

## **Proposed Changes to Emmanuel's Governance Structure** *Reinforcing the Trellis so the Vine can continue to Grow*

The story of Emmanuel from the beginning has been a story of God's faithfulness to us, His people. We are a church family called to a mission. A mission to glorify God by knowing Jesus Christ and making him known. We are disciples of Jesus who make disciples...all for the glory of God!

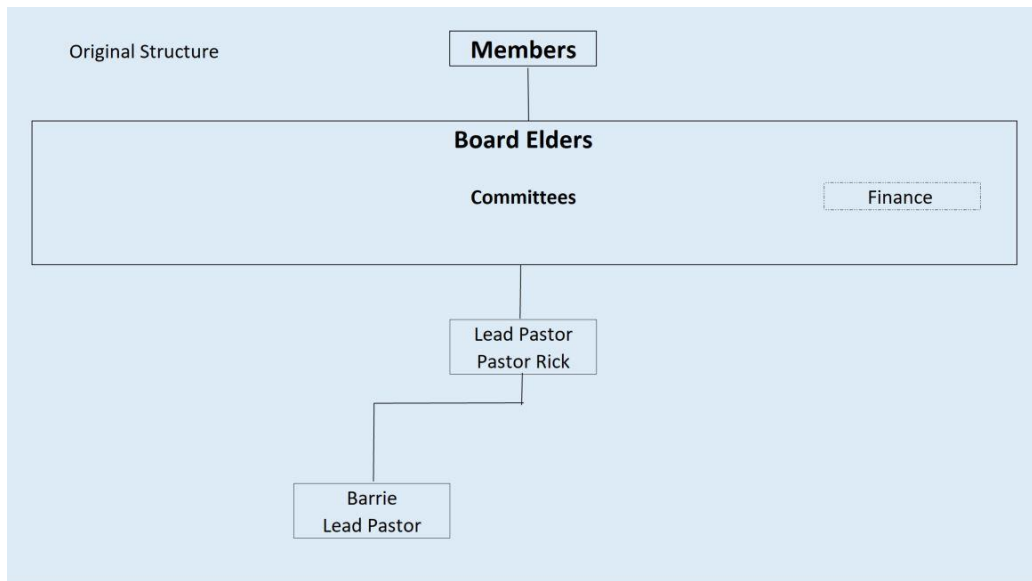
God has blessed the ministry here at Emmanuel. Seeds were planted by some and watered by others and God has brought a great harvest and continues to bless to this very day. The church family and witness have grown, and we give God the praise.

That growth has not been without great challenges to overcome and great sacrifices as well. We are grateful for all those who have served and sacrificed through the years. That service and sacrifice have deepened our faith and strengthened our resolve to stay on mission.

Emmanuel has not been a church to stand still for long. Over twenty years ago there was an audacious plan to build a bigger building to serve a growing church family. The plan was to build that church on the outskirts of Barrie with the faith that the city would grow up around the church on Salem Road. God, in His wise timing, has rewarded that faith as we witness the neighbourhoods springing up around the Barrie site.

Almost 10 years ago, in 2013, the church was incorporated. A church bylaw was drawn up to reflect how we operate as a church. Our structure as a church is like a trellis in your garden. Its purpose is to support the living, growing plant. A climbing vine, in full bloom, causes the trellis supporting it, to seem to disappear. You see, the structure is important, but it is there, only to serve the mission and vision of the church.

The Church bylaw at that time described a structure that looked like this.



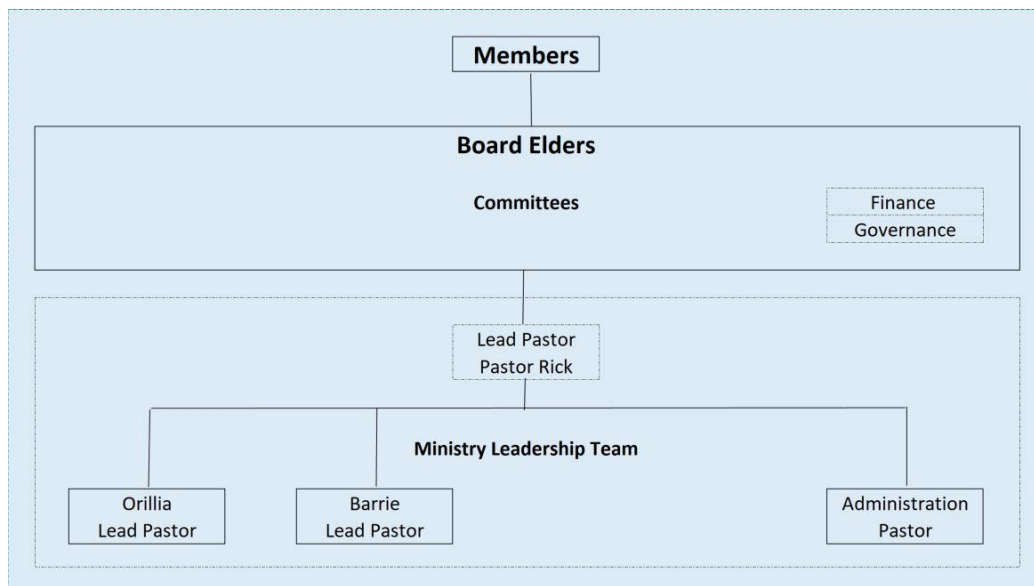
- The Members elected Elders to govern the church and a Lead Pastor to lead the church. The Lead Pastor was accountable to the Elders and the Elders were accountable to the members.
- Pastor Rick Buck was that Lead Pastor.

## The Vision to Multiply Takes Hold

Since incorporation, Emmanuel has continued to grow and change. Disciples making disciple-makers.

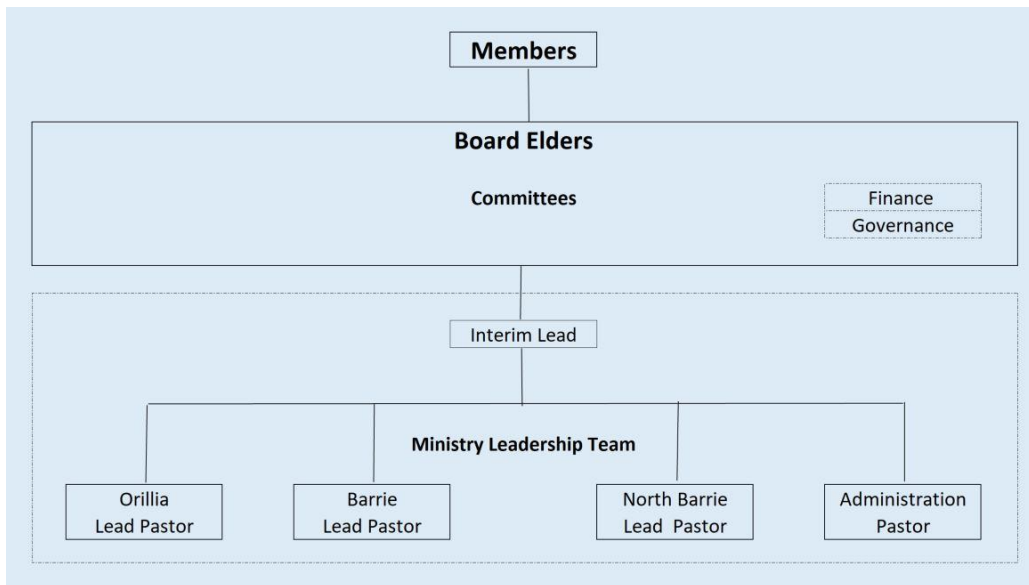
- Seven years ago, in 2015, Emmanuel once again took a large step of faith and sent a group of over 50 of our church family under the leadership of Pastor Dave Whitelaw to plant a new congregation in the city of Orillia. God blessed that step of faith and almost 350 were in attendance early this month. Praise God!
- Pastor Rick's role expanded in 2015 to include oversight of Pastor Dave and the Orillia congregation.
- At the same time, the church recognized that there were advantages to keeping many of the administrative functions centralized and freeing Pastor Dave and his staff to give greater focus to the ministry they had been called to. Pastor Randy's role expanded to oversee these Central Services such as Finances, Human Resources, and IT.

Our structure was changing!



## Skip ahead to 2020

- Emmanuel was both sad and proud when God called Pastor Rick and Jo Buck to serve as Regional Director of the Fellowship Central Region with over 276 Fellowship Churches.
- The Board appointed Pastor Randy on an interim basis as the Lead Pastor.
- And then it seemed like the whole world turned upside down. The Pandemic. But God is our rock and our fortress. He is our hope and confidence.
- That hope and confidence in God lead us, just 7 months into the Pandemic, to send another group of excited, faith-filled members of our church family to plant a congregation in North Barrie. From one perspective, it was a crazy risk for Emmanuel, but from the perspective that counts, it was a step of faith.



For the past two years, we have been functioning with a structure that looks like this.

The growing vine is heavy on the trellis. It was time to examine the trellis to make sure it would serve us well into the future.

### A Time of Review

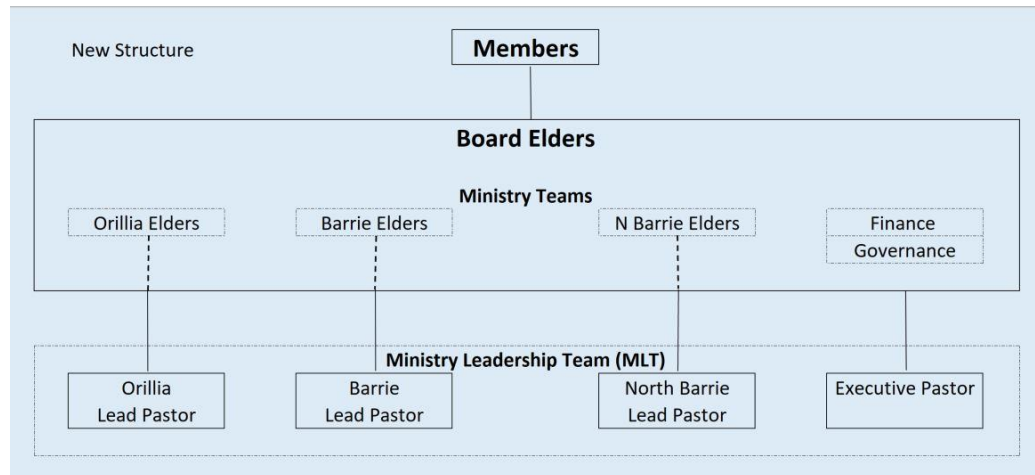
- The Board had already begun discussions in 2019 and sometime later established a Governance review team made up of representative Elders from each congregation and the staff Ministry Leadership Team consisting of Pastors Randy, Dave, Josh, and Jordan. Those Elders included Dan Henderson from Orillia, Peter Mensinga from North Barrie, and Dennis Mudde and Fred Van Arragon from Barrie.
- **The question to be considered was how do we adjust our bylaw to reflect who we have become and to support us into the future?**
- These past 3 years have included a lot of discussion and planning among the Board and Leadership team, --covered by fervent prayer. As a result of all that work, the Board is recommending to the membership, a new governance structure and a draft of our bylaw that supports these changes.

### What We Affirmed

- **First**, we affirmed that we are one church with multiple congregations, and we weren't finished multiplying. Our vision to continue to grow remains strong and we need to ensure the structure, -the trellis, will support that vision.
- **Second**, we acknowledged the high level of autonomy each of the congregations enjoy while still being part of one church. We are better and stronger together.
- **Third**, we affirmed the close relationship the Lead Pastor has with the Elders and the accountability built into that relationship. As a result, from the beginning, we have encouraged the development of Ministry teams of local Elders in each congregation with the local Lead Pastor (an Elder himself) as their leader.

## The Proposed Changes

There are three major changes proposed in our governance structure. The numerous changes to our existing bylaw support these proposals. The new governance structure would look like this.



- **First**, each of the Lead Pastors will be accountable directly to the Board Elders. Just as the Lead Pastor, Pastor Rick and then Pastor Randy, were in the old model.
  - Remember we are **one** Church with multiple congregations. We have **one** Board made up of Elders from each of the congregations.
  - The Board will appoint Ministry Teams of Local Elders that include the Local Lead Pastors. “Ministry Team” is the new term for what used to be committees of the Board Elders.
  - The Board will designate the Local Elders to hold their Local Lead Pastor accountable for leading the congregations in the fulfillment of the mission and to bring reports back to the Board.
  - In our existing structure, the congregation Lead Pastors are accountable to Pastor Randy as Interim Lead Pastor. The **new** structure would make the local Lead Pastors **directly** accountable to the Elders.

**Second**, the role of the Administrative Pastor will be expanded, and the title changed to Executive Pastor. Pastor Randy would continue in this role. Not only would the Executive Pastor continue to oversee the administration of Central Services, but this role would also encompass leadership in those things that bind us together as one church with multiple congregations. The discussion and decision-making on these matters would be done in collaboration with the Ministry Leadership Team.

- They include:
  - Our Shared Mission and Vision – including the vision to plant new congregations
  - Our Shared doctrine and practice
  - Our Shared heritage – those distinctives that should permeate all our congregations
  - Our Shared pulpit teaching strategy
  - Our Shared Missions Strategy

- Our Shared support for the Fellowship
- **Third**, if a congregation is calling a new Lead Pastor, it would be the responsibility of the members of a local congregation to vote to approve and not the entire membership.

These are the major changes. There are numerous other edits in the existing bylaw but most of them are to support the major changes listed above.

**Where do we go from here?**

- Amendments to our Bylaw need to be approved by the membership. The bylaw and new structure will be brought to the membership at the Annual Meetings to be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- In the meantime, a Town Hall will be held in Orillia, Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup> after the service. Another Town Hall will be held at the Barrie site on Salem Rd, Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the town halls is to present and discuss the proposed changes. It will be an opportunity for church leaders to hear feedback and answer questions.
- Thank you for reading this document and we would encourage you to examine the proposed bylaw.
- Would you pray? Pray over the process: that we would only make changes with God's blessing and that we would move forward in unity as a church family.