



**BETHANY  
CHURCH**

**NEW MEMBERS  
COURSE BOOKLET**





# COURSE OUTLINE

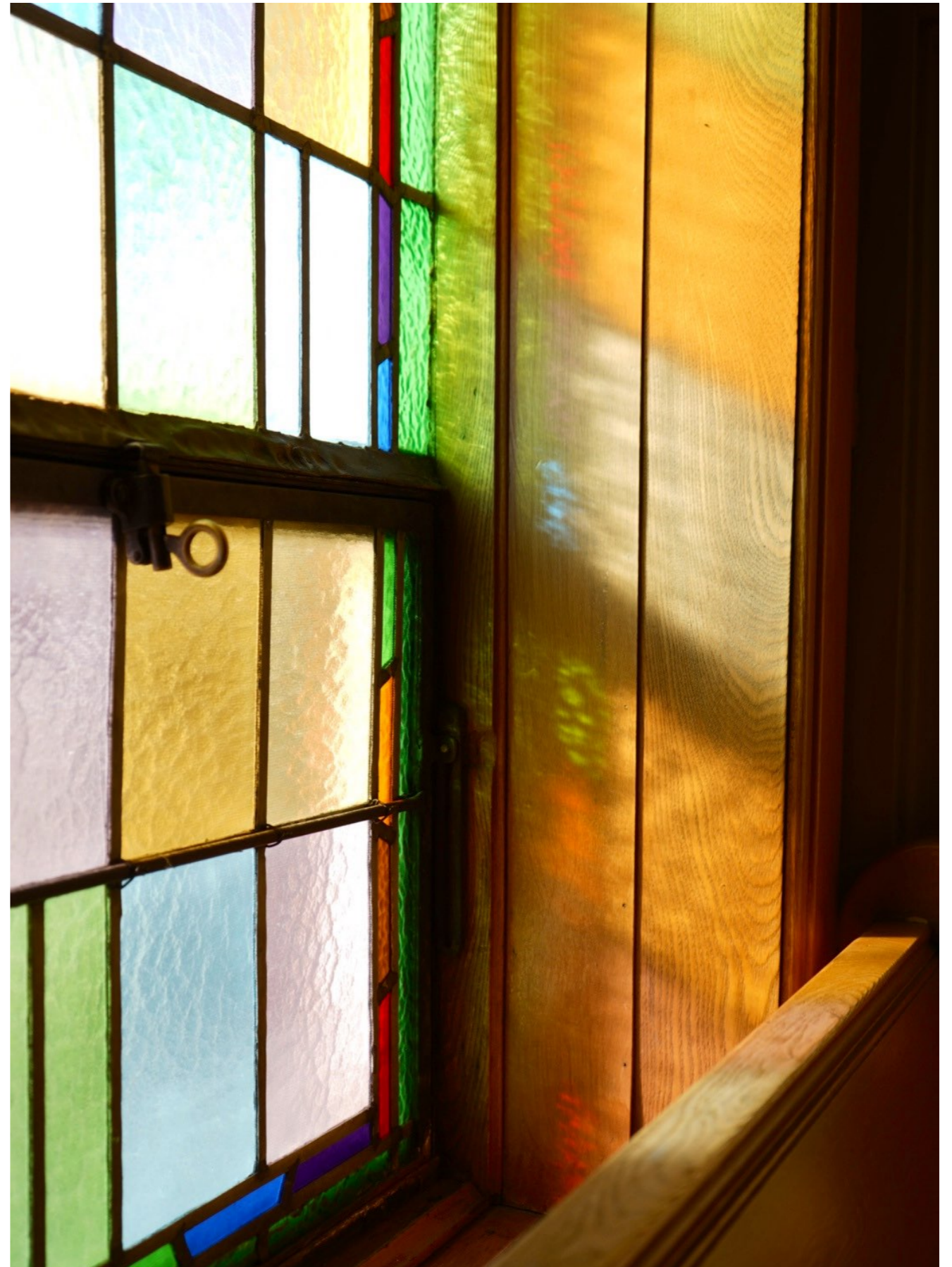
\* 3 hour-course

## LESSON ONE - 1.5 HOURS

- Bethany's History
- Bethany's Beliefs
- EMCC Articles of Faith & Practice
- Seven Markers of The Way of Jesus

## LESSON TWO - 1.5 HOURS

- Bethany's Core Values
- Bethany's Purpose Statement
- Bethany's Vision of Church Renewal



# LESSON ONE

## BETHANY'S HISTORY

The groundwork for Bethany began in 1807 with the arrival of Mennonite settlers in Waterloo County, led by Joseph Schneider & Benjamin Eby. They arrived with the hopes of settling a new homeland, which would soon come to pass.

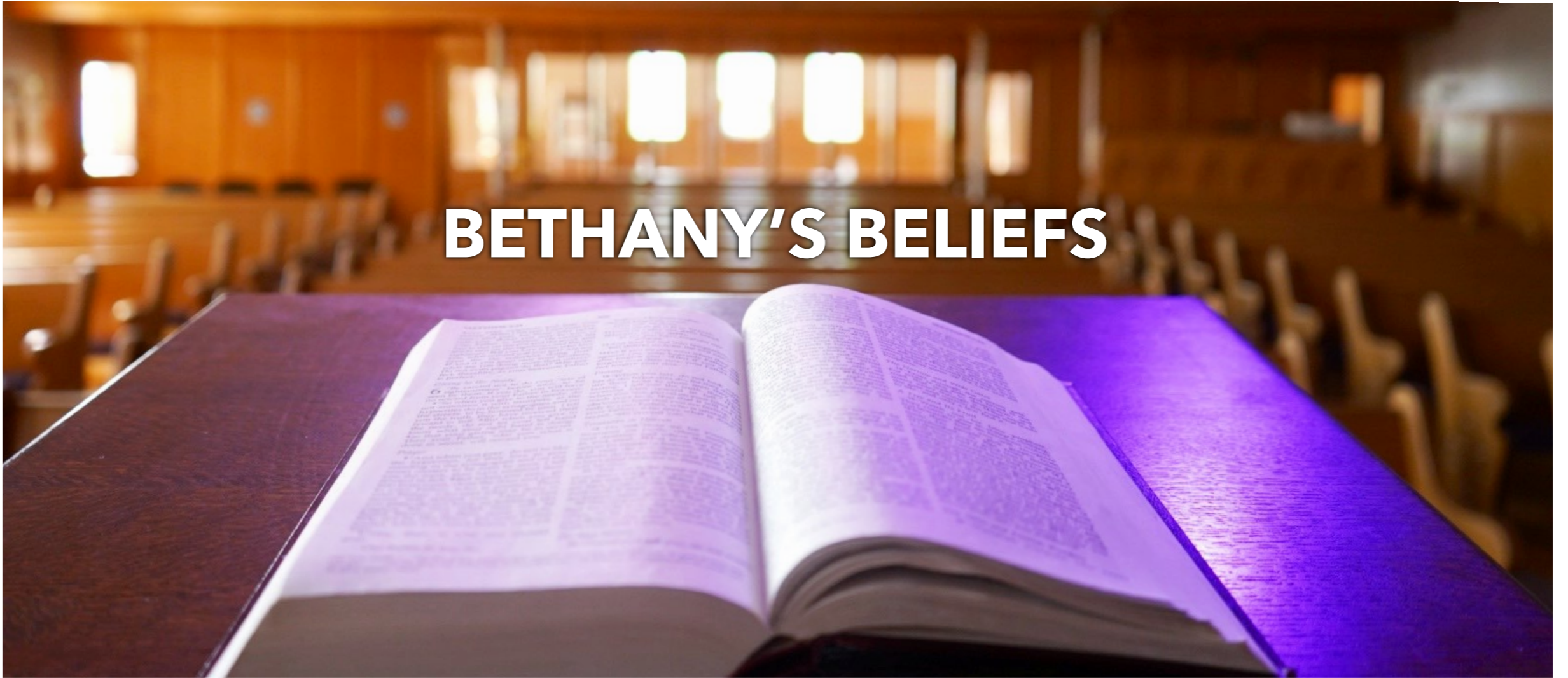
In the 63 years after being settled, the community which consisted of Ebytown, Sand Hills, Berlin & Kitchener continued to grow. In 1852, Berlin was named the county seat for Waterloo County. By 1870, the county had grown enough to be designated as a town. Forty-two years later in 1912, it grew to city status. On September 1, 1916, this thriving community's name was changed from Berlin to what we now know as Kitchener.

Many things transpired in those years. Suddaby School opened its doors in 1857 and was enlarged to 12 classrooms. Businesses began to grow, popping up between Weber & Church streets, and from Cedar to Ontario streets. Lancaster street was the easterly limit of the town.



In that time, 12 new churches were built. Among them was a church called Bethany, which was built on a half-acre of land for \$200. In 1877, Bethany was a part of the newly formed United Mennonite denomination. In 1947, the name was changed again to United Missionary and, finally, to The Evangelical Missionary Fellowship in 1993.

From the very beginning, Bethany was a church deeply involved in both local and foreign overseas missions: Sending and offering support to members of the congregation on missions; supporting local churches by offering use of the building; and partnering with one another to reach the community.



# BETHANY'S BELIEFS

\* Our beliefs are in line with the EMCC, which are specified in the Articles of Practice.

## ARTICLES OF PRACTICE

### 1. ORDINANCES

The Christian ordinances are two in number: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the outward rites appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

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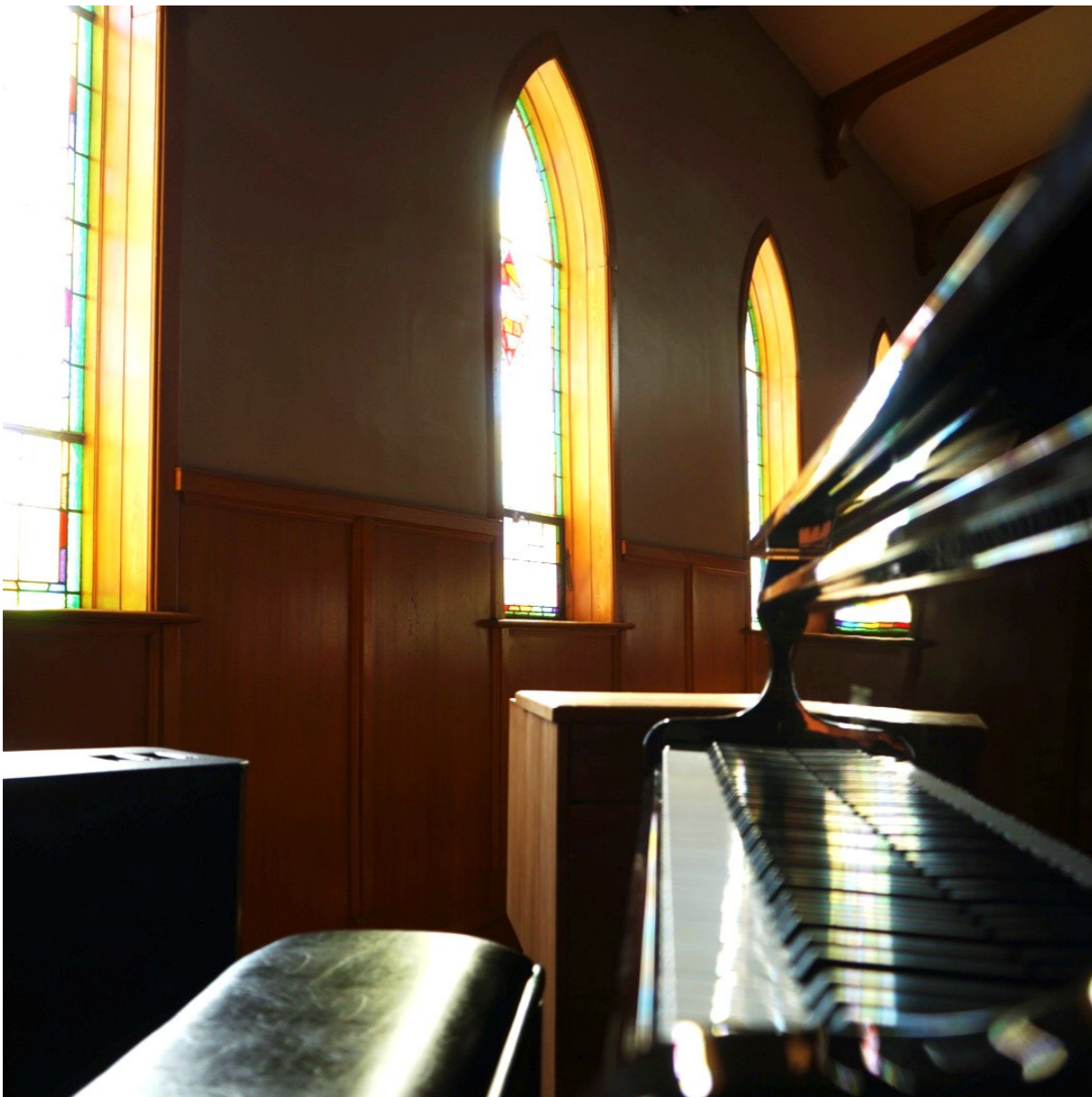
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### 3. THE LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day<sup>1</sup>, which commemorates the resurrection, is for private and public worship and for rest from unnecessary work. It should be devoted to spiritual development, Christian fellowship, and service<sup>2</sup>. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian church and is important to the welfare of society.

1) Matthew 28:1; 1 Corinthians 16:2 | 2) Isaiah 58:13-14; Hebrews 10:25

### 4. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

In recognition of God's ownership of all things<sup>1</sup>, believers should practice systematic and proportionate giving – adopting the tithe as a minimum expression of their stewardship<sup>2</sup>. They should regard Christian liberality as a privilege and sacred duty, and freely give of their substance for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad, for the maintenance of the local church, and for the support of the agencies and enterprises of the denomination.

Believers should also dedicate themselves, their time and substance to God, and to the advancement of His kingdom. Christians are encouraged to spend time in Bible study, prayer, and in sharing the gospel<sup>3</sup>."

1) Genesis 1:1, 14:18-23 | 2) Malachi 3:8,10 | 3) 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 8:9-12, 9:6-8

### 5. DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

God is concerned for the well-being of children<sup>1</sup> who are under the atonement of Christ<sup>2</sup>. We encourage the formal dedication of children in a public, church service.

1) 1 Samuel 1:24-28; Matthew 19: 13-15; Luke 2:21-22 | 2) Mark 10:13-15; John 3:16-19; Romans 5:13





## NOTES

## DIVORCE

Divorce is viewed in the scriptures as contrary to God's will<sup>1</sup>. Christians should seek by forbearance and forgiveness to preserve the marriage bond. Persons, divorced and remarried, who give evidence of being genuinely born again, are eligible to be received into membership in the church.

Divorce between members of the church is an occasion of great tragedy. Such conduct brings the teaching and reality of Christian reconciliation under reproach and offenders are to be disciplined. The church shall provide counsel and take proper disciplinary action, giving consideration to appropriate aspects of local church discipline. Care should be exercised that such action be as redemptive as possible for all parties involved.

Ministers are to refrain from performing marriage ceremonies where one or both parties are divorced. However, ministers are permitted, at their discretion, to solemnize the marriage of a person whose previous marriage partner committed adultery, who is recognized as living a genuine Christian life, and where there is good evidence that a true Christian marriage is intended.

<sup>1</sup>) Genesis 2:24-25; Malachi 2:15-16; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-12;  
1 Corinthians 7:10-16

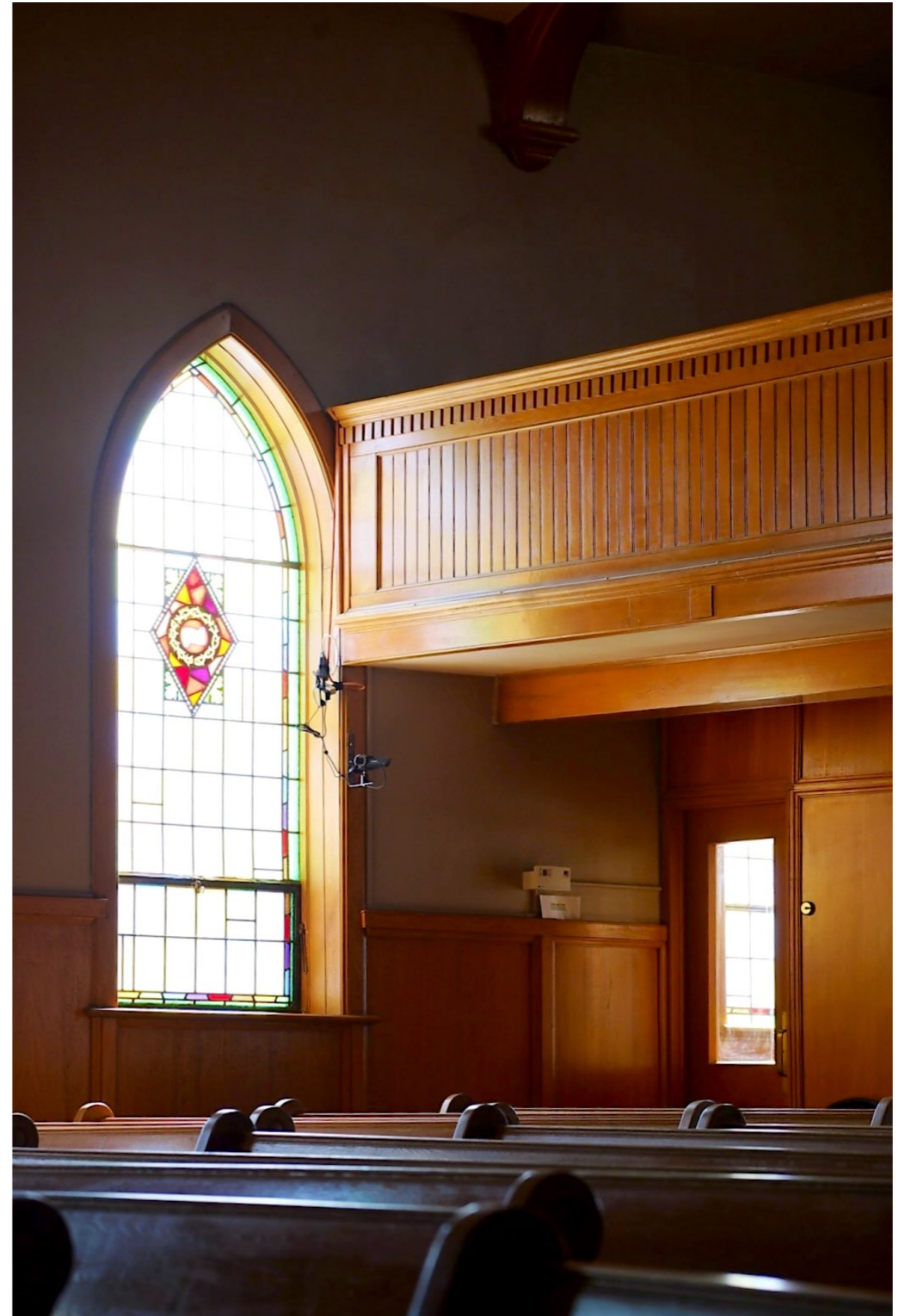


## 8. PRACTICES AND CONDUCT

Believers are not to be conformed to the view and lifestyle of the world of which they are a part<sup>1</sup>, but, on the contrary, are to function as salt<sup>2</sup> to prevent the spread of moral corruption, and as light to dispel spiritual darkness. High standards should therefore be set for their personal and collective life including the following:

1. Their disposition and attitudes be characterized by godliness and the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control<sup>3</sup>.
2. Their social relationships bear witness to Christ, their entire conduct reflecting the spiritual ideals of Christianity rather than the world. They shall not engage in sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage; shall not marry unbelievers; shall not hold membership in oath-bound secret societies; and shall not compromise Christian principles in partnerships<sup>4</sup>.
3. Their bodies be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup>, thus making it consistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health, to prevent negative influence and injury to their bodies through inappropriate practices of substance abuse<sup>6</sup>.

1) Romans 12:1,2 | 2) Matthew 5:13 | 3) Galatians 5:22-24 |  
4) 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 | 5) 1 Corinthians 3:16,17, 6:19, 20 |  
6) 1 Corinthians 6:12-20





## HISTORY OF THE EMC

The foundation for any church ought to be based on the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Just as the early church waited on the power of the Holy Spirit and received power, we also operate this way. While the events of Acts happened thousands of years ago, we believe the Holy Spirit continues to empower the church today. This is important for every church, because God's intention is for growth beyond the days of the apostles, throughout time, until His glorious return.

The roots of the Evangelical movement arose, as most changes do, out of a faithfulness to the word of God and for that to be demonstrated in people's lives. With any new move of God, there are those raised up to carry the torch. Some of the earliest theologians who recognized the flawed teaching of the Catholic Church, such as John Wycliff and Martin Luther, became emboldened. As God began this shift, many rallied to the cause and reform began.

As the reformation continued to gain momentum, more leaders rose up, such as John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli. Along with the ramp up of reformation came a group that would be called the Anabaptists. As thoughts on salvation by faith were brought to the church, the Anabaptists further insisted that people should be baptized as adults, with knowledge of what it meant. This, like many reformations in the church, brought great persecution and led to these reformers being martyred for their beliefs.

Fast forward 200 years and we see the reformation of the church jump ahead again. This shift began with a small group of students from the Oxford Church in England. This movement would produce believers calling themselves Methodists because of their methodical application of the scriptures. Among these were two, now very well known Christians, named John and Charles Wesley; one a preacher and the other a hymn writer. They and their newly named Methodist believers travelled around singing in open fields, preaching in jails and anywhere the Lord would lead them, leading to a spiritual awakening that would continue to transform the world.

This brings us to the founding of the Evangelical Missionary Church we know today. As revival continued, it made its way into the Mennonite community, where many came to faith in Jesus. This led to the formation of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, which began to spread through evangelism and westward migration.

In 1947, they would take on a new and more familiar name, The United Missionary Church. It grew, having numerous conferences both in Canada and the USA. In the United States they took on the name The Missionary Church Association. In 1969, this group merged with their Canadian counterparts, forming The Missionary Church. Lastly, in 1988, the church in Canada separated to become The Missionary Church of Canada, while maintaining fellowship with their brothers and sisters in the United States and around the world.

## **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **ABOUT THE BIBLE**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is divinely-inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and the only final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible, as originally written under the inspiration and supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit by human authors, is the Word of God, the supreme source of truth for Christian belief. The Bible reveals who God is, exposes who we are in light of His holiness, proclaims God's merciful salvation, and teaches and trains Christ's followers how to grow in relationship with God and others.

### **ABOUT GOD**

#### **THE FATHER**

We believe in the one true, living, and holy, God who is a self-existent, eternal, personal Spirit eternally existent as a trinity of three persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These persons are distinct but inseparable: one in essence, power and glory. God is the transcendent and immanent Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all things visible and invisible. We believe that the Father is eternally the Father of the Son, the author of salvation, and now the Father of all who are born again into new life through faith in Christ.

#### **THE SON**

We believe in Jesus Christ, in whom the divine and human natures are inseparably united. He is truly God and truly man, the eternal Son of God in the flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal the Father, announce the arrival of God's Kingdom with word, miracles and deeds, and to offer Himself up as a sinless atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. He was physically raised from the dead and then exalted to the right hand of the Father.

In fulfilling the earthly mission of His first coming, Jesus demonstrated a life of victory on our behalf over Satan and sin; provided the only way for people to be rescued from sin; and opened the way to live a holy life as participants in the Kingdom of God. He continues now as the only Mediator between God and humanity. Jesus will, at the Father's appointed time, come again in power and glory.

#### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who is fully God and — while not to be confused with the Father and the Son — remains one with the Father and the Son, in majesty and glory. The Holy Spirit convinces us of the need for a saving relationship with God, and engages every person who trusts and follows Jesus in a life-giving relationship. Through His indwelling presence, the Holy Spirit gives the believer spiritual life assurance of Christian life. The Holy Spirit gives all believers the ability to accomplish God's purposes for their lives, through spiritual abilities and gifts to use for God's glory and the service of others.





# THE WAY OF JESUS

## 7 MARKERS

These seven markers characterize a follower of Jesus whether they are just starting out or have been on that journey for a lifetime. None of them stand alone; each are interdependent on the others, like the strands of a rope combine to form one strong cord. In simple terms, this is what following Jesus looks like:



HIS LIFE

I have begun following Jesus, and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.



HIS MISSION

I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.



HIS CHARACTER

I am becoming like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours and character.



HIS LOVE

I am learning to love God and love others.



HIS TEACHINGS

I am learning the teachings of Jesus.



HIS DISCIPLES

I am helping someone and someone is helping me to be a reproducing follower of Jesus.



HIS COMMUNITY

I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.



# LESSON TWO

## BETHANY'S CORE VALUES

### ABIDING IN CHRIST

Abiding in Christ means that we are spending time each day with Jesus, leaning on and drawing our strength from Him. In John 15, Jesus shares the imagery of "The Vine and The Branches". Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we can have fruitful lives.

### BELONGING IN COMMUNITY

We believe that just as each one of us is born into a family, we are also a part of the family of believers. This means we each find fellowship, encouragement and a place to serve.

### CHURCH IN RENEWAL

Bethany is a church in Renewal, learning to walk intimately with God. We submit to God to renew our minds, so that we can know His plans and purposes, as individuals and as a church community.



## BETHANY'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

### EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT BETHANY

Bethany Church has something for everyone. Church isn't for perfect people. It's for hurting people, for hungry people, for ordinary people, for growing people. It doesn't matter your background: your ethnicity, your religious or nonreligious upbringing, or what you've been through. You are welcome here.

## BETHANY'S VISION OF CHURCH RENEWAL

Pastor Ray Doerksen (Founder of Church Renewal) described church renewal as a return to ancient paths (Jeremiah 6:16). In other words, the goal is for the people of Bethany to walk intimately with and to learn to abide with God. God has a plan and purpose for every area of our Christian life, and desires that we grow in our knowledge of Him. Our aim is to learn to hear His voice in everyday life.

Twice a year, we plan to host a "Hearing God Seminar" where people are welcome to learn about and experience church renewal. After people participate in the seminar, they are invited to join an Abide Small Group, which consists of fifteen lessons addressing a variety of real issues that believers will encounter in life. This is a wonderful opportunity for people to grow in their relationship with God and with one another.





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