified only by a majority vote of the Membership.
- 13.3** The Church Board may adopt policy statements, rules and guidelines not inconsistent with this Constitution on such matters as are deemed necessary from time to time. A Policy Statement passed by the Church Board is in force until the next meeting of Members where it will be presented to the Members for their approval. A majority vote of the Members at a membership meeting will be required to adopt such policy.
- 13.4** Policy statements, rules and guidelines passed by the Church Board shall be recorded by the Secretary and reported to the Annual Business Meeting. The record shall include in parentheses the date and occasion for the adoption of the policy.
- 13.5** The Board shall incorporate these policy statements, rules and guidelines in the Policy & Procedures Manual of the Church on an annual basis.

#### **14. - Dissolution Or Winding Up of Remaining Assets**

**14.01** In the event of dissolution or winding-up of the Corporation, all its remaining assets, after payment of its liabilities, shall be distributed to the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (or its successors or assigns) if it is still then a charitable organization which is registered under the Income Tax Act (Canada), provided that if it is not, then the distribution shall be to one or more registered charitable organizations in Canada having cognate or similar objects to those of the Corporation, as designated by the members at a meeting called for that purpose.

## COVENANT OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The following is an expression of the commitment Christ expected of Members and encouraged in Adherents:

Having been led to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body of Christ.

We covenant, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love;

- to join in mutual labours for the kingdom of Christ;
- to strive loyally for the advancement of His Church in holiness, knowledge, and love;
- to promote her prosperity and spirituality;
- to maintain her ordinances, worship, discipline and doctrines.

We covenant to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God prospers us, to the support of this church and all her ministries.

We covenant to maintain private devotions and family devotions where possible;

- to endeavour to bring early to a saving knowledge of Christ all over whom we have care and influence;
- to walk circumspectly in the world;
- to be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements.

We covenant to watch over one another in brotherly love;

- to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress;
- to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;
- to be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation.

We covenant to witness faithfully to the saving and keeping power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His promise that all who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

This bylaw, upon its approval at a duly called meeting of Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church, shall supersede all other Constitution and Bylaws of Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church. Upon adoption, an original copy (not a photocopy) shall be sent to and kept on file at the EMCC office – 214 Highland Rd. E., Kitchener, Ontario N2M 3W2. A copy must also be submitted to the Canada Revenue Agency when changes, other than editorial, are made to this bylaw. This copy to be submitted by the Business Administrator.

Approved by the Membership of Palmerston Evangelical Missionary Church

Date:

Signature of two Signing Officers of the Congregation

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX A

# The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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A great deal of interest in the nature and function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit has risen world wide in recent times within the Church of Jesus Christ. Much has also been written and spoken on the subject of the Holy Spirit and his (or God's) gifts. The following article outlines the major emphases of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada with regard to these important teachings.

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### Spiritual Gifts Defined

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We believe in the Holy Spirit and his ongoing ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ and in the world. We believe that part of the work of the Holy Spirit is the equipping of believers with gifts for service.

What do we mean by "gifts" of the Holy Spirit? Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities enabling the believer to function in the Body of Christ with effectiveness and satisfaction. Some gifts are the enhancement of natural ability for service; others are endowments with special ability. Natural ability as a speaker, musician, teacher, etc., does not necessarily mean that one has or will receive a gift in that area. Every believer has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:7) to assist in ministry within the church.

In I Corinthians 12:4 the term used to describe gifts is the Greek word *charismata*. The term comes from the root *charis* which means "grace", and signifies that these endowments come from the free bounty of God's grace and love. They are not rewards for holiness, spirituality, or spiritual maturity. Out of his love God gives just the gift or gifts we need to be of help and blessing to our fellow believers. (I Peter 4:10)

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### Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

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Ephesians 4:11-13 serves as an excellent basis for defining the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit. They are given to equip members within the church for ministry so that the whole body may be edified and built up toward maturity in Christ. We believe that all the gifts will be in operation until Jesus comes.

(I Corinthians 1:7 - "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ").

These gracious endowments are part of God's plan for his people. He disburses them through his people, sovereignly as he chooses, for the glory of God the Father. All believers have the privilege of being channels in manifesting his gifts. (I Peter 4:10) When there is a need in the church, and believers are sensitive to the Spirit's leadership, his gifting will minister to that need. God's Spirit can be trusted to provide what is needed to build up the Church and provide for its enlargement.

It is wrong to become obsessed with only a few of the more spectacular gifts. All are given by and are the work of the same Spirit. Let us seek the gifts God wants to give us, for the sake of building up his church as we are involved in it today. Let us not be found guilty of disparaging or unduly emphasizing any gift of the Holy Spirit.

The gifts listed in I Corinthians 12 seem somewhat spectacular, and thus our interest often focuses exclusively on these. This is unfortunate. In Corinth, a misplaced emphasis on some gifts and a preoccupation with only a few of them resulted in pride and division. In that passage Paul insists that all of the gifts proceed from the same Holy Spirit even though the manifestations may differ. "It is the same God who works all things in all men." (I Corinthians 12:4-7)

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### Diversity of Spiritual Gifts

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There are at least three different lists of spiritual gifts found in Scripture (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11). Even a brief look at these lists readily indicates that while they all make reference to the gifts of the Spirit, each has a different orientation. Ephesians 4:11 is a list of gifts that equip persons, who are Christ's gifts to the church, for various offices. Romans 12:6-8 catalogues some of the basic functions that gifts, which are performed in the church, serve. I Corinthians 12 is more a list of supernatural abilities not associated with natural human service. As a result it becomes very difficult to come up with a definitive



list of the gifts.

Some injustice has been done to New Testament teachings by the practice of referring to a list of nine gifts as though only nine exist. In fact, in several "lists" of gifts, one can count at least twenty-one gifts which are mentioned by the Apostle Paul! Scripture does not limit their number.

As one looks at these gifts listed in Scripture, it is clear that there is a diversity of gifts. Some of these gifts are miraculous; some are more natural, some are verbal, some are mental; some are powerful, some are administration - but all are described within the context of building up the Body of Christ and are activities of the same Holy Spirit. When people concentrate on a limited number of gifts, forgetting their great variety, the result may be a partial, incomplete ministry, and a loss of blessing and effectiveness. All of these gifts, and as many more as the Church has need of to fulfill its mandate and ministry, are available from the good hand of our God.

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### **Tongues Speaking**

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One of the gifts listed in I Corinthians 12 and 14 is tongues speaking. Because much attention has been given to this gift, it is specifically discussed here. Paul believed it is a genuine manifestation of the Spirit (I Corinthians 14:18, 19), but he believed in the necessity of careful control of this gift by the one so gifted. (I Corinthians 14:26-28)

Paul discusses tongues speaking as an aid to personal prayer and praise. Tongues speaking is addressed and directed to God, not to man. (I Corinthians 14:2,4,14-17) It is usually incoherent to the hearer. Here is a gift given to enhance the prayer life of believers who have the gift. The believer edified by it is, in turn, to edify the church. It is not necessary that all Christians possess this gift. (I Corinthians 12:29-31) The Scripture clearly states that the Holy Spirit dispenses all the gifts sovereignly to recipients. (I Corinthians 12:11) Therefore, if he chooses to give us any one of the miraculous gifts, he will do so regardless of whether we expect or seek it.

As to the public use of the gift of tongues, the procedures laid down in Scripture are to be followed. If one speaks in tongues publicly, there should be an interpreter so that the whole group may be edified. Only one should speak at a time and no more than two

or three at a session. (I Corinthians 14:27) If no one is present to interpret (whether the speaker or some other person) then the would-be speaker should keep silent and restrict the use of tongues to personal devotional practice. (I Corinthians 14:28) In I Corinthians 14, Paul prefers the exercise of the gift of prophecy -- that is the telling forth of the Word of God in the vernacular for edification, exhortation, comfort and evangelism. (14:3-5, 23-25)

Since Paul implies that speaking in tongues publicly was a problem in Corinth (I Corinthians 14:20); since he surrounds the practice there with these restrictions and qualifications (14:26-28); since he urges that prophecy rather than tongues should be the norm in public Christian gatherings (14:11-19); and since public tongues speaking is not mentioned as a common practice in other New Testament congregations; it is out of order for an undue emphasis to be placed on the public use of this gift. (14:39)

The gift of tongues should not be considered a standard of measurement for one's spirituality, or as the necessary evidence of the Spirit-filled life. It is just one of the many wonderful endowments given by the Spirit to bless and enrich the lives of believers and the life of the church of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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### **Conclusion**

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Churches in the modern world which put a great deal of stress upon the Spirit's gifts are called "charismatic" fellowships. Paul insists in I Corinthians 13 that no matter what gift a believer possesses, without love (agape) it is worthless. Thus love, though not one of these gifts, is vital to the proper use of each. Charismata (gifts) and agape (love) are both important components in the life of the Church and the life of a believer; but the greatest of these is love. Let us pray that the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada will be Spirit-led and Spirit-filled. Above all, however, let us pray that the love of Christ will characterize us as a denomination. If we are God's people filled with his agape, the Spirit of God will see that we are also people who manifest genuine charismata.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the  
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada*



Evangelical Missionary Church  
of Canada HIS MISSION - OUR MISSION

# Christ at the center

*Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials, Love in All Things.*

## **CHRIST AT THE CENTRE**

### **Christ's Mission...To Seek and to Save the Lost**

Jesus was sent into the world by the Father (John 3:16; 5:23-27; 17:21-25) to seek and to save the Lost (Luke 19:10). It is a statement worthy of acceptance that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

This is the Good News, the Gospel (the Evangel) we proclaim.

### **Christ's Commission... Make Disciples**

Jesus' last word to the Church before His Ascension was "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19).

A disciple is someone

- who follows Jesus.
- who learns of Jesus.
- who willingly submits to and obeys Jesus' perfect will.
- who has a living relationship with Jesus.
- who commits oneself to Jesus as He is, Son of God, the only Saviour, Lord of All.
- who is "in love with Jesus."
- who introduces others to this love relationship with Jesus.
- who carries on the Mission of Jesus.

### **Christ's Cross...The Power of God**

The Cross of Christ is the epicentre of Christian faith and self-understanding (1 Cor 2:2), the core of Christian theology, its key and its foundation, the content of Christian preaching. In history the cross was an instrument of Roman torture, humiliation, death, and terror; Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Paradoxically, the Cross is the very epitome of His self-revelation, God not revealed in divine power and glory, but in human disgrace, poverty, suffering and death.

### **Christ's Resurrection...The Triumph of Life Over Death**

If the Cross is the 'eye-piece,' the Resurrection is the telescopic lens. We cannot understand the Cross without the Resurrection and the Resurrection presupposes the Cross. The tomb is empty! Jesus has been raised bodily! "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." (1 Cor 15:17). It is central and essential to our confession (Rom 10:9).

### **Christ's Spirit...Mediates the Personal Presence and Ministry of Jesus**

The same Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead, is the Helper sent by Jesus, whose essential work

is to mediate the personal presence and ministry of Jesus. He does so in order that our Lord may be known, loved, trusted, honoured, and praised (John 14:16; Rom 1:4; 8:11).

The Spirit of Christ, also called the Spirit of God (Rev 2:1, 7,8, etc.), in the words of Jesus, "will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14). This is His fundamental and unchanging task.

The Spirit is more than a power who gives coping ability for living, or enables performance in service, or moves people to speak, or brings about emotional response, or endows with knowledge or insight. Rather He is the third Person of the Trinity and very God (Gen 1:26; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

Jesus is our example of 'life in the Spirit' (Matt 3:17; 4:1). His life characterized by love for God and love for others was well pleasing to His Father and commended as our example (Phil 2:5; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:21).

The same Spirit is the deposit guaranteeing our complete redemption (2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:13).

The Holy Spirit empowers us to love like Jesus in victory over the world, the sinful nature (flesh) and the devil and causes us to be partakers of God's nature through union with Christ and to be His witnesses, sharing our faith with others (1 John 2:15-17; 4:12-13; 5:1-5; 2 Pet 1:4; Acts 1:8).

The fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated in Christlike character in a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-25).

### **Christ's Gifts...Given for Service to Others and for the Common Good**

God sovereignly and freely distributes to each of His children His gifting and gifts as He sees fit (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4). He does so for the purpose of service to others (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10; Eph 3:7), for the common good and for the building up of the body (1 Cor 14:12; Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:7).

God has given many and diverse gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:4), the most wonderful is the gift of His Son (2 Cor 9:5; Rom 5:15, 16) and saving faith (Eph 2:8) unto eternal life (Rom 6:23). The gift of His Son is given by the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17) and is also called the gift of God (John 4:10).

The grace gifts of Christ (1 Cor 1:4-7; 4:8) are one and the same as the gifts of the Spirit and are also called the gifts of the Father (2 Tim 1:6; Heb 2:4).

The gifts given for communication of God's message (Eph 4:8, 11-12; 1 Cor 14:1, 12; 1 Cor 12:28) are central to God's equipping of all believers for service.

The gifts are to be eagerly desired by the Body - not sought after as an individual bestowal - for the building up of the body (1 Cor 12:31; 14:12) and to be treasured and developed (1 Tim 4:13-14; 2 Tim 1:6).

The exercise of gifts are not the evidence of true spirituality. They do not protect from sin, nor do they transform character but reside in the believer or appear as transitory operations of extraordinary power from God, given when and as God sees fit (1 Cor 12).

The fruit of the Spirit, pre-eminently expressed in love, is the prime evidence of true spirituality (1 Cor 13:2).

Anything that God has ever done anywhere, He can do here; anything that God has ever done any time, He can do now; anything that God has ever done for anyone, He can do for you (Tozer).

## **Christ's Word...Makes us Wise for Salvation, Guides the Believer's Conduct and Equips for Every Good Work**

"The holy Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:15-17).

### **UNITY IN ESSENTIALS**

**We are called to Unity in Essentials...There are essentials in doctrine (the things we believe); in practice (the things we do) and in conduct (the way we live).**

#### **Essentials of Doctrine: Statement of Faith**

The Articles of Faith of our EMCC Constitution can be distilled in the following way:

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. ONE GOD, eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, Our Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work and substitutionary death, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. THE SALVATION of lost and sinful people through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
5. THE HOLY SPIRIT by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. THE UNITY in the Spirit of all true believers, the Body of Christ; visible in gathered communities and in co-operative mission.
7. THE RESURRECTION of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

These articles are the non-negotiable Essentials of the Christian faith. The statement is Orthodox and Evangelical. Orthodox means in agreement with the historic teaching of the Christian faith as expressed in the historic creeds. Evangelical means an emphasis on the biblical gospel about salvation by faith in Christ and new life (regeneration) by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This new life is essential to the Christian walk.

#### **Essentials in Practice: The Ordinances**

We teach and practice two ordinances as commanded by Christ: Believer's Baptism and Lord's Supper, both intended as expressions of faith and obedience on the part of the believer.

We are immovable in our stand that the new birth is essential, and we are convinced that the Biblical teaching is believer's baptism by immersion upon profession of faith.

We also recognize that some godly, passionate Christians have roots in other traditions where baptismal practice differs.

We are, therefore, persuaded that the timing and mode of water baptism ought not to prevent born again believers from being accepted into membership of our churches and our denomination. We want to receive all whom Christ receives.

We welcome all who love Jesus to join us in the memorial feast at the Lord's Table, recognizing the body and blood of our Lord.

## **Essentials of Conduct: Statement of Christian Conduct**

The Christian's conduct is modeled on the example of Jesus.

Out of gratitude to God for His Covenant love, empowered by the Spirit of Holiness, informed and shaped by the instruction of the Word of God, the Christian walks in the steps of Jesus, obedient to the teaching of Jesus.

The Scriptures teach that the divine pattern for sexual relationships is the marital union of one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant relationship in mutual submission to Christ where care and respect for each other are practiced.

The Scriptures teach that the believer is to be unfettered by anything that attains an addictive, compulsive or idolatrous dominance or control in one's life and conduct.

## **LIBERTY IN NON-ESSENTIALS**

We proclaim passionately the Gospel of Jesus. We uncompromisingly defend the Essentials. We gladly celebrate our liberty in non-essentials. We warmly commend love in all things.

We accept that the Scriptures teach many other things of importance and substance beyond the Unifying Essentials. However, we are persuaded that these other matters must not displace our unity based on essentials. We will be careful that our studious attention to these matters, albeit worthy, not distract us from our high calling to make His Mission, Our Mission.

We can and will engage in teaching and dialogue in areas beyond our unifying base with 'warm hearts and cool heads' rather than 'hot heads and cold hearts.' We intend to generate light rather than heat. We will be careful that our passionate engagements on points of practice or teaching not bring disrepute to our Saviour by doing so in a way unbecoming.

We will represent the views of others fairly, accurately and peacefully. Love will guide our forms of expression and we agree that fair dealing concerning issues of known sensitivity is important to our unity.

We will treat sensitively the heritage positions of our movement and the traditions specific to each congregational culture.

We will express our well considered views and will plead for a particular understanding but not impugn the spirituality, character or intelligence of those who differ. We will speak of our fellows with respect and avoid the tendency to demonize others who hold differing views. When others are speaking we will accord them a courteous hearing, although we may hold differing views.

We will cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and kindness in speech and be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation.

We will foster an atmosphere where careful study of the Scriptures is preeminent, reasoned decision making is encouraged, passionate love for God is approved and active service is the result.

We will also seek to develop consensus on various issues and to develop mediating positions that build bridges rather than walls appreciating those points held in common. Position papers concerning such issues will be published from time to time.

We will guard against the tendency to make agreement on secondary issues tests of fellowship or service.

We intend to be a movement characterized by Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials and Love in All Things.

## **LOVE IN ALL THINGS**

### **Christ's Commandment..."Love one another as I have loved you."**

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

A disciple is someone who is in love with Jesus, and who out of love follows Him, and who becomes an agent of that same love, imparting it to others compassionately, giving freely of one's substance and self and pointing lost people to the love of Jesus who saves and transforms.

A disciple responds compassionately to the needs of others

- grounded in the love of Christ, demonstrated at the cross - Grace
- experiencing the love of Christ, received through faith - Conversion
- expressing the love of Christ within the Body - Unity
- expressing the love of Christ in action - compassionate and practical love
- expressing the love of Christ in word - sharing the message of God's love to a lost and dying world, one person at a time.

## **CHRIST'S CHURCH**

### **Christ's Church...The Body of Christ Manifest in Gathered Assemblies of Believers**

"The local church is an organized body of believers in Christ [which is] voluntarily joined together for public worship and evangelism, teaching the Word, fellowship with the saints, observance of the ordinances, exercise in prayer, and who are commissioned with the responsibility to administer discipline." [former EMCC Constitution 2003]

"The characteristic marks of the members of the true church are faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God's commandments and victory over the world" (1 John 3:21-24; 1 John 5:1-5). [former EMCC Constitution 2003]

### **Christ's Church...The Body of Christ Manifest in Cooperative Mission**

Christ's Church in all times and all places, mystical and invisible is manifest in a dynamic missional 'ecosystem' of disciples, gathered communities, networks and institutions through which the presence of Christ is mediated to the watching world. Christ has given gifts to the Church that unify and mobilize believers for mission that transcends and extends the bounds of localized ministry (Eph 4:11; Acts 13:1-4; 1 Cor 12:28;). It is biblical to set apart leaders who serve and have standing in the larger church. The Spirit of unity and mission implants the impulse of cooperation and connection that prompts churches of like faith to make common cause for the Great Commission, to organize and support one another and to hold one another to account. It is right for there to be a mutual accountability in matters of faith, practice and conduct where the guiding principles are "Unity in Essentials, Liberty in Non-Essentials and Love in All Things" with Christ at the Centre.

## **CHRIST AND THE EMCC**

### **Statement of Heritage and Mission**

Born in revival fires and burning with missionary activism, our movement has been characterized by a willingness to embrace successive waves of spiritual renewal in order to refurbish its Great Commission fervour. From the initial impact of Wesleyan spirituality in the late 19th century upon Anabaptists and Pietists that forged them into a new force for evangelism at home and abroad to the late 20th century mergers and assimilations of other evangelicals the story of the denomination is one of merging streams.



All allegiances to Christ are embedded in culture. We appreciate and honour our cultural heritage but acknowledge that traditions that concretize and stabilize our life of faith can also trap us and stifle our ability to engage our world. As such we celebrate our ability to examine ourselves afresh in the light of our Great Commission mandate and Great Commandment priorities.

Each local church, (affiliate, associate or full member of the EMCC) is called upon to willingly and intentionally covenant, that to the best of her ability, she will promote the values, advance the purpose and support the ministries of EMCC in keeping with the Great Commandment and in pursuit of the Great Commission with Christ at the Centre!

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## THE ASSURANCE OF THE BELIEVER

Christians may know a consistent and confident relationship with God. (I John 5:12–13) Children of God can live with the assurance they are God's own and with the confirmed hope they will enter God's eternal reward. Assurance is the privilege of the believer who lives in obedience to God and who walks by faith in a personal living relationship with the creator. Assurance, itself, is not our salvation but the knowledge that we are saved.

John Wesley wrote that *“saving faith — the one faith — implies an assurance that Christ loves me, and gave himself for me. For he that believeth with the true saving faith hath the witness in himself, the Spirit witnesses unto his spirit that he is a child of God.”* (I John 5:10)

### SOME CONCLUSIONS REGARDING CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

- It is the believer's privilege to have a daily walk with God in which the strength and warmth of His love and power provide support for each day's events. God never fails us. As a result of this fact, we should want to respond in love and obedience and give a living witness and testimony to all that God has done in us.
- Assurance builds as we “give diligence to make (our) calling and election sure.” (II Peter 1:10) The evidence of our salvation is our consistent faithfulness to him. (I John 3:9-10)
- Assurance is ours as we exercise, in God's strength, the faith He gives us to walk in Christ.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the  
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada*

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## THE ASSURANCE OF THE BELIEVER



EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY  
CHURCH OF CANADA

## THE CONTENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

### Assurance of Forgiveness and Salvation

- Believers can be sure their sins are forgiven. This assurance comes through the combination of the witness of the written Word of God and the witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God's Word proclaims, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7) The Holy Spirit bears testimony of our salvation in and through Jesus Christ. "Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (I John 5:10-11)

### Assurance in Our Walk With Christ

- Believers can be sure that they are God's children. That assurance comes from the Spirit of God who "testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children." (Romans 8:14)
- Believers can be sure that God will not forsake them. As Paul said, "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" (Romans 5:10)
- Believers can be sure that nothing can wrest them from God's loving care. Paul declared, "if God be for us, who can be against us," and announced that no one can separate us from the love of Christ. (Romans 8:31,35)
- Believers can be sure that God can keep them from falling. He is able "to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy." (Jude 24)
- Believers can be sure that God will forgive them when forgiveness is requested. God has promised in His Word that "if we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins..." (I John 1:9)

### Assurance of Resurrection Life

- Believers can be sure that they have resurrection (glorified) bodies as their eternal dwelling place. The scriptural promise of eternal life is far more than an impersonal immortality. God's Word proclaims, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:11)
- Believers can be sure that their eternal life will be lived in Christ's presence. Jesus said, "There are many rooms in my Father's house...I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2-3)

## CHECKPOINTS FOR CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

Believers must take into account that they are involved in spiritual warfare. (Ephesians 6:10-18) Since one of the oldest strategies of the enemy is to question the veracity of God's declarations, it can be expected that there will be times when the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10) will attempt to raise doubts in believers about the reality of God's saving work in their lives.

Individuals who are lacking assurance should ask themselves a few basic questions:

### Do I meet the biblical criteria of a believer?

- There is no sound basis for assurance of salvation unless you have confessed with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and "believed in your heart that God raised him from the dead." (Romans 10:9)

### Am I abiding in Christ?

- It can truly be said that the proof of the reality of a salvation experience is its continuance. The Bible

teaches that professing believers can fail to abide in Christ (John 15:6), can be hardened through sin (Hebrews 3:13), and can be overcome by the world (II Peter 2:20-22). To do so is to place oneself in spiritual jeopardy. We are instructed to continue on in faith and obedience, and to keep ourselves in the love of Christ. (Jude 20-23)

### Do I share in worship and witness with a fellowship of believers?

- It is possible to be saved and therefore part of the invisible church of Jesus Christ and yet not be part of a local church. However a lack of assurance of salvation may result from neglecting assembly with other believers. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25) As John said, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers." (I John 3:14)

### Do I have consistent devotional practices?

- Assurance belongs to believers who pray regularly and practice consistent and meaningful Bible study. The apostle John said, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (I John 5:13)

### Am I facing circumstances that are adversely affecting my assurance?

- All Christians have times when they don't *feel like a Christian*. When we are physically sick or have failed in some task, we often do not "feel" like a joyous Christian. At such times it is good to remember that assurance results from faith not feeling. When the enemy of our souls uses such times to attack, the believer must raise the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16), remembering that, "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)



## **APPENDIX #1: ARTICLES of FAITH and PRACTICE** **(A Part of EMCC Bylaw #1)**

### **ARTICLES OF FAITH FP-1**

#### **FP-1.1. ABOUT THE BIBLE**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and the only final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible, as originally written under the inspiration and supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit by human authors, is the Word of God, the supreme source of truth for Christian belief. The Bible reveals who God is, exposes who we are in light of His holiness, proclaims God's merciful salvation and teaches and trains Christ's followers how to grow in relationship with God and others.

Psalm 119:105; Matthew 4:4; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20-21

#### **FP-1.2. ABOUT GOD**

We believe in the one true, living and holy God who is a self-existent, eternal, personal Spirit eternally existent as a trinity of three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These persons are distinct but inseparable, one in essence, power, and glory. God is the transcendent and immanent Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all things visible and invisible.

Genesis 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:6-8; John 1:1-3,14; I Corinthians 2:9-12; Colossians 1:15-16, 2:9; Hebrews 1:3

We believe that the Father is eternally the Father of the Son, the author of salvation, and now the Father of all who are born again into new life through faith in Christ.

Gen. 1:1. Ps. 90:2. John 13:3; Eph. 1:2-4; I Pet. 1:2-4.

We believe in Jesus Christ in whom the divine and human natures are inseparably united. He is truly God and truly man, the eternal Son of God in the flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. He came to reveal the Father, announce the arrival of God's Kingdom with word, miracles and deeds, and to offer Himself up as a sinless atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. He was physically raised from the dead and then exalted to the right hand of the Father.

In fulfilling the earthly mission of His first coming, Jesus demonstrated a life of victory on our behalf over Satan and sin, provided the only way for people to be rescued from sin, and opened the way to live a holy life as participants in the Kingdom of God. He continues now as the only Mediator between God and humanity. Jesus will, at the Father's appointed time, come again in power and glory.

Matthew 1:18-25, 4:17, 23; Luke 23-24; John 1:1-18, 6:37-47, 10:10; 14:6; I Corinthians 15:3-8; Hebrews 4:14-15, 9:14-15; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 2:4-6a.

We believe in the Holy Spirit - who is fully God and, while not to be confused with the Father and Son, remains one with the Father and the Son in being, majesty, and glory. The Holy Spirit convinces of the need of a saving relationship with God and engages every person who trusts and follows Jesus in a life-giving relationship.

Through His indwelling presence the Holy Spirit gives the believer spiritual life, assurance of salvation, understanding and guidance in all truth, and power to live out the Christian life. The Holy Spirit gives all believers the ability to accomplish God's purposes for their lives with spiritual abilities and gifts to use for God's glory and the service of others.



John 1: 12,13; 3:5-8, 16:7-14; Romans 8:5-17, 26-27; I Corinthians 2:10-12, 12:4-11; Ephesians 3:16-21; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 6:10-18

### **FP-1.3. ABOUT HUMANITY**

We believe that God created humankind in His image, male and female, to enjoy a loving relationship with Him and with one another. God specially created humankind as the climax of His creative work on earth and established the family, based on covenant marriage between one man and one woman, as the building block of human community. We believe individual human lives are to be valued from conception, because God loves each one at every stage of life and desires that each one will come to know and love Him. Through human rebellion against God we have fallen and have come to be marred by a sinful nature. Humanity, apart from Christ, is now spiritually dead and, unless born again through Christ, cannot see the kingdom of God. We, in our own strength, without divine grace, cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God or bring glory to Him as we were designed to do. Through the finished work of Christ and God's grace experienced in the influence and empowering of the Holy Spirit individuals are enabled to exercise their will to accept God's gift and will.

Personal acceptance of Christ's redemptive work results in a restored relationship with God and freedom to fulfill our created purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gen. 6:5. John 3:3-7; Rom.3:10,18, 23; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 2:11-14.

### **FP-1.4. ABOUT SALVATION**

We believe that in spite of our rebellion, God still loves all of humanity and has mercifully extended His life-giving grace toward us. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, people who believe in Him are forgiven of sin and declared righteous (justification), are made spiritually alive (regeneration), and are set apart into a never-ending relationship with Him as holy people who are being renewed in the image of God (sanctification).

True belief will be evidenced by heartfelt repentance from and godly sorrow for sin, complete trust (faith) in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and surrender to His will as Lord. Spiritual life will result in spiritual fruit in a life increasingly marked by love for God, fellow believers and the lost.

Salvation is God's gracious gift, to be accepted through faith, through which the believer can be assured of personal salvation which speaks to the past in the forgiveness of sins, to the present of a continuing walk with Christ, and to the future with the promise of resurrection life. Our assurance is in our continuing relationship with Christ by faith. As a result of the saving grace of Christ, the believer can experience a Spirit-filled, Spirit-gifted, and Spirit-led life of victory over sin. In submission to the Spirit the believer's life will show increasing alignment with the Great Commandment and Great Commission of Jesus.

Matt 10:22; 22:37-40; 28:18-20; John 3:16-21; 15:4; Acts 2:22-42; Romans 5:1-2, 6:11,19-23; II Corinthians 5:14-6:2; Ephesians 2:8-10

### **FP-1.5. ABOUT THE CHURCH**

We believe that the true Church consists of all people everywhere who have been reborn through personal participation, by faith, in the death and resurrection of Christ, being called out to become part of the body of which Christ is the Head. The Church is visible to the world when believers gather in community and when they are active in serving and blessing others in Jesus' name. The Church is the evidence of God's saving work and a strategic part of God's plan to reflect His grace, proclaim His truth, and extend His care to the world. The people of God have been sent on mission to the world – to love and worship God in a spirit of unity, to teach the Word of God, to celebrate Baptism and Communion, to encourage all people to follow Jesus, and to participate in the ever-growing kingdom of God.

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 3:8-1, 14-21; 4:1-16; Colossians 1:18-23

## FP-1.6. ABOUT THINGS TO COME

We believe that God intervenes in the affairs of this world. At the time of God's choosing, Jesus will bodily return to the earth in power and glory to judge and rule the world, as God's Kingdom is fully and forever established.

We believe the promise of Scripture that God will create a new heaven and a new earth which will be the eternal dwelling place of those who have been made righteous in Christ.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all humanity to stand before God for final judgment. Those who have not accepted His life-giving grace will be raised to experience eternal punishment being separated from God and all that is good. Those who have trusted in Christ will be raised to live eternally in God's presence and receive the promised reward.

Matt 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:24-29. 14:1-6; Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-9.

## ARTICLES OF PRACTICE FP-2

### FP-2.1. Ordinances

The Christian ordinances are two in number, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the outward rites appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

#### FP-2.1.1. Baptism

Baptism by water is the symbol of one's union by faith with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. It constitutes the public confession of these spiritual realities to the world and is the answer of a good conscience toward God<sup>1</sup>. Baptism is administered, preferably by immersion, to those who have been born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who give evidence of the genuineness of their salvation<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:36-41; Rom. 6:3-5. <sup>2</sup> Acts 8:12-13,34-39.

#### FP-2.1.2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ himself on the night of His betrayal<sup>1</sup>. It is a memorial of Christ's death, a centre of communion and fellowship, a testimony to saving faith, and a visible token of Christ's redemptive covenant. It is observed only by believers and consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for life and sustenance until He comes<sup>2</sup>. While the Lord's Supper is open to all true believers, we are strongly exhorted to examine ourselves "and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 26:26-30. <sup>2</sup> I Cor 11:26. <sup>3</sup> I Cor. 11:26.

### FP-2.2. Divine Healing

God is able to heal, therefore we ought to pray for the sick<sup>1</sup>. Although healing cannot be demanded of God, it should be sought according to Scriptural instruction. God heals in three ways:

- 1) through the natural processes of the human body which may be aided by medical help;
- 2) through the supernatural intervention of God bringing healing to the body; and
- 3) through the death and resurrection of the body to a glorified state.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12:15,22; James 5:13-16.

#### **FP-2.3. The Lord's Day**

The Lord's Day<sup>1</sup>, which commemorates the resurrection, is for private and public worship and for rest from unnecessary work. It should be devoted to spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and service<sup>2</sup>. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian church and important to the welfare of society.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28:1; I Cor. 16:2. <sup>2</sup> Isa. 58:13-14; Heb. 10:25.

#### **FP-2.4. Christian Stewardship**

In recognition of God's ownership of all<sup>1</sup> things believers should practice systematic and proportionate giving, adopting the tithe as a minimum expression of their stewardship<sup>2</sup>. They should regard Christian liberality as a privilege and sacred duty, and freely give of their substance for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad, for the maintenance of the local church, and for the support of the agencies and enterprises of the denomination.

Believers should also dedicate themselves, their time, talents, and substance to God and to the advancement of His kingdom. Christians are encouraged to spend time in Bible study, prayer, and in sharing the gospel<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1:1, 14:18-23. <sup>2</sup> Mal. 3:8,10. <sup>3</sup> II Cor. 5:14-15, 8:9-12, 9:6-8.

#### **FP-2.5. Dedication of Children**

God is concerned for the well-being of children<sup>1</sup> who are under the atonement of Christ<sup>2</sup>. We encourage the formal dedication of children in a public service of the church.

<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 1:24-28; Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 2:21-22. <sup>2</sup> Mark 10:13-15; John 3:16-19; Rom. 5:13.

#### **FP-2.6. Marriage, Singleness, Family, and Human Sexuality**

As human beings, men and women, we are created in the image of God. God saw that his creation of humankind was very good. As a result we have intrinsic worth and are found to be equally valued by God.

We believe God has established the church as a family of faith in which we are each sons or daughters. It is within this family of faith that we are established, rooted, fulfil our ministry, and find maturity in Christ.

We also believe the family of faith is where the goodness of being either single or married is to be honoured. We recognize that God has created human beings for relationship with him and with each other. God's intention is for people to be blessed through families: both the family of faith and the family into which God has placed us. God created the family to be the cornerstone of social order.

The home is a divinely established institution<sup>1</sup> in which the husband is the head<sup>2</sup> but serves its members by the law of love, and in which husband and wife are to work together to raise their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Obedience to parents is to be rendered by children in the spirit of mutual respect and love.

Marriage is part of God's design in establishing the family. We believe that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. This heterosexual union<sup>4</sup> is the only appropriate relationship within which the joy of sexual intimacy is to be expressed. We affirm such marriage as God's design for a lifelong loving relationship, sexual intimacy, and the birth and nurture of children. Christian marriage is intended for those who share a common faith in Christ<sup>5</sup>. Such a marriage is blessed of God.



Since the EMCC believes the Bible defines marriage as being a covenant union of one man and one woman, the EMCC only recognizes covenantal heterosexual unions as marriages. Therefore, ministers are forbidden to perform ceremonies or make any public comment that would give any indication to the contrary.

<sup>1</sup> Gen 2:23-24. <sup>2</sup> Eph 5:22-25, 28; Col 3:18-21. <sup>3</sup> Deut 6:4-9. <sup>4</sup> Gen 2:23-24. Rom 1:26-27. <sup>5</sup> Deut 7:3; II Cor 6:14-17.

#### **FP-2.7. Divorce**

FP-2.7.1. Divorce is viewed in the Scriptures as contrary to God's will<sup>1</sup>. Christians should seek by forbearance and forgiveness to preserve the marriage bond.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 2:24-25; Mal. 2:15-16; Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-12; I Cor. 7:10-16.

FP-2.7.2. Persons divorced and remarried who give evidence of being genuinely born again are eligible to be received into membership in the church.

FP-2.7.3. Divorce between members of the church is an occasion of great tragedy. Such conduct brings the teaching and reality of Christian reconciliation under reproach and offenders are to be disciplined.

The church board shall provide counsel and take proper disciplinary action giving consideration to appropriate aspects of local church discipline.

Care should be exercised that such action be as redemptive as possible for all parties involved.

FP-2.7.4. Ministers are to refrain from performing marriage ceremonies where one or both parties are divorced. However ministers are permitted, at their discretion, to solemnize the marriage of a person whose previous marriage partner committed adultery, who is recognized as living a genuine Christian life, and where there is good evidence that a true Christian marriage is intended.

#### **FP-2.8. Practices and Conduct**

Believers are not to be conformed to the view and lifestyle of the world of which they are a part<sup>1</sup>, but, on the contrary, are to function as salt<sup>2</sup> to prevent the spread of moral corruption, and as light to dispel spiritual darkness. High standards should therefore be set for their personal and collective life including the following:

- 1) their disposition and attitudes be characterized by godliness and the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control<sup>3</sup>;
- 2) their social relationships bear witness to Christ, their entire conduct reflecting the spiritual ideals of Christianity rather than the world; they shall not engage in sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage; shall not marry unbelievers, shall not hold membership in oath-bound secret societies, and shall not compromise Christian principles in partnerships<sup>4</sup>;
- 3) their bodies be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup> thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to compromise their influence and injure their bodies through inappropriate practices or substance abuse<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Rom. 12:1,2. <sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:13. <sup>3</sup> Gal. 5:22-24. <sup>4</sup> II Cor. 6:14-16. <sup>5</sup> I Cor. 3:16,17, 6:19,20. <sup>6</sup> I Cor. 6:12-20.

#### **FP-2.9. Attitude Toward Civil Government**

Civil government is ordained of God<sup>1</sup> for the welfare of society to promote and protect the good and to restrain and punish evil<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, we consider it the duty of Christians to pray for rulers and for those who are in authority over them and to give due loyalty, respect, and obedience to them<sup>3</sup>. Christians are also encouraged to take an active interest in government at all levels. Where the demands of civil law would militate against the supreme law and will of God, Christians should obey God rather than man<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. 4:17. <sup>2</sup> Rom. 13:1-5. <sup>3</sup> I Tim. 2:1-4. <sup>4</sup> Acts 4:13-20, 5:27, 28.

#### **FP-2.10. Attitude Toward Strife and Military Service**

FP-2.10.1. Believers are to love their enemies, do good to them that hate them<sup>1</sup>, overcome evil with good, and, as much as possible, live peaceably with all men<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, it is not fitting for the Christian to promote strife between nations, classes, groups, or individuals.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:43-48. <sup>2</sup> Rom. 12:14-21, 13:1-4.

FP-2.10.2. Sincere Christians have conscientious differences as to their understanding of the teaching of the Word of God with reference to their responsibility as Christian citizens to human government both in times of war and times of peace. We are, therefore, to exercise tolerance and understanding, and respect the individual conscience with regard to participation in war.

#### **FP-2.11. Oaths**

A Christian's life should be so transparent in its honesty and integrity that his or her word can be fully trusted without swearing on the Bible in judicial situations<sup>1</sup> or taking the Lord's name in vain<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:33-35,37; James 5:12. <sup>2</sup> Ex. 20:7.