



*Learning, Loving, Living Christ*

## **Constitution and Bylaws**

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## **Introduction:**

### **1. Preamble**

We, the members of the EastPointe Bible Church (EBC) of Peru, Indiana, desiring to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, to foster the spirit of harmony, to promote godly order in the Church, and to better represent the Word and Kingdom of Christ before the world, do ordain and establish the following Constitution and Bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

### **2. Name**

This assembly shall be known as the EastPointe Bible Church of Peru, Indiana.

### **3. Statement of Purpose**

We purpose to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Head of His Church (Matthew 16:13-18, Romans 10:8-11, Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:15-19); to establish a local congregation of believers patterned after the New Testament Church and obedient to the teaching of the Scriptures; to build and advance the true Church of which Christ is the head, by preaching the gospel of Christ to the lost and leading them to the Savior beginning in our “Jerusalem” and extending to the uttermost parts of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8), by providing a place where believers can assemble to worship the Lord (Hebrews 10:25), and by teaching believers the doctrines of Scripture and training them for the work of the ministry (2 Timothy 2:15, Ephesians 4:11-13); and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper as set forth in the New Testament.

### **4. Church Covenant**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public profession of our faith, having been immersed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its spiritual prosperity; to attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the winning of a soul to Christ; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ our Savior; and to give Him the preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of the rules of our Savior, to seek it without delay.

We moreover purpose that when we find it necessary to relocate, we will as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like precious faith and practice, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

## **Statement of Faith**

### **1. The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible, as originally written, was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men and, therefore, has truth without any mixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human

conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried. (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21)

## **2. God**

We believe there is one and only one living and true God; an infinite Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; 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. (Exodus 20:2,3; I Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11)

## **3. Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God who lived a sinless life, died a victorious death, rose in bodily form, ascended into Heaven where He now ministers as our High Priest and is coming back to this earth to establish His earthly kingdom. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:6,7; Luke 1:35; 24:38, 51; John 1:4; 20:27; I Corinthians 15:4; Acts 1:9-11; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 3:21; 20:6; Psalm 72:3)

## **4. Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer. He bestows spiritual gifts, some of which were of a temporary nature designed as signs to authenticate the message of the apostles and have ceased. Among these are the gifts of tongues, healing, and prophecy (foretelling). (John 14:16,17,26; 16:8-11; 3:5,6; 1:33; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; Luke 1:35; Acts 5:30-32; 11:16; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13,14; Mark 1:8; Luke 24:49; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27)

## **5. Satan**

We believe in the personality of Satan who is called the dragon, that old serpent, the Devil; that he is the unholy god in this age and the author of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:2,10)

## **6. Creation**

We accept the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth but a literal, historical account of the direct work of God, and not from previously existing forms of life, and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. We reject both theistic and naturalistic evolution. (Genesis 1,2; Colossians 1:16,17; John 1:3)

## **7. Fall of Man**

We believe that man was created in innocence but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; that they are totally depraved and, therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Genesis 3:16,24; Romans 1:18,32; 5:10-19)

## **8. Payment for Sin**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the 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 and vicarious payment for our sins. We believe that His payment consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sin in His body on the tree. We believe that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and is uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and the all-sufficient Savior. (Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24,25; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4-7; I John 4:10; I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21)

## **9. Regeneration and Justification**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again which is a regeneration by the Holy Spirit to be able to respond to the preaching of the gospel and confess Jesus as Lord and trust that God did raise Him from the dead. That new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process, and that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker in the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. We believe that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that it involves more than mental assent but is the personal reception of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

We believe that justification is the act of God whereby the believer is declared righteous upon the basis of Christ's imputed righteousness. (John 3:3,6,7,8; Romans 10:8-9, II Corinthians 5:17,19; I John 5:1; Acts 16:30-32; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; 3:21-28; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16)

## **10. Security of the Believer**

We believe in the security of the saints; that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Philippians 1:6; John 10:28,29; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 1; 1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 89:30-33; John 6:35; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:19; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)

## **11. The Local Church**

We believe that the local Church is a congregation of immersed believers associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are Pastors, Elders and Deacons whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scripture. We believe the true mission of the Church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all mankind as we have opportunity. We hold that the local Church has the absolute right of self-government free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is

scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local Church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline and of benevolence the ~~will of the congregation~~ *consensus of the council of elders in obedience to God's Word with appropriate input from deacons and the congregation is final* (Acts 2:41,42; 20:17-28; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:11; 5:23; I Timothy 2:1-7; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 22, Acts 14:23, 15:6, Titus 1:5, 1 Peter 5:1-4)

## **12. Ordinances**

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water 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 prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relationship.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. Since it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred. The Pastors shall frequently explain the meaning and requirements of the ordinances. (Acts 8:26-39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 11:23-28; Acts 2:41-42)

## **13. Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is of a divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth. (Romans 13:1-7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21,22; Acts 23:5; 5:20; 4:19,20; Matthew 22:21; Daniel 2:17, 18)

## **14. Separation**

We believe that obedience to God's Word will not allow cooperation in spiritual efforts with those who will deny the historic Christian faith. We specifically repudiate the assumption that cooperation with unbelievers is justified if commendable spiritual results are obtained by doing so. We

believe the Bible requires a Church be completely separated from associational fellowship with groups that permit the presence of those who reject the essentials of this statement of faith. (II Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 16:17, 18; II John 9-11)

## **15. Righteous and Wicked**

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, 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 life in the everlasting security of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 18, 23; 7:6; I John 5:19; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 6:25; Matthew 25:34-41; John 8:21)

## **16. Eschatology**

We believe that the imminent rapture of the Church is the next event to occur according to prophesy. Christ's coming for His Church as outlined in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:51, 52 will announce the beginning of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27), which concludes "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7), the Great Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. At the close of the Great Tribulation period, Christ will establish His earthly kingdom and occupy the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6,7; Acts 2:29,30) and reign for one thousand (1000) years (the millennium reign referred to in Revelation 20:1-6). After this the Great White Throne Judgment occurs. All the wicked dead of all ages will appear before this throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

## **17. Church Governance**

We cannot help but be affected by our culture that is immersed in democratic procedures. This has even permeated the culture of the church especially in the western hemisphere. Living in that reality, we are convinced that God's Word does not directly address the issue of voting but it does give us a model for governing by elders. In that model, major decisions pleasingly satisfied the congregation (Acts 6:5). The elders will pursue making decisions that bring about harmony in the body. A simple yes or no vote does not provide helpful input and because of much scripture concerning unity and resolving differences. We want to strive for

a better way for those that govern to make major decisions in the church. Scripture is clear, Elders are to govern the church but biblically minded elders realize that they are not an authority all their own. They are ultimately responsible to Christ. And they are not to be unapproachable in leading, guarding and governing the church. We believe firmly in receiving input from deacons and the congregation prior to making decisions that affect the body as a whole. (1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:1-6, Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 & 1 Peter 5:1-4)

## **Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Rom 1:18-32.)
2. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)
4. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
5. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of EastPointe Bible Church.
6. We believe the truths about marriage, gender, sin, redemption and humanity as outlined herein are among the most clear doctrines of our

faith from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. We believe this is also evident in that for millennia they have been universally practiced by Christians and Jewish believers alike. We believe these doctrines are foundational to our faith.

7. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of EastPointe Bible Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the EastPointe Bible Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by EastPointe Bible Church in any capacity, members of EastPointe Bible Church, and/or those who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

## **Bylaws**

The following Bylaws are designed to help our church operate in a biblically faithful manner. Like most church Bylaws, they cover basic issues related to membership, the offices of deacon and elder and the use of church property. They also cover issues that are often overlooked in standard Bylaws, such as Biblical counseling, confidentiality, and conflict resolution.

At first glance, you may wonder why we have gone into such detail and addressed issues that churches have traditionally ignored. The primary answer to this question is that we believe there has been a significant change in the moral and legal climate of this country. Early in the 20th century, most Americans, whether they were Christian or not, held to a common framework of basic moral values. Honesty, fairness, respect for others, self-discipline, and accountability were generally viewed as commendable qualities. In recent years, however, respect for these qualities has been undermined by a growing emphasis on individualism, a diminished respect for authority, the acceptance of relative morality, and the loss of common norms and values.

Because of this change, it is no longer possible to assume that everyone holds to the same standard of common sense, fairness, and justice, even within the same church. Therefore, what seems to be appropriate to one member of a church (for example, allowing the Deacons to spend a certain dollar figure without congregational approval) might seem to be outrageous to another member.

This loss of common values, even within the church, can cause a great deal of confusion and conflict. It can also expose a church to devastating lawsuits. A generation ago, very few people would have even dreamed of suing a church. But the legal climate has changed dramatically in recent years, and today, lawsuits against churches are commonplace. Part of the reason for this is that

people have differing expectations as to how a church should conduct its affairs and treat its members. When these expectations are not met, a lawsuit often follows, which can ruin a church both spiritually and financially.

As Proverbs 22:3 warns, “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naïve go on, and are punished for it.” Realizing that the absence of common norms and values can pose a threat to the unity and well-being of our church, we developed these Bylaws as a means of establishing commonly accepted standards for how we would treat one another and govern ourselves as a body. In particular, these Bylaws are designed to accomplish these goals:

- They help to prevent surprises and disappointed expectations by providing potential members with a thorough explanation of how the church intends to govern itself.
- They reduce the likelihood of confusion and conflict with the church by establishing clear operational guidelines.
- They prevent the misuse of authority by church leaders by limiting their power and establishing procedures that protect members from being disciplined or losing rights without due process.
- They give our leadership protection from being subpoenaed by a civil court to testify regarding information they receive through pastoral counseling, while at the same time giving them guidelines for reporting actual or suspected harm to others.
- They reduce the church’s exposure to legal liability by satisfying recently developed legal requirements, even in areas where we deny that the state has jurisdiction, and by requiring that potential lawsuits will be resolved through Christian conciliation rather than through litigation.

Most people would agree that these are worthwhile goals, but some might still be troubled by the amount of detail found in these Bylaws. They might say, “Why can’t we live with just a few general rules?” The answer to that question is quite simple: Because we live in a fallen world, we tend to interpret general rules differently and twist them to serve our own selfish ends. Therefore, it is often necessary to develop detailed rules to eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings and mistreatments.

This human need for detailed guidance is clearly reflected in Scripture. Instead of giving us only the two great commandments (love God and love your neighbor), God gave us the Ten Commandments. And he didn’t stop there. Realizing our weaknesses and our sinful tendencies to ignore or distort his commandments, God instructed Moses to set forth dozens of detailed laws on how we should behave (see Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy). All of these laws are summed up in the two great commandments, but even Jesus knew that until the world is renewed, we will still need the helpful guidance of the more detailed moral principles set forth throughout Scripture (Matt 5:17-7:6).

One of the places that we sometimes need this kind of detailed guidance is in the church. Scripture does not tell us exactly how to organize ministries or receive input from the congregation or how to dispose of property if a church dissolves. These Bylaws are designed to answer these types of questions, and will hopefully spare us from unnecessary confusion and conflict, help us to act in consistent and respectful ways, and allow us to devote ourselves to the more important matters of God's kingdom.

As you read these Bylaws, we encourage you to look up and study the Bible passages that are cited next to particular provisions. If such study does not answer all of your questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to approach a member of our leadership who will be happy to talk with you about these Bylaws.

## **Confidentiality**

- A. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matt 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 16:28; 26:28, Prov. 11:13; 20:19) invites confession (Prov. 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (Prov. 23:19-25, Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our leadership shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the following guidelines.
  
- B. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the leadership of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:
  - 1. When a Pastor or Elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other Pastors or Elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the Pastors or Elders of that church (see Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt 18:15-17);
  - 2. When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Prov. 24:11-12);

3. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matt. 18:15-20) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom. 13:1-5); or
  4. When required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- C. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Therefore, a Pastor or Elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside the church without the approval of the Council of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Council of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Cor. 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.
- D. The Pastors and Elders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

## **Conflict Resolution**

If a dispute arises within the church or between a member and the church and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved as follows:

- A.** The dispute shall be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the “Rules of Procedures” of the Institution for Christian Conciliation, and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.
- B.** All mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with the (statement of faith) of EastPointe Bible Church and our basic form of government, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the dispute. If a dispute involves an attempted revision of the statement of faith or our

form of government, the mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with those documents, as they existed prior to the attempted revision.

## **Membership**

It is the desire of this church to freely extend its fellowship to all individuals. At the same time, this church desires to uphold the principles of commitment to Christ and to His body the Church. This commitment must accompany true membership in the body of Christ as Scripture teaches.

### **1. How to become a member**

All individuals twelve (12) years of age and older who have personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord and who desire to be committed to this church as a local body of believers may become members of this church through the following procedure (all individuals seventeen (17) of age and under who desire to become members of this church must also provide the written consent of their parents or legal guardian.

#### **A. Pattern of Attendance**

Candidate will have established a pattern of regular attendance and consistent participation in the life of this church to the satisfaction of the Council of Elders.

#### **B. Membership Class**

Candidate will be instructed in the following, either by attendance at a membership class or by instruction given by an Elder:

1. The church's Statement of Faith.
2. The Scriptural principals of commitment to the body of Christ.

#### **C. Personal Interview**

Having a good understanding of the previously prescribed instruction, the individuals desiring membership shall meet with the Elders or a representative group of Elders to verbalize their personal testimony, share their views on Christian living and doctrinal truth, and state their desire to be committed to this church as a local body of believers.

#### **D. Expectation Regarding Believers Baptism**

Having agreed to the doctrinal statement, those desiring membership who

have not been baptized by immersion will receive instruction in the ordinance of baptism (thereby seeing the need to be obedient to God's instruction in His Word) and shall agree to be baptized. Elders may allow for exceptions such as physical handicaps.

#### **E. Elder Approval**

The applicant must be approved by the Elders. A signed Statement of commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm one's desire for membership and to serve as a formal record of one's membership.

#### **F. Public Testimony**

New members will be asked to give their testimony concerning their assurance of salvation. They shall declare their substantial agreement with the Statement of Faith of this Church and their willingness to abide by and be governed by its Constitution and Bylaws.

#### **G. Public Welcome**

The new members shall be publicly welcomed into the fellowship of the congregation.

#### **H. Transfer of Membership**

A letter of transfer shall be granted to members in good standing who are uniting with churches of like faith and practice. If a member is not in good standing, churches of like faith and practice requesting a letter will be notified as to their standing and status in the Church

## **2. Membership Status**

### **A. Active Members**

Active members are those who have not absented themselves beyond three (3) months; with exception given to unusual situations such as prolonged sickness, military service, education and a temporary situation.

### **B. Inactive Members**

When a member has unreasonably absented himself or herself from the church for a period of three (3) months; he or she will automatically forfeit an active status and thus will be placed on an inactive status. Notification will be made by mail of this action.

### **C. Reinstatement of Active Status**

A member who forfeited an active status in accordance to the above guidelines will be reinstated into an active status when the person has reestablished a pattern of regular attendance and consistent participation in the life of this church to the satisfaction of the Council of Elders. Notification will be made by mail of this action.

### **D. Forfeiture of Membership**

Members who have absented themselves from the church for a period of twelve (12) months or longer without notifying the church of their reason for absence shall forfeit membership status, subject to review by the Council of Elders. Notification will be made by mail of this action.

## **3. Restoration of members overtaken by sin**

### **A. Loving Concern**

Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship with the body of believers, and ultimately weakens the witness of the church among nonbelievers. Mutual accountability and concern for one another are Scriptural principles that play a vital part in the restoration process, which might have to be exercised upon a fellow member who is out of harmony with sound Biblical doctrine and/or behavior. While correction may range from words of exhortation to action of excommunication, the ultimate challenge and goal are for those “who are spiritual, to restore such a one” who has been “overtaken in a fault” and to do so “in the spirit of meekness...” (Galatians 6:1).

### **B. Scriptural Pattern**

Matters of church discipline will follow the procedure as stated in Matthew 18:15-17 and Titus 3:10-11 and Romans 16:17-18. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a Biblical standard of doctrine (Galatians 6:1).

Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Council of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to

Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of an erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such an erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders. If the Council of Elders determines after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by the pertinent Scripture, that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church and the congregation at a regularly scheduled meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at the regularly scheduled meeting. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation at a regularly scheduled meeting. If the erring individual after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

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 the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraph, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignation from membership is possible only by members not under any disciplinary action.

## **Council of Elders**

### **1. Governing Body**

The chief governing body of EastPointe Bible Church shall be the Council of Elders. In counsel with the Deacons, all the activities and affairs of the church shall be exercised by and under the authority of the Council of Elders who are to govern, oversee, shepherd, protect and care for those attending the church. This God-given authority is NOT ultimate and unrestrained. Jesus Christ is the true shepherd, who has entrusted the care of His church to the Pastor-teachers who govern by means of conforming to Scriptural principles. The Biblical pattern of effective leadership is best obtained through congregational involvement. Therefore, it is our goal to make sound, Biblical decisions in harmony with the local assembly. (Acts 6:5)

### **2. Qualifications of Elders**

The following list of qualifications of Elders is compiled from 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- A.** Above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- B.** Husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- C.** Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2)
- D.** Self-controlled, sober minded, sensible, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- E.** Respectable, good behavior, orderly (1 Timothy 3:2)
- F.** Hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- G.** Able to teach, he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- H.** Not given to drunkenness, not addicted to wine (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- I.** Not violent, not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- J.** Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)
- K.** Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered

(1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

- L.** Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:6)
- M.** Rules well his own house. His dependent children are faithful; not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6)
- N.** Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- O.** Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- P.** Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- Q.** A lover of the good and sensible (Titus 1:8)
- R.** Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
- S.** Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
- T.** Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

### **3. Primary Functions of Elders**

- A.** Elders are to shepherd the flock of God, which involves caring for the people and guarding them against false teachers (1 Peter 5:2, 3; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- B.** Elders are to teach and exhort (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- C.** Elders are to refute those who contradict the truth of the Word (Titus 1:9)
- D.** Elders are to manage the church of God with gentleness, not lording over the flock (1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Peter 5:2, 3)
- E.** Elders are to minister to the sick and others in need (James 5:13-16)
- F.** Elders shall interview those interested in church membership, being assured that they are in agreement with the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

## **4. Administrative Procedures**

### **A. Number of Elders**

The council of Elders will consist of scripturally qualified male members who desire the office of Elder. The total number of Elders will be based upon the need of the ministry as determined by current Council members, not to be fewer than two (2) Elders, as long as scripturally qualified men are available.

### **B. Term of Office**

The term of office shall continue so long as the Elder meets the Biblical qualifications and desires to continue serving the Lord in this capacity. While periodic evaluation may become necessary, annual evaluations will be conducted of each Elder by the other Elders and by himself.

### **C. Elder development:**

- 1.** Under the direction of the Senior Pastor, the Council of elders may select men who fit the biblical guidelines for Eldership, exhibit indications of a call of God on their life and have the desire for entrance into an Elder Development program. This program will be designed to mentor men towards eldership here at EBC or elsewhere. This program will have the goal of producing a personal written doctrinal statement and will include an ordination examination for the candidate and will proceed under the direction of the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders.
- 2.** Men who enter into this development process will be announced to the congregation for prayer and consideration of qualifications. The candidacy will continue as long as no unresolved qualification issues arise. Members of the congregation will be encouraged to follow the normal process for loving confrontation and restoration (Matthew 18) concerning matters of disqualification.
- 3.** Once the development process has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council of Elders and according to the preceding steps, the Elder Candidate will be officially commissioned at a public service. (1 Timothy 5:22 & previously referenced passages in this section.)

#### **D. Intentionally Blank**

#### **E. Status of Pastors**

Pastors; those Elders who “labor in the word and doctrine” and are remunerated for their labor, shall be members of the Council of Elders with neither any more nor any less authority or privileges than any other Elder.

#### **F. Decision-Making Process**

The Council of Elders should reach decisions as the result of mutual respect and conviction and/or persuasions of each other, consideration being given until consensus is achieved (1 Corinthians 1:10, 11; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2)

#### **G. Quorum.**

The council of elders shall annually determine the quorum for its meetings.

#### **H. Removal of Elders**

Any Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Council if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the Elders, in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. When an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20.

### **5. Business Transactions**

#### **A. Normal Operation Transactions**

The Council of Elders may expend or delegate to expend funds for the normal operations of this church within the annual budget guidelines with accountability such as the Purchase Order Requisition process.

## **B. Non-real Estate Transactions**

The Council of Elders may purchase or sell any non-real estate property within the annual budget guidelines.

## **C. Real Estate Transactions**

The Council of Elders shall not encumber the congregation with loans, buy, sell, or transfer any non-real estate property or real estate except after consensus among themselves and a public request and allowing ample time for input and support of the congregation.

## **6. Church Officers**

### **A. Selection of Church Officers**

Church officers will be appointed and duties defined by the Council of Elders as deemed necessary. These may include a Mediator, Church Clerk, Financial Secretary and/or Financial Treasurer.

### **B. Term of Office**

The terms of all church officers will be defined by the Council of Elders.

## **7. Committees**

The Council of Elders shall appoint committees as needed and shall be responsible for procedures and accountability of such committees. This may include job descriptions, committee structures, guidelines and procedures, terms of office, duration of committees, etc.

## **Council of Deacons**

### **1. Authority and Responsibility**

#### **A. Chain of Command**

Authority and responsibility of the Council of Deacons shall be derived solely from the Council of Elders and limited to guidelines established by the Elders in addition to those contained in this Constitution and Bylaws.

#### **B. Periodic Review**

Responsibilities and guidelines for the Council of Deacons shall be reviewed periodically and may be modified at any time by the Council

of Elders for the efficient conduct of church business, with the exception of those contained in this Constitution and Bylaws.

**2. Qualifications of Deacons**

This list of qualifications for Deacons is compiled from 1 Timothy 3:8-12.

- A.** Worthy of respect, men of dignity
- B.** Sincere, not double-tongued
- C.** Not indulging in much wine, not addicted to much wine
- D.** Not pursuing dishonest gain
- E.** Keep hold of the truths of the faith
- F.** Nothing against them, above reproach
- G.** Husband of one wife
- H.** Manage dependent children and household well

**3. Qualifications for the wives of the Deacons**

This list of qualifications for the Deacon's wives are compiled from 1 Timothy 3:11.

- A.** Worthy of respect
- B.** Not malicious talkers
- C.** Temperate
- D.** Trustworthy in everything

**4. Function of Deacon Council**

The Deacon Council is to minister to the temporal needs of the congregation as authorized or assigned by the Council of Elders in order to permit the Elders to concentrate more on the spiritual needs of the congregation (Acts 6:1-6)

## **5. Administrative Procedures**

### **A. Number of Deacons**

The Deacon Council shall consist of any number of men, who are members in good standing, as deemed necessary by the Council of Elders to meet the ministry needs of the church, not to be fewer than (5) Deacons, as long as scripturally qualified men are available.

### **B. Term of Office**

A Deacon may serve as long as he meets the biblical qualifications and has the desire to do so. Upon request a Deacon will be granted a sabbatical.

### **C. Selection of Additional Deacons**

Any addition to or vacancy on the Deacon Council may be filled in accordance with the following procedure:

1. The current Deacon Council shall apprise the Council of Elders of the need for an additional Deacon(s).
2. Upon approval from the Elders, the Deacon Council shall compile a list of potential candidates who meet the Biblical qualifications for this office. This list will be compiled in the following the manner:

After public declaration of the need, any member of the congregation, including the Deacons, may submit the names of qualified men for the office of Deacon in accordance with Acts 1:15, 23; Acts 6:3; and Acts 15:22.

The Deacon Council shall evaluate the name(s) as to his (or their) qualifications.

3. The Deacon Council shall submit a list of qualified candidates to the Council of Elders for their approval.
4. The final list will be presented to the congregation for input which will initiate a “testing period” the length of which is determined by the Elders and shall be no less than six months.

The congregation is to examine the names of the nominees. If

someone has reason to believe that a particular man is not qualified or if they have a question, it is his/her responsibility to go to that man and attempt to resolve the issue.

If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the questioning party, then that person may come to the Council of Elders with the concern. The Council of Elders will then investigate the matter.

If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Council of Elders, the nominee remains a potential Deacon. If not, his name will be dropped.

5. Upon agreement of the Council of Elders and Deacon Council the Elders, with the current deacons, shall interview the candidates agreed upon, verifying the individual's qualifications and desires to serve as a Deacon. During a closed session, the Elders and Deacons shall take counsel, and if no concern has surfaced and the Elders and Deacons are still in agreement, the candidate shall be asked to serve as a Deacon.

#### **D. Deacon Chairman**

A Deacon Chairman will be selected by the council of elders and presented to the deacons for input. With biblical effort to resolve any objections, he will serve as long as he desires and continues to meet the biblical qualifications for deacons. His role will be one of organizing documenting and communication to ensure all deacon service needs are filled.

#### **E. Decision-Making Process**

The Deacon Council should reach decisions as the result of mutual respect for conviction and/or persuasions of each other, consideration being given until consensus is achieved. The Deacon Council will be responsible to submit a synopsis of meetings and bear the responsibility to carry out those decisions. (1 Corinthians 1:10-11; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2)

#### **F. Quorum.**

The Council of Elders shall determine the quorum for the Deacons' meetings.

## **G. Removal of a Deacon**

Any Deacon may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Council if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the Elders, in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. Any removal from office of a deacon will be made known to the congregation by the elders at the next practical assembly.

## **Pastors**

### **1. Responsibilities**

- A. The Pastor(s) as Elders shall serve on the Council of Elders.
- B. The Pastor(s) shall be those Elders who give themselves to the ministry to the extent that their livelihood is met through the financial support of the Church.
- C. The Pastor(s) shall have oversight of all public services of worship in cooperation with other Elders.
- D. The Pastor(s) shall take special concern for the various ministries of the Church. In case of Associate Pastor(s), responsibilities may be more specified as determined by the Council of Elders.
- E. The Pastor(s) primary duty as outlined in Acts 6:2-4 is to maintain the God-given spiritual priorities of preaching God's Word and prayer. He shall protect the spiritual welfare of the congregation by teaching, leading, governing, and caring.
- F. Pastor(s) will serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the Church. All boards, committees, or ministries shall provide a synopsis of meetings upon request.

### **2. His Call**

- A. Considering the previously stated biblical qualifications and job description, the Elder Council shall hear and interview available men. They shall recommend to the congregation the man considered as a pastoral candidate.
- B. The congregation will be given an opportunity to hear him preach and to question him doctrinally and personally.
- C. The congregation will be given opportunity to provide written input of biblical reasons supporting their conviction of why the pastoral candidate is or is not called by God to shepherd the body of Christ at EastPointe. This input should be submitted in writing. The final decision rests with the consensus of the Council of Elders.

### **3. His Tenure**

- A. The Senior Pastor shall have the option of electing employment by the church or establishing a contractual relationship with the church as a self-employed person. All other Pastors shall be employees of the church.
- B. Any Pastor may terminate his ministry by submitting in writing his resignation to the Elder Council no less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the effective date. The Elder Council will announce the resignation to the congregation. The twenty-one (21) day notice can be waived by mutual consent.
- C. The Pastor's ministry may be terminated by:
  - 1. In accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20, persons who feel the Pastor's ministry should be terminated should submit to the Elders and Deacons a written request for dismissal supported by their reasons for such action.
  - 2. The Council of Elders will prayerfully and carefully investigate the request as to its' compliance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20. The Elder council's decision will be communicated to the submitter of the request and determine if further action may be necessary.
  - 3. Intentionally Blank.
  - 4. The Pastor must be given thirty (30) days' severance pay.

#### **4. His Salary & Benefits**

- A. His salary will be reviewed by the Elders and Deacons. Annual increases shall be granted as funds permit and as a reward for faithful, effective service.
- B. His vacation shall be determined at the time of his call and be included in his salary package. The Elders shall take into consideration the Pastor's experience and years in the ministry.
- C. The Pastor will be sent, expenses paid, to the annual meetings of organizations with which the Church is affiliated.

### **Internal Organizations**

#### **1. The Sunday School**

- A. It shall have as its purpose the teaching of the Word of God to all ages, on the level of that age, and with the most effective methods available and allowable through the Word of God. It shall be a part of the Church in all aspects and shall not be considered independent from the total Church programs or policies.
- B. Appointment of teachers is in the hands of the Elder Council. The superintendents of the departments involved shall meet with the committee when felt necessary. (The Pastor, Deacons, and Sunday School Superintendent will care for this matter at this time.)
- C. Only active members shall serve as teachers.
- D. Teachers shall uphold the Biblical standards of the Church and will adhere to and annually sign the Personnel Release Form.
- E. All teachers, superintendents, and officers are requested to attend Sunday School council meetings unless providentially hindered.

#### **2. Ministries**

- A. It is recognized that the Church may have within it various auxiliary organizations such as the men's or women's missionary society,

AWANA, youth groups, choirs, men's or women's fellowships, and other organizations.

- B. Organizations may be formed as are necessary to carry out the function and ministry of the local Church. They must be approved by the Elders or their appointee and be subject to the Church regulation and policy. They may not constitute any violation or conflict with the accepted constitution and by-laws or any other official documents of the Church.
- C. Ministry Directors must be members in good standing of the Church and regular in attendance to the services of the Church. They must be in agreement with the leadership standards of the Church.
- D. Such groups may not adopt or promote, without the consent of the Pastor and Deacons, programs, missionaries, or any other activities which are not already a part of the Church program.
- E. Ministries within the church will prepare and give a report to the council of deacons annually and/or as requested by the deacon chairman.

**3. Meetings:** The congregation shall meet for worship and Bible study each Sunday morning *and at other times as called by the Elders*.

**4. Licensing and Ordaining** - See section on Elder development.

## **5. Amendments**

- A. The constitution and by-laws of this Church may be amended by the Council of Elders after careful and prayerful consideration and ample notice to and input from the deacons and congregation.
- B. Copies of the proposed amendment must be provided for each member in good standing and no less than 30 days shall be designated for input and feedback from the body. Such proposed changes will be advertised to members in good standing via email and when requested via printed copy.
- C. Once the elders have received all input and feedback their final decision and effective date will be publicly announced for updates.

## Glossary of Terms:

1. **Consensus:** when a majority of a council or committee agree and the decision can move forward in good faith. This does not require 100% agreement by all parties. The consensus model will function as a quorum for submitting to Indiana State Law IC 23-17
2. **Council:** A group of men endowed in a position of authority
3. **Deacon:** A man that meets the biblical prerequisites for being one of the official servants of the church who serves with the Deacon Council.
4. **Elders:** Biblically qualified men that function in a way that meets the requirements for “members” according to Indiana state laws governing 501c3 status.
5. **Feedback:** Honest and humble submissions to the Council of Elders regarding decisions they are making. Written submissions are highly recommended.
6. **Input:** Honest and humble perspectives about areas the elders might not have considered.
7. **Marriage:** the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.
8. **Meeting:** A gathering of a group of people for a specific purpose at a specific time and place. Usually defined in other ways i.e. worship meeting, committee meeting etc.
9. **Member:** Any believer and follower of Jesus Christ that has followed the guidelines for EBC membership herein. This is not a member in the sense of Indiana state law governing 501c3 corporations.
10. **Membership:** Privileges that come with being a member of the body of Christ and making a public declaration of desire to be associated with the congregation of EastPointe Bible Church in accordance with the guidelines outlined herein. Those privileges do not exceed what is permitted in scripture.
11. **Ministry:** An organization within the body of church established for a specific area, age group or purpose.
12. **Ministry Director:** A Member of the body of Christ that has been given authority by the Council of Elders to organize and oversee the operations of a particular ministry within the church.
13. **Pastoral Ministry:** The personal acts of ministering in the Word of God and Prayer conducted by the pastor(s).
14. **Pastors:** Elders who are devoted to the ministry of the Word and prayer that are remunerated for their labor.
15. **Ordaining:** The process by which men are officially recognized and commissioned as called by God to be a pastor/teacher.