

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
EMANUEL ROMANIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**

This Church Constitution and By-Laws were authorized by the General Meeting of the Church

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of
Emanuel Romanian Pentecostal Church
In the City of Edmonton, Alberta

Adopted this constitution and by-laws on the day of April 18, 2015

Certified by:

Per: G.P. - original signed
Title: President

Per: L.P.
Title: Vice President

Per: F.B.
Title: Secretary

Per: O.E.
Title: Treasurer

Per: S.J.
Title: Committee member

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this organization is:

- a) To preach and advance the teachings of the Pentecostal faith and the religious tenets, doctrines, it's observances in the light of Scripture.
- b) To establish, maintain and support a house of worship with services conducted in accordance with the tenets and doctrines of the Pentecostal faith.
- c) To support and maintain missions and missionaries in order to propagate the Gospel.
- d) To establish and maintain a religious school of instruction for children, youths and adults.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 NAME

EMANUEL ROMANIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

ARTICLE 2 DEFINITION

As an independent church we will be deemed as:

- 2.1 A church that will meet all financial obligations in providing a place of worship and its operation, not excluding an adequate salary for its pastor and choir leadership.
- 2.2 A church that has sufficient maturity to have properly qualified leadership available for selection, and be able to maintain standards of discipline and doctrine over its members.
- 2.3 A church that has a Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths, and a church Constitution and By-Laws approved by de General Meeting of the Church .

ARTICLE 3 PREROGATIVES

- 3.1 This congregation shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:3, 13).
- 3.2 This church shall have the right to govern itself according to the Church Constitution and By-Laws in force by order of General Meeting of the Church.
- 3.3 In connection therewith, or incidental thereto, this church will have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purpose; all in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.
- 3.4 The activities of this local church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its objectives, in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.
- 3.5 Upon dissolution and after the payment of all debts and liabilities, all remaining assets will be given to a qualified donee described in subsection 149.1(1) of the Income Tax Act.

ARTICLE 4 TENETS OF FAITH

We believe most assuredly that the Holy Scriptures are God's final revelation and constitute our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice as stated in the Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths approved by the church assembly.

ARTICLE 5 ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES

5.1 ORDINANCES

5.1.1 The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins, and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

5.1.2 The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be regularly observed as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

5.2 PRACTICES

5.2.1 Dedication of children

5.2.2 Prayer for the baptism with the Holy Spirit

5.2.3 Prayer for the sick

5.2.4 Christian marriage

5.2.5 Christian burial of the dead

ARTICLE 6 MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Persons desiring to become members of this local 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).

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 5:19-21 NIV). Sexual immorality shall be interpreted to mean common-law marital relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships (1 Corinthians 6:15-18; 7:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4), and all forms of homosexual activity, along with other practices deemed inexcusable for Christian conduct, and which place a person under God's judgment (Romans 1:26-2:11).

They shall indicate a desire to live in harmony with this body of believers, shall accept

the doctrinal standards as set forth in the Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths, and shall be regular financial supporters of this church.

6.2 Membership shall consist of the following:

6.2.1 Regular Members. Persons 18 years of age and over who fulfil the requirements of Article 5.1.1 and Article 6.1 shall be known as regular members.

6.2.2 Junior Members. Persons between the ages of 12 and 18 who fulfil the requirements of Article 6.1 may be eligible for junior membership. Such membership does not qualify for voting privileges at congregational business meetings.

ARTICLE 7 OFFICERS

7.1 OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be a pastor, secretary, treasurer, Pastor's Council member(s), and such other officers as may determined by this church from time to time.

7.2 PASTOR

7.2.1 Nominations for pastor shall be submitted to the church congregation by the Pastor's Council and will be appointed according to By-law 1, Art. 2.1.

7.3 THE PASTOR'S COUNCIL

The Pastor's Council shall consist of the pastor and not fewer than three (3) members (if more, the exact number and the resolution authorizing the same must be duly recorded in the church minutes). After the setting in order of the church and the creation of the Pastor's Council, the lay members of the Pastor's Council shall be selected in accordance with the resolution of this church. The pastor shall act as chair of the Pastor's Council.

7.4 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer and other positions of the Pastor's Council shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting. They shall serve 4 (four) years term as is stated in By-law1, Art. 2.2.3.4. Removal of a Council Member from the Pastor Council as is stated in By-law 1, Art. 2.2.4.

ARTICLE 8 SELECTIONS AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

8.1 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual congregational business meeting shall be held on a suitable date no later than by the end of their first quarter of the calendar year, unless otherwise decided the Pastor's Council.

8.2 SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special business meetings may be called by:

8.2.1 The pastor;

8.2.2 The secretary of the Pastor's Council upon written order of a majority of the Pastor's Council;

8.2.3 By petition by no less than one-half of the regular members of the congregation. Such petition shall be handed to the Pastor's Council, whose duty it shall be to give notice of such meeting.

8.3 NOTICE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

Two weeks (14 days) notice shall be given of the annual congregational business and special business meetings from the pulpit and posted and on bulletin board of the church. It shall include date, time and purpose of the meeting.

8.4 AGENDA

The agenda shall be prepared by the pastor and Pastor's Council. An agenda item may be submitted to the Pastor's Council by a member of the congregation in good standing. It must be in writing, signed, and in the possession of the Pastor's Council at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 9 PROPERTY

All real estate owned by this local church shall be held in the name of the church. The acquiring and disposal of real property shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a duly called congregational business meeting. A 75 percent majority of those voting at a duly called congregational business meeting shall be required.

In the matter of disposing of any real property of this church, this congregation shall be subject to church by-laws in accordance with the applicable provincial property regulations.

ARTICLE 10 DEPARTMENTS

The departments of this local church may be Christian Education, Youth Ministries, Men's Ministries, Women's Ministries, and Children's Ministries. The Pastor's Council or steering committee shall have authority to institute such other departments of this local church as deemed necessary from time to time.

ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any annual congregational business meeting of the church duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the Pastor's Council at least 30 days before the date of the business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any voting member between the time of the announcement and the time of the business meeting on application to the secretary of the Pastor's Council.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at the meeting.

BY-LAWS FOR A CHURCH WITH A PASTOR'S COUNCIL

BY-LAW 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

A membership committee composed of the pastor and the Pastor's Council shall receive applications for membership, shall make investigation relating thereto as it deems proper, and shall approve for admission into the local church those applicants who meet membership requirements.

1.2 PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

1.2.1 Application for membership shall be received on a signed application form whereby the applicant agrees to abide by the provisions of the Church Constitution and By-Laws including the terms of membership as stated in Articles 5.1.1 and 6.1.

1.2.2 Applicants who have been approved by the membership committee for membership in this assembly shall be publicly received into the church (Galatians 2:9).

1.3 TRANSFER

Members who move from another local church and desire to have their membership transferred should request a certificate or letter of transfer from the membership committee of the former church for presentation to the membership committee of this local church. Members who move to another local church shall be given, upon written request, a certificate or letter of transfer by the membership committee of this church.

1.4 DISMISSAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Grounds for dismissal of membership in this church shall include the following:

1.4.1 VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1.4.1.1 Voluntary withdrawal from membership in this assembly or reception into the membership of another congregation;

1.4.1.2 Issuance of a transfer letter;

1.4.1.3 Absence from the regular services of the local assembly for three consecutive months, upon issuance of a letter from the membership committee noting this voluntary withdrawal.

1.4.2 DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Upon the conclusion of disciplinary procedures according to By-Law 1.5.2 of the Church Constitution and By-Laws which finds a member responsible for a failure

under the causes of disciplinary action.

1.5 DISCIPLINE

1.5.1 NATURE AND PURPOSES OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the local church is responsible. The aims of discipline are that God may be honoured, that the purity and welfare of the local assembly may be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration.

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of local church members, while fully providing for the protection and advancement of the spiritual welfare of our local assemblies. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of both justice and mercy. The following shall be proceeded with only after all other avenues of Christian counsel and brotherly admonition have been attempted.

1.5.2 CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any proven act or conduct which, in the opinion of the Pastor's Council, after a full investigation of the evidence may be determined to be in contradiction of the terms as defined in violation of principles as stated in Article 6.1 of the Local Church Constitution and By-Laws may give just cause for disciplinary action by the Pastor's Council. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, among such causes for action shall be:

- 1.5.2.1** Any moral failure involving sexual misconduct or sexual deviation (including, but not limited to adultery, homosexuality, incest, sexual assault, pornography and improper contact with the opposite sex).
- 1.5.2.2** Any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct or any conduct unbecoming to church member (including, but not limited to deception, fraud, theft and assault).
- 1.5.2.3** Any act or action of a church member, which is the cause of serious discord or dissension, with or without malicious intent (Romans 16:17, 18; Proverbs 6:19).
- 1.5.2.4** The propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the hereby Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths of the church.

1.5.3 INITIATIVE

1.5.3.1 AUTHORITY

Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with church members who have reached the place where, in the opinion of the

Pastor's Council, endorsement can no longer be given. The Pastor's Council, which has the authority to approve church membership, also has the right to withdraw their approval and to dismiss church membership.

1.5.3.2 PASTOR'S COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITY

The Pastor's Council is responsible to deal with allegations of misconduct according to the Church Constitution and By-Laws.

In the event that the Pastor's Council finds itself compromised in any manner, or appearing to lack impartiality, it shall have the right to appoint a substitute committee to hear charges against a church member.

1.5.4 STATEMENT OF CONDUCT

Should a church member admit to, or confess to a wrongdoing or misconduct to the board, such as should require disciplinary action, then the Pastor's Council shall exercise discretion as to the appropriate form of discipline.

1.5.5 REPORTS, RUMOURS OR COMPLAINTS

Should there be reports, rumours or complaints, written or unwritten, which appear to be persistent, serious, becoming publicly known and posing a detriment to the testimony of the individual or church, then the pastor shall use their judgment to discuss the matter with the member being accused, always in the presence of a member of the Pastor's Council. The pastor and Pastor's Council member shall exercise their discretion as to whether or not to commence an official investigation.

1.5.6 INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS OR COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

Written and signed allegations of violations under By-Law 1.5.2 by a local church member shall be investigated. The senior pastor shall appoint two members of the Pastor's Council to investigate the allegation, having in mind that it is their responsibility to safeguard the member, the local church and the fellowship. This shall be done to determine the credibility of the allegation.

1.5.6.1 Signed written allegations shall be filed with the Pastor and/or a member of the Pastor's Council, by the complainant(s) describing the alleged violations.

1.5.6.2 The persons making the allegation shall be interviewed in order to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons underlying the allegation.

1.5.6.3 The accused church member shall be given an opportunity to be interviewed to discuss the allegation.

1.5.6.4 Should a church member, when presented with the allegations,

acknowledge a wrongdoing that requires disciplinary action, then the Senior Pastor or the Pastor's designate shall report the acknowledgment of wrongdoing to the Pastor's Council who shall initiate appropriate disciplinary action and a restoration program.

1.5.6.5 Should the local church member deny the allegations made, the investigators shall determine if the evidence merits a disciplinary hearing.

1.5.6.6 Where an accused local church member serves in a leadership capacity in the church, such ministry may be restricted during the investigation at the discretion of the Pastor.

1.5.7 LEGAL CHARGES

1.5.7.1 Where a local church member has been legally charged under the Criminal Code:

1.5.7.1.1 No disciplinary procedures will be followed until the legal proceedings, including appeal, have run their course.

1.5.7.1.2 Continuing involvement in church leadership may be subject to restriction during the time of the legal proceedings at the discretion of the Pastor's Council.

1.5.7.1.3 A guilty verdict of a local member following the legal proceedings, including appeal, shall automatically precipitate disciplinary procedures by the Pastor's Council.

1.5.7.1.4 Local church members may be eligible for participation in a restoration program upon request for reconciliation.

1.5.7.2 Should the allegations against the local church member be one of a violation which is required by law to be reported (including, but not limited to, offences against minors), the Pastor's Council shall report the accused to the appropriate legal authorities and delay their own investigation, until the appropriate legal authorities have opportunity to investigate.

1.5.8 PREPARATION AND FILING OF CHARGES

Allegations shall only be investigated when they have been made in writing, dated and signed by the complainant. If, after due investigation, it is determined that a disciplinary hearing should occur, charges should be filed with the Pastor's Council. The person against whom charges have been filed shall be informed by registered mail of the charges at least 15 days before being called to appear before the Pastor's Council for a disciplinary hearing. The hearing shall take place within 40 days of formal charges being delivered to the local church member, or the entire proceeding shall be rescinded. The said local church member may be relieved immediately from church involvement upon being notified of the charges.

1.5.9 DISPOSITION OF ALLEGATIONS

1.5.9.1 If written allegations are made and signed, but the investigators conclude under the guidelines of the Church Constitution and By-Laws that no reason exists for a hearing, then the matter shall be dropped.

1.5.9.2 The pastor, or the pastor's appointee, may seek to counsel all parties involved and to bring to an end any continuation of rumours or conflicts related to the matter.

1.5.9.3 The complainant shall be informed in writing that the investigation has been concluded and the allegations dismissed.

1.5.9.4 There shall be no record of the investigation kept.

1.5.9.5 The church member shall be informed in writing that the investigation of the allegations has concluded and no charges have been laid.

1.5.10 DISCIPLINARY HEARING

In the event the investigators find the charges merit a hearing they shall request the pastor to arrange for a disciplinary hearing by the Pastor's Council for the accused church member. The church member shall be requested to appear at the hearing. To ensure the ability of the hearing committee to render an impartial judgment, no member of the Pastor's Council of the church may sit on the hearing committee when they have been party to the details of the investigation or any event or incident related to the alleged offence. The senior pastor may attend the hearing as an observer but shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence. The role of the senior pastor is to be redemptive to all parties involved. If the accused church member refuses to appear at the hearing to offer a defence, the hearing will proceed and the accused member may be disciplined if found guilty of the charges preferred.

1.5.10.1 THE CHAIR

A member of the hearing committee shall be appointed by the pastor to serve as chair. The chair of the hearing committee along with the pastor shall prepare an agenda and arrange for all matters of the hearing. The chair shall appoint a recording secretary from the membership of the hearing committee.

1.5.10.2 ROLE OF INVESTIGATORS

1.5.10.2.1 The investigators shall bring a report to the hearing and offer evidence as discovered during the investigation procedures.

1.5.10.2.2 They shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence.

1.5.10.2.3 No evidence or comment regarding the evidence shall be given by the investigators or accusers in the absence of the accused local church member, unless the accused local church member has failed to, or has refused to, appear at the hearing.

1.5.10.3 CHURCH MEMBER'S SUPPORT

1.5.10.3.1 The accused church member shall have the right to have a member of this church present for support but not as an active participant in the hearing process. The supporting person may be the spouse of the accused church member. Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the hearing.

1.5.10.3.2 The agenda and proceedings shall provide sufficient opportunity for the complainant and complainees to speak, offer evidence, cross examine, present witnesses, and to make a summation statement. It will be the role of the hearing committee to question and make inquiry of the participants and to seek to have all the facts, evidence and testimony duly presented and examined to ensure an objective decision.

1.5.10.3.3 The verdict shall be made by secret ballot in the absence of investigators, the complainant and the supporting member if present and the complainees. A two-thirds majority vote shall be required to determine guilt.

1.5.10.3.4 If it has been determined that guilt has been established, discipline shall be administered prayerfully and in the fear of God, in accordance with the Scriptures and as set forth in the Church Constitution and By-Laws.

1.5.10.4 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VERDICT

1.5.10.4.1 The verdict shall be communicated to the pastor and placed in the minutes of the Pastor's Council. If the verdict is one of guilt, then the minutes of the hearing and any other relevant documents shall be maintained in a confidential file until the disciplinary process has been completed.

1.5.10.4.2 The senior pastor shall communicate the verdict in writing to the local church member and the complainant within five days of the decision of the hearing committee.

1.5.10.4.3 If a guilty verdict is reached, the local church member shall

be informed in writing of the right and process of appeal.

1.5.10.4.4 If the verdict is one of not guilty, then no record of the hearing shall be maintained.

1.5.11 DISCIPLINE

A church member who has been found guilty of violating or who has confessed in writing to having violated any of the principles set forth in the Church Constitution and By-Laws, shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Pastor's Council. A church member who has confessed to, or been found guilty of, the charges may have their membership placed on probation, or suspended. A church member who refuses to enter the restoration program and does not complete the same shall have their membership dismissed.

1.5.12 RIGHT OF APPEAL

The church member shall have the right of appeal. The purpose of the appeal is to examine the process and the judgment rendered.

Any appeal of the decision by the hearing committee must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the decision of the committee to the secretary of the Pastor's Council. The Pastor's Council will appoint an appealing committee comprised of a minimum of 3 renowned pastors of other independent churches. The appeal will be heard within 60 days of receiving the request for an appeal in writing. The accused person will be present at this appeal, but if the accused person neglects or refuses to attend the hearing, it may proceed in the absence of the accused person. The decision of this appeal committee will be final. The decision of the appeal committee will be communicated in writing to the church member by the chair of the appeal committee within five days of the appeal hearing. Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the appeal hearing, nor in any other investigative or disciplinary hearing provided for in these by-laws.

1.5.13 RESTORATION

In the event a local church member who has been found guilty of offence shows repentance and indicates a desire for continued fellowship with the local church, the Pastor's council shall determine an appropriate restoration program, which would have in view the completion of a suspension period or the reinstatement of membership as applicable. The program of restoration shall be administered in brotherly love and kindness. The restoration program may include limitations of ministry involvement during the term of restoration.

1.5.14 REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

Persons who have had their membership suspended and have successfully completed the restoration program may apply for reinstatement of membership by communicating their request to the secretary of the Pastor's Council.

1.5.15 WAIVER OF CLAIM

Notwithstanding the provisions hereinbefore contained, certificates of membership of this church shall be issued upon the condition that suspension of the member and withdrawal of the certificate of membership in the manner herein provided shall not give the suspended member cause for legal action against the pastor or any member taking part in the suspension proceedings; and the acceptance of the certificate of membership or fellowship in this local church shall be evidence of a waiver by the member of all rights of action, causes of action, and all claims and demands against the church or any member or officer of "Emanuel" Romanian Pentecostal Church by virtue of suspension proceedings.

2.1 PASTOR

2.1.1 APPOINTMENT AND CALL

A call shall be extended to a pastor when the pastor receives a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast at a meeting duly convened for that purpose.

2.1.2 DUTIES

The pastor shall be considered the primary spiritual overseer of the assembly and shall, with the Pastor's Council, direct all of its activities. The pastor shall consult with the Pastor's Council regarding the ongoing health and wholeness of the congregation and to ensure the appropriate ministries and programs are in place to accomplish the same.) The pastor shall arrange for all special meetings, missionary conventions or revival campaigns. The pastor shall act as chair of all the business meetings of the local church, and of the Pastor's Council. The pastor shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees and departments. The pastor shall provide for all the services of the assembly, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach in the local church without the approval of the pastor. No congregational or Pastor's Council meeting shall be held in the absence of the pastor without the written authorization of the pastor.

2.1.3 RESIGNATION

The pastor may resign by giving a minimum of one month written notice to the congregation or to the Pastor's Council by a letter addressed to the secretary of the Pastor's Council of the local congregation.

2.1.4 VACANCY

When the pastorate becomes vacant, the authorized representative(s) of the Pastor's Council shall be empowered to act in the full legal capacity of the pastor, who shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable pulpit ministry until such time as a new pastor has been duly installed.

2.1.5 PASTOR/CONGREGATION RELATIONSHIP

When difficulties have arisen between the pastor and the assembly or congregation which do not involve the credentials of the pastor, but only the position as pastor, and which apparently cannot be resolved at the local level, the pastor, the Pastor's Council or a quorum consisting of not fewer than one-third of the regular members of the assembly shall have the right to appeal to the use of stipulated provisions 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 of the herein Constitution and by-laws.

The refusal of a pastor to call a meeting of the Pastor's meeting shall constitute the Pastor's Council right to take one of the following action: to call a congregation meeting or to appoint an appealing committee comprised of a minimum of 3 renowned pastors of other independent churches.

If the appealing committee calls for a vote of confidence in the pastor, the roster for the vote shall include only those members who held membership 60 days prior to the vote of confidence and shall exclude the pastor and members of the pastoral staff, as identified in the minutes of the Pastor's Council, and their spouses, who shall not be included in the quorum necessary to have a congregational meeting. The vote shall require a simple majority in support of the pastor, for the pastor to retain the position as pastor. If such is not achieved, the pastor's duties shall be terminated immediately.

2.1.6 CHARGES INVOLVING CREDENTIALS

Charges in matters involving the pastor's credentials, morality, integrity or doctrinal soundness must be made to the Pastor's Council in writing, and properly signed by one who is willing to appear in person and give testimony concerning the charges. Charges thus preferred against a credential holder shall be dealt with according to provisions made in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.

ORDINANCES

2.2 PASTOR'S COUNCIL

2.2.1 QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for service on the Pastor's Council shall be determined and approved in accordance with the policy of this church, as guided by such scriptural provisions as are cited in Acts 6:3, I Timothy 3:8-13, and Titus 1:5-9. The official Pastor's Council shall be comprised of members who are of good report and sound judgment, examples to the congregation in matters of stewardship, church attendance, and spiritual maturity, and seeking constantly, as sanctified vessels, to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18).

2.2.2 DUTIES

The main duties of the Pastor's Council are as follows:

- 2.2.2.1** The members of the Pastor's Council shall act along with the church leadership in all regards as good disciples of God and not like church owners, and they shall carry out in good faith all the church duties, shall keep confidentiality of all the conversations and activities of the Council (except for official announcements), and shall actively support the church in all respects: spiritually, materially and physically.
- 2.2.2.2** The members of the Pastor's Council shall examine the applications of all those interested in becoming members of the church.
- 2.2.2.3** The members of the Pastor's Council shall be in charge with the church property, shall be responsible with its maintenance, and as such they shall regularly verify the church inventory.
- 2.2.2.4** The members of the Pastor's Council or the assistant pastor as the case may be shall be responsible with the church service should the pastor be absent.
- 2.2.2.5** Should the church be left without a pastor (leadership), as the case may be, the assistant pastor or a member of the Council mutually approved by the members of the Council shall serve the church for a period of 90 days until an official (legal) pastor is chosen (named).
- 2.2.2.6** The members of the Council shall display an exemplary conduct for the entire church, for the glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ (1Timothy 3:2-7, Acts 6:3-6).

2.2.3 APPOINTMENT OF PASTOR'S COUNCIL

2.2.3.1 NOMINATIONS

- 2.2.3.1.1** To inaugurate the Pastor's Council, the congregation business meeting shall appoint a nominating committee. The nominating committee shall be comprised of a minimum of three non-pastor's council members.
- 2.2.3.1.2** The nominating committee would present a list of nominees to the Pastor and Pastor's Council to determine if such individuals are qualified to serve as a Pastor's Council member, depending of the policy of the church.
- 2.2.3.1.3** The list of nominees shall be presented to the congregation for initial voting.

2.2.3.2 VOTING

All the elected Pastor's Council members of this church, except the pastor, shall be declared elected upon receiving more than 50 percent of all votes cast for the office at the annual congregational business meeting. If the candidate is not elected on the first ballot, voting shall continue until an election is declared. If no election is declared as a result of the second election ballot, the name receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated on each succeeding ballot.

When the church congregation is voting on business matters, a definite voting bar shall be made between those who are entitled to vote and those who are not so entitled. A member of the congregation wishing to challenge the right of another to vote may do so. In the event of such a challenge, a majority vote of the congregation shall decide.

2.2.3.3 APPOINTED OFFICES

It shall be the duty of the newly elected Pastor's Council to fill all appointed offices for the ensuing year without delay.

2.2.3.4 TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

2.2.3.4.1 The term of all lay members of the Pastor's Council shall be for four years, as determined by the local congregation. After a member has served for four years, the member should continue to serve on the Pastor's Council after a confirmation vote at the annual congregational business meeting.

2.2.3.4.2 Termination of membership on the Pastor's Council member shall occur if any Pastor's Council member, during the term of office, shall resign, move away, and cease to be a member of the congregation or be disqualified according to By-Law 2.2.4 of these by-laws. Provision is hereby made for Pastor's Council to appoint a successor until the next annual meeting.

2.2.4 REMOVAL OF A COUNCIL MEMBER FROM THE PASTOR'S COUNCIL

2.2.4.1 CAUSES

2.2.4.1.1 Failure to maintain the qualification of a member of Pastor's Council.

2.2.4.1.2 Failure to function effectively with respect to the philosophy or capacity of the Pastor's Council, or the needs of the congregation.

2.2.4.1.3 Displaying a contentious or non-cooperative spirit.

2.2.4.1.4 Functioning with a dictatorial authority.

2.2.4.1.5 Loss of membership through disciplinary action.

2.2.4.2 METHOD

2.2.4.2.1 Evidence of cause for removal (as found in By-Laws 2.2.4.1.1 through 2.2.4.1.5).

2.2.4.2.2 Based on evidence of cause for removal, the entire council membership will consider the matter and the ongoing service of the member on the council. After due consideration, the Pastor's Council will vote by secret ballot and a simple majority will determine the outcome. The council member in question will refrain from voting. If there are four or fewer currently serving council members in the church, not continuing the senior pastor, the senior pastor will invite two to former council members, or mature deacons, to assist the Pastor's Council in its deliberation and decision. If the vote indicates the removal from the position of council member, there is no appeal process available. However, the former council member may maintain church membership, the right to minister and serve in the church.

Future possibility of this individual serving as a council member may be a consideration based on the willing submission of the former council member to the authority of the Pastor's Council.

2.2.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Pastor's Council shall not place the member in a position where there is conflict of interest between their duties as Pastor's Council member and personal interests. Every Pastor's Council member who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in, or may become interested in, an existing or proposed contract, transaction, or arrangement with the church or who otherwise has a conflict of interest by virtue of involvement of a family member or the involvement of an employer, partner, business associate, or a corporation that the member is involved with as either a director, shareholder, officer, employee, or agent, then such Pastor's Council member shall declare a conflict of interest fully at a meeting of the board and withdraw from any discussion or vote.

2.3 SECRETARY AND TREASURER

2.3.1 QUALIFICATIONS

The secretary and treasurer shall be capable of performing such clerical duties as this congregation requires, and shall be appointed annually by the Pastor's Council, and may be one of its own members. The position of secretary and treasurer may be filled by the same person, who may be a member of the Pastor's Council.

2.2.2 DUTIES – SECRETARY

The secretary shall be custodian of the records of the various congregational meetings and shall record the same in record books provided for that purpose. The secretary shall preserve the records of the local church and prepare reports as directed by the Pastor's Council.

2.2.3 DUTIES – TREASURER

The treasurer shall be the custodian of the general funds of the church and shall deposit the same in a chartered bank in the name of the church, and shall disperse such funds as authorized by the Pastor's Council. The treasurer shall ensure that an accurate record of accounts is kept, and shall present a financial statement at the annual congregational meeting and at any other time when requested to do so by the Pastor's Council or church congregation. The books shall be reviewed before the annual congregational meeting by financially qualified individuals appointed by the Pastor's Council.

2.2.4 DUTIES - OTHER OFFICERS

Departmental officers' terms of reference shall be outlined in the departmental constitution, as adopted by this congregation.

2.4 BOARD OF DEACONS

The church may choose to establish a Board of Deacons (Servants of the church), appointed by the members of Pastor's Council, for unlimited tenure. Served in other ministries in the church for a minimum of two years prior to becoming a deacon. Consideration provided by transferees.

Meet monthly for instruction, direction, accountability, evaluation and assignment of duties. Character qualifications (1Timothy, Acts6): servant heart, ministry orientation. Skills required to complete the assigned task. Covenant of agreement with vision and direction Plan to protect.

BY-LAW 3 BUSINESS MEETINGS

3.1 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The regular order of business for the annual congregational business meeting of this local church shall be determined by the pastor and Pastor's Council which may include such items as:

- Devotional
- Reading of previous minutes by the secretary
- Report of treasurer
- Report of committees
- Unfinished business
- Selection of officers
- New business
- Adjournment

3.2 QUORUM

Twenty-five (25) percent of the voting membership shall be required to constitute a quorum. Those members who by reasons of health are unable to regularly attend church meetings may be omitted from the quorum calculation.

3.3 PARLIAMENTARY ORDER

In order to expedite congregational business meetings this local church shall be governed by the spirit of Christian love and fellowship..

BY-LAW 4 DEPARTMENTS

All departments of this local church shall be responsible to the pastor and the Pastor's Council, and shall present annual reports to the annual congregational meeting.

BY-LAW 5 MEETINGS

5.1 REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

The time and place of the regular church services shall be determined by the Pastor's Council and the pastor.

- 5.2** No member or any number of members shall call any private, secret, business or devotional meetings without the knowledge and consent of the Pastor's Council and the pastor.

BY-LAW 6 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1** Accepting our responsibility under the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, as stated in Matthew 28 and Mark 16, this local church shall support the missionary and shall take missionary for this purpose.

- 6.2** This church has the right to solicit free-will offerings from the congregation at any time, in efforts to raise relief funds to be distributed to impoverish families of Canadian or other countries.

- 6.3** An amount equal to 10 (ten) percent of its general offerings fund and tithes can be used in support of global humanity purposes and church plantation and aid.

6.4 FINANCES

This church has the right to make application for and receive loans from any recognized source, including but not limited to banking institutions and credit unions, as it relates to plans for purchase of real estate or building construction in relation to securing a permanent house of worship.

BY-LAW 7 AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any annual congregational business meeting of this church or any special congregational business meeting duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the Pastor's Council at least 30 days before the date of the business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any voting member between the time of announcement and the time of the congregational business meeting on application to the secretary of the Pastor's Council.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds majority vote. Such amendment shall not be contrary Declaration of Trust, where applicable.

STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

Article 5 of the “Emanuel” Romanian Pentecostal Church *Constitution and By-Laws* Adopted by General Meeting of the Church, 2015

PREAMBLE

The “Emanuel” Romanian Pentecostal Church stands firmly in the mainstream of historical Christianity. It takes the Bible as its all-sufficient source of faith and practice, and subscribes to the historic creeds of the universal church. In common with historical, evangelical Christianity, it emphasizes Christ as Saviour and coming King. It also presents Christ as Healer, and it adopts the distinctive position that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence when Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit (See Article 5.6.3).

5.1 HOLY SCRIPTURES: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God¹ by which we understand the whole Bible to be inspired in the sense that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of Scripture.² Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original writings. The whole Bible in the original is, therefore, without error and, as such, is infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.³

The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian believers today receive spiritual illumination to enable them to understand the Scriptures,⁴ but God does not grant new revelations that are contrary or additional to inspired biblical truth.⁵

5.2 THE GODHEAD: The Godhead exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having the same nature and attributes and are worthy of the same homage, confidence and obedience.⁶

5.2.1 THE FATHER: The Father exists eternally as the Creator of heaven and earth, the Giver of the Law, to whom all things will be subjected, so that He may be all in all.⁷

5.2.2 THE SON: The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father, is true God and true man.⁸ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,⁹ and by His sinless life, miracles and teaching, gave full revelation of the Father.¹⁰

He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitution sacrifice.¹¹ He

¹ 2 Tim. 3:16,17

² 2 Pet. 1:20,21

³ Psa. 119:160a; Matt. 5:17,18

⁴ 1 Cor. 2:12-14

⁵ Prov. 30:5,6

⁶ Matt. 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

⁷ Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:28

⁸ John 1:1,14; 10:30; 17; Phil. 2:6,7; Heb. 1:8

⁹ Luke 1:26-35

¹⁰ John 12:49; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

¹¹ Rom. 5:6,8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18

rose from the dead.¹ He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.² He will come again to establish His kingdom in righteousness and peace.³

5.2.3 THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is also God, performing actions and possessing the attributes of Deity.⁴ His personality is shown by the fact that He has personal characteristics and that individuals may relate to Him as a person.⁵

5.3 ANGELS

5.3.1 CLASSIFICATION: Angels were created as intelligent and powerful beings to do the will of God and worship Him.⁶ However, Satan, the originator of sin, fell through pride and was followed by those angels who rebelled against God. These fallen angels or demons are active in opposing the purposes of God.⁷

Those who remained faithful continue before the throne of God and serve as ministering spirits.⁸

5.3.2 THE BELIEVER AND DEMONS: Demons attempt to thwart God's purposes; however, in Christ, the believer may have complete liberty from the influence of demons.⁹ He cannot be possessed by them because his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in which Christ dwells as Lord.¹⁰

5.4 MAN: Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God.¹¹ He fell through sin and, as a consequence, incurred both spiritual and physical death.¹² Spiritual death and the depravity of human nature have been transmitted to the entire human race¹³ with the exception of the Man Christ Jesus.¹⁴ Man can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵

5.5 SALVATION

5.5.1 ATONEMENT OF CHRIST: Salvation has been provided for all men through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.¹⁶ It is the only perfect redemption and substitution atonement for all the sins of the world, both original and actual. His atoning work has been proven by His resurrection from the dead.¹⁷ Those who repent and believe in Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and receive eternal life.¹⁸ Furthermore, in the atonement, divine healing was provided for all

¹ Matt. 28:6; 1 Cor. 15:4,20

² Acts 1:9-11; 2:33; Heb. 8:1

³ Matt. 25:31

⁴ Acts 5:3,4

⁵ John 16:13-14

⁶ Psa. 103:20; Rev. 5:11,12

⁷ Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Eph. 6:11,12; 1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 6

⁸ Heb. 1:14

⁹ Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; 4:1-4

¹⁰ Matt. 6:24; 1 Cor. 6:19,20

¹¹ Gen. 1:26,2:7

¹² Rom. 5:12; James 1:14,15

¹³ Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19,23

¹⁴ Heb. 7:26

¹⁵ John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5,6

¹⁶ Isa. 53:3-6; John 12:32,33; 1 Pet. 2:24

¹⁷ Acts 2:36; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:14,17,20; Heb. 10:12; 1 John 2:2

¹⁸ Acts 20:21; 1 Pet. 1:23,25

believers.¹

5.5.2 REPENTANCE AND FAITH: Man can be born again only through faith in Christ. Repentance, a vital part of believing, is a complete change of mind wrought by the Holy Spirit,² turning a person to God from sin.

5.5.3 REGENERATION: Regeneration is a creative work of the Holy Spirit by which man is born again and receives spiritual life.³

5.5.4 JUSTIFICATION: Justification is a judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous solely on the basis of his acceptance of Christ as Saviour.⁴

5.6 THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

5.6.1 ASSURANCE: Assurance of salvation is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ,⁵ resulting in love, gratitude and obedience toward God.

5.6.2 SANCTIFICATION: Sanctification is dedication to God and separation from evil.⁶ In experience it is both instantaneous⁷ and progressive.⁸ It is produced in the life of the believer by his appropriation of the power of Christ's blood and risen life through the person of the Holy Spirit;⁹ He draws the believer's attention to Christ, teaches him through the Word and produces the character of Christ within him.¹⁰ Believers who sin must repent and seek forgiveness through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.¹¹

5.6.3 BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT: The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit.¹² Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way,¹³ and receives power to witness and grow spiritually.¹⁴ Believers should earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵ The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.¹⁶ This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth.¹⁷

5.6.4 THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural abilities given by God through the exercising of which believers are enabled to minister

¹ Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:16b, 17

² Isa. 55:7; Acts. 17:30; Gal. 3:22,26; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:10-13

³ John 3:3b,5b,7; 2 Cor. 5:17 - 18a; 1 Pet. 1:23

⁴ Rom. 3:24; 4:3-5; 5:1-2

⁵ John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:35-39

⁶ 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1

⁷ John 17:17,19; Heb. 10:10,14

⁸ 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 1:14-16

⁹ Rom. 6:11,13,14,18

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

¹¹ 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2

¹² Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; Eph. 5:18

¹³ John 16:13-15

¹⁴ Acts 2:1-4; 9-17, 39, 1Cor.14:18

¹⁵ Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8

¹⁶ 2Cor.3:18; Acts 1:8

¹⁷ Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46

effectively and directly in particular situations.¹ They serve the dual function of building up the church, and of demonstrating the presence of God within His church.²

5.6.5 DIVINE HEALING: Divine healing provided in the atonement of Christ³ is the privilege of all believers. Prayer for the sick and gifts of healing are encouraged and practised.⁴

5.7 THE CHURCH

5.7.1 THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH: All who are born again are members of the universal church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ.⁵

5.7.2 THE LOCAL CHURCH

5.7.2.1 PURPOSE: The local church is a body of believers in Christ who have joined together to function as a part of the universal church.⁶ The local church is ordained by God and provides a context in which believers corporately worship God,⁷ observe the ordinances of the church, are instructed in the faith and are equipped for the evangelization of the world.⁸

5.7.2.2 ORDINANCES

5.7.2.2.1 THE LORD'S SUPPER: The Lord's Supper is a symbol, memorial and proclamation of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This ordinance of communion is to be participated in by believers until Christ's return.⁹

5.7.2.2.2 WATER BAPTISM: Water baptism signifies the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and is practised by immersion.¹⁰

5.7.2.3 MINISTRY: A divinely called and ordained ministry is the provision of the Lord to give leadership to the church as it fulfils its purposes.¹¹

5.8 THE END OF TIME

5.8.1 THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEAD: At death the souls of the believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ,¹² and these remain in constant bliss

¹ 1 Cor. 12:4-11

² 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12, 24-25

³ Matt. 8:16,17

⁴ 1 Cor. 12:28-30; James 5:14

⁵ 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:25b; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15

⁶ Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 16:19

⁷ John 4:23; Acts 20:7

⁸ Acts 1:8; 11:19-24; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:2

⁹ Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26

¹⁰ Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5

¹¹ Acts 6:2b-4c; 13:2-4a; 14:23; Eph. 4:8,11-13

¹² 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21,23-24

until the resurrection of the glorified body.¹ The souls of the unbelievers remain after death conscious of condemnation² until the final bodily resurrection and judgment of the unjust.³

5.8.2 THE RAPTURE: The rapture, the blessed hope of the church, is the imminent coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself His own, both the living who shall be transformed, and the dead in Christ who shall be resurrected.⁴ Believers then will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to faithfulness in Christian service.⁵

5.8.3 THE TRIBULATION: The tribulation will be a time of judgment on the whole earth.⁶ During this period the Antichrist will emerge to offer false hope to the nations.⁷

5.8.4 THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: The return of Christ to earth in power and great glory will conclude the great tribulation with the victory at Armageddon,⁸ the defeat of Antichrist and the binding of Satan.⁹ Christ will introduce the millennial age,¹⁰ restore Israel to her own land, lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, and bring the whole world to the knowledge of God.¹¹

5.8.5 THE FINAL JUDGMENT: There will be a final judgment in which the unbelieving dead will be raised and judged at the great white throne, according to their works.¹²

The beast and false prophet, the devil and his angels, and whoever is not found in the Book of Life, shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to annihilation but to everlasting punishment, which is the second death.¹³

5.8.6 THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS: The righteous will share the glory of God in the new heaven and the new earth for eternity.¹⁴

¹ Rom. 8:22,23; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; 2 Cor. 5:1,4b

² Luke 16:22-31; John 3:36

³ Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15

⁴ 1 Cor. 15:51-57; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13

⁵ Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10

⁶ Matt. 24:15,21-22; 1 Thess. 5:1-3

⁷ 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:11-18

⁸ Matt. 24:27,30; Luke 17:24,26-30

⁹ Rev. 16:12-16; 17:8,12-14; 19:11-20

¹⁰ Psa. 2:6-12; Dan. 2:44-45; Luke 22:29-30; Rev. 3:21; 20:6

¹¹ Isa. 1:24-27; 2:1-4; Zech. 14:3,4,9; Rom. 8:19-23; Rev. 22:3

¹² Dan. 7:9-10; John 12:48; Rom. 2:2,6,11,16; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:11-15

¹³ Matt. 25:41b; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10,15; 21:8

¹⁴ Matt. 13:43; John 17:24; 2 Pet. 3:13; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21:1-2,10,22-23

5.9 POSITIONS AND PRACTICES

5.9.1 MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY: Marriage is a provision of God wherein one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others enter into a lifelong relationship¹ through a marriage ceremony that is recognized by the church and legally sanctioned by the state.

Marriage establishes a "one-flesh" relationship², that goes beyond a physical union and is more than either a temporary relationship of convenience intended to provide personal pleasure or a contract that binds two people together in a legal partnership. Marriage establishes an emotional and spiritual oneness that enables both partners to respond to the spiritual, physical and social needs of the other.³ It provides the biblical context for the procreation of children.

Marriage is to be an exclusive relationship that is maintained in purity.⁴ It is intended by God to be a permanent relationship. It is a witness to the world of the relationship between Christ and His Church.⁵

Marriage requires a commitment of love, perseverance and faith. Because of its sanctity and permanence, marriage should be treated with seriousness and entered into only after counsel and prayer for God's guidance. Christians should marry only those who are believers.⁶ An individual who becomes a believer after marriage should remain with his/her partner in peace, and should give witness to the Gospel in the home.⁷

The Bible holds family life as a position of trust and responsibility. The home is a stabilizing force in society, a place of nurture, counsel, and safety for children.⁸

Marriage can only be broken by *porneia* which is understood as marital unfaithfulness⁹ involving adultery, homosexuality, or incest. While the Scriptures give evidence that the marriage vow and "one-flesh" union are broken by such acts and therefore recognize the breaking of the marriage relationship, the Scriptures do recommend that the most desirable option would be reconciliation.¹⁰

5.9.2 DIVORCE: We believe that divorce is not God's intention. It is God's concession to the "hardness of men's hearts."¹¹

¹ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6

² Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:15

³ Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4

⁴ Eph. 5:3,26,27

⁵ Eph. 5:25,31,32

⁶ 2 Cor. 6:14,15

⁷ 1 Cor. 7:12-14,16

⁸ Eph. 6:4

⁹ Matt. 5:32; 19:9

¹⁰ Eph. 4:32

¹¹ Matt. 19:8

We, therefore, discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. Our objective is reconciliation and the healing of the marriage union where possible. Marital unfaithfulness should not be considered so much an occasion or opportunity for divorce but rather an opportunity for Christian grace, forgiveness, and restoration. Divorce in our society is a termination of a marriage through a legal process authorized by the State. While the Church recognizes this legal process as an appropriate means to facilitate the permanent separation of spouses, the Church restricts the idea of divorce, in the sense of dissolution of marriage, to reasons specified in Scripture.

The weight of the biblical record is negative and the explicit statement is made, "God hates divorce."¹ Divorce is more than an action of the courts which breaks the legal contract between partners in a marriage. It is also the fracture of a unique human relationship between a male and a female. Divorce has profound consequences for the children. Divorce is evidence of the sinful nature expressed in human failure. Jesus gives one explicit cause for the dissolution of marriage: *porneia* or marital unfaithfulness.

Where all attempts at reconciliation have failed and a divorce has been finalized, we extend Christ's love and compassion.

5.9.3 REMARRIAGE: Remarriage is the union, legally sanctioned by the State, of one man and one woman, one or both of whom have been previously married. It is regarded as acceptable in Scripture in the event of the death of a former spouse. It is also regarded as acceptable if there has been sexual immorality on the part of the former partner or if the former partner has remarried.

5.9.4 TITHING: Tithing was divinely instituted by God under the old covenant and was compulsory upon the people who worshiped God.² Under the new covenant we are not bound by arbitrary laws; but the principles of right and wrong, as expressed by the law, are fulfilled in the believer's life through grace. Grace should produce as much as, or more than, law demanded. Regular systematic giving is clearly taught in the New Testament. It is known as the grace of giving.³ The gauge or rule of this systematic giving is defined in the Old Testament, known as the law of tithing. All Christians should conscientiously and systematically tithe their income to God.

¹ Mal. 2:16

² Lev. 27:30-32; Mal. 3:10

³ 2 Cor. 9:6-15