

Church Constitution for the congregation of
HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH
(revised and approved at annual meeting: Sunday, February 5, 2023)

Name and Objects

1. The name of the Church shall be “HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH”. All subsequent references to “this church” or “the church” or “congregation” shall refer to “Harmony Community Church.”
2. The objects of this church are to preach, teach, promote, disseminate, advance, demonstrate and implement the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the local community, throughout Canada and to people everywhere and thus fulfill the command of our Lord and Saviour that His Gospel be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations and shall endeavour to propagate other churches of like faith and practice.
3. And, to initiate and establish the agencies, programmes, ministries and institutions, and to purchase and hold such properties as are necessary to achieving these objects.

Fundamental Relationships

1. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in obedience to His Word, this church is ruled by her membership, governed by the Church Board, led by her Pastor (and her other recognized spiritual leaders) and does its ministry through her people, individually and collectively and, further, cooperates in the greater cause of the Great Commission within the family of local churches called the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.
2. This Constitution (also called these Bylaws) is consistent with these fundamental relationships.

Doctrine, Practice and Affiliations

Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

The church is a member congregation of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada and shall maintain its membership in good standing, and affirms the Articles of Faith and Practice of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC) as outlined in the constitution of the EMCC.

This church covenants that to the best of her ability she shall advance the purpose, promote the values and support the projects and ministries of the Evangelical Missionary Church and to abide by the By-laws of the Evangelical Missionary Church insofar as they shall apply to a local EMCC church.

This local church shall do her best to support the shared ministries of the EMCC. This church shall endeavour to contribute 5.5% of the general offerings (excluding mission, building and special offerings) to the work of the District.

This church shall ensure that it tithes from the general offerings to the kingdom work. This means that Outside ministry / missions support should be a minimum of 10% of our non-designated income.

As a full member of the EMCC, this church shall have the rights and privileges that pertain thereto.

As a full member of the EMCC, this church shall be amenable to the leadership and District and National Denomination leaders and maintain cordial and cooperative relationships with her sister churches.

The relationship between this church and the EMCC shall be specified in a bilateral covenant agreement that upon its signature shall serve as the defining interpretive document for the relationship between this church and the EMCC.

Ottawa Valley presbytery affiliation

Harmony Community Church shall maintain accountability to and involvement in the sister churches of its local presbytery; the boundaries and membership of which are subject to district approval. This Church shall attempt to support the celebrations hosted by presbytery and never do anything that would hinder the work of another church in the local fellowship.

Essential Statement of Faith

The following articles are the non-negotiable Essentials of the Christian faith and fully consistent with the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. The statement is *Orthodox* and *Evangelical*. *Orthodox* means in agreement with the historic teaching of the Christian faith as expressed in the historic creeds. *Evangelical* means an emphasis on the biblical gospel about salvation by faith in Christ and new life (regeneration) by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This new life is essential to the Christian walk.

We believe that the following statements of faith are essential and non-negotiable essentials of the Christian Faith:

1. The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy; and the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. One God, who exists in three persons: God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. These persons are distinct but inseparable, one in essence, power, and glory.
3. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His person return in power and glory.
4. The salvation of lost and sinful people through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith apart from works, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
5. The Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a sanctified life to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ and whose fullness enables the believer to produce the fruit and experience the manifestations of the Spirit.
6. The unity of all true believers, the Body of Christ. The local church as the tangible expression of the Body of Christ, an organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together for public worship and evangelism, teaching the Word, fellowship with the saints, observance of the ordinances, exercise in prayer, and who are commissioned with the responsibility to administer discipline.

Essential Statement of Faith (cont'd)

7. The resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
8. Marriage is an institution established by God that is a covenantal union between one man and one woman. This union is intended to be lifelong, and its purpose is to reflect the relationship between Christ and His church. As Christ is the head (spiritual authority) of the church so is the husband head of his wife. Christ displayed his headship through loving leadership, sacrifice, and humility. A husband is to follow Christ's example and lead his wife in love, humility, and sacrifice. As the church willingly submits to Jesus, so to is a wife called to willingly submit to her husband's godly leadership. God has designed for husbands and wives to complement one another in these roles which brings glory to God and joy to the marriage (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:21-24, Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:5-9; Ephesians 5:22-33).
9. God created human beings as male and female. Both men and woman hold equal dignity and worth before God. Woman and men were created in the image of God, both male and female represent God in distinct and complementary ways. A person's gender has been determined by God from birth and cannot be changed. On the rare occasion when a person is intersex, that individual should seek to follow their predominant biological gender (sex). While the fall in the Garden of Eden has distorted God's original design for gender (Gen 3:16-19), we should embrace with finitude and joy the gift of being biologically male or female (Gen 1:27; 9:6; Gal 3:28; James 3:9).

Membership in the Church

1. *"Members are persons who give clear testimony to saving faith in Christ, who give evidence of that faith in discipleship and obedience (e.g. Baptism), who have been examined and publicly received by a local Evangelical Missionary Church, and who, upon profession of faith, covenant to actively participate in the life and work of the local congregation."* EMC Constitution 13.3.1.
2. Persons desiring to become members of this church shall give credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. They shall give evidence of compliance with the biblical standard of Christian practice and manifest spiritual growth by giving evidence of the fruit of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22,23 NIV)
3. They shall refrain from "acts of the sinful nature: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). Sexual immorality shall be interpreted to mean common-law marital relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships (1 Corinthians 6:15-18;7:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8' Hebrews 13:4), and all forms of transexual, homosexual and lesbian activity, along with other practices deemed inexcusable for Christian conduct, and which place a person under God's judgment (Romans 1:26-2:11). They shall not be member of oath-bound secret societies. They shall indicate a desire to live in harmony with this body of believers, shall accept the doctrinal standards as set forth in this constitution, and shall be regular financial supporters of this church.
4. Only members, 18 years and older, in good standing of Harmony Community Church are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting and Special Meetings
5. A member in good standing is understood to mean someone who has been accepted into membership of Harmony Community Church by formal action of the church leadership, and who is not under church discipline and who is habitually living a consistent Christian life as expressed in the Covenant of Church Membership and the Constitution of EMCC.
6. A regular adherent is someone who attends the public meetings of the congregation and who may be involved in other aspects of community life and ministry but who has not formalized the relationship by a formal action
7. Where an Individual has withdrawn without notice or was under discipline at the time of withdrawal, a letter of membership transfer will not be issued until the Church Board has determined that satisfactory closure of the issues giving rise to the withdrawal has been achieved.
8. In the event that a Member is habitually absent from the Church for a period of six (6) consecutive months without a reasonable explanation, the Church Board may after first having attempting to make personal contact with the Member, place that Person's Membership on the inactive roll, with the result that such member shall not have the right to vote at Meetings of Members, provided that the Board has first sent written notice by regular mail to that Person. A member who is placed on the inactive roll shall be deemed suspended from any office or position held in the Church, effective the date of the Resolution made by the Board. A Member who has been placed on the inactive roll may request in writing that his or her Membership in the Church be reinstated onto the active roll of Members and the Board in its sole discretion shall determine whether to grant this request.
9. In the event that a Member has been on the inactive roll for a period of one (1) year, then that Person's Membership may be terminated by resolution of the Board and written notice shall be sent by regular mail to the inactive Member's last known address. The Membership shall cease on the date of the Resolution made by the Board.
10. Every person who makes application for membership or who maintains membership in the Church consents to submit to the process of church discipline as outlined in these by laws and/or in the EMCC Constitution section 13.3.3 and also waives the right to take legal action against this church or its leaders or any member or officer of the EMCC.
11. Alternatively, in disputes where the individual is not attempting to circumvent and undermine a disciplinary action according to the process in these bylaws and/or the EMCC constitution, the individual may request that the issue be settled by the following process of mediation and arbitration.

Membership in the Church (cont'd)

12. **PRIVACY OF INFORMATION STATEMENT:** Whereas praying for one another and caring for one another are integral parts of the church community and an apostolic commandment, all members of Harmony Community Church, by the nature of their attending, be privy to personal information relating to medical conditions or other personal information (see Covenant of Membership). While the leadership of the Church will make every effort to ensure that sensitive information is only distributed with the permission of the individual, there will be times when express permission will not be available before publication or public announcement. The scriptures teach that the Church community is a family and will share information amongst each other with the same care and respect as any extended family. Any information given in the confines of confession and counseling, if stipulated to be confidential will remain so, within the jurisdiction of the Elders. It is one of the mandates for pastoral ministry that leaders communicate the known needs of the body to the rest of the body. The scriptures also teach that gossip and busybodyness are sins and the church family are to avoid such carnal communication that might harm the reputation of its members.

Mediation and Arbitration

1. In the event that a Member is dissatisfied with any proceedings or the results thereof, or any other matter arising out of the Church Constitution involving that Member and the Church, if the Member does not violate or circumvent the waiver contained above or attempt to do so, then that Member or Adherent may petition the Church board to have his or her concerns resolved through a process of Christian dispute resolution in accordance with Matthew 18:16
2. The Church Board may choose, in its sole discretion, to accept an Adherent's appeal to enter this process of mediation and arbitration.

Discipline

Scriptural Standard for Discipline

All Members are expected to stay true to sound doctrine and the Statement of Faith and to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture and in keeping with the Standards of Conduct and Practice. Such conduct includes moral purity, personal honesty, and biblical fidelity (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; II Timothy 3:1-17). Members are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as they seek to emulate the character of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:28-29). Members shall promote the unity of the church rather than seeking to divide it (Ephesians 4:3-13; 25).

Purpose of Discipline

The Church is commanded by Scriptures to discipline its members when they continue in open and habitual sin. The biblical purpose of Church discipline is to bring reconciliation and restoration of the offender to fellowship with God and with the church consistent with the instruction of the Old and New Testament. The pattern of Matthew 18:15-19 and the principle and spirit of Matthew 5:23-24 are commanded and commended to us by our lord. As such only those matters that cannot be resolved on a personal and/or private level or that have failed to be resolved through a mediation process shall advance to a formal process of discipline in which the Church Board in combination with the Pastor and Deacons or Elders shall adjudicate.

Circumstances Giving cause for Discipline

1. An Individual shall be deemed to be under the Discipline of the Church if the Church board determine by Resolution that any of the following circumstances have occurred:
2. an Individual has evidenced unethical or immoral conduct or grievous behaviour that is otherwise unbecoming of a Christian and/or contrary to biblical principles;
3. an Individual's conduct evidences an unwillingness to either comply with, adhere to, or submit to the Scriptural authority and procedures set out in the Church Constitution herein;
4. an Individual has propagated doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith or the general teachings of the Church, or has propagated any doctrines or practices in such a way as to cause discord or dissension;
5. an Individual has wronged another Individual causing discord or dissension in the Church, with or without malicious intent, and has not repented and been willing to enter into a process of reconciliation.

Process of Discipline

1. In the event that an allegation against a Person gives causes to disciplinary action as outlined above, a process whereby a fair and equitable investigation shall be undertaken to consider the merits of the allegation and, if warranted, the Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons or elders, upon a seventy-five (75%) percent majority vote shall establish the nature of the discipline to be imposed. Due process, procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice shall be complied with in relation to all aspects of the process. The Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons or elders may delegate the investigation and adjudication of the matter to a tribunal composed of at least three members of combined board (Church Board in combination with the pastor and any deacons or elders).
2. Termination or suspension of Membership as a disciplinary action shall be deemed appropriate only where no other reasonable alternative is available.
3. In the case where the best interest of the Church is served by making the decision of the Combined Board known to the membership, a meeting specifically convened for that purpose shall be called. A brief statement of the cause for discipline shall be made, and explanation of the decision made shall be given but it shall not be the purpose of this meeting to "retry" the case.
4. In the event that the decision is to terminate the Individual's Membership in the Church, then the Individual shall automatically cease to be a Member of the Church upon the date that the decision is made.
5. This process shall inform any disciplinary proceedings involving adherents inasmuch they can be applied.

Discipline and Attendance at Public Worship

An individual who has been disciplined or whose Membership has been terminated shall not be barred from public worship unless his/her presence is disruptive to the peaceful proceedings of the public worship service as determined in the sole opinion of the Church Board in combination with the pastor and any elders or deacons, in which event such Individual agrees that he may be removed from such public worship service without the necessity of legal action, whether or not such Individual is at that time a Member of the Church. The same provision applies to non-members whose presence likewise has been judged disruptive.

Discipline and Individuals under age 18

In the event that the Individual in question is under the age of 18 when an allegation is made, then the Discipline procedure provided for by the Combined Council shall require that notification of any Discipline process shall be given to the Individual and the parents or legal guardians of the Individual and such persons shall be entitled to attend and speak on behalf of such Individual at any such proceedings.

Intervention by the Conference of EM Churches

It is our understanding that recognized representatives of the conference of churches and recognized leaders in sister churches can and may exercise their Christian duty to admonish and exhort, and counsel leaders in matters that are bringing disrepute or disharmony to the EMCC family

It is our understanding that this church has a covenant obligation to conduct her affairs in a way that brings no disrepute to the family of the EMCC and that promotes harmony among the churches. As such this church recognizes the right of the EMCC Conference of Churches to intervene with authority to act for the conference through her elected representatives, but only in certain prescribed cases:

1. The local church ceases to function as an organized EMCC local church or is no longer able to maintain the organizational standards of a local EMCC church.
2. The local church is at risk of or contemplating closure.
3. The local church leadership board by a majority vote in a formal resolution invites the intervention of the EMCC. The specific cause for the invitation to intervene must be specified
4. There are reasonable grounds to suppose that the financial affairs of the church are not in order, in which case the EMCC may audit the financial records of this church and take such steps as necessary to set things in order.
5. There has been an appeal process using the EMCC Constitution section 14, in which case the minutes and other relevant documentation of this church shall be made available for the purposes of investigating the matter under appeal. This shall include the right to interview members and leaders of this church in order to ascertain the facts of the matter under appeal.
6. There is a moral or ethical problem which has not been resolved by ordinary means and where the local leadership has been unable or unwilling to deal satisfactorily with these matters.
7. There have been formal allegations brought against a credentialed minister in which case the EMCC shall be authorized to proceed in keeping with the provisions governing the discipline of ministers and can expect the full cooperation of our leadership and congregation in pursuing the investigation to its appropriate conclusion. The allegation must be made in writing and endorsed by two signatures. The allegation shall be filed in writing both with the Church Board of this church and the National Office

It is our understanding that any such intervention is an interim measure taken for the purpose of returning the local church to a condition in which it is once again able to govern its own affairs

It is our understanding that any such intervention shall proceed in consultation with the Church Board of this congregation inasmuch as this is possible

It is our understanding that in keeping with the principle of natural and biblical justice and due process any such intervention by the EMCC shall be communicated in writing in a timely way and supported by other appropriate documentation.

Meetings of the Membership

Annual Meeting

There shall be an annual Meeting of Members at such time and place in Canada as determined by the Church Board of the church. The purpose of the annual meeting will be to do the following:

- Hear or receive necessary reports from the Pastor and Church Board and other boards and committees.
- Review and approve the financial statements for the immediately preceding year, including the Auditor's report thereon;
- Approve the budget for the coming year;
- Hold elections;
- Transact any other necessary business

The Annual Meeting shall be held as early as practicable after the end of each calendar year and before February 28th

The following shall report in writing to the Annual Meeting: [The following list is an example. Adapt the list according to your situation: *Pastor, Deacons and/or Elders, Chairperson of Trustees, Church Board Secretary, Auditors, Church Treasurer, and treasurers and heads of any auxiliary organizations such as women's, men's youth and seniors. Other reports may be requested by the Church Board or the Pastor.*]

The Church Board shall require that the written reports referred to above be submitted to the secretary at least three Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting in order that they can be prepared for distribution at that meeting.

Special Meetings

A special meeting may be convened at the request of the Chairperson of the Board or a majority of the Board.

It shall be convened by the Secretary within thirty (30) days of the request.

The purpose of any Special Meetings shall be given clearly and announced at least two Sundays before the date of the Special Meeting.

Meetings of the Membership (cont'd)

Notice of Meetings

1. Annual and Special business meetings shall be announced from the pulpit and preferable published in the Church bulletin for at least two Sundays preceding the meetings.
2. If notice does not fully comply with the above statement Member may waive notice and the meeting shall be considered a duly called meeting. If a member attends the Member's meeting, this attendance shall constitute a waiver of notice of the Meeting, except where the member attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the grounds that the meeting is not lawfully called.

Quorum

1. A quorum for an annual, special election, or other special Meetings of Members shall be constituted by the presence of at least one third (33%) Members who have the right to vote (except for inactive Members) immediately prior to the time of the meeting in question. No business shall be transacted at any Meeting of Members unless the requisite quorum is present at the time of the transaction of such business.
2. If a quorum is not present at the time appointed for a Meeting of Members or within such reasonable time thereafter, the Members present and entitled to vote may adjourn the meeting to a fixed time and place but may not transact any other business.

Elections

1. The members of the Church board shall be elected by a majority ballot from a slate prepared by the Nominating Committee. In the case where only the required number of Board members are nominated, an election with majority support is required and not mere acclamation of the slate of candidates.
2. All other positions shall be appointed by the Church Board and ratified by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Term of Elected Positions

1. The board members shall be elected for two year terms.
2. Three trustees shall be elected to three year terms
All other elections and appointments shall be for a one-year term
Church Board members, deacons and/or elders shall serve no more than seven consecutive years and shall step down for a year before becoming eligible for re-election.

Rules of Order

All business meetings of the Church and the various committees shall be governed by the rules of order outlined in such standard guides as Robert's Rules of Order. Notwithstanding, it is fitting that all boards and committees demonstrate the spirit of unity and brotherly love and that **consensus not majority** is a worthy goal in the conduct of business in the Lord's work.

The Church Board

General Duties

1. The affairs of the Church shall be governed by a Church Board elected by the membership of the Church at the Annual Meeting
2. The Church Board shall conduct its business on behalf of the congregation in keeping the Constitution of the EMCC and these bylaws and any duly approved policies or procedures.
3. The Church Board shall report on its activity on behalf of the congregation at least once a year to a meeting of the local church membership
4. All Church Board members serve without remuneration.
5. The Church Board shall appoint a Committee to review the Church Membership roll, at least every second year.
6. The Church Board shall appoint a Committee to prepare a Budget for the ensuing year. After review and approval, the Church Board shall present the proposed Budget to the Annual Meeting for adoption.
7. The Church Board may appoint other committees as are deemed necessary.
8. The Church Board is responsible to ensure adequate insurance coverage is obtained for all assets and against general liability.

Composition

1. The Church Board shall have a minimum of five voting members and no more than nine, composed of the elders and deacons and such other members as may be needed. Less than 50% of the board members can be related, with the term "related" being defined as any of the following: spouse, parent, child, grandchild or sibling.
2. The Chair of the Church Board shall chair all meetings of the Board and also chair Meetings of all Special Meetings of this church and the portions of the annual meeting where the Senior Pastor would be in conflict of interest.
3. No remunerated staff person shall be a voting member of this Church Board
4. All salaried pastoral staff are non-voting advisors of the Church Board, whose spiritual and general counsel shall in every case be sought and considered.
5. In the absence of an elected Chair, the Senior Pastor shall act as Chair until a Chairman is elected.
6. The Church Clerk may fill the role of a board member in the event of a vacancy or if there is a need for additional board members to fulfill the minimum requirement of five (5).

The Church Board (cont'd)

Qualifications

1. All Church Board members must be active members in good standing who have been on the membership roll for one year.
2. Where a local church cannot maintain a minimum of five voting members, it shall request the Regional Minister to appoint additional board members from a sister church. When a majority of the Church Board is composed of appointees outside the local membership, it shall be called a Steering Committee and the congregation shall be termed and considered a "Church in Transition" if the National Board so decides by resolution.

Removal From the Board

Any Church Board member may be removed from serving who fails to regularly attend services or Board meetings, files for bankruptcy, or becomes subject to disciplinary action of the Board or Church.

Board Vacancies

All Church Board vacancies are filled by Church Board appointment until a meeting of the membership can elect a replacement.

Church Board Meetings

1. At least seven days' notice of all business (whether regular or special) sessions of the Church Board is to be given to all members (elected and advisory) of the Board. If notice does not fully comply with the above statement a Board Member may waive notice and the meeting shall be considered a duly called meeting. If a member attends the Board meeting, this attendance shall constitute a waiver of notice, except where the Board member attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the grounds that the meeting is not lawfully called.
2. The combined Church Board shall meet not less than 4 times a year and as often as necessary to accomplish its goals.
3. All Church Board meetings require the presence of a majority of the members of the Board to act on matters of business.
4. All business sessions of the Church Board shall record in the minutes the actions taken and these shall be reported for approval at the next meeting.

Officers and Other Elected or Appointed Positions

Conference Secretary/Church Clerk

The Secretary of the Church Board is a member to be elected by the membership annually. The Secretary shall keep minutes and care for the correspondence of the Board and shall also act as Secretary of all Annual and Special Meetings.

Elders and Deacons / Deaconess

1. The Elders and Deacons are members of the Church board and are elected to the board by the membership. They shall serve with the pastoral leadership in directing the congregational care and spiritual ministry of the congregation
2. A Person may be considered for appointment as a Church Elder or Deacon if he fulfills all the following qualifications;
 - The Person must be Member of the Church in good standing;
 - The Person must be over the age of twenty-one (21).
 - The Person must demonstrate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, faithfulness over a period of time, and a good reputation among believers and before the community. Not being a novice believer (3 years or less).
 - The Person must fulfill the spiritual qualification of an Elder as set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-10; 1 Peter 5:1-5 or a Deacon as set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. these biblical provisions are not intended to provide an exhaustive or exclusive check list but rather to set out the kind of things to look for in a leader – [whose character is godly, whose conduct is worthy of emulation, whose doctrinal soundness is known to be mature and whose reputation is a credit to Christ and His Church.]
 - The only substantive difference in qualification in 1 Timothy 3 is the ability to teach for an elder. It is also clear that elders were the male leaders of the first order and the deacons were the assistants to whom other matters were delegated. A Deaconess is a female member of the board elected by the membership. It is encouraged that female members of the board be unmarried or widows as to not put them in a position of exercising spiritual authority over their husbands. [The nomination committee should take this into consideration when reviewing nominations]
3. **Elders** are male members of the board who are recommended by the Pastor and approved by the board membership. The specific duties shall be defined by the leadership team but shall include spiritual leadership, vision casting, congregational care, church discipline, assuring the doctrinal and ethical soundness of the teaching and preaching and leading the church in its fulfillment of the Great Commission. If there are credentialed ministers in the congregation that are not on Pastoral staff they may be invited to contribute their advise and help in the ministry of discipline and spiritual care and join any Elders meetings.
4. **Deacons / Deaconesses** are the other elected members of the board who are not designated as Elders.

Trustees

The Trustees [minimum of three (3)], elected by this Church shall care for and maintain the real property of the Church and hold the property in trust, subject to the direction of the Church Board. In the absence of an elected board of trustees the Church Board appoints a property committee to fulfill this function with at least one non-board member to sit on the committee. Elected Trustees have a term of office of three years. The chairman of the trustees will be a board member. Trustees must be members of the Church.

Treasurer

The Treasurer elected by this Church shall transact and keep records of financial dealings and shall file all required returns on behalf of this Church.. They shall be members elected annually.

Finance Committee

A finance committee shall manage the budget, oversee financial transactions and receive recommendations for expense. They shall review the finances on a regular basis, appoint signing officers, and prepare statements and prepare a proposed budget for the annual meeting. They shall execute the recommendations of the Church board and make recommendations to the board for non-budgeted or over-budgeted needs. The Committee shall be composed of two board members, the Treasurer, the Clerk and the Pastor and others appointed by the board to serve in the year appointed.

Nominating Committee

A Nominating committee, (minimum 3 members) whose duties shall include the preparation of the slate of nominees for the election by the Church, shall be appointed by the Church Board or elected at annual meeting. The Pastor is a member of the nomination committee or a board member appointed by the board

Other Committees

Other committees and groups shall be formed as needed to achieve the Mission of this Church and in accordance with these bylaws.

Pastoral & Church Staff

1. There shall normally be a pastor (or pastors) who is (are) charged with leadership in the spiritual life and the work of the Church and in the ministry of the Word of God.
2. **Pastoral Selection:** The Senior Pastor shall be chosen from candidates approved by the Evangelical Missionary Church. When a candidate has been cleared by the Regional Minister / President and upon the majority vote of the Church Board recommending a candidate, a ballot vote of the membership shall be held at a duly called meeting. A call shall be extended to a Pastor when he receives a majority vote of 80%. When a candidate has received less than 80% but 60% or more, the Church Board may consult with the Regional Minister / President on the merits of presenting the candidates a second time. The results of the vote shall be communicated without delay to the Regional Minister / President. The Church shall pay the moving expenses of an incoming Pastor. The Pastor and Church Board shall negotiate the terms of an employment agreement keeping in mind the yearly guidelines published by the National Office
3. **Duties:** The Pastor shall be considered the spiritual overseer and shepherd of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, committees, and departments, and shall be responsible for all regular and special services, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach without the pastor's consent.
4. **Reviews / Evaluation of Pastoral Ministry:** Each Pastor's ministry shall be reviewed and evaluated by the Church Board on a yearly basis.
5. **Resignation:** The Pastor may resign by giving a minimum of 30 days written notice to the Church Board. Terms of separation shall be agreed upon by the Church Board and the Pastor. The Regional Minister / President shall be informed immediately of the resignation
6. **Vacancy:** When the pastorate becomes vacant, the Church Board shall continue to give leadership and congregational care, shall arrange suitable pulpit ministry and shall undertake a search for a suitable pastor.
7. **Removal:** A Pastor may be removed from his position with the Church for any reason upon a two-thirds majority vote of the Members voting who are present or represented by proxy at a Meeting of Members duly called for the purpose of authorizing the removal of the Pastor or an Associate Pastor.
8. Nothing contained in the said procedure shall preclude the Pastor or an Associate Pastor from receiving whatever notice of equivalent monetary settlement as legally appropriate in the circumstances, if any. In the event of a disagreement between the Church and the Pastor or an Associate Pastor concerning the amount of notice or monetary settlement, if any, that is appropriate, and before any legal action is commenced the matter shall first be referred to Person or Persons mutually acceptable to the Church and the Pastor or Associate Pastor to resolve such dispute through mediation in a spirit of conciliation worthy of maintaining a Christian witness to the Church and the community.
9. The removal or resignation of the Pastor from the Church shall constitute his removal as a Member of the Church, and where applicable, as an ex-officio Member on all committees and boards. The written request of the outgoing pastor that his membership continue may be granted, with or without limiting stipulations, by resolution of the Board.
10. The Senior Pastor shall recommend to the board any additional staff (Assistant, Youth Pastor, secretarial, etc) and shall be part in any interview process that involves hiring additional Church Staff. Positions recommended by the Senior Pastor must be approved by the Board. If salary and benefits exceed \$10,000 for the remaining conference year then a congregational vote will be required to ratify the board decision. The Senior Pastor can terminate the employment of other Church staff with previous consultation of the Board Chairman. Any appeals can be made to the Board Chairman within two weeks of termination and a special meeting of the Church board will be called to arbitrate. The decision of the Church board can then be appealed to the National Office for further arbitration. While any arbitration is ongoing the staff member shall be absent from their regular duties with pay.
11. The Senior Pastor shall conduct regular reviews of all staff and give an annual management report to the board.

Pastoral & Church Staff (cont'd)

12. **Staff Protection:**
 - a. Without limiting the generality of below examples of inappropriate deemed by Harmony Community Church to be contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His followers as recorded in the New Testament, Harmony Church does not accept conduct such as sexual activity outside of marriage, Homosexual sexual relations, the pre-meditated acquisition of pornographic materials for personal stimulation, drunkenness or the use of illicit drugs.
 - b. All staff and volunteers must be willing to submit their name for a police check before they can fulfill duties that would put them into direct contact with children or the finances of the Church
 - c. A separate detailed sexual abuse prevention policy will be created and be maintained by the Church in accordance with denominational and insurance company guide lines. See Appendix A
13. **Definition of Marriage:**
 - a. We resolve that as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, our congregation and the ministries that it supports, reserves the term “marriage” for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.
 - b. We resolve that members of our leadership or staff will be allowed to arrange for, officiate at or take part in the solemnization or celebration of a marriage only when it conforms to our statement on marriage.
 - c. We resolve that this congregation and its leadership will only hold official membership in religious organizations, associations that also hold to the same definition of marriage.

Interim Pastor

When there is need for an interim pastor, this church shall appoint one after consulting with and obtaining the authorization of the Regional Minister / President

Financial Bylaws

1. Bank accounts of the church and all auxiliary organizations shall be in the name of the church and/or organizations, and not in the name of Treasurer, “in trust.”
All treasurers shall submit their books, records and annual report to the auditors for examination.
2. All monies shall be handled in such a way that no room shall be left for the temptation, opportunity or appearance of wrongdoing. Offerings shall be counted and tabulated in a clear and documented fashion and no less than two tellers shall be used when counting and recording amounts.
3. In the event of a change of treasurers before an unexpired term, the former treasurer shall submit his/her records to the auditors for examination before turning them over to the treasurer-elect and the auditors shall report to the Church Board.
4. The financial records of the church shall be made available for examination by a Regional Minister upon the request of the National Office when the matter of the good standing of this church in the EMC is under review or when a request for a loan or financial assistance has been made to the EMC.
5. The Church Treasurer and one other appointed by the church Board shall be designated signing offices for the church bank accounts. The signature of two (2) signing officers shall be required on cheques and other bank documents.
6. The Church Treasurer, or another duly appointed person on the Finance Committee, shall be the only signing officer on receipts for Income Tax purposes, unless otherwise designated by the Church Board. Treasurers of the Sunday School and other auxiliary organizations shall keep detailed records of offerings received and shall submit summaries to the Church Treasurer not later than January 31st of the next calendar year, so that the Church Treasurer can issue charitable tax receipts.
7. Any capital expenditure over TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,000) requires a two-thirds majority vote of a duly called Meeting of the Church. The vote may be by secret ballot. The question for the ballot must be clearly worded to admit only a YES or NO answer.
8. **Bequest Bylaw** – please see Appendix B

Property

1. This church will exercise due diligence in capital projects so as not to jeopardize, injure or encumber her own ministries nor the shared or individual ministries of sister local churches and shall take such steps as necessary to ascertain that its actions have the blessing of and engender goodwill form sister churches.
2. This church has the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own and use any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its objects, all in accordance with its constitutions and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended but shall sign a waiver absolving EMCC of financial or legal liability
3. The property deed of this Church shall contain the following words: “The said lands shall be held for the use and benefit of the said congregation or other entity as part of the EMCC. Save as otherwise herein provided, the said lands may be sold, conveyed, mortgaged, leased or exchanged, or otherwise dealt with only with the consent of the local congregation of the church and the consent of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, which latter consent may be given by the Board of Directors thereof.”
4. The EMCC shall have authority over the final disposition of these properties in accordance with the laws of the land, the bylaws of the National Assembly of Churches, the EMCC and any bilateral covenant agreement signed with a member church.
5. This congregation reserved the right to rent or allow use of our property and facilities only by individuals or groups not incompatible with our goals, values and statements. Furthermore, any group using our facilities or property must have sponsorship of a person or persons who is (are) a part of the congregation of Harmony.

Conflict of Interest

Any person on any board or committee, who stands to profit financially because of a decision by that board or committee, or who cannot otherwise act in a decision consistent with the trust implicit in election or appointment to that board or committee, shall declare his or her conflict of interest and shall withdraw from involvement in that decision. This would also apply when a related family member would stand to profit from the decision.

Amendments

These by-laws may be amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of members present at an annual or special meeting of the Church membership. The Church Board shall publish recommendations for amendment, repeal or adoption of new bylaws at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting at which they are to be voted on.

Policies and Procedures

1. The Church Board shall be responsible to maintain a Policy Manual.
2. The Membership may adopt Policy Statements, rules and guidelines not inconsistent with this Constitution when necessary and from time to time. These policy statements may be rescinded or modified only by a majority vote of the Membership.
3. The Church Board may adopt Policy Statements, rules and guidelines not inconsistent with this Constitution on such matters as are deemed necessary from time to time.
4. Policy Statements, rules and guidelines passed by the Church Board shall be recorded by the Secretary of the Board and reported to the Annual Meeting. The record shall include in parentheses the date and occasion for the adoption of the policy.
5. The Board shall incorporate these Policy Statements, rules and guidelines in the Policy Manual of the Church on an annual basis.

Church Covenant

The following is an expression of the Commitment to Christ expected of members and encouraged in adherents:

Having been led to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We covenant, by the aid of the Holy Spirit,

- to walk together in Christian love;
- to join in mutual labours for the kingdom of Christ;
- to strive loyally for the advancement of His church in holiness, knowledge, and love;
- to promote her prosperity and spirituality;
- to maintain her ordinances, worship, discipline and doctrines.

We covenant,

- to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God prospers us,
- to the support of this church and all her ministries.

We covenant,

- to maintain private devotions and family devotions where possible;
- to endeavour to bring early to a saving knowledge of Christ all over whom we have care and influence;
- to walk circumspectly in the world;
- to be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements.

We covenant

- 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 offense and always ready for reconciliation.

We covenant to witness

- faithfully to the saving and keeping power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and
- His promise that all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Effective Date of this Constitution

This Revised Constitution, upon its approval at a duly called meeting of HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH shall supersede all other constitution and Bylaws of HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH. Upon adoption, an original copy, (not a photocopy) shall be sent to and kept on file at the EMCC Office, 160 Lancaster St. E; Kitchener, ON, N2H 1N2

Approved by the Membership of HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Date: Feb. 5, 2023 – Annual General Meeting

Signature of two Signing officers of the Congregation:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

APPENDIX A

ABUSE POLICY OVERVIEW for Harmony Community Church in compliance with insurance coverage

Pre-employment will cover:

Personal References, police records check and educational verification.
Records are kept as part of the employee personal file.

Volunteers:

Applications are to be obtained on all volunteers
Police records checks and background checks will be completed before active volunteer positions are validated.

Abuse policy **shall be** reviewed with new employees and all volunteers.

Child abuse training for denominational credentialed staff will be reviewed by denominational officials at regular conferences provided by the EMCC.

Operational procedures to monitor and eliminate the potential for sexual abuse:

Details of extensive policy and procedures have been adopted by denominational standards and are available for reviews.

Said procedures are communicated and reviewed by Church leadership, volunteers and staff.

The Elders board are to regularly meet and discuss the behavior of staff and volunteers and assess their attitudes, actions and relationships with our clients in an attempt to ward off any negative behavior patterns that might lend itself to abuse or the appearance of using their position for sexual exploitation.

Any complaints of staff or volunteers, whether directly or indirectly will require a written report by the Pastor or Chairman of the Board as a record of what was complained and the actions that were taken in the light of such complaints.

Any complaints of sexual misconduct of credentialed staff will be reported to the District Superintendent for investigation.

Possible Misconduct may include:

- Sexual Touching (kissing, extended hugging, groping, etc.)
- Giving of gifts of a nature that would suggest inviting relationship
- Suggestive conversation
- Threatening or suggestive gestures

Counseling: Staff

Most “closed door” counseling in the office of the Church would involve couples seeking help. Individual Counseling that is conducted with members of the opposite sex is always to be conducted with another witness of the same sex as the client present either in the counseling session or within visual access to the counseling area. When conducting home visitation/counseling, staff will take into consideration the factors of age, sex and marital status of the clients in how they will conduct their stay.

Children under 16 can only be counseled with the parent’s permission.

Records are to be kept of the time, place and subject of any counseling session. Details of that session (if kept) are to be kept confidential in a secured place.

Counseling: Volunteers

Volunteers may counsel clients under the same conditions and requirements of staff. They are, in addition, to report any counseling sessions to the Pastor and refer any difficult issues to staff for further consultation.

Non-credentialed staff and volunteers **are not** protected by “confessional privilege” and any confession/admission of sexual, physical abuse, or breach of the nations laws by anyone of any age must be reported to someone in institutional authority (ie. Pastor or board member). According to Ontario Provincial legislation both professionals and volunteers of any agency are required to report (directly to police and/or child services) if a child under 18 has been sexually abused or if anyone of any age confesses to having sexually or physically abused someone under the age of 18.

Altar Ministry: Spontaneous acts of ministry compassion such as “altar work” (not necessarily happening at the church altar area) should be conducted between members of the same sex, or at least have a member of that sex in close proximity to the conversation. Children under 16 should have a parent present when such ministry is conducted or the parent(s) should be aware that such ministry will/may happen from time to time.

The Results of any “altar work” should be brought to the attention of the Pastor/staff (such as decisions to follow Christ, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Healing, deliverance or confessions of sexual abuse etc.)

Overnight precautions:

It is not the Normal function of this institution to be in charge of the care of young people on an overnight basis. From time to time there are sleep overs either on the property of Harmony Church, the EMCC or the home of Staff/volunteers of the organization. When such events occur proper chaperoning of qualified volunteers in numbers that reflect the group size and sex composition of the clients will be strictly monitored.

Any “fraternization” between the young people that could lead to sexual encounters will be strictly avoided.

All Children under 18 must have signed consent from their parents before attending any “off site” events that would bring the young people beyond the normal scope of the Church’s ministry.

Transportation precautions:

It is not generally considered appropriate for men and women who are not related to travel alone together, unless special circumstances warrant it. However, when it involves minors, then it is never warranted (unless express parental permission is secured).

Teaching Settings:

Teachers will conduct classes (bible studies) in a non-enclosed area that can be monitored by staff/supervisors. When teaching minors we are required to have two (2) adults present or visually accessible to the teaching area.

All teaching that is done must be in accordance with the general beliefs and practices of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada and that of the Local leadership. Teachers are to be aware of the general teachings of the EMCC and that of Harmony Church and refrain from teaching anything that would be in contradiction to those beliefs. We are only liable for what we say we believe and are on record as believing. Any issue/concept or teaching that a teacher feels may be outside of the parameters of acceptable doctrine should be discussed and approved by the Pastor/Elders.

Teachers are to utilize teaching methods and materials that are approved by the Supervisor or Pastor.

Any methods of disciplinary action taken by a teacher against an unruly student are to be within our legal mandate and reported to the Superintendent/Pastor. Students will never be made to feel inferior or placed in embarrassing situations by a teacher.

Any physical or verbal “horseplay” by another student will be reported to the Superintendent/Pastor and in turn brought to the attention of both sets of parents.

Home Bible Studies that are clearly announced through the church media (bulletin, email, website etc) are satellite teaching extensions of the Church and are to be governed by the same policies and procedures as teaching events that are on the Church property.

Physical contact guidelines:

While the Church stands by our scriptural mandate to express the Love of Christ to others and especially within the body of Christ (within the Church membership/adherents) we recognize that physical touch can be manipulated and misunderstood as inviting relationship and is thereby cautioned.

Touch is clearly mandated by the scriptures as a point of “faith contact” when ministering to the sick, calling into service and in times of distress. It is a powerful medium of the message of Christ. It is a privilege to participate in such ministry but care should be taken to ensure that such ministry is understood and accepted by the client. When “laying on hands” one must be careful not to touch the person in any place that would make them uncomfortable. The rule of thumb is “if in any doubt - DON’T”

Hugging is a regular way of greeting members of the Christian Community. Primarily, it is a gesture to be offered between adult members of the same sex at times of greeting and as an offering of encouragement in times of need. Occasionally, hugging of members of the opposite sex occurs as a greeting or as an act of encouragement. When such embracing occurs it is to be brief and with clear intentions. Unfortunately, because of the day and time we live in we must avoid hugging children under the age of 16 (of either sex) unless their parent(s) are present. And use great caution in hugging any minor under the age of 18 (whether of the same sex or not.)

We recognize that the biblical statement “greet one another with a holy kiss” (ex. 1 Cor. 16:20) is a cultural expression and must be interpreted in the light of the culture that one is ministering in. In the primary culture of Harmony (rural, English, Protestant) kissing is a gesture of sexual intimacy or the intimacy reserved for close family members. We recognize that cultures vary in their interpretation of this expression, but because of our present ministry context, staff, volunteers and leadership are to refrain from greeting anyone in this way (unless they are greeting an adult of their own cultural community or a member of the same sex - which is the biblical context).

Anyone within the congregation who feels somebody else is abusing their “Christian liberties” in the area of touching, beyond the accepted boundaries, should report such conduct to a member of the leadership team.

APPENDIX B

HARMONY COMMUNITY CHURCH BEQUEST POLICY:

Rationale:

The HCC Bequest policy specifies the process that will be followed to reach a decision about acceptable uses for bequest that have been made to the Church. We hope that members and friends of Harmony will feel comfortable giving to the Church, knowing the process that will be followed in utilizing their gifts.

Gift Acceptance Policy:

All designated Bequests or other gifts can be refused by the board of HCC if they do not agree with the designation for the following reasons:

- a. Commit the Church to ongoing and/or unpredictable future expenses;
- b. Violate the faith principles, evangelical beliefs and stewardship values of the members.
- c. When accepted we must honour the designation unless the family/executor is willing to change to better meet the needs of the Church.
- d. The Board Chairman, Finance Committee Chairman and Senior Pastor together will determine whether the gift designation is to be accepted by the Church

Undesignated Bequests:

- #1. **TITHING PRINCIPLE:** A minimum of 10% of undesignated bequest will go toward mission work outside of the Church as an above budget donation. The board will choose the said mission/missions unless the amount is over 10% of the annual budget. Then the board will make recommendations to the congregation for approval.
- #2. 1/3rd of any remaining designated Bequests should go to any capital deb. If there is no debt at the time of the bequest then 1/3rd (of the surplus) shall be applied toward future capital projects.
- #3. 1/3rd of the undesignated bequests to go toward capital improvements, equipment or major repairs. To be decided by the Board and approved by the congregation (if any single project is greater than our constitutional mandate for capital projects.)
- #4. 1/3rd of the undesignated bequests will go toward the general fund if it does not exceed 25% of the church's annual budget. If greater, the Board and Finance committees can make recommendations to the congregation as to possible designations / projects / personnel or special funds to be set up to accommodate the surplus.
- #5. If the undesignated gift is under \$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars) or less than 10% of the annual budget, then the Board may dispose of the bequest immediately according to the wishes of the family and the needs of the Church, bypassing the capital expenditure limit set in the constitution if a capital project is chosen.

SUMMARY:

Harmony Community Church encourages those who are part of this fellowship to practice good stewardship in their handling of their personal finances, including estate planning, and covenants with them to practice good stewardship in exercising their gifts in building the kingdom of God.

Harmony Church Policy Statement:

A. Basis of Christian Fellowship:

There are certain minimum standards that represent what we believe as a basis of entering fellowship with another group or leader. Such fellowship is expressed in things such as shared services, pulpit exchange, membership in interdenominational (ecumenical) associations and ability to transfer membership between assemblies.

Such basis of fellowship also means that ministerial protocols will be followed when someone who is a member of or under the spiritual care of another Church or Pastor comes into contact with our ministry.

We recognize that there are religious organizations who have individual congregations or credential holders who do not agree with their organization's doctrinal or lifestyle positions. To these we also hold out the hand of Christian fellowship.

We endeavour to live by the Moravian Creed that was re-iterated by John Wesley, "***In essentials unity, in nonessentials Freedom, in all things love.***" We believe that the following statements are the essential truths for unity to be expressed through fellowship.

1. Salvation:

There is one true God who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, His Son. There is Only Salvation (eternal Life) available through personal Faith in Jesus and His finished work of redemption on the Cross.

2. The Bible:

The Bible is God's revelation of His Will for our lives and is inspired by God's Holy Spirit. It reveals an accurate historical account of God's dealings with humanity in the past and His future plan for mankind.

3. The Family:

God has established that marriage is exclusively the union between one man and one woman. It is intended to be a life long journey together of love and fidelity.

4. Evangelism:

It is the Church's great commission by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel message (good news of the Kingdom) and to actively seek ways to share that message with all those who have yet to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour.

B. Inter-Faith Dialogue and Co-operation

As good citizens and neighbours in our community we must keep the lines of communication open between various political, religious faith communities and civic organizations so that we may walk together in peace and come together for causes of common good. We will be ready to co-operate with all people to assist in taking care of the sick, the poor, the hungry or other areas of social concern. In any mutual endeavour our motto must be "Co-operation without Compromise".

Whether a religious community or leader agrees with the essential statements in our basis of fellowship or not, we will endeavour to demonstrate the love of Christ.

We recognize that to be "In this world and not of it" is a daily challenge to the Church. Each believer, leader and assembly must discern what it means to be "unequally yoked" and act accordingly to prevent the light of the gospel being hidden under the basket of compromise.

*Appendix and Policy Statement Approved by
Harmony Board March 27th, 2010*

