

NAME: _____



EVERY DISCIPLE GROWING
EVERY DISCIPLE GOING

**EXPLORING
EMMANUEL**

PRE-SEMINAR READING MATERIAL

Last Updated: March 4, 2026

WELCOME TO EMMANUEL CHURCH!

Welcome!

We are grateful that you are considering covenant membership at Emmanuel Church. Our prayer is that this guide will help you understand who we are, what we believe, and how we follow Jesus together.

Emmanuel Church began in 1957 with a small group of believers who desired to see the gospel take root in Weatherford, Texas. Over the decades, the Lord has sustained, refined, and strengthened this church. We have experienced seasons of growth, hardship, revitalization, and renewal. Through it all, Christ has been faithful.

But Emmanuel Church is not a building. It is not an address on Bethel Road. It is a people.

The New Testament word for church is *ekklesia*, meaning a gathering of called-out ones. The church is a covenant community of believers called by Jesus, who belong to Jesus and to one another.

Our vision is simple:

Every disciple growing in Christ.

Every disciple going with Christ.

We summarize our mission in three pillars:

Reach. Teach. Send.

Everything we do flows from that calling.

In preparation for our time together in ***Exploring Emmanuel***, please read through ***this document to be familiar with the concepts we will discuss***. Write down any questions you may have and make sure we answer them during the meeting.

The concepts and information provided will be covered in our time together, and you will be provided with a copy of the ***Exploring Emmanuel*** book to keep.

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The Gospel: The Good News We Believe

Membership at Emmanuel begins with the gospel.

The gospel is not advice. It is not moral improvement. It is the joyful message from God how we can be saved from our sin through faith in Jesus Christ.

We often present the good news through a rubric of God | Man | Christ | Response

GOD

God is our holy Creator and righteous King. He made us in His image to know Him, love Him, and reflect His glory.

MAN

All people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Sin separates us from God and leaves us spiritually dead and unable to save ourselves.

CHRIST

In His mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived a perfect life, died as a substitute for sinners, and rose bodily from the grave. On the cross, He bore the penalty our sins deserved.

RESPONSE

We are saved by grace through faith as we repent and believe the gospel. We turn from sin and trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and new life. Salvation is not earned. It is received.

To be considered for membership at Emmanuel, you must have personally trusted in Christ as Lord and Savior.

If you have any questions about the gospel, or you are not sure if you have believed, please let us know, we would be glad to talk with you about this important message!

What Is the Church? Why Membership Matters

We believe the Bible is clear that the church is not optional in the Christian life.

When God saves us, He places us into a spiritual family.

The New Testament assumes believers belong to identifiable local congregations who:

- Gather regularly for worship, instruction, and fellowship as family
- Have recognized leaders who shepherd (Elders who oversee and pastor)
- Lovingly care for one another
- Practice redemptive church discipline when necessary
- Partner together in Jesus' mission in the world

Church membership is a covenant commitment.

It is a public declaration that says:

“I belong to this body of believers.

I will walk with them.

I will serve alongside them.

I will submit to biblical leadership.

I will be accountable to them.”

You don't just join a church, you become part of the church.

Membership is not about privileges. It is about responsibility and belonging.

When you become a member of Emmanuel Church, we take responsibility to help you in your spiritual growth. You are agreeing to submit to the loving care of others as they take responsibility for your spiritual growth.

Likewise, you are agreeing to take responsibility for the spiritual growth of others.

How Emmanuel Is Led

We believe Scripture teaches that local churches should be:

- **Elder-Led.**
- **Deacon-Served.**
- **Congregationally Accountable.**

Elders

Elders are biblically qualified men affirmed by the congregation to provide spiritual leadership, shepherding, teaching, and oversight.

They are responsible for guarding doctrine, caring for members, and leading the church faithfully.

Deacons

Deacons are biblically qualified men and women who serve the church by leading practical ministry efforts.

Their service supports unity and frees elders to focus on prayer and the Word.

The Congregation

Members are not spectators. The congregation affirms leaders, receives members, participates in discipline matters, and affirms the annual budget.

Members share responsibility for the health and mission of the church.

This structure reflects our conviction that Christ is the Head of the church, and we are stewards under His authority.

What We Believe

We believe in **Regenerate Church Membership**. Jesus taught that you must be born again. (John 3) We receive into membership those who have a credible profession of being born again and faith in Christ.

We also believe in **Local Church Autonomy**. New Testament Churches are self-governing, under the Lordship of Jesus, but are free to, and encouraged to cooperate with other faithful churches.

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

1. **We believe** the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. **We believe** in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. **We believe** that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. **We believe** that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death that is separation from God; that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and therefore are sinners in thought, word and deed.
5. **We believe** that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and a substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.
6. **We believe** in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
7. **We believe** in the future sudden, visible, and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. **We believe** that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
9. **We believe** in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the eternal blessedness of the saved, and the eternal punishment of the lost.
10. **We believe** that baptism is the immersion of a believer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in testimony of faith in the crucified, buried and risen Christ, and in confession that the believer is to be dead to sin and risen to newness of life in Christ Jesus; and that the Lord's Supper is the baptized church's commemoration of the Lord's death "till He comes."

Our Pillars: Reach | Teach | Send

Everything we do at Emmanuel falls under three pillars.

REACH

We desire to reach our neighbors and the nations with the gospel.

This includes:

- Personal and group evangelism
- Local outreach partnerships
- Church planting
- Global missions

We cooperate with other churches through the Southern Baptist Convention to support missionaries, plant churches, and train pastors.

TEACH

We are committed to teaching God's Word clearly and faithfully.

This happens through:

- Expository preaching
- Discipleship Hour classes
- Community Groups
- Discipleship Groups
- Family discipleship

We want every disciple growing in maturity.

SEND

We equip believers to live missionally in everyday life.

We aim to send:

- Missionaries overseas
- Church planters
- Leaders within our church
- Everyday Christians into workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods

We want every disciple going with Christ.

Emmanuel Membership Covenant

Having trusted in Christ alone as my Lord and Savior, and being in agreement with the Calling, Commitments, Convictions, Core Values, Beliefs and Governance of Emmanuel Church, I now am called to unite with the Emmanuel family. In doing so, I commit myself to the Lord and to the other members of the family to protect our unity, share in, serve and support the ministry of my church family through pursuing:

BELONGING TO HIS BODY...

- by living life as a fully devoted follower of Christ. (Mark 8:34; John 12:26)
- by attending faithfully (Hebrews 10:25).
- by dealing biblically with conflict and refusing to gossip (Matthew 18:15-20; Ephesians 4:29).
- by following the leadership by submitting myself to the care and correction of leadership should the need arise (Hebrews 13:17).
- by praying for its health and impact (2 Thess. 3:1; James 5:16).
- by warmly welcoming those who visit and committing myself to community with those who attend (Romans 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 12:25-27).
- by having a community group that will know you and help you as you seek to love God, love believers, and love unbelievers (John 13:35; Philippians 2:3-4; James 5:16..)

HELPING OTHERS BELIEVE IN CHRIST...

- by developing relationships with the unchurched, and unmoved (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Matthew 5:16).
- by sharing my story of grace with others (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15).
- by praying for the salvation of non-believers with whom I have a relationship (Matthew 9:37-38; Romans 10:1-4).

BEING TRAINED IN GOD'S TRUTH...

- by committing myself to read, understand and apply the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:9-11).
- by affirming the inspiration, infallibility and authority of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:21)
- by availing myself to the tools and resources of the church which are designed to further my understanding of and deepen my commitment to applying God's Word (Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 5:19).
- by preparing myself to give a "ready defense" for my faith based on God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:15)

BEING STRONG IN A LIFE OF MINISTRY AND WORSHIP...

- by serving others in ministry (Matthew 25:31-46, James 2:15-16)
- by giving graciously as God has graciously given to me (Luke 6:38; 1 John 3:17).

Peacemaking & Church Discipline

Conflict happens, even in healthy churches. Conflict is an opportunity to bring glory to God through the way we work together to resolve conflict.

At Emmanuel, we are committed to biblical peacemaking.

We seek to:

- Overlook minor offenses
- Go privately to a brother or sister when needed
- Speak truth in love
- Forgive as we have been forgiven
- Pursue reconciliation

If serious sin persists without repentance, Scripture calls the church to pursue loving correction. Church discipline is not about punishment; it is about restoration and protecting the witness of Christ.

Membership means we are willing to both give and receive loving correction when necessary.

The gospel is not only our message. The gospel is our method for reconciling man to God, and man to man.

What Active Membership Looks Like

Membership is not perfection in life, but it is participation in the life of Jesus.

Healthy members will strive to:

- Gather faithfully on Sundays as is the pattern of the church since the time of Apostles
- Participate in a Community Group
- Serve others in ministry
- Give generously and cheerfully of your financial resources to share the cost of ministry and the support of missionaries and church staff
- Pursue personal holiness while modeling and encouraging others
- Support and pray for leadership
- Live on mission in everyday life

No one does this perfectly. But members should strive to move in this direction together.

If long-term inactivity or open rebellion persists, membership may be reevaluated. This protects the integrity of our covenant, the health of the body, and the witness of the gospel.

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Next Steps Toward Membership

If you believe God may be calling you to covenant with Emmanuel, here is the process:

1. Attend the Exploring Emmanuel class.
2. Complete the Membership Form (including your testimony).
3. Meet with an elder for a pastoral conversation.
4. Be affirmed by the congregation at a Members' Meeting.
5. Begin giving, serving, growing, and going with this church family.

Our desire is not to pressure you.

Our desire is clarity, joy, and conviction.

We hope that by the end of this process you can say:

“I belong here.

I'm ready to grow here.

I'm ready to go from here.”

If you have questions, we would love to walk with you.

To God be the glory in the church, now and forever.

— The Elders of Emmanuel Church