

BY-LAWS

The Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church of Bethlehem, PA

ARTICLE I

Name and Location of the Church

The name of the Church is Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church of Bethlehem, PA.
The Church is located at 3100 Hecktown Road, Bethlehem, PA 18020

ARTICLE II

Constitution

The *Faith and Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church and the Standing Rules of the Bible Fellowship Church Conference serve as the constitution of this church.

The Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church is a member of the Bible Fellowship Church Conference. The Church is bound by its commitment, in so far as it is able, to abide by the enactments and legislation approved by the body.

ARTICLE III

Membership

The membership of Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church is composed of people who, through faith in Christ, have been regenerated, given testimony of the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, been baptized by immersion and have committed themselves to service and fellowship under the authority of the Church.

The standards and responsibilities for Church membership are those set forth in Article 202 of the *Faith and Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church.

A. Types of Membership

Active Member: All those who have been approved for membership by the Board of Elders and who pledge regular attendance, ministry to the church body and financial support. Those who, because of sickness or infirmities, are unable to attend services or contribute to the financial support of the work are still considered active members.

Associate Members: All those who by special consideration have been conferred this status by the Church for specific circumstances, such status shall be granted upon the merits of each appeal and shall not confer voting privileges. Since the Church believes all individuals should be actively associated with a local body of believers, such membership shall be reviewed annually.

Inactive Members: All those members who, without reasonable excuse, have not attended the regular services of the Church for a period of one year and have failed to communicate

with the Church during that time. Such inactive members names will be removed from the active roll and will not be counted in statistical reports. Such members shall not have voting privileges.

B. Application

The procedure for applying for Church Membership is as follows:

1. The applicant shall familiarize themselves with the *Articles of Faith and Order* and the *Biblical Principles for Living* and such other materials as is pertinent to the understanding of doctrine and standards and government of the Church. Applicants shall attend classes to help familiarize them with this information.
2. The applicant shall submit a Church Membership Application to either the Membership and Discipline Committee or a member of the Pastoral staff for consideration by the Board of Elders.
3. The applicant shall be interviewed by the Membership Committee concerning their salvation, Christian life and commitment to the ministry of the Church. The Elders of the Church shall consider for approval the applicant for membership. Those approved shall be publicly recognized in a worship service.

C. Membership Termination

Membership in Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church may terminate in any of the following ways:

1. By death
2. By transfer to another Bible Fellowship Church
At ones request, the Board of Elders may remove a member's name from the church roll and may forward a letter of transfer to a designated Bible Fellowship Church with which one is uniting providing one is a member in good standing.
3. By transfer to another evangelical Church
At ones request, the Board of Elders may remove a member's name from the church roll and may forward a letter of transfer to a designated evangelical church with which one is uniting, providing one is a member in good standing. A letter of transfer will not be issued to an unspecified church.
4. By withdrawal
At one's request, the Board of Elders will remove a member's name from the church roll, if they are in good standing, allowing for discipline if otherwise.
5. By inactivity
Members, who have been absent without just cause for a period of one year, may be dropped from the list of members. Any individual so removed shall be informed of that action, and may be reinstated upon acceptable explanation to the Board of Elders of the reasons for the absence, or upon the resumption of attendance or promise to resume attendance.

6. By exclusion through church discipline
Should a member become an offense to the Church, its stated purposes or its testimony, the church may terminate such membership, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and correction as indicated in Article 300, entitled "Discipline", in the *Faith and Order*.

Discipline

The Scriptures warn that false teachers, disruptive persons and immorality will enter the Church, and admonishes the Church to exercise discipline over those who threaten the peace and purity of the fellowship.

- A. The purposes of discipline:
 1. To restore the offending member to fellowship with the Lord and His people.
 2. To preserve the peace and purity of the Church.
 3. To protect younger and weaker members of the Church from spiritual harm.
 4. To maintain the testimony of the Church.
- B. The causes of discipline:
 1. The introduction of heretical doctrine which threatens the well-being of the Church.
 2. The causing of divisions within the Body which threaten the unity of the fellowship.
 3. Disorderly conduct which threatens to damage other members of the Church or to bring scandal upon the name of Christ and His Church.
- C. The procedure in discipline:

Where there appears to be cause for disciplinary action against a member of the church, Biblical principles as outlined in Scripture (Matthew 5:23,24, 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-5) shall be followed, as well as any guidelines enacted by The Bible Fellowship Church Conference.
- D. Restoration to membership:

The Church shall reinstate a previously disciplined member upon their request and expression of repentance and satisfactory evidence that they have made the necessary correction.

ARTICLE IV Government

Though each Bible Fellowship Church is autonomous, they are not independent because they are part of a fellowship of churches.

The assembly of churches is represented, in one body, from all the particular churches of this denomination and is called the Bible Fellowship Church Conference.

The government of the church, the conduct of its business, the management of all its property, real and personal, the supervision of its general work, and its ministries shall, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit be vested in the Pastors, the Elders, the Deacons, and staff, as herewith provided.

ARTICLE V
Church Meetings

A. Annual Congregational Meetings

The Congregation shall hold two regular meetings each year.

1. The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held in January for the receiving of yearly (January - December) reports of officers and committees and for any other business that may arise. At this meeting there shall be a roll call consisting of the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, and all other officers who are required to report. The annual election of Elders and Deacons shall take place at this meeting unless this election is held at a special Congregational Meeting that precedes the Annual Congregational Meeting. Election of Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Annual Conference as nominated by the Board of Elders are to be elected by the congregation at a time following the election of Elders.
2. The Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held during the months of July/August. This would be an informal meeting which would involve a report on the state of the Church, the approval of the Nominating Committee, vision setting, planning and other pertinent business. Other items of business that may arise can be presented at the meeting.

B. Special Congregational Meetings

Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or by action of the Board of Elders. Purposes for such meetings include, but are not limited to, the approval of the Annual Budget, the calling of pastoral staff, etc. Calls for special meetings shall include a statement of the purpose of the meeting, and generally no other business shall be conducted.

C. Particulars with regard to meetings

1. A quorum shall consist of the Chairman, the Secretary, and all the eligible voters present.
2. Announcements of meetings shall be made at not less than all the regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship services for two consecutive weeks prior to the proposed meeting, and shall also be printed in the bulletins for these same services.
3. In all voting of the Church, only those active members of the Congregation who are present and have attained the age of sixteen are eligible to vote.
4. In all voting of the Church, a simple majority vote shall be sufficient to either approve, amend, or defeat any motion, with the exception of election of the Pastoral Staff, and amendment of the By-Laws which requires a two-thirds majority vote.

D. Board of Elders Meetings

1. Regular Meetings – the Board of Elders shall meet regularly each month.

2. Special Meetings – Special meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or upon the petition of three members of the Board of Elders.
 3. The Secretary of the Board shall record and issue minutes of all meetings to be distributed within a two-week period following the meetings.
- E. Board of Deacons Meetings
1. Regular Meetings – The Board of Deacons shall meet at least bi-monthly, or more often if so required. A schedule of meetings is to be set.
- F. Committee Meetings
1. Church Committees shall meet as frequently as necessary to carry on their assigned responsibilities.
 2. Meetings shall be called by the Chairperson of the Committee or by one of the members of the Committee in consultation with the Chairperson.

ARTICLE VI

Officers, Boards, Committees and Elections

- A. Senior Pastor
- The Senior Pastor of the Church shall be called as provided for in and in accordance with Article 409 of the *Faith and Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church Conference. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders, after prayerful investigation and consideration, he shall be elected by the Congregation for an indefinite period. He shall be the Chairman of the Board of Elders and of the Congregational Meetings.
- B. Other Pastoral Staff Positions
1. Pastoral staff such as Associate Pastors, Pastor of Youth/Young Adults, etc. shall be hired according to the needs and vision of the church.
 2. The BFC Faith and Order, Article 409-1.14, permits the expedient calling of pastors to other pastoral staff positions than Senior Pastor without the direct involvement of the congregation. EBFC will involve the congregation in the calling of all pastoral staff because it is important to harmony within the church between the leadership and the congregation as expressed by the spirit of the BFC Faith and Order Articles 401-1.4, .5, and .6. The procedure for calling all pastoral staff other than Senior Pastor shall include the following major steps.
 - a. A search committee shall be established and shall serve at the direction of the elders. It shall include lay men and women with knowledge and/or experience in the specific area of ministry for which leadership is being sought, church staff if appropriate, and elders one of whom will chair the committee.

- b. A job description shall be established by the elders with consideration from the Search Committee.
 - c. The search committee shall carry out its function independently, shall seek guidance from the elders as needed, and arrive at a recommendation to the elders.
 - d. The elders shall receive the recommendation of the search committee, meet with and interview the recommended candidate, and if in agreement with the search committee's recommendation shall present the candidate to the congregation for approval of a minimum of two thirds majority of those present at the meeting.
- C. Board of Elders

- 1. No person will be considered as a candidate for the office of Elder unless he has been an active member in good standing of Ebenezer Church for at least one year at the time of the Annual Meeting.
- 2. The Board of Elders shall be composed of the Senior Pastor, other pastoral staff, and up to 10 lay men elected according to the rules of the *Faith and Order*. For each additional fifty members above three hundred, another Elder may be added. The number of men serving shall be established by recommendation of the Board of Elders and approval of the Congregation.
- 3. Elders shall be elected for a period of three years arranged in classes so that approximately one-third of the Elders will be elected in any one year. Shorter terms may be permitted by special circumstances.
- 4. If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Elders, the unexpired term may be filled by a special election at a Congregational meeting.
- 5. The election of Elders will be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting unless this election is held at a special Congregational Meeting.
- 6. The term of office for the newly elected Elders shall begin immediately after the Congregational Meeting at which they were elected.
- 7. After the completion of a term of office, an Elder may be eligible for re-election.
- 8. An installation service shall be conducted following the election for those not having served before.

D. The Officers of the Board of Elders

- 1. The Board of Elders shall hold an organizational meeting in January or February. At this meeting, the Board shall, in addition to regular business:
 - a. Elect by and from its members, a president, vice-president and secretary, these being recognized as the Executive Officers of the Board.

- b. The Senior Pastor shall appoint from among the Elders, chairmen for all organized committees, as provided in these By-laws. Committee members shall be recruited and confirmed by the publication of the officially listed committees.
 - c. An appointment of two or more of its lay members shall be made to the membership of the Pastoral Relations Committee, in addition to the chairman.
 - d. An appointment of two, three or four of its members shall be made to the Membership and Discipline Committee, in addition to the Chairman. As enacted by the Board this committee is to consist of Elders only.
2. The Officers of the Board of Elders shall be the authorized legal representatives of the Church. They shall hold title to all properties of the Local Church in trust as per Article 408 of the BFC Faith and Order. They shall review or see that the Finance Committee reviews annually all insurance coverage for the Church and associated organizations where coverage is involved.
 3. In the absence of the Chairman, the President of the Board shall preside at the Board Meetings.
 4. The Secretary of the Board shall be secretary of the Congregational Meetings.
 5. Arrangements for pulpit supply in cases where the Pastor is absent due to vacation, sickness, etc. will be made by the Officers of the Board.
- E. Church Treasurer
1. He shall be elected by the Board of Elders annually.
 2. He shall be a member of the Finance Committee.
 3. If he is a member of the Board of Elders, he shall be an Executive Officer of the Board.
- F. Delegates to Annual Conference
- The Board of Elders shall nominate from their number with congregational approval the Delegate(s) and Alternate Delegate(s) from the Church to serve at Annual Conference and function as called upon by the *Faith and Order*.
- G. Board of Deacons
1. If there are sufficient eligible men it is desirable that the number of Deacons be equal to the number of Elders so that Elder/Deacon teams may be established which can minister both to the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation.
 2. A candidate for the office of Deacon shall have been an active member in good standing of Ebenezer Church for at least one year at the time of the Annual Meeting.
 3. They shall be elected for a period of three years arranged in classes so that approximately one-third of the Deacons will be elected in any one year. Shorter terms of service may be permitted by special circumstances.

4. The election of Deacons will be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting unless this election is held at a special Congregational Meeting.
5. If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Deacons, the unexpired term may be filled by a special election at a Congregational Meeting.
6. They shall elect by and from its members a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman shall preside over the regular meetings of the Board of Deacons.
7. After completion of a term of office, a Deacon may be eligible for re-election.
8. An installation service shall be conducted following the election for those not having served before.

H. Nominating Committee

1. The Nominating Committee exists to serve the Elders in the role of interviewing and recommending prospective Elders and Deacons.
2. A Nominating Committee of at least four shall be elected by the Board of Elders at its June or July meeting. This election shall be confirmed by the Congregation at the Semi-Annual meeting.
3. The Senior Pastor shall be Chairman of the Nominating Committee.
4. The Nominating Committee shall publish a list of its nominees by the Sunday prior to election.
5. The Nominating Committee shall affirm the willingness of persons to serve before presenting their names to nomination.
6. Nominations may be offered from the floor at the election meeting by voting members in good standing if the one being nominated meets the requirements of the office and has affirmed his willingness to serve in writing to the Nominating Committee Chairman no later than on the Sunday two weeks prior to the election meeting.

I. Auditing Committee

This Committee shall be assigned by the Finance Committee to audit books and accounts of the organizations within the Church annually and present their findings at the Semi-annual Congregational Meeting.

ARTICLE VII **Board of Elders**

A. Authority and Qualifications

The authority and qualifications of Elders of Ebenezer Church shall be according to the *Faith And Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church. The Board of Elders are those having the ruling or governing authority in the Church.

B. General Duties

The Board of Elders shall have the general oversight of the life and work of the Church including prayer, worship, Christian Education, evangelization, missions, visitation, discipline, finances, and other areas necessary to fulfill the purpose of our church.

C. Specific Duties

1. The particular duties shall be those provided for in the *Faith and Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church and those specified in the by-laws.
2. The Board of Elders shall delegate to the Board of Deacons those particular tasks that it deems advisable to function more efficiently in carrying out the ministry of the Church.
3. The Board of Elders shall form those Standing Committees required by the *Faith and Order* and such other committees as it deems necessary to assist in the efficient carrying out of the work and ministry of the Church.

Standing Committees

The Chairman of each Committee must be a member of the Board of Elders.

A. Pastoral Relations Committee

In addition to the Chairman, an appointment is to be made from the membership of the Board of Elders of two or more lay elders to serve on the Committee. (In accordance with the BFC *Faith and Order* Article 402-1.1, all members of the PRC must be elders.)

This committee is to maintain good relationships between the Pastoral Staff and the congregation, shall discuss with each Pastor problems that arise, shall seek solutions to these problems, and shall carry out its work as per Article 402-1 of the BFC *Faith and Order*.

B. Membership and Discipline Committee

This Committee shall be composed of the Chairman and two, three or four other Elders to serve.

1. They shall interview and pass upon all who express a desire to unite in membership, including those coming by transfer, as to their Christian experience and life.
2. They shall inform all candidates as to Church Doctrine, Life and Worship along with the financial and electoral structure of the Church. The duties of the members shall be stressed.
3. They shall be custodians of the membership roll, revising it annually according to the *Faith and Order* and the precepts of the local Church, and shall obtain and record all information for the membership roll.
4. They shall to the best of their abilities assist the Pastor in his labors pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the Church.
5. They shall administer discipline in the Church in cases where the Pastor requests their assistance.

C. Finance

1. The Church Treasurer shall be a member of this committee.
2. They shall be responsible for the financial structure of the Church. In this respect they shall request all of the organizations and committees working under a budget ministry one month prior to the Finance Committee annual preliminary fiscal planning meeting to present proposed budget needs for the next year.
3. They shall be recipients of the Offerings and Contributions to the Church.
4. They shall deposit such funds as they receive in a Church designated depository in the Name of the Local Church.
5. They shall prepare a proposed budget each year for the period of January 1 through December 31. This proposed budget shall be presented to the Board of Elders for approval, and after such approval, to the Congregation for final approval at its Annual Meeting or special congregational meeting.
6. They shall be responsible to the Congregation to which they shall submit an annual report (as audited by the Auditing Committee), and periodical reports as may be required. Their books shall be open for inspection by the Congregation at all times.

D. Evangelism

General Duty: It shall make recommendations to the Board of Elders that will promote an evangelistic emphasis thus deepening and strengthening the spiritual life of the Church.

Specific Duties:

1. It shall plan special evangelistic efforts and deeper life conferences.
2. It shall develop a program to train in sharing the Gospel with the emphasis on everyday evangelism.
3. It shall endeavor, in conjunction with the pastoral staff, to institute classes for new converts, visitation campaigns in conjunction with evangelistic efforts and means of reaching and holding those who have been contacted for Christ.
4. It shall endeavor through the Church to promote the use of evangelistic resources.
5. It shall provide for the support of all evangelists and conference speakers whom it secures for services in the Church. The committee shall communicate with the Finance Committee on the remuneration for the speakers.
6. It shall recommend to the Board of Elders adequate means and methods to publicize its ministry.

E. Missions

1. They shall seek to promote missions in the Local Church.
2. They shall maintain communication with those Missionaries that are affiliated brethren of the Local Church and those assigned by the Board of Missions of the Bible Fellowship Church. They will be responsible for seeking out and reporting to the Board of Elders the needs of these missionaries.
3. They shall recommend to the Board of Elders projects for disbursement of the monies set apart from Annual Church Budget excess.
4. They shall seek to promote missionary work among the membership, screen candidates, and make recommendations as regards financial support.
5. They shall assist the Pastor in the planning of missionary services.

F. Discipleship Ministries

1. The Pastor of Discipleship shall promote the programs of Christian Education and prayer in the Church.
 - a. He shall supervise all Christian Education and Youth activities and integrate these activities with the Church program, and shall meet periodically with the adult, youth and children's ministry coordinators to facilitate necessary cooperation.
 - b. He shall act as Sunday School Superintendent over all the children, youth, and adult Sunday School programs.
 - c. He shall seek to promote prayer among God's people and shall be responsible for the weekly prayer services of the Church.

G. Worship Committee (members include Elder of Worship and Worship Coordinator)

1. They shall be responsible to the Board of Elders for all aspects of the worship services of the church including music, sound room, etc.
2. The Worship Coordinator shall meet regularly with Worship Ministry Leaders and Committees which shall include, but not be limited to Choir Committee, Sound Room Committee, and Worship Team Leaders. The purpose of these meetings would be to assure alignment of all worship ministries.
3. The Elder of Worship shall represent Worship Ministries to the Board of Elders for purposes of communication and decisions required by the Board.

ARTICLE VIII
Board of Deacons

A. Qualifications and Organization

The qualifications and organization of the Board of Deacons shall be according to the *Faith and Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church.

B. General Duties

The general responsibility of the Deacons is one of sympathetic and benevolent service to the Church, the distressed, friendless and sick, showing the mercy and concern of the Church for the material and natural needs of others.

C. Relationship to the Board of Elders

The Board of Deacons shall serve under the direction of the Board of Elders reporting to them on a regular basis their actions and activities.

The Board of Elders shall have the authority to delegate to the Board of Deacons specific responsibilities to assist in carrying out the work and ministry of the Church.

D. Particular Duties

1. Church Property

- a. They shall be responsible for all of the Church properties, furnishings, equipment and contracted services; and any policy determinations regarding the same.
- b. They shall work with all Committees and Organizations to determine ongoing needs for furnishings and equipment.
- c. They shall determine those major renovations, repairs and changes to be made and the expenditures required. These shall be presented to the Board of Elders for consideration. In this respect an annual survey of the needs shall be made.
- d. They shall have the oversight and responsibility for the Facility Manager or other paid personnel or volunteers assisting him.
- e. They shall be responsible to see that the parsonage is cleaned and refurbished at the time of change of Pastors.
- f. The use of the Church building and facilities by any group, other than the stated organizations of the Church shall be reviewed and evaluated for appropriateness by the Deacons, and shall prepare a recommendation for approval by the Elders.
- g. They shall review all requests of Church equipment to be used off of Church property and shall grant such requests as they deem appropriate.
- h. They shall be responsible for those items of general maintenance and repair to the Church properties, furnishings and equipment, and shall make recommendations

as needs arise regarding renovations and major repairs and/or changes and shall participate in determination of costs.

2. Ushers

- a. The Deacons shall be responsible for the oversight of Church Ushers. They shall recruit, train and assign men to serve as ushers at all the worship services of the Church.
- b. They shall maintain a scheduling of ushers for the receiving of tithes and offerings, with an overall responsibility assigned to a person in charge at the service.
- c. A program shall be maintained for the meeting and welcoming of new people. Special effort is to be made by the ushers in charge to accommodate, direct and seat new persons into the sanctuary at the services.
- d. They shall be responsible for crowd control during the worship services and large group activities where egress during fire or other calamity dictates.

3. Preparation for the Ordinances

- a. The Deacons shall see that the Lord's Table is prepared for Communion Services, and arrange for persons to assist in the distribution of the emblems.
- b. Members of the Committee shall accompany the Pastor as required in the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins.
- c. The Deacons shall be responsible for making the necessary physical preparations for Baptismal Services.

4. Ministries of Benevolence

- a. The Deacons shall provide oversight for the distribution of benevolence to individuals and families needing assistance, focusing on needs within the Church with first priority, and also on needs within the community, and shall take measures to provide for these needs as they deem proper.
- b. They shall have oversight of the Benevolent Funds as collected on the Communion Sundays making disbursements of funds in the performance of their duties, with an accounting made to the Finance Committee of the Board of Elders.

5. Ministry to the Sick, Shut-ins and Widows

- a. A primary concern of the Deacons shall be the spiritual needs of those who are deprived of the opportunity to attend services. They shall provide regular home visitation, literature, tapes, transportation, or other aids that provide spiritual ministry.
- b. The Deacons shall see that the widows of the Church are properly cared for in a material and spiritual way.

6. Transportation

- a. The Committee shall assure the proper registration of the vehicles, under their care, as the property of the Church and maintain a transportation policy.
- b. They shall have responsibility for maintaining all vehicles in proper running order, as having the latest Motor Vehicle safety inspection and necessary insurance coverage.
- c. They shall determine the qualifications for drivers, control and scheduling of the vehicles and making driver assignments.
- d. They shall participate in any of the bussing ministries that are promoted by the Church.

7. Other Ministries

The Board of Deacons shall assume responsibility for serving and ministering through other committees such as; Visitation, Social Activities, Meals, etc.

8. In carrying out their responsibilities, the Board of Deacons may dissolve existing committees, modify or subdivide responsibilities of committees or create new committees to most effectively meet needs and work with the skills and abilities of the individuals serving on the Board. Such changes shall be communicated to the Board of Elders for response and confirmation prior to being implemented.

ARTICLE IX

Bethlehem Christian School

The Board of Deacons shall annually with the assistance of the Church/School Liaison review the agreement entered into with the Bethlehem Christian School for the use of Church facilities for the operation of the School, make appropriate revisions, and present the revised document to the Elders for approval.

ARTICLE X

Revision of By-laws

These By-laws are subject to provisions contained in the Bible Fellowship Church *Faith and Order*.

The By-laws can be amended by a recommendation from the Board of Elders and a two-thirds majority approval by the Congregation.

ARTICLE XI

Parliamentary Authority

"Robert's Rules of Order, Revised."

