



church constitution



Article I location of emmanuel bible church

The name of this organization shall be known as Emmanuel Bible Church of the Upstate, Simpsonville, South Carolina. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

Article II foundation and purpose

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is both the foundation of the Church and the head of the Church (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 5:23). This church does here affirm its faith that the Scriptures alone, both the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31; 2 Timothy 3:16), which shall govern absolutely every area of life and ministry.
2. This church exists by the grace of God for the glory of God. Therefore the purpose of this church shall be the exultation and glory of God by applying the gospel to every area of life. We are committed to making from all people disciples who love God with all their hearts and who love their neighbors as themselves, accomplished through worshipping and enjoying Him (John 4:23); equipping the saints for service through expositional preaching and Bible study (Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; 1 Peter 3:15); proclaiming and applying the Gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching (Psalm 19:7-11; Colossians 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 4:2) and personal evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20; John 1:41-42; Acts 1:8); encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Philippians 1:5; 4:14-19); administering the ordinances of baptism and communion (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32); encouraging Biblical fellowship and unity among believers (Matthew 5:16; Eph 4:1-6; Hebrews 3:12-13); mercifully serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 10:25-37; 1 Peter 2:9); and calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the character of God and His church (1 Peter 1:13-16; 2:9-12).

Article III statement of faith

All who join Emmanuel Bible Church are required to affirm Emmanuel's Statement of Faith. This statement registers our belief in and connection with historic orthodox Christianity. Upon agreement with the statement and acceptance into the membership, we, the members, are responsible for believing and living in accordance with it.

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

II. Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven who knows all things immediately and comprehensively; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

IV. Of the Creation

We believe that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the beginning, by the word of his power, made from nothing the heavens and the earth and all things therein, and that all things were made very good.

V. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the virgin-born Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen bodily from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

VI. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

VII. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a sincere, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an increased condemnation.

VIII. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

IX. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with sincere contrition, confession, and petition for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

X. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

XI. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

XII. Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XIII. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

XIV. Of a Gospel Church

We believe in the universal church, a living body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, teaching the Word, and exercising church discipline; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its only scriptural officers are elders (including pastors) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Letters to Timothy and Titus.

XV. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that believer's baptism is done in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe in the regular observance of the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of the bread and the cup, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

XVI. Of the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God.

XVII. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that public officials are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

XVIII. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith alone are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

XIX. Of the World to Come

We believe that at the last day Christ will descend bodily from heaven, and bodily raise the dead from the grave to final retribution and reward; that a solemn separation will take place; that the wicked will be sentenced to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy and glorification; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

XX. Of Marriage

We believe that marriage is a covenant made before God between a man and a woman that models the relationship between God and His people and the profound mystery of Jesus' relationship to the church, in which wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord and that husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for the church.

This Statement of Faith is based heavily, though not exclusively, on the revised New Hampshire Confession of Faith from 1853.

Article IV church covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, relying on His gracious aid, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We will work to apply the gospel to every area of life. We will work to make disciples who will love God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves so they are equipped to do the work of the ministry.

We will work and pray to guard the Spirit-given unity in the bond of peace.

We will endeavor to watch over one another in brotherly love; to admonish one another faithfully lest we become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; and to consider how to encourage one another to love and good works.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for one another. We will rejoice at one another's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. We will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We will endeavor to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to seek the salvation of our family and friends by pure lives and loving confrontation.

We will endeavor to walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, for we remember that we have been raised to walk in the newness of life.

We will work together for the advancement of this gospel church as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the principle of God's Word.

Article V church membership

Section 1. Qualifications

For membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

Section 2. Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended for admission by a majority vote of the elders and accepted by a majority vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish his or her membership in other churches. Members shall not be received into this church by letter from other churches.

Section 3. Process of Membership

Prospective members shall:

1. Successfully complete the Membership Class (*Membership Class*).
2. Read and study the Articles of Faith, Constitution of the Church, and the Church Covenant.
3. Complete the Membership Application Form (*Membership Application Form*).
4. Be announced and posted by name to the congregation for membership consideration at least two weeks before a vote to receive the prospective member into the church. Objections may be voiced to the elders by any member during this two-weeks' time.
5. Meet with an elder and persons approved by the elders for a membership interview to discover basic biographical information and to recount God's converting work in his or her life. During this interview the prospective member shall be made aware of his or her responsibilities and obligations of membership (*Membership Interview*).
6. Be approved at a regularly-scheduled elders' meeting, where the elders will review the applicant's testimony. Upon being approved by a majority vote of the elders, the elders shall recommend the prospective member for membership (*Elder Recommendation*). Should the elders determine that the prospective member does not confess Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied. This decision made by the elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court for that decision.
7. Be recommended for membership by the Pastor and elders, and received by the congregation through majority vote into the church at any regular or special meeting of the congregation (*Congregational Affirmation*).

Section 4. Duties and Privileges

In accord with the duties enumerated in the church documents, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body and shall submit to the loving rule of the elders. Only those who are members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in leadership ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 5. Associate Membership

A. Purpose

This is designed to fulfill the needs of those who are temporary residents of the area and who are members of an evangelical church who wish to make themselves officially accountable to and to participate with a local congregation while retaining full membership in their home church. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home-church membership must be retained.

B. Duties and Privileges

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for regular members except that:

1. Associate members may not hold an elected church office.
2. Associate members will not have voting privileges or speaking privileges in members' meetings.
3. An associate member may become a regular member by writing a letter to the elders expressing the reason and desire for the change in membership status. Upon approval of the elders by majority vote, the elders shall notify the congregation of the change at the next members' meeting.
4. Time spent as an associate member will count toward required membership time to hold certain elected offices as a regular member.

C. Termination of Associate Membership

Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Simpsonville area, accompanied by a letter of resignation. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or leadership of the home church of that termination. This decision made by the elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court for that decision

Section 6. Membership Care List

A Membership Care List shall be kept by the elders and shall be reviewed with the assembly at each regular membership meeting as a means to bring particular members before the congregation for further attention and care. The Care List records members for whom the elders or the assembly are concerned, for reasons ranging from serious illness and significant difficulties in life to regular absence from corporate gatherings or the need for church discipline.

A member's appearance on the Care List does not necessarily signify disobedience or sin; rather, the list is a means to raise awareness before the assembly about concerns for a member and to point the body to reach out in love to minister to that member. If a member is placed on the Care List because of church discipline, the guidelines of Section 7 below on church discipline will be followed and the body shall pursue the repentance and reconciliation of that member.

Section 7. Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or who lives in ongoing, uncorrected, deliberate sin, whether in doctrine or in practice (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:16-21), is guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so, opposing the welfare of the church, this person shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from the Lord's Supper for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

A. Purposes

The purposes of church discipline should be:

1. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22);
2. The instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25);
3. The purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);
4. The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and
5. Supremely, the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

B. Process of Church Discipline

1. It is the responsibility of the erring member to confess his or her sin to the one(s) sinned against and be reconciled to the offended person(s) (Matthew 5:24).
2. It is the responsibility of any member of this church having knowledge of an erring member's sin to warn and correct him or her in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1).

3. If the erring member does not heed these warnings, then the warning member shall request the presence of one or two others and go again to the erring member, repeatedly if necessary, seeking repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:16). The warnings in Steps 1-3 may occur with no specified time interval.
4. If the erring member does not heed these warnings, then the matter shall be brought to the attention of the elders. The elders shall take the case into prayerful consideration and bring the matter before the church at any members' meeting, if necessary, so that the body may publicly and corporately call the erring member to repentance (Matthew 18:17). No action calling for dismissal shall be taken against any member until he or she is informed in writing, the offense cited, and he or she is given an opportunity to appear at a meeting of elders. Upon entering Step 4, the elders shall consider suspension from the Lord's Supper for a definite period and deposition from office as necessary actions toward the sinning member (See Section 7 above).
5. If the erring member does not repent in response to the church, then he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the membership and fellowship of the church at any members' meeting (Matthew 18:17). If after dismissal the erring party heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and personally asks (in writing) the elders to be reinstated by the church, then, upon the review and recommendation of the elders by majority vote, the erring party shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of membership (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).
6. All matters of discipline shall be conducted in the spirit and letter of the Scriptures. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the fourth or fifth stages of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous steps at the fourth or fifth stages of church discipline, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

Section 8. Termination of Membership

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following death, voluntary resignation of any church member, or dismissal by church discipline. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline upon the recommendation of the elders by a two-thirds vote and by the two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any members' meeting. Membership may be terminated by a letter of resignation upon the recommendation of the elders by a two-thirds vote and by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any members' meeting.

Article VI meetings

Section 1. Worship Meetings

A worship service shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2. Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Members' meetings shall fall under two headings: regular members' meeting and special members' meeting. The elders may call a special members' meeting for any reason, provided prior notice of two weeks has been given.

1. A regular members' meeting shall be held at least once a year to determine financial and budget affairs. The elders will determine times for these meetings. The date, time, and purpose of any meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.
2. The elders may call other members' meetings. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.
3. The chairman of the elders will be moderator unless the elders choose an alternate.
4. In all members' meetings, fifteen percent of eligible and active voting members shall be considered a quorum. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present and voting.
5. Any proposition to be voted upon by the congregation shall be posted in writing and announced verbally for two services prior to the vote. Any questions regarding the propositions should be directed toward the elders during this time.
6. The most recent edition of *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* shall be the parliamentary authority for all members' meetings in matters not covered by this constitution. In case of any conflict between said rules and By-Laws of the church, the By-Laws shall govern.
7. No one may sit in on a members' meeting who is not a member in good standing. Non-members may sit in on a members' meeting with the majority approval of the elders.

Article VII finances

- A. The church is supported by voluntary contributions from its members who shall give according to their abilities and according to the dictates of their own consciences.
- B. No paid performances, sales, or solicitations shall be used to raise money for the church.

- C. All undesignated tithes and offerings will be disbursed as follows:
1. Ninety percent to general budget and building, ten percent to home and foreign missions will be the goal until a church building is built or purchased, and a full-time pastor installed. At such a time, the percentages may change at the discretion of the elders.
 2. Permanent mission support shall not exceed seventy percent of the total mission budget.
 3. Outstanding indebtedness for fixed assets shall not exceed two and one-half times the annual income.
- D. Records of all financial transactions shall be kept by the Deacon(s) of Finance. Said report shall be made available upon request.
- E. A budget estimate shall be prepared and presented by the elders, or, if authorized by a majority vote of the elders, the Deacon(s) of Finance or other committee. The annual budget will then be adopted by majority vote of members present and voting at the annual financial members' meeting. The budget shall be posted at least one week prior to the members' meeting.
- F. The annual budget for the new year shall not exceed the previous year's income.

Article VIII officers

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 1. Elders

A. Qualifications

The elders shall be no fewer than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 6-9, and shall have been members of the church in good standing for at least one year. The elders shall be responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church.

B. Classification

1. This church recognizes that the terms elder, overseer, and pastor are used interchangeably in Scripture (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2). We choose, however, to use the terms elders and pastors to distinguish between full-time elders and lay elders. Lay elders are viewed as unpaid pastoral staff.
2. The Pastoral Staff is the elders who are full-time employees of the church.

C. Selection and Nomination of Elders

1. The elders shall seek recommendations to fill the office of elder from the church members.

2. The elders shall be the nominating committee and shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications.
3. The elders shall then approve, disapprove, or add to the list of nominees. A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the elders shall then be posted publicly at least two weeks prior to a members' meeting. At this members' meeting, the slate of nominees shall be presented to the members to affirm the decision of the elders by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting. Upon congregational affirmation, the newly elected elder(s) shall assume office immediately.

D. Responsibilities

1. Generally

The elders shall oversee and govern all the ministries and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

2. Specifically

The elders shall take particular responsibility for things such as:

- a. Examining and instructing prospective members,
- b. Examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
- c. Overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees,
- d. Conducting worship services,
- e. Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion,
- f. Equipping the membership for the work of the ministry,
- g. Encouraging sound doctrine and practice,
- h. Admonishing and correcting of error,
- i. Overseeing the process of church discipline,
- j. Coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church, and
- k. Mobilizing the church for world missions.

1. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share orthodox convictions.
3. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of the elders with hiring authority for that position.

4. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.
5. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of South Carolina, the elders shall elect one of their number to serve as the president of the corporation.

E. Recognition of Elders

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders for the overseeing and shepherding of God's flock.

F. Termination of Elders

An elder's term of office may be terminated by letter of resignation to the elders or by dismissal.

1. Upon resignation by letter or dismissal of the pastor, the pastor's salary and other benefits shall continue as deemed appropriate by the elders until he has obtained a full-time, paid position. A suggested maximum for the continued salary and other benefits is forty-five days.
2. Any two or three members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders in writing and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at any members' meeting of the church.
3. Upon resignation or dismissal of an elder, and if desired by the remaining elder(s), the vacant office may be filled by a qualified individual approved by the vote of members.

Section 2. Pastor

A. Qualifications and Duties

1. The pastor shall be an elder and shall meet the Scriptural qualifications for his calling in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 1, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article VIII Section 1.
2. As an undershepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, he shall preach the Word, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of every committee and board.

3. In the absence or incapacity of the pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

B. Calling the Pastor

1. A candidate for acceptance to the pastorate shall be heard at a minimum of four regular worship services. His wife and family must accompany him to at least two of the services and he shall, with his family, meet with the elders.
2. The Pastor shall be accepted by a three-fourths vote of members present and voting at any officially-called members' meeting.

C. Dismissal of the Pastor

Upon submission of evidence of immorality, apostasy, heresy, unfaithfulness to his duties, departure from the articles of faith, constitution, or by-laws, or if he no longer agrees with the direction of this church, by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19) to the satisfaction of three-fourths of elders, the elders shall make a determination to recommend the pastor's termination to the members. After making such determination the chairman of the elders shall notify the pastor to cease his duties immediately. Upon receipt of such notice the pastor shall immediately cease such duties. Thereafter the procedure for terminating the pastor's tenure shall follow the procedures below.

1. The Pastor may be dismissed by eighty percent vote of members present and voting at any officially called members' meeting, following the procedures of Article V Section 7 and Article VI Section 2.
2. A meeting to dismiss the Pastor shall be called by twenty-five percent of the church members by petition to the elders.
3. If dismissed, the Pastor's services shall be terminated immediately (See Article VIII Section 1 F).

Section 3. Deacons

A. Qualifications

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, persons who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry.

B. Responsibilities of Deacons

1. Generally

The deacons shall advise and be ready to serve the elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word and the care for the members of the congregation. The deacons shall be responsible under the elders for the physical oversight of the church. They shall care for the temporal needs of

members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others.

2. Specifically

The deacons shall take particular responsibility for things such as:

- a. Assisting in ministering mercy to the needy and supervising the benevolent funds of the church.
- b. Assisting in administering the ordinances of the gospel.
- c. Assisting in caring for and maintaining the church properties.
- d. Assisting in the fellowship gatherings of the church.
- e. Enlisting other members, as needed and with the approval of the elders, to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.
- f. Arranging, with the approval of the elders, the agenda for the annual financial meeting.
- g. Receiving, holding, and disbursing a fund for benevolence, with the approval of the elders, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

C. Organization

The elders may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function. The deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best, under the elders, to achieve the mission of the church.

D. Recognition of Deacons

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected by two-thirds vote of members present and voting at any officially-called members' meeting.

E. Termination of Deacons

The procedure for the dismissal of deacons shall follow the procedures of the elders in Article VIII Section 1 F with this exception: if the diaconal need ceases, the position may be dissolved as deemed appropriate by the elders.

ARTICLE IX ordinances

A. Baptism

This church recognizes the disagreement among God's people concerning the mode and participants of water baptism. This church seeks to maintain a charitable spirit toward others in the universal body of Christ while maintaining unity and homogeneity within this local expression of it. Therefore, this church shall baptize only professing believers in Christ. Furthermore, the common mode by which this church shall baptize is immersion.

B. The Lord's Supper

All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and are walking in fellowship with the Lord shall be welcome to join in this ordinance.

ARTICLE X dissolution of the corporation

In the event of the dissolution of the Emmanuel Bible Church as a non-profit corporation, the assets of the corporation shall be given and paid over to a non-profit corporation of like faith and practice. Said corporation shall be determined by a majority vote of the members of the church present at a previously announced members' meeting for said dissolution.

- A. Notice of dissolution shall be sent in writing to each member at least fifteen days prior to the scheduled meeting, and public notice shall be given at least forty-five days prior to the meeting.
- B. All recommendations for recipients of the corporation assets shall be placed in writing by a member of the church to the elders no fewer than thirty days prior to the dissolution meeting. No other recommendations shall be considered.
- C. It shall be the duty of the elders, or a committee approved by the elders, to examine all recommendations submitted to it and make its own recommendations to the congregation concerning the distribution of the church assets.
- D. Said recommendation from the elders, or committee approved by the elders, shall be made available in writing to the congregation fifteen days prior to the dissolution meeting.
- E. The decision as to the recipient(s) of the assets of the corporation shall be the mutual consent by secret ballot of the majority of the members present at the dissolution meeting.
- F. The elders, in the stead of the members of the corporation, shall assume the responsibility of all dissolution proceedings, and shall seek and obtain legal assistance to complete said proceedings.

ARTICLE XI ordination and licensing of ministers

A. Emmanuel Bible Church has authority as a local church body to ordain candidates for pastoral ministry.

1. Definition of Ordination:

- a. Ordination to the Gospel Ministry is the act of setting apart a man for the ministry by the church, confirming his call. Ordination is available to men called by God to the Ministry of the Gospel, qualified according to the teaching of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), and tested by the church over a reasonable period of time. Ordination represents approval for all pastoral and ministerial functions at Emmanuel Bible Church or in other approved ministries with no need for renewal. Ordination credentials, however, are subject to suspension or revocation in matters of discipline.
- b. The rights and privileges granted to ordained ministers should not be misused or misapplied if the person holding such credential is no longer functioning in a ministerial capacity. Persons who leave the Gospel Ministry should submit their ordination for an “inactive status” for the duration of that time. Ordination may be restored to “active status” upon notice of one’s return to ministerial functions. For those ordained ministers active in ministry at their retirement, the requirement for submitting to “inactive status” would not apply.

2. Candidates for Ordination:

Emmanuel Bible Church will only consider members or associate members as eligible candidates for ordination.

- a. Candidates for ordination shall have the necessary schooling or experience and shall be recognized by the leadership of this church as having the qualifications of a bishop as set forth in 1 Timothy 3. The candidates shall be walking in fellowship with the Lord and their fellow believers.
- b. A candidate seeking ordination in this church must approach the elders for permission to be examined. The elders must decide whether to grant permission based on character, spiritual gifts, maturity and education of the candidate.
- c. When permission has been granted a date for the examination will be set.

3. Ordination Council:

- a. The council before which the candidate is examined shall be composed of a minimum of five men, the majority of those being ordained ministers. The Pastor and at least one elder from Emmanuel Bible Church shall sit on this council together with three ordained ministers chosen by the candidate.

- b. All council members chosen by the candidate shall be approved by the Pastor and elders. The basis of their approval or disapproval shall include their personal character and reputation as well as any ecclesiastical ties or unseparated alliances.

4. Basis of Approval and Certification:

- a. The candidate’s examination shall include, but is not limited to, the following topics:
 - 1). The qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9); and his personal relationship with Jesus Christ,
 - 2). Knowledge of Bible content, and
 - 3). Knowledge of theology, church polity, and discipline.
- b. The candidate shall receive unanimous approval of the council.

Upon passage of the examination, a date shall be set for an ordination service. This service shall contain, but is not limited to, an address to the candidate and the congregation by the Pastor and prayer for the candidate by members of the examination board. Upon completion of this service, the candidate is an ordained minister and is entitled to all the privileges thereof.

B. Emmanuel Bible Church has authority as a local church body to license ministers for the Gospel Ministry.

1. Definition of Licensing:

- a. The License for Pastoral Ministry is available to men called by God to the Ministry of the Gospel. This license is for those qualified for the role of Pastor who have yet to meet the requirements for Ordination. Licensing represents approval for all pastoral duties and ministerial functions as defined by the Constitution of Emmanuel Bible Church as interpreted and applied by the elders. Licensing credentials, however, are subject to suspension or revocation in matters of discipline.
- b. The license is issued for one year and may be renewed annually upon request of the licensee and approval of the Elders. Upon satisfactory completion of at least one year of effective ministry, the man holding a Pastoral Ministry license is encouraged to pursue ordination by Emmanuel Bible Church.

2. Candidates for Licensing:

- a. Emmanuel Bible Church will only consider members or associate members as eligible for licensure.
- b. Candidates for licensure shall be subject to a thorough review of the candidate’s qualifications, including call to the ministry, education, experience, character and reputation (as outlined in 1 Timothy 3), and prospective ministry employment.

3. Process for licensing:

- a. Candidates who are seeking licensure must request such consideration by written request to the Chairman of the elders. After receiving the candidate's request, the Chairman of the elders will prepare for the elders a report that will consist of a thorough description of the candidate's qualifications as set out in section 1.b above.
- b. The elders will give due and full consideration to a candidate's qualifications and may ask the candidate to subject himself to an interview by the full elders.
- c. A license will be granted only upon unanimous approval of the elders.
- d. The records of the elders' meeting will document the candidate's approval. The candidate will be notified in writing of the elders' decision.
- e. The congregation of Emmanuel Bible Church will be appropriately notified of the candidate's approval.

ARTICLE XII dispute resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, 1 Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflicts among themselves according to biblically based principles. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically-based principles. The elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

ARTICLE XIII indemnification

Section 1. Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2. Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3. Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE XIV amendments

- A. As a working, flexible document, this constitution may be amended, altered, or revised at any regular members' meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.
- B. Amendments to this constitution shall be presented in writing to the elders, and, if accepted, shall be presented to the church for vote at any members' meeting.

