

Emmanuel Free Methodist Church



Vision

We want to help people become committed followers of Jesus, using their God-given gifts and talents to make a difference in the world.

Mission

To be a Christ-centered community that loves courageously, serves radically, and gives sacrificially, to everyone, everywhere, every day.

Statement of Faith

What We Believe

- We believe in one true God, who made and sustains everything.
- We believe in the Trinity--Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who gave His life for the sins of the world. He was crucified and rose from the dead.
- We believe that we receive forgiveness and eternal life when we accept Jesus as our Savior.
- We believe that the Bible is God's written Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit. We accept its truth and its authority for our lives.
- We believe that in order to have a right relationship with God and reach heaven, each person must choose to accept and follow Jesus as Savior.
- We believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can be freed from slavery to sin and can become more and more like Jesus, living our lives on earth as God's holy people.
- We believe that as followers of Jesus, we are called to shine His light into the world, using what God has given us to share His love and bring Jesus to others.

Emmanuel Free Methodist Church



Statement on Marriage, Gender & Sexuality

Principles Regarding Marriage Nature of Marriage (from the Free Methodist Book of Discipline 2015):

At creation God instituted marriage for the well being of humanity (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman into a lifelong relationship which the Scriptures call “one flesh.” We look not to the states but to the Scriptures for our understanding of human personhood and well-being, including human sexuality and marriage. We order our life of faith and our ministries according to the Scriptures, not according to the shifting values of society and the state.

Sexual intercourse is God’s gift to humanity, for the intimate union of a man and woman within marriage. In this relationship, it is to be celebrative (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage, between one man and one woman, is therefore the only proper setting for sexual intimacy. Scripture requires purity before and faithfulness within and following marriage.

With deep compassion for persons who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and especially those who have been mistreated and marginalized in various settings, the Free Methodist Church encourages its congregations to practice welcoming hospitality and embracing loving-kindness toward all who desire to worship among us. We will be a people who offer ourselves as agents of Jesus’ grace and love to others- all others. We will trust the Holy Spirit to convict people of their sin, to enliven hope of transforming possibilities, and then to lead people to God’s best for their lives.

Nevertheless, we hold that marriage can only be the union of one man and one woman who have made public covenant and vow before God and the state (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9). Therefore, it would be a breach of the doctrine of our Church for ministers or members of the Free Methodist Church to conduct, officiate, or assist in officiating, the marriage or union between a same-sex or same-gender couple. In light of our beliefs, ministers and members of the Free Methodist Church shall not officiate or assist in officiating marriages or unions of same-sex or same-gender couples.

We hold that our congregations are stewards of the church property. Officiating or assisting in officiating or hosting a marriage between a same-sex or same-gender couple in any Free Methodist Church building or on any Free Methodist property would be a violation of consecrated Free Methodist property. Therefore, such marriages may not be performed or hosted at Free Methodist churches or on Free Methodist properties. Marriage the Free Methodist Church deems doctrinally acceptable, legal and appropriate should be safeguarded and supported by both the church and society and should be formalized with public vows. It is not enough for a couple to live together in private commitment; we believe that they are to covenant before God and the state.

Further, we hold that all these provision are applicable to and fully binding on all activities and ministries of or affiliated with the Free Methodist Church.



Core Values

Goodness: As we engage the foster care crisis, we remember that every person is created in the image of God. Therefore, each person has goodness, dignity, and humanity within them -- each wounded foster child, each struggling birth parent, each broken family. Because we value life, we value each life. Father Gregory Boyle, a Jesuit priest, writes, "The wrong idea has taken root in the world. And the idea is this: there just might be lives out there that matter less than other lives." Every life has incredible value because of God.

Honesty: We face the world as it is. God created this world good, but it has all been tainted by sin -- by what we've done, by what's been done to us, and by the brokenness that has taken hold of creation. Sin destroys a life through the vicious cycle of personal tragedy and personal failure. When entering the foster care sphere, we come into contact with some of the most vulnerable people in our broken world. Many birth parents have experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and they may not have the resources to parent well. We recognize this cycle of hurt as an effect of living in a fallen world.

Love: We put away the pointing finger (Isaiah 58:9) and put on love. Love heals what is broken and restores God's goodness in each life. We love because God first loved us. We serve a Savior who showed us compassion when we were lost and without hope. He did not save us from far away, but drew near and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14). Our love for birth families is rooted in the compassion that Christ showed us. Henri Nouwen reminded us that compassion means "to suffer with": "Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears, to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

Church: We love the church. We are convinced that God longs to bring healing and restoration to families through the body of Christ. God designed children to grow up in healthy families, but when families are in crisis, God wants to heal them through the church. No other community on earth has the privilege and the power to stand between what is and what shall be in the world. The church is the sign pointing to new creation, the foretaste of what it will be like when all is restored, and the instrument by which God restores goodness in the world right now. We work with God to love and to heal, and we rejoice with God when families are restored.

Adoption: We see family as a haven and refuge not only from the world, but also for the world. Family is not an impermeable sanctuary that one must be born into, but a hospitable people who share a readiness to welcome others home. Adoption is God's idea, and as Christians we recognize that redemption happens when God adopts us into his family at great cost to himself. Because adoption is at the heart of the gospel, we are committed to promoting and supporting adoption when it is the best path to redemption and restoration.

Support: We believe that every Christian and every church can participate in caring for the vulnerable. James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows

in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." While we are all called to care for the vulnerable, those callings will be different: some will foster, some will adopt, and--just as importantly--some will support. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul calls the church the body of Christ in order to make a comparison to a human body. Just as the parts of our bodies must work together, so all believers and all communities of believers must use their diverse God-given gifts to minister to the vulnerable. Some are called to foster, some are called to adopt, and some are called to support, but we are all called.

Commitment: We are committed to pursuing God's restoration in the lives of the children we serve. Trauma affects everyone in tremendous ways, and healing is not quick. We enter the journey with realistic expectations, which means we prepare ourselves for a difficult and uncertain journey for the sake of the child. We are committed to being learners for how to parent children from hard places, and we will ask for support and resources during times of crisis.

Scripture: The Bible is the inspired and infallible instrument for God's authority being exercised in the world. We submit ourselves to the Spirit's voice addressing us through scripture to correct error, heal brokenness, reveal God's plan for restoration, and release us for service to the world.