

# **EPC Church Constitution**

## **CHAPTER 1 General Provisions**

### **Article 1 Name**

This church shall be called Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in San Jose (“hereinafter EPC”).

### **Article 2 Creed (Statement of Faith)**

EPC accepts the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as guidance for faith and living. We seek to adhere to the standards of church governance, worship, and the ordinance of discipline as provided by the laws of the Presbytery to which EPC belongs. We believe that the following statements of faith are in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, and hereby adopt them as EPC’s Creed:

1. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the infallible Word of God written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are the only authority for our faith and life.
2. We believe that God the Father, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are one in essence, equal in glory and power.
3. We believe that from the time of our forefather Adam all men have sinned against God, and that God has given His Son, Jesus Christ, as our only Savior and Lord.
4. We believe that God gifts our salvation unto us by His grace through faith.
5. We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and that the church’s mission is to save lost souls.
6. We acknowledge the leading role of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel and in the ministry of the church.
7. We believe in the historical and bodily death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
8. We faithfully enforce Baptism and Holy Communion as the sacraments instituted by Christ.
9. We believe that marriage consists of a holy union between one man and one woman, and that it represents the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church.
10. We believe that it is the duty of all believers to gather in congregational worship, to pray constantly, to participate in the sacraments, to engage in fellowship with the saints, to give thanks for God’s grace, to give offerings, to participate wholeheartedly in saving lost souls, and to await the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ.
11. While we do not know when Jesus will come again, we will pray and eagerly await Jesus Christ’s imminent advent.
12. We believe that all humanity will be resurrected and stand before Christ’s judgment on the last day, and that those who have obeyed Him in faith will enter God’s heavenly kingdom, while those who continue to disobey in their sin will receive a just judgment commensurate to their offence.

## **CHAPTER 2 Church Staff**

### **Article 3 Permanent staff**

The permanent staff of EPC consists of Elders (Overseers) (Acts 20: 17,28; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7) and Deacons, and the Elders consist of Teaching Elders who both preach and govern, and Ruling Elders who solely devote themselves to the governance of EPC.

### **Article 4 Temporary staff**

By necessity and under the authority of the Session, the temporary staff shall be appointed without ordination as follows:

- (1) Evangelist: Assists with the ministries of EPC under the guidance of the Pastors and the Session.
- (2) Gwonsa: A female believer who is 45 years of age or older and an Active Member of EPC, who has been instructed by the Session to visit members of EPC, and to care for the sick, the afflicted, and the weak within EPC.
- (3) Deacon for Term: An Active Member who has been temporarily appointed to serve the administration of EPC.

### **Article 5 Temporary Staff Election and Terms**

- (1) Evangelist: To be appointed by resolution of the Session, for a term of one year. May be re-elected by resolution of the Session.
- (2) Gwonsa: To be elected according to the provisions in Article 10 as a temporary non-ordained office, but shall remain in service in the absence of any disciplinary action against her.
- (3) Deacon for Term: To be appointed upon the nomination of the Session and the consent of the nominee, to serve for a term not exceeding one year.

## **CHAPTER 3 Qualifications of Employees**

### **Article 6 Pastor**

- (1) Qualifications: A person who falls under the descriptions of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4 who has graduated from a formal seminary institution and ordained by a recognized denomination, and also:
  - a. Accepts the charter and by-laws of EPC and its denomination,
  - b. Is truthful/sincere in his faith and actions,
  - c. Leads his family through love and devotion in every circumstance,
  - d. Is respected and praised even by nonbelievers, and
  - e. Is a male of 27 years or older.
- (2) Distinctions
  - a. Installed Pastor: A head pastor who has been called and appointed / designated by EPC for a life term.
  - b. Temporary Pastor: A pastor who has been called by EPC to serve for 1 year whose term may be extended based on a decision by a Congregational Meeting.

- c. Associate Pastor: A temporary pastor who assists the Head Pastor whose tenure may be extended yearly based on a decision by the Session.

### **Article 7 Elder**

#### (1) Qualification

- a. An Active Member in accordance to 1 Timothy 3: 1-7,
- b. Who acknowledges the creed, charter, and by-laws of EPC,
- c. A male who is 45 years of age or older,
- d. Who has served EPC without reproach for at least 5 years after his baptism,
- e. Who has been an Active Member for at least 5 years,
- f. Who is firm in his assurance of salvation, and
- g. Who is respected and acknowledged even by nonbelievers.

- (2) Adjunct Elders are elders who have been registered in EPC for more than 2 years and appointed by resolution of the Session. Upon 1 year of appointment, he may serve as an active elder upon approval of 2/3 or more of the Active Members attending the Congregational Meeting.

### **Article 8 Deacon**

#### (1) Qualification

- a. An Active Member in accordance to 1 Timothy 3:8-13,
- b. Who acknowledges the creed and by-laws of EPC,
- c. A male who is 35 years of age or older,
- d. Who has served EPC without reproach for at least 3 years after his baptism,
- e. Who has been an Active Member for at least 3 years,
- f. Who is firm in his assurance of salvation, and
- g. Who is respected and acknowledged even by nonbelievers.

- (2) Adjunct Deacons are deacons who have attended EPC for 2 years as an Active Member, and have been appointed by resolution of the Session.

- (3) By resolution of the Session, Deacons for Term can be appointed tasked with the responsibilities of Ordained Deacons.

### **Article 9 Gwonsa**

The office of Gwonsa is a permanent office in that once appointed, their term of service is indefinite. However, it is a temporary office in that they are not appointed by ordination.

#### (1) Qualifications:

- a. A female Active Member who is 45 years of age or older and who has attended EPC for three years after registering as a member,
- b. Whose faith is true,
- c. Who is firm in her assurance of salvation,
- d. Who serves her fellow brothers and sisters in love, and
- e. Who is respected and acknowledged even by nonbelievers.

- (2) Adjunct Gwonsas are gwonsas who have attended EPC for 2 years as an Active Member, and have been appointed by resolution of the Session.

## **CHAPTER 4 Staff Election and Terms**

### **Article 10 Permanent Staff Election and Terms**

- (1) Pastor: To be called upon approval of 2/3 or more of the attending Active Members during the Congregational Meeting. Upon termination of term, the pastor shall not plant a church or receive the calling of a church that is within 20 miles of EPC within three years of the end of his ministry.
- (2) Elder, Deacon, Gwonsa: The Session shall announce the time and location of the Congregational Meeting for the purpose of voting for the appointment of staff at least 6 months prior to the Congregational Meeting. Candidates will be nominated in accordance with Articles 7, 8, and 9, and shall be appointed upon approval of 2/3 or more of the attending Active Members during the Congregational Meeting.
- (3) Voting Method: Voting shall be done once per candidate, anonymously, limited to one vote per attending Active Member.

## **CHAPTER 5 Disciplining Committee**

### **Article 11 Session**

- (1) Organization: As one of the three disciplining committees (Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly) of the Presbyterian Church, it is comprised of the Head Pastor and Active Elders. The Disciplining Committee becomes effective upon attendance by the majority of Elders and 1 Pastor. Upon resolution of the Session, the English Ministry Pastor, Temporary Pastor, and Adjunct Elders may sit in the Disciplining Committee with observatory status.
- (2) Meeting: Meets regularly every month, and can be summoned upon Pastor's request

### **Article 12 Congregational Meeting**

- (1) Congregational Meetings can only be attended by Active Members of EPC.
- (2) Meetings:
  - a. Regular Congregational Meeting: Meets every January.
  - b. Ad-hoc Congregational Meeting: Meets upon request of the Session, or upon a request of 1/3 or more of the members, or the head of the Session.
- (3) Chairman, Clerk: The head of the Session of the local church is the chairman, and in his absence, upon resolution of the Session, a temporary chairman sent by the Presbytery or a member of the Session can be appointed as temporary chairman. The clerk of the Session serves as the clerk, and all minutes of the Congregational Meeting shall be kept by him.
- (4) Validation: The Session will announce or notify all members of the time, location, and agenda of the Congregational Meeting at least two weeks prior, and shall operate on the basis of those who attend the Congregational Meeting.
- (5) Resolution: All special agenda items including issues pertaining to Pastoral Calling, Election of Elders, Deacons, and Gwonsa shall be determined upon approval of 2/3 or more of all attending Active Members, while general items will be determined upon a majority vote.

### **Article 13 Office-holder's Meeting**

- (1) Organization: Comprised of members of EPC's Session, Deacons, Gwonsas, and Deacons for Term. The chairman is the head of the session. The clerk can be appointed and departments can be formed upon resolution of the Session.
- (2) Ministry: The Office-holder's meeting is responsible for planning and executing all the ministries of EPC under the guidance of the Session.
- (3) Meeting: Meets on a bimonthly basis. The chairman may order an ad-hoc meeting upon resolution of the Session or a request of 1/3 of the Officer-holders.

## **CHAPTER 6 Church Property**

### **Article 14**

Church Property refers to all real estate, personal property, and all property offered or donated to EPC by individuals or entities.

### **Article 15**

All Church Property is managed and overseen by the Session, and upon a demonstrated need, the Session may delegate this function to a committee such as the Church Property Management Committee.

## **CHAPTER 7 Self-governing Bodies**

### **Article 16**

All self-governing bodies will operate for the purposes of worship, education, and missions, subject to the creed and by-laws of EPC, under the guidance of the Session.

## **CHAPTER 8 Members**

### **Article 17 Membership Requirements**

- (1) Registered members are those who have completed EPC's membership course.
- (2) Active Members are registered members who have been baptized, agreed to adhere to EPC's Constitution consisting of the Statement of Faith and its By-laws, and have been in attendance at EPC for at least a month.

### **Article 18 Membership Benefits**

- (1) Registered members may participate in EPC's worship services and fellowship.
- (2) Active Members (a) are offered full participation in the sacraments listed in the Statement of Faith; (b) have access to Church discipline; (c) may vote in the Congregational Meeting; (d) be voted upon for election for various offices; and (e) upon request and review, receive Marriage Officiating services from a pastor of EPC provided that said marriage conforms to the above Statement of Faith.

## **CHAPTER 9 Addendum**

**Article 19**

This Constitution may be amended upon approval of 2/3 or more of the attending Active Members of the Congregational Meeting.

**Article 20**

In the instance that EPC decides to depart its governing Presbytery, a Congregational Meeting shall gather, and upon a majority vote, may execute its departure from the Presbytery. Upon disaffiliation, all Church Property that previously belonged to EPC shall remain in its possession.

**Article 21**

This Constitution

- was passed and implemented on the Congregational Meeting of January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999;  
and
- partially amended on the Congregational Meeting of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005.