



# Exploring Church Membership at

**Emmanuel**   
Christian Centre



## Welcome!

We're delighted that you are considering membership with us here at Emmanuel.



Dan and Sara Brett

In this booklet we will:

- Look back at the history of Emmanuel Christian Centre.
- Share our mission, vision and the call God has given us today.
- Explain how our structure works as a church family.
- Briefly why we believe in church membership.
- Highlight the requirements for church membership at ECC.
- Explore the implications of the membership covenant.
- Explain the next steps in becoming a member.

If you haven't already, please ask for or pick up a copy of the **Free Methodist Church UK and Ireland Handbook 2023**.

This will provide you with crucial information with regard to our Articles of Doctrine, Membership Covenant and the lifestyle principles we uphold as members.

We pray that you will be blessed in reading this booklet and that as you prayerfully consider membership you may know the Holy Spirit's leading in every way.

If you have any further questions or would like to know more about membership please do not hesitate to get in touch.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel Brett". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Rev. Dan Brett and the church leaders.



Norman and Mary

## Our history

Emmanuel Church began in 1983 under the leadership of Rev John Welsby. In 1979, John and his wife Cherrie had come to work with Rev Norman Ellison, an itinerant preacher and evangelist, who had been working in Pembrokeshire since the 1950s. Rev Ellison ministered throughout the county with children's caravan missions, schools work and ministry in the farming communities. He also ran a Beach Mission in Saundersfoot every summer with students from Emmanuel Bible College in Birkenhead. John and Cherrie came to serve on the teams and sensed God's call to work with Norman and his wife Mary.

Norman had vision for a bookshop, a centre for the work, and a home for its workers, often commenting that 87 Pembroke Road would be the ideal location. However, in 1981, Norman passed away after a short illness. John, Cherrie and Mary sought the Lord together for the future of the work.



John and Cherrie in 2021.



A meeting in the early days of Emmanuel

By now there was a small gathering of enthusiastic people keen to share their faith, who met in 71 Pembroke Road. John and the leaders prayed that God would confirm the call to establish a church, through someone who had no knowledge of what was being discussed. God's plan was confirmed later that day when a phone conversation confirmed that "the only way forward in Pembrokeshire is a church planting ministry."

In 1983, 87 Pembroke Road came up for sale. God provided all the finance necessary through generous friends and Emmanuel Christian Centre became a reality with the first church service held in the living room following a picnic. Over the years a purpose built building was developed on the site and is now used throughout the week to host worship and prayer meetings and to reach out into our local community.

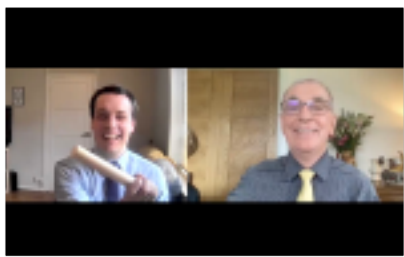


87 Pembroke Road in the early days of the church building (to the right)

God has been so faithful through every season of our life as a church. From Norman's ministry, to the Christian bookshop in Haverfordwest (1982-2016), to the Beach Mission (now 'Emmanuel Missions') which continues in Saundersfoot, our mission is still 'to know Christ and make Him known in Pembrokeshire' and beyond.

In 2009 we affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, becoming a full society in 2012. Our pastor Rev. Dan Brett was ordained in the FMC in 2019, serving alongside John as assistant pastor until John handed the baton over in April 2021.

We thank God for His goodness to us through the last 40 years of our life as a church and look with expectant hope to Jesus and His plans for us as we step forward into the future together.



Dan receiving the 'baton' from John on Zoom during Covid in 2021.

## Who we are

We believe that because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit we can be set free, living free and bringing freedom. It's our deep desire to see individuals and communities transformed and to see scriptural holiness spread across our land. Emmanuel is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and part of the Free Methodist Church. We are Wesleyan-Arminian in theology, Holy Spirit led and Missional in Word and Deed. For more information about what this means and to read our Articles of Doctrine and Membership Covenant please read the *Free Methodist Church UK and Ireland Handbook*.



## Our mission

We exist to *know Christ and make Him known* in Pembrokeshire and beyond. We believe that we are filled by the Holy Spirit to flow out in love to the world. We do this weekly through Baby and Toddler groups, Rainbow Kids Club and Youth Life Group, which are full of families from our local community who don't yet have a relationship with Jesus. We also love finding creative new ways to share Jesus through events (such as the Christmas Experience) which reach the county. Emmanuel Missions partners with local churches in Pembrokeshire and elsewhere to share Jesus. We also support Robyn Welsby, in her schools ministry across the county.



Robyn, presenting the 'Walk Through the Bible' sessions.

## Our vision

We are passionate about being a welcoming community where anyone can **belong, share** openly, and **grow** in loving and serving Jesus. We want these values to permeate our life as a church.

**Belong** - we belong to Jesus and so we belong to one another. We believe this family is open to all who would turn from sin and self-reliance and put their trust in Him and so we welcome everyone with the radical loving kindness of Jesus and trust the Holy Spirit to convict and lead us into God's best for our lives. We love having fun, eating together and spending time with one another across the generations. Our church life is punctuated by Bring & Share, Prayer Breakfasts, Work Parties (with chips) and Life Groups where we can learn to be family together.



Eating together at harvest.

**Share** - we aim to create safe spaces, filled with the grace of Jesus, where we can share openly and honestly about our struggles, failures, doubts and questions, without fear of scorn, ridicule or condemnation. Our Life Groups, Rainbow Kids Club and Emmanuel Kids all create space for us to explore Scripture together and how it applies to our lives. Sharing our lives openly with each other helps us to know Jesus better and live for Him.

**Grow** - we long to grow to know and love Jesus better, to grow in our obedience to Him and to grow to use our gifts to serve Him and each other. We believe each of us is a vital member of the body of Christ. We actively encourage members to develop their gifting and to serve Jesus wherever they find themselves and we seek to equip and enable each other to do this. We believe God is a God of multiplication, and so we expect to multiply disciples, leaders and churches as the Spirit leads and empowers us.



One of our holiday clubs



## Our call

We believe God has called us to **build** on what has gone before, **revitalise** where the gospel witness has dried up, **plant and support** new churches across Pembrokeshire and **develop** new leaders and partnerships for the Kingdom. Will you join us as we seek to be obedient to Jesus in our generation?

## Our structure

At Emmanuel we want to follow the example of our shepherd-leader, Jesus, who humbled himself, stooping to wash His disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). We believe the role of leadership is not to be served, but to serve. Our structure reflects this, with each layer of leadership serving each other and being accountable to each other. Ultimately, every facet of church life is mobilised to fulfil our mission to reach our community and our County with the Good News of Jesus. The graphic to the right attempts to show how our church structure functions.



## Jesus

Jesus is the foundation and cornerstone of everything we do at Emmanuel. We want to build our life on Him and His Word and be constantly filled with His Spirit (Eph 2:19-22).

## Free Methodist Family in UK and Ireland

Emmanuel belongs to the Free Methodist Church family ([www.freemethodist.org.uk](http://www.freemethodist.org.uk)). We share in Articles of Religion and specific values which help us maintain our unique Wesleyan heritage.<sup>1</sup> FMC UK appoint ministers to churches, in prayer and consultation with the pastors, church delegates and church members. They provide routes to ordination, development opportunities, leadership training, practical and spiritual advice for churches, accountability and spiritual oversight for pastors and a connection of churches with a shared vision and purpose. Emmanuel is represented at the FMC UK annual conference through our pastor and delegate. Please read the FMC Handbook for more info.

## Emmanuel Christian Centre Trustees

ECC is a registered charity (no. 1087079) and our trustees provide spiritual and practical oversight for the ministry of ECC. They ensure that we comply with the stringent requirements of the Charity Commission and meet all other legal obligations. They hold the pastor and leaders accountable for the use of resources and ensure that we continue to fulfil the objectives of the charitable trust.

## Task Team

The task team is chosen from among the membership and is responsible for the practical maintenance and development of the church property (inside and out), as well as the grounds, in consultation with the pastor (s) and church leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> You can find the Free Methodist Articles of Religion in Appendix 1 of the *Free Methodist Church UK and IRL Handbook, 2023*.

## **Church Leaders**

The church leaders serve the church members and wider church by working closely with the pastor to prayerfully plan and organise the day-to-day life, ministry and vision of Emmanuel. Church leaders are called to identify, train, disciple and empower others to rise up into their gifting, serve the church and thus build up the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-16). Church leaders are nominated from among the membership following the recommendations of a Nominating Task Group before being appointed by the members at the AGM.

## **Pastor**

Pastors are appointed to the church by the trustees and FMC UK, in prayerful consultation with the church leaders and church members at Emmanuel. Pastors are responsible for the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the church, having been called to follow the loving example of Christ, the Good Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). This involves serving and overseeing the church in prayer and worship, teaching from God's Word, encouraging and enabling discipleship, equipping and empowering others to develop and use their gifting, caring for church members, reaching out to the lost, seeking and implementing God's vision for the work in the County and providing servant leadership amongst the church leaders and within the church family as a whole (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:1-4). The pastor is accountable to the ECC trustees, the FMC UK, the church members and, ultimately to the Lord Jesus.

## **Members**

At Emmanuel, membership is a heart commitment; it is the way we wholeheartedly and visibly commit ourselves to the life and ministry of our local church family and thus serve the wider congregation and our community. We will explore the purpose and role of church members in more detail below.

## **Why should I become a church member?**

Membership is a covenant commitment between the church and the member. Members promise to sustain a saving relationship with Jesus, to bring glory to God, to advance the cause of God on earth, to preserve the unity of the body of Christ, and to cherish the fellowship of the Free Methodist Church. The church promises to honour Christ, obey the written Word of God, offer the sacraments, give voice to the members, and work together with the members to bring glory to God in all things (FM Book of Discipline, para 151-154).



Two of our members, Ian and Anna, enjoying one of our open air events.

We believe that the local church is God's idea. In the exciting days of the early church, the picture we see is not primarily of one homogenous community of believers (1 Peter 1:1), but of wonderfully diverse local assemblies of the Lord's people (or churches). Paul writes to groups of believers in Macedonia, Judea, Asia and Galatia, while also sending greetings to individual 'house churches' (Col. 4:15-16, 1 Cor. 16:19, Philemon 1:1-2). Similarly, in the book of Revelation, we can read seven letters written to individual churches which were all within the same region (Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7 and 14). In the earliest days of the church a clearly distinguishable 'group' of believers is counted (Acts 2:41) and added to (Acts 2:47), as individuals make the choice whether or not to join (Acts 5:13). Having a clearly defined group of believers or 'members' who are committed to a local church is important for a number of reasons.

First, it identifies a group from whom individuals can be chosen and trained for church leadership (Acts 6:3, Titus 1:5-9, Heb. 13:7, James 3:1, 1 Timothy, 3:1-16).

Secondly, it helps identify those for whom the church leadership is primarily responsible. Leaders are responsible, not for all believers everywhere, but for the 'flock' God has entrusted...and assigned to their care (1 Peter 5:1-4). Leaders are also called to 'watch over' the flock carefully and responsibly as they must 'give an account' (Heb. 13:17) to the Lord for the way they have exercised this care.

Thirdly, church membership provides a means for spiritual accountability as we all seek to grow more like Jesus together. In becoming a member of a local congregation we voluntarily place ourselves under the authority, not of distant, unknowable entities, but of local church leaders and pastors who know us and have a specific responsibility before God for us (Heb. 13:17). Committing to church membership helps to stop us from sliding into sin by providing a way in which loving church discipline can be enacted (1 Cor 5:13) and forgiveness and restoration offered (2 Cor. 2:5-8). It provides us with a safe place where we can confess our failings to one another (James 5:16), encourage each other (Heb. 3:13), carry each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2), use our giftings for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) and grow to maturity together (Eph. 4:15-16). It stops us from being able to disappear the moment God challenges us, or things get tough.

Paul, when writing to the church in Corinth addresses one body made up of many parts, each of which is different, but all of which are crucial for the body (the local church) to function effectively (1 Cor. 12:12-31). Having a church membership helps prevent us from merely being a group of individual Christians (body parts) who come together for a Sunday service. Instead, united behind a common vision (Philippians 2:2), committed to one another in love (Eph. 4:2), and with our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2), we are joined together by Him to be His body in this place.

## Who can become a member?

Anyone who has repented of their sin, put their faith in Jesus, and been baptised is able to become a member. Membership may also be transferred from another fellowship. *We ask that all new congregants spend a year to get to know us before considering membership.*



Children taking part in our 'One Story' Christmas musical outreach in 2019

## What are the requirements?

- Forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, Christian baptism and a willingness to say yes to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.
- Acceptance of the FM Articles of Religion,<sup>2</sup> Membership Covenant,<sup>3</sup> and principles for the lives of its members and the governance of the church?<sup>4</sup>
- Covenant to support the church, live in fellowship with the members be an active participant in the ministry of the church and seek God's glory in all things (please see the following section).
- Approval of membership by the pastor + church leaders. Public declaration of membership vows.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Appendix A,' *FMC UK Handbook*, 2023, pg. 30-37

<sup>3</sup> 'How do we function,' *FMC UK Handbook*, 2023, pg. 19-23

<sup>4</sup> 'Appendix B,' *FMC UK Handbook*, 2023, pg. 38-54



## What is the covenant/commitment we make in membership?

As members of Emmanuel we recognise that we are being called to commit to each other as members of the body of Christ. This covenant is expressed in a number of key ways:

- **Love.** In becoming a member we are choosing to commit ourselves in love, not just to our friends, or the people we get on with, but to the whole church family, including those we find difficult to love. Church members are called to seek to express this love in tangible, practical ways (Gal. 6:10, John 13:35, John 15:12). If disagreements or problems arise within the church family, church members are called to make every effort to maintain the unity we have in the Spirit (Eph. 4:3-6), resolving tensions biblically (Matt. 18:15-17, Col. 3:13, Eph. 4:32). We want Emmanuel to be a family where we care for one another deeply, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who are rejoicing. Church members are called to live this out and model it for the wider church community (1 Pet. 4:8, Rom. 12:15).
- **Pray.** Church members commit to pray for our Emmanuel family, ministries, and leaders. We seek God's direction together in all aspects of church life. We prioritise prayer both individually and corporately as we pray for God's Kingdom to come, and His will to be done in Pembrokeshire and further afield (Matt. 6:9-13, Eph. 6:19, 1 Thess. 5:16-18).
- **Meet.** Church members prioritise meeting together regularly, both in large and small groups to worship God in music and prayer, to learn from His Word, partake in the Lord's Supper, enjoy fellowship together and witness to those around us (Acts 2:42-47, Heb. 10:24-25).
- **Give:** As members of Emmanuel we commit to seek the Lord in the area of financial giving and to give of our best. We choose sacrificially and cheerfully to give a regular 'tithe' (a percentage of our monthly income) alongside special 'offerings' for His work throughout Pembrokeshire and the world (Lev. 27:30, Mal. 3:6-12, 1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 8-9, 1 Tim. 6:17-18).
- **Serve:** We believe that God gives each of us both spiritual and natural gifts that we are called to use to serve Him and to lovingly serve each other (1 Pet. 4:10). We are members of one body and are called to use our gifts for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7). Every member is uniquely valuable and vitally important to ensuring that we function healthily as a church. Church members commit to explore and develop their gifting and calling by willingly and sacrificially serving the church. Members are called to work humbly alongside others, encourage and enable other people to thrive in their gifting, pray for the church, contribute to team discussions, attend team meetings and take direction from their ministry leaders (Phil. 2:5-11). If called upon, members are asked to prayerfully consider requests to become involved in particular ministries or leadership positions.



Praying for our county at our 24-7 prayer.

- **Contribute.** We believe in the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:5-9), and that our members have a vital role to play in the life and ministry of the church. Members at Emmanuel prayerfully appoint church leaders and task team members following the recommendation of the Nominating Task Group. These leaders work closely with the Pastor (s) and undertake the day-to-day practicalities, pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the church on behalf of the membership (1 Tim. 3:17, Titus 1:5). Members are called to support, encourage, pray for and hold their leaders to account. Members also contribute to the decision-making process of the church by attending members' meetings, listening to the concerns and ideas of others, and lovingly sharing their own perspective as the Holy Spirit leads.



Steph enjoying our church camp evening activities in 2019



Puppet outreach in Haverfordwest, Easter 2019

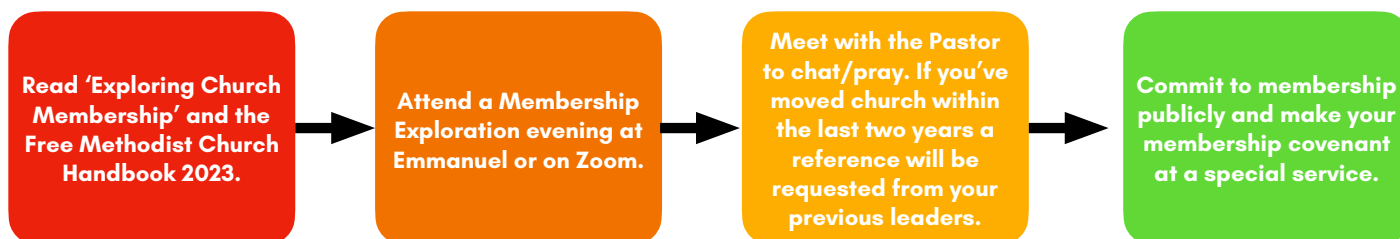


Prayer Breakfast on Coppet Hall Beach before our summer Beach Mission in 2019

- **Respect the leadership.** We believe that God calls, anoints and equips specific people to lead His church. As church members it is our calling to respect, encourage, pray for and lovingly challenge our pastor (s) and our leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 1 Thess 5:25). In becoming a church member we are choosing to place ourselves under their care and authority. We commit to listen to them, follow their leading and imitate their example as they imitate Christ (Phil. 3:17, 1 Cor. 11:1).
- **Grow.** None of us is perfect, but as church members we commit to 'walk in step with the Spirit' and grow to be more like Jesus. We commit to living a life of repentance and reliance on the Holy Spirit to set us free from sin and empower us to live holy, godly lives (Gal. 5:16-26, 1 Peter 2:12, 2 Peter 3:11-12). As members we are called to prioritise disciplines such as prayer and fasting, private and corporate Bible study, worship, confession, evangelism, service, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and mutual accountability in our desire to become more like Him.
- **Witness.** We are the church both gathered on a Sunday and scattered throughout the week. We believe that everyone has a ministry and a mission field wherever God has placed them in their every day lives. Church members recognise this and seek to make the most of every opportunity to witness for Jesus throughout the week, with their lips and with their lives (Eph. 5:16).

## How do I become a member?

All prospective members are encouraged prayerfully to consider membership in the following ways:



Having explored membership in all the ways described above, the final stage involves making a public commitment to the local church at Emmanuel and the wider Free Methodist Church family at a special service. At this service the following five questions will be asked of prospective members:

1. Do you have the assurance that God has forgiven your sins through faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Do you believe the Bible is God's written word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit, and do you accept its authority for what you believe and how you live?
3. Do you resolve, by God's grace, to be Christ-like in heart and life, opening yourself fully to the cleansing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the Scriptures, and the nurture and fellowship of the church?
4. Do you accept the Free Methodist Articles of Religion,<sup>5</sup> Membership Covenant,<sup>6</sup> and principles for the lives of its members and the governance of the church?<sup>7</sup>
5. As a follower of Jesus Christ, will you embrace the mission of the Free Methodist Church, within and beyond this congregation and will you join us in giving sacrificially of your time, talents and resources to help us carry out this mission?

As you consider church membership we pray that you may grow in your relationship with Jesus and with us as a church. We long to reflect the words of the Apostle Paul: we are 'partners in the gospel' and 'workers together with Him', as we look to Jesus the 'author and perfecter of our faith.' (Phil. 1:5, 2 Cor. 6:1, Heb. 12:2).

If you would like more information about membership at Emmanuel or would like to arrange a time to chat or ask further questions please get in touch.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Appendix A,' *FMC UK Handbook, 2023*, pg. 30-37

<sup>6</sup> 'How do we function,' *FMC UK Handbook, 2023*, pg. 19-23

<sup>7</sup> 'Appendix B,' *FMC UK Handbook, 2023*, pg. 38-54

## **Contact Details:**

**Rev. Dan Brett (Pastor)**

[dan@eccentre.org.uk](mailto:dan@eccentre.org.uk)

07943 756 278

### **Emmanuel Christian Centre**

87, Pembroke Road

Merlins Bridge

Haverfordwest

Pembrokeshire

SA61 1LN

### **Emmanuel Church Online**

[www.emmanuelchristiancentre.org.uk](http://www.emmanuelchristiancentre.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/emmanuelchurchpembs](https://www.facebook.com/emmanuelchurchpembs)

[www.youtube.com/emmanuelpembs](https://www.youtube.com/emmanuelpembs)

