

BYLAWS OF EBENEZER BIBLE CHAPEL

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Any person may be received as a member of this Church who has professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has completed the requirements of a membership preparation class, who has demonstrated a desire to obey the Scriptures, who is in agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and the Constitution and Bylaws of this Church, and who has been approved by the Elders.

SECTION 2 - RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

When a candidate has met the requirements described in Article 1, Section 1, he or she will appear before the congregation in a regular Sunday service and publicly acknowledge faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. A certificate of membership shall be presented at that time.

SECTION 3 - RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Every active member of Ebenezer Bible Chapel is entitled and encouraged to participate in the activities of the church. This Church functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Pastor as the undershepherd with the oversight of the Elders. Membership in this Church does not afford members with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determinations of the internal affairs of this Church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures. The membership of this Church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any Church action except as stipulated in this Constitution and Bylaws, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of this Church as determined by the Elders. Active membership in this Church is required for those who hold leadership positions such as elective office, committee appointments, teaching positions, etc.

SECTION 4 - MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

- A. Active members are those who regularly attend the services of this Church and participate in the functions of the congregation through worship, giving, service, and observance of communion unless hindered by illness or other providential circumstances such as serving in ministry outside this Church or in military services, as determined by the Elders.
- B. Inactive members are those members who absent themselves from the services of the church for a period of six months, unless providentially hindered, as stated in Section 4, A. The names of such members shall be placed on the list of inactive members. Inactive members forfeit the privileges of membership such as holding office, voting, or participating in congregational business meetings. An inactive member wishing to be reinstated as an active member shall follow the usual procedure for obtaining membership as stated in Article. 1, Section 1 and Section 2.

SECTION 5 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in this Church shall terminate in the event of any of the following: (1) death of the member, (2) church discipline according to Article 1, Section 7, (3) or becoming a member of another church.

- B. Any member withdrawing from or in any way losing membership in this Church immediately thereby forfeits all rights and privileges to the church corporation or its property, funds, or offices.

SECTION 6 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS (Church Covenant)

Having been born again by the Word of God and the Spirit of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ according to the provisions of the abounding grace of God, and being justified on the grounds of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and acknowledging our willingness to confess Him as our Savior before men, we do now in the presence of God, the holy angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into Covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this local assembly, within the body of Christ, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully, scripturally and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of this church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations by means of our missionaries and fundamental faith missions.

We recognize the duty and responsibility of each member to live a holy life (1 Peter 1:16), separated from the sins and evils of the world, and to be consecrated unto God. Members shall seek to glorify God in their conduct and to preserve the good name of this Church. They shall attend the services of this Church as regularly as possible, reporting the reason for any long absence. They shall support the work of this Church with time, talents, and money, up to or beyond the tithe, and share in witnessing to the unsaved about Christ. They shall be willing to the best of their God-given ability to serve in any capacity to which this Church may call them.

They shall watch over one another in brotherly love, remember each other in prayer, aid one another in sickness and distress; they shall be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

SECTION 7 - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Reasons for church discipline may include but are not limited to disputes between individuals (Matthew 18:15), false doctrine (Titus 1:9-11), immorality (1 Corinthians 5:11), or disorderliness (3 John 9-10), as stated in this Church's *Statement Concerning Church Discipline*. The brotherly approach of Matthew 18 shall be used in all strained relations between the members and in dealing with all transgressors. Unrepentant transgressors are to be expelled from membership in the congregation. Upon repentance and confession they may be reinstated to full membership by Elders' approval and a vote of the members.

ARTICLE II - OFFICERS

SECTION 1 - TRUSTEES

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the Church, the officers of the Trustees are as follows:

- A. Chairman/President – The Pastor by virtue of his office may be recognized as the Chairman of the Elders and President of the Trustees. The Pastor is an officer having full rights of voting,

proposal and discussion. The Pastor may temporarily waive his chair to another Elder if he desires or by request of the Elders.

- B. Secretary – The Elders shall elect, annually, from among its own members a Secretary who shall by virtue of his office be also the Secretary of the Trustees and shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings.
- C. Treasurer – The Church Treasurer shall by virtue of his office also be Treasurer of the trustees and shall keep accurate records of this Church and disburse such funds as the Deacons shall authorize.

SECTION 2 - PASTOR

A. Definition

The “Pastor” is not an office, but a function. He is an Elder who is “first among equals” (1 Timothy 5:17). He is recognized for his gifts as a leader, teacher, and Pastoral care. He is not a “self-willed” man, “lording it over” others, but is accountable to his fellow Elders. This allows for a functional, gift-based diversity within the Eldership team without creating an official, superior office over fellow Elders.

B. Qualifications

The Pastor is to be a man of God. He is to demonstrate a life of godliness and faithfulness as defined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Out of conviction he is to uphold the Statement of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws of this Church.

C. The Pulpit Committee

The Elders shall act as a pulpit committee or appoint a pulpit committee to investigate possible candidates. The responsibilities of the pulpit committee must include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Prepare a list of possible candidates. Send an identical church resume to each candidate including the Constitution, Bylaws, brief history of this Church, current number of members, families and attendance; the date the pulpit became vacant and other information considered pertinent. The possible candidate is required to respond with a professional resume / application, a personal theological statement, and a list of at least six (6) references. Each possible candidate is to be informed of the committee’s ultimate decision regarding his candidacy.
- 2) The references shall be contacted and requested to provide information regarding the individual’s preaching, Pastoral and administrative duties and basic Christian character. The information will be used to construct a list of potential candidates. Only one (1) official candidate shall be contacted and considered at a time.
- 3) The committee shall invite the potential candidate to the church to preach as a pulpit supply speaker and to be interviewed in private.
- 4) A list of thought-provoking questions shall be prepared to assist the pulpit committee in evaluating each possible candidate during the personal interview. The same list shall be used for each candidate and the answers recorded.

- 5) After the interview and hearing the potential candidate, a decision shall be made to invite him to come as "The Candidate." Arrangements shall be made for the candidate to spend a minimum of three (3) days, including a Sunday, with this Church to be exposed publicly and privately to as many people of the Church as possible. Arrangements shall have been made to have a congregational business meeting to consider a call to the candidate within seven (7) days after his candidacy.
- 6) The committee will be responsible for screening and recommending an interim Pastor for the consideration of the Board of Elders and congregation. No interim Pastor will be considered for the position of Pastor.

D. The Pastoral Call

- 1) A Pastor shall not be called to serve this Church except by approval of the members, who shall express their convictions by means of a secret ballot at a congregational business meeting called for the purpose of voting on a candidate.
- 2) A quorum for this meeting shall consist of the active members present.
- 3) Approval to extend a call shall consist of ninety percent (90%) vote in favor of acceptance by those present.
- 4) All members in good standing from eighteen (18) years and upward shall be eligible to receive a ballot and vote.
- 5) If the vote is affirmative the candidate shall be formally notified within five (5) days by letter including the exact salary, housing provisions, professional reimbursements, hospitalization, moving allotment, retirement benefits, vacations, and other benefits. He shall be notified of the percentage of the vote and the number voting.
- 6) If the vote is negative the candidate shall be formally notified within five (5) days by letter. The pulpit committee should repeat the procedure in Section 2, C, and may elect to start at subparagraph C, 3).

E. Termination

The Pastor will give the church not less than thirty days notice of his intention to discontinue as Pastor. A Pastor may be dismissed for cause, such as incompetence or inability in the performance of Pastoral or ministerial duties, or unbiblical character or conduct, by a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the members at a special meeting called by the Elders for that purpose. The church will give the Pastor not less than sixty days notice in the event of dismissal except in a case of immorality or heresy. However, in a case of an admitted act of immorality or heresy, the Elders may act without congregational authority to demand the resignation of the Pastor.

F. Responsibilities

It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Word of God as revealed in the Old Testament and New Testament of the Holy Bible, to carry out his Pastoral duties and lead the congregation in evangelistic outreach. He shall endeavor to keep unity and peace in the congregation, and lead in the general oversight of the work. He shall be the president/chairman of the board of Elders, moderator of the members' meetings of the congregation, and shall submit an annual report.

SECTION 3 - BOARD OF ELDERS

A. Selection and Terms

The Board of Elders shall consist of three or more Elders providing there are qualified men. When an Elder's term of office expires, his successor shall be named by the Pastor and Elders. This selection shall be affirmed by a vote of at least seventy five percent of the members present at a congregational meeting. Additional Elders shall be selected in the same manner, as the need may arise. Elders shall serve four year terms, on a rotating basis. After two consecutive terms, an Elder shall not be eligible to hold that office for one year.

B. Qualifications of Elders

He shall be a member who meets the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

C. Duties of Elders

- The Elders shall provide spiritual oversight and administrative guidance and leadership to this Church in its life and service.
- They shall provide counsel for the Pastor.
- Develop the total congregational program.
- Work with matters relating to discipline.
- Assist in public worship services and in the administration of the ordinances.
- Review all applications for membership.
- Oversee the choice and placement of officers in the church program.
- They shall keep in touch with the spiritual and material needs of members and the community, contacting members who are absent to determine if any concerns can be addressed.
- They shall maintain lists of active and inactive members, notifying any member whose name is to be placed on the list of inactive members. See Article I, Section 4, A and B.
- They shall plan for a supply minister if the Pastor is not able to serve because of illness or other reason.
- They shall work with the Pastor in the selection of an assistant Pastor and/or additional Pastoral staff if necessary.
- They shall initiate a review of the Pastor's tenure if strained relations between the Pastor and congregation should develop.
- In the event of the Pastor's death or resignation they shall oversee the selection and call of a new Pastor in cooperation with the congregation.

SECTION 4 - BOARD OF DEACONS

A. Selection and Terms

The Board of Deacons shall consist of no less than three Deacons providing qualified men are available serving for terms of three years each, with one or more Deacon being elected each year. The Deacons shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the members at the annual business meeting for Election of Officers. After two consecutive terms, a Deacon shall not be eligible to hold that office for a period of one year.

B. Qualifications of Deacons

A Deacon shall meet the spiritual qualifications given for that office in 1 Timothy 3:8-16.

C. Duties of Deacons

- The Board of Deacons shall serve as custodians of the church property and have charge of maintenance and improvements of the physical plant. They shall contract for janitor services, heat, light, snow removal, and other things pertaining thereto.
- The Board of Deacons shall prepare a proposed budget for each fiscal year, making it

available to the members for review at least two weeks before it is voted on in the annual congregational business meeting.

- The Board of Deacons may spend up to one thousand, five hundred dollars (\$1,500) when funds are available without having the approval of the congregation.
- The Treasurer and/or Deacons will be responsible for counting weekly and special offerings, keeping records of all offerings while maintaining strict confidentiality for each donor, depositing funds, providing receipts for donors, maintaining records of expenditures, and dispersing funds as required.
- At least two individuals (Treasurer and/or Deacons) will count and record all offerings together each time an offering is collected.

B. Examination of Financial Records

Members of the congregation appointed by the Elders shall conduct an annual examination of the financial records and the financial procedures of this church. A report of the findings shall be presented to the Board of Elders and congregation when the examination is completed.

C. Organization of Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall select a chairman at the beginning of each New Year. The Board of Deacons shall serve as custodians of deeds and insurance papers and shall provide an annual report.

SECTION 5 – BOARD OF MISSIONS

The Board of Missions shall consist of three or more members, providing qualified individuals are available, selected through the nominating process, serving three year terms. The board shall present to the congregation at the annual congregational business meeting a proposed budget detailing disbursements of missionary funds, to be voted upon. The Board shall have authority to make special disbursements from the missions account in excess of budgeted amounts as stipulated in the Missions Policy as approved by the Elders. They shall maintain contact with missionaries supported by this Church, and shall direct the overall program and policy for missions in cooperation with the Pastor and Elders.

SECTION 6 - RECORDING SECRETARY

The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of congregational business meetings. The Recording Secretary may have an assistant.

SECTION 7 - CHURCH TREASURER

The Church Treasurer shall be elected at the annual business meeting and shall have charge of all funds, placing them in banking institutions approved by the Deacons. The Treasurer shall report monthly to the Elders and congregation. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all monies received and disbursed and make an annual report. He shall serve for a term of three years. After two consecutive terms, the Treasurer shall not be eligible to hold that office for a period of one year unless there are no other qualified candidates.

SECTION 8 - SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS

A. Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent

The Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent shall be elected for a term of one year and fulfill their duties as described in the Policy Manual.

B. Sunday School Secretaries

A Sunday School Secretary and an Assistant Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year and fulfill their duties as described in the Policy Manual.

SECTION 9 - HEAD USHER

The Head Usher shall be elected annually. He shall arrange for greeters and ushers for church services and arrange for the operation of the sound system and recording devices.

SECTION 10 - CEMETERY TRUSTEES

The Cemetery Trustees shall consist of at least three members serving terms of three years each, one or more being elected each year. They shall organize with a chairman and a secretary. The secretary shall have a map of the lots and keep an accurate account of all lots. They shall be responsible for all cemetery accounts and financial transactions and shall give an annual report.

SECTION 11 - COMMITTEES

Committees may be established such as a Kitchen Committee, Flower Committee, Library Committee, or other committees as the need may arise. Committees may function either permanently or on a temporary basis. Permanent committees shall be chosen through the nominating process and elected by the congregation at the annual meeting for election of officers. Members of permanent committees shall normally serve two year terms, arranged so that at least one member of each committee is elected each year. All committee chairmen shall give an annual report.

ARTICLE III - INDEMNIFICATION, INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL LIABILITY

- A. The Elders may reimburse, advance, and indemnify the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of this Church.
- B. Subject to the provision of paragraph (A) of this Section, this Church shall indemnify any officer or former officer of this Church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of having been an officer, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, provided that:
 - 1) The Elders are satisfied that the officer acted in good faith;
 - 2) The officer reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of this Church, or at least not opposed to its best interests, and
 - 3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the officer had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

- C. This Church may not indemnify an officer in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of this Church, in which he was adjudged liable to this Church, or where the officer is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.
- D. By adopting these provisions for indemnification of officers, this Church has in no manner and to no extent waived the liability protection which is or may be afforded to officers, and any other church member or officer under Pennsylvania law governing nonprofit corporations.

SECTION 2 – INSURANCE

This Church shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of this Church, or is or was serving at the request of this Church as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability.

SECTION 3 – LIABILITY

To the fullest extent permitted by Pennsylvania law, as now in effect and as amended from time to time, a director of this Church shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken or failure to take any action.

ARTICLE IV – ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING

SECTION 1 – ORDINATION

When in the judgment of The Board of Elders a man in the membership of this Church is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within their power to call and conduct an ordaining council. This council shall be composed of the Pastor, The Board of Elders, and such other men as they shall invite to participate. The ordaining council shall examine each applicant for ordination as to his Christian experience, call to the ministry, capabilities, education, reputation, character, doctrinal beliefs and other qualifications for the Gospel ministry. The Board of Elders shall reserve the right to require Pastors who have been ordained by Ebenezer Bible Chapel to sign the doctrinal statement upon request. In the event of a refusal to sign the doctrinal statement, ordination credentials automatically become void.

SECTION 2 – RESTRICTIONS

The following shall not be ordained to Pastoral ministry by this Church:

- A. One who is a novice (1 Timothy 3:6). The candidate must have served in definite Christian work for at least two years in such a manner as to demonstrate reasonable evidence of God's call to ministry.
- B. A woman shall not be ordained by this Church (1 Timothy 2:8-15).
- C. One who is divorced or married to a divorced person shall not be ordained by this Church (1 Timothy 3:2-5).
- D. One who is not in full agreement with the doctrinal position of Ebenezer Bible Chapel.

SECTION 3 – DISCIPLINE

The Elders shall have the power to discipline, even to the revoking of the ordination credentials of

any minister ordained under this Constitution and Bylaws if said minister is found guilty of doctrinal or moral defection or brings disrepute upon his Christian life and ministry, after an impartial trial conducted by the Elders whose decision cannot be overruled by the congregation of this Church.

SECTION 4 – APPEAL

The minister under discipline shall have the privilege of appealing his case within six (6) months if he can establish his innocence to the Pastor and Elders.

SECTION 5 – COMMISSIONING

Ebenezer Bible Chapel may grant a Certificate of Commissioning for missionary service to Christian workers in its membership being called into missionary work. Such missionaries must be in full doctrinal accord with Ebenezer Bible Chapel, and must affiliate only with recognized fundamental mission boards. In consulting with the board of Elders, they must be able to give practical evidence of a divine call to missionary service.

ARTICLE V – BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

SECTION 1 – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.

SECTION 2 – NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Elders shall appoint the Nominating Committee to select nominees for each elected Church and Sunday School office. The Nominating Committee shall consist of one Elder, one Deacon (whose term of office is not due to expire), the Pastor, and one other member. Except for the Pastor, no member shall serve on the Nominating Committee twice in succession.

SECTION 3 – NOMINATING PROCESS

Sixty days prior to the election, names of the Nominating Committee shall be published. At that time, notice shall be given that any active members of this Church may submit suggested nominations to the committee in writing to be considered. Names of members thus suggested will be added to the list of nominees providing (a) they meet the qualifications, (b) they are approved by The Board of Elders, and (c) they are willing to serve. The nominations will be closed one month before the date of the election. The list of nominees shall be made available to members of the congregation for two consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

SECTION 4 – CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

An annual meeting of the congregation shall convene during the last quarter of the year as directed by the Elders. The Elders may call special meetings of the congregation as deemed necessary. All meetings and their purpose must be announced in the Church bulletin on two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. The members present at any properly called congregational business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 5 – QUALIFICATIONS

All members in good standing from eighteen (18) years and upward shall be eligible to receive a ballot and vote.

SECTION 6 – METHOD OF VOTING

Votes shall be taken by secret ballot. Members must be present at the meeting to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.

SECTION 7 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Election of Officers shall be conducted at the annual congregational business meeting during the last quarter of the year as the Elders may direct. Election of officers shall be by secret ballot and require a simple majority vote of those present and voting unless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1 – APPROVAL

These Bylaws may be amended or revised at any time at any regular or special business meeting. The proposed amendment or revision must be announced and submitted in writing to members at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, and must be approved by a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the members present.

SECTION 2 – ADOPTION

These Bylaws were adopted on May 22, 2011 by a unanimous (100%) vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Church in which a quorum was present. These Bylaws supersede any other Bylaws of this Church.