**By-Laws**

*of the*

*Emmanuel Bible Church*

ARTICLE I

The name of this church shall be Emmanuel Bible Church

ARTICLE II

**Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify and worship God, and to share in the means of grace as established in the Holy Scriptures. To that end we shall, according to the Lord’s Will and through a local congregation, submit to the authority of Scripture in faith and practice, evangelize for Jesus Christ, worship in public, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, provide Scriptural instruction (as found in the Old and New Testaments), and participate in corporate fellowship.

ARTICLE III

**Doctrinal Statement**

The following doctrinal statement is intended to convey, in concrete form, those Scriptural truths that the church is committed to teach and defend. It is the intention of the church that these truths shall always be held, taught, and defended in any and all of its meetings, policies, and practices:

1. We believe the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and Christian conduct. (John 17:17, 1 Thess 2:13, 2 Tim 3:15-17, Heb 4:12, 2 Pet 1:20-21)
2. We believe in One God, eternally existing in three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (Gen 1:2, Gen 1:26, Gen 11:7, Deut 6:4, Ps 139:7-10, Is 9:6, Matt 28:19, Mark 2:8-12, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:1,14, John 20:28, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Cor 2:10-11, 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 13:13-14, Rom 9:5, Phil 2:6-11, Titus 2:13, Heb 1:3, 1 Pet 1:2, 1 John 5:20, Rev 1:8)
3. We believe man (humankind) was created in the image of God, possessing righteousness, holiness, and a true knowledge of God. We believe that all human life is sacred, and is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Gen 1:26-27, Gen 9:6, Ps 8:3-5, Ps 139, 1 Cor 11:7, Jas 3:9). However, there is an exception to this call in the recognition of the biblical duty of the state, when acting in its proper God-ordained sphere, seeks to defend and protect human life through the intervention of police enforcement and certain of its penal laws among its citizenry, as well as military service in the pursuit of “just wars.” (Acts 25.11, Rom 13. 1-5, Gen 9:6)
4. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complimentary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one’s God-ordained, God-created biological sex is a rejection of God’s Sovereign and all-wise Will in creating His image within that person. (Gen 1:26-27, Gen 2:18-23)
5. We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman in a “one-flesh” relationship. Marriage, as instituted by God, reflects Christ’s relationship with His church and serves as the foundational unit of a stable society. We believe that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that one man-one woman marital relationship. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual behavior, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Gen 2:18-25, Matt 15:18-20, 1 Cor 6:9-10, 18, 1 Cor 7:2-5, Eph 5:21-33, Heb 13:4)
6. We believe man fell from the original state in which he was created because of his disobedience to the direct command of God, and the consequences of which were transmitted to the entire human race; so that all mankind is guilty of that first transgression and now possess an inherent and corrupt nature. Apart from a relationship with Christ, all of mankind is dead in their sins. (Gen 3:1-24, Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-26, Rom 5:12-19, Rom 6:23, Eph 2:1-3, 1 John 1:8-10)
7. We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son incarnate, truly God and truly man, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary while she was a young virgin. (Is 7:14, Matt 1:23, Matt 8:29, Mark 13:32, Luke 1:34-35, John 1:1-3, 14, 18, John 20:28, Rom 1:3-4, Gal 4:4, Phil 2:5-11, Col 1:15-19, Heb 1:5, Heb 2:14-18)
8. We believe Jesus Christ died as a punishment and substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of men, the just for the unjust, forever satisfying the demands of a holy God against sinful men. (John 3:16, Rom 3:21-28, Rom 5:17-19, Eph 1:7, Phil 3:8-9, 1 Thess 1:9-10, Titus 3:4-7)
9. We believe Jesus Christ has bodily risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, been enthroned at the Father’s right hand, and is personally coming again to consummate His kingdom and reign among His people. (Mark 13:26-27, Luke 24:36-51, Acts 1:9-11, Acts 2:33-36, Acts 7:55-56, Rom 6:9, Rom 8:34, Rom 14:9, 1 Cor 15, Eph. 1:20, Eph. 2:6, 1 Thess. 4:14-17, Heb. 1:3, Rev 1:7)
10. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the triune Godhead, with intellect (Rom 8:27,1 Cor 2:10-11), emotion (Eph 4:30), and will (1 Cor 12:11). He is active in the lives of believers (John 14:17, John 16:7, Acts 8:39, Rom 8:26, 1 Cor. 6:19, Eph. 1:13), and is the One Who inspired the Prophets and the Apostles, the whole of Scripture (Acts 1:2, 2 Pet 1:21). He proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26), but is fully equal with them (Gen 1:1-2, Ps 139:7-8).

It is the conviction of the church that the Holy Spirit baptizes, seals, and forever indwells the Christian at the time of conversion, sanctifying us through the Word and prayer, sovereignly working in us to progressively conform us to the likeness of Christ (Rom 8:1-17, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 2 Cor. 1:21-22, 3:18, Eph. 1:13-14, Phil 2:12-13). Therefore, everything necessary for living the Christian life is given to us at our conversion (Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:9-10, 2 Pet 1:3-4).

It is also our conviction that He gifts every believer with an ability (gift/ gifts) to edify the church (Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:7-12; Heb 2:1-4), as well as His having gifted individuals during the Apostolic Era with miraculous abilities (gifts) to authenticate the apostolic witness and message (Heb 2:3-4; 2 Cor 12:12). With that message (New Testament) now fully self-authenticating, we believe those miraculous gifts were relegated to that specific era of redemptive history and therefore have ceased (1 Cor 13: 8-12, 1 Cor 13-14:12), and are no longer routinely practiced as a necessity for the life and ministry of the church today.

1. We believe that personal salvation from sin is not the result of man’s good works, but is wholly of God’s free grace, in which the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit regenerates those who have been foreordained to eternal life and those alone. (John 6:44, John 10:27-29, John 17:9-12, Rom 5:1-2, 17, Rom 8:30, Rom 9:10-16, Gal 3:10-14, Eph 1:3-14, Eph 2:8-10, 2 Thess 2:13-14, 2 Tim 1:8-12)
2. We believe that reception into the local church and participation in the ordinances of baptism and the Lords Table are the privileges and responsibilities of believers in Jesus Christ alone, (Matt 26:26-29, Acts 2:38, Acts 2:42, Rom 6:3-4, 1 Cor 11:23-26)
3. We believe that after death there awaits a conscious and eternal blessedness in the Presence of God for the believer, but for the unbeliever, a conscious and eternal punishment. (Eccl 12:14, Matt 13:49-50, Matt 16:27, Matt 22:11-14, Matt 25:31-46, Luke 16:19-31, John 5:28-29, John 14:1-3, Rom 2:6-11, 2 Cor 5:10, Heb 9:27, Jude 7, 13, Rev 7:9, Rev 14:9-11, Rev 20:4, 10-15, Rev 21:1-4, 8)
4. The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Emmanuel Bible Church’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our elders (as defined in Article V) are our church’s final interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application.

ARTICLE IV

**Membership**

All individuals who profess repentance toward God, faith in Christ, and express essential agreement with the purposes, doctrines, and government of the church, as well as their responsibilities to the church, may be recognized as members of the church.

Some orthodox, believing Christians may disagree with any of the three following doctrinal distinctives and yet desire membership in the church. Those distinctives are: the baptism of believers only (12), cessation of the giving of miraculous gifts to individuals (10), and the foreordination to eternal life by God’s grace alone (11). Those who have such disagreement but who are in firm agreement with all other of our doctrines of faith, as well as the purposes and governing of the church, may also be recognized as members of the church. However, for the sake of preserving the unity and peace of our fellowship in Christ, we request that they neither promote their viewpoint nor proselytize our members (Jn 17:20-21, Rom 12:10, 1 Cor 1:10, Eph 4: 2-3, Col 3:12-14). Any such action shall be considered divisive and therefore, subject to the discipline of the church (See Article VI).

All prospective members must offer evidence, by their confession and conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and these By-Laws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ. Before such time, all prospective members shall be asked to attend the Emmanuel Bible Church orientation program, and to then meet with the elders. Furthermore, the elders will provide all prospective members a copy of the church’s Doctrinal Statement and membership policy, and have them sign a statement stating that they have read and agree to the terms of membership. The elders, having discerned that all such individuals are in essential agreement with the above, shall then publicly present them as members to the congregation at a regular Sunday service. The elders of this church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE V

**Church Officers**

**Section 1: General Statement**

Jesus Christ alone is the Head if His Church. However, as Head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers (elders and deacons). Therefore it is the duty of the church to seek to discover those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing, and having formally recognized such by public ordination, to set them apart by united prayer and to submit to their rule and ministry. Any person who holds an office within the church must be a member of the congregation. Anyone called to the office of elder or deacon must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with the stated purposes of the church and must adhere to the essentials and distinctives of the doctrinal statement. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this known to the church.

**Section 2: Elders**

Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church, the implementation of church discipline, and the watching over of the souls of its members, as those who must give account to God for this responsibility. They shall exercise the oversight of the church in all its ministrations and functions. Anyone desiring the office of elder must evidence the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders must seek to discharge their duties as set forth in the Scriptures, particularly in such passages as Acts 20:17-28; I Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17. While every elder bears spiritual rule and must be “apt to teach,” some will be more exclusively engaged in the ministry of preaching and teaching (I Timothy 5:17).

When the qualifications for elders are examined, it is evident that elders are made by the Spirit of God and not by men. It is this which Paul has in view when he says of the elders at Ephesus that the Holy Spirit has made them overseers (Acts 20:28). It is, therefore, the Holy Spirit who raises up such men in the church, making them known by the shepherding ministry that He enables them to perform and the Biblical qualifications which He enables them to fulfill. Once this begins to take place, it then becomes the church’s responsibility, led by the existing elders, to recognize those whom God has raised up in their midst.

Once ordained by the existing elders, each elder shall serve so long as he remains competent in the performance of his duties, confirms to the Biblical requirements for the office, abides by the By-laws, and remains faithful to the essentials and distinctives of the church. Any elder charged and found guilty, by a unanimous vote of the remaining elders, of incompetence in the discharge of his duties as an elder, or lack of conformity to the Biblical qualifications, of disobedience to the By-laws, or of unfaithfulness to the essentials and distinctives of the Statement of Faith contained therein, shall forfeit his right as elder and be removed as such.

**Section 3:** **Deacons**

Scripture holds out deacons as distinct officers in the church. It belongs to them to take special care of the needs of widows, orphans, the poor, and others requiring the assistance of the church as set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13. It is again the church’s responsibility, led by its leadership, to recognize as deacons those individuals who manifest a ministry of practical service within the church and who conform to the Biblical qualifications. Once ordained to office, each deacon shall serve so long as he remains faithful to his ministry responsibilities and continues to conform his life to the Biblical requirements.

**Section 4: The Selection Process**

It is the church’s responsibility, led by the existing elders, to recognize those men whom God is raising up as leaders within our midst. In order to fulfill that responsibility, the following process shall be followed:

1. At least once a year the membership of the church shall have the opportunity to give a written recommendation of the names of men whom they believe should be considered as either an elder or deacon. This opportunity shall be given in an annual congregational meeting.
2. The elders shall review all names recommended by the membership, pursuing those who give evidence of meeting the Biblical qualifications. This will involve meeting with these men over a brief period of time in order to determine their calling and commitment to fulfill the responsibilities of either position of leadership.
3. Before publicly presenting any man to the congregation for their consideration, the elders shall privately seek a response from each member of the church. All such responses shall be kept confidential among the elders and shall be evaluated in light of the Biblical qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, as well as other relevant passages.
4. If it is evident that there are Biblically-based concerns about the individual’s abilities and qualifications, the candidate will not be publicly presented for the congregation’s consideration. If it is evident that he does have the confirmation of the membership, he shall be publicly nominated before the congregation in a regular Sunday morning service.
5. Before the individual is formally ordained for service, the membership shall again have the opportunity to pray over the selection and to give additional response to the elders. The candidate shall then be ordained for the ministry to which he has been called in a regular Sunday morning service.

ARTICLE VI

**Church Discipline**

**Section 1: The Problems Requiring Discipline**

The authority of the elders in matters of church discipline extends into two fundamental areas of local church life. The first is doctrinal, involving any instance of departure from the orthodox truths of the faith (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 2:17-18). The second is moral, involving any case of disobedience to the clear commandments of Scripture (Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 3:10-11). Therefore, in both the doctrinal and moral areas of local church life, the elders of this church shall seek to exercise their authority whenever necessary.

**Section 2: The Purpose of** **Discipline**

On the personal level, the purpose of discipline in the life of the offender is restoration and repentance (Galatians 6:1; II Thessalonians 3:14; II Corinthians 2:7-8). On the corporate level, the purpose of such discipline in the life of the church is to maintain both doctrinal and moral purity (Titus 1:9; I Corinthians 5:6). In order to fulfill these purposes, therefore, the elders of this church shall seek to exercise their responsibility with respect to local church discipline.

**Section 3: The Procedure for Discipline**

In all matters pertaining to local church discipline, the elders of this church shall seek to follow the four-step procedure clearly outlined in Matthew 18:15-20. First, there is to be a private rebuke (18:15); second, if necessary, there is to be a plural rebuke (18:16); third, if necessary, there is to be a public rebuke by the entire church (18:17a). This third step involves taking the matter to all of the elders first, and then to the church as a whole. The purpose at this point is to issue a public censure from the fellowship of the Lord’s Table as well as from an intimate association with the Lord’s people (cf. II Thessalonians 3:6-15). The fourth step, if necessary, is expulsion from the life of the church, in which the unrepentant individual is to be considered as a nonbeliever (18:17-20).

ARTICLE VII

**Board of Trustees**

**Section 1: General Statement**

The governing of the church and the conduct of its business, the management and control of its property, real and personal, and the general supervision of its work shall, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, be vested in the Board of Trustees. The Trustees shall be called upon to perform whatever legal and business transactions are peculiarly designated to them by the laws of the state.

**Section 2: Composition of the Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of the elders of the church.

**Section 3: Powers of the Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall have the sole power of governing and managing the affairs of the church. In the management and control of the property, business, and affairs of the church, the Board of Trustees is hereby vested with all the powers possessed by the church itself, so far as the delegation of authority is not inconsistent with the laws of the State of New Jersey, the certificate of incorporation of the church, or these By-laws.

ARTICLE VIII

**Meetings**

**Section 1: The Church**

In accordance with the Scriptural command to assemble together, the church will meet weekly for the purpose of conducting public worship, Biblical instruction, corporate prayer, and fellowship.

**Section 2: The Trustees**

The Board shall meet at lreast once a month to discuss and act upon the general ministry and business of the church. A majority of the members of the board must be present to constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IX

**Amendments**

The By-laws, including the Statement of Faith, may be amended from time to time, but only by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees. Prior to the adoption of such amendments, the congregation shall be informed of their substance and given adequate opportunity for comment.

ARTICLE X

**Dissolution of the Corporation**

A unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees shall be required to dissolve the corporation. In the event of dissolution, all assets remaining after the satisfaction of all debts will be distributed to a similar tax exempt organization.