

## **The Provisional Constitution of Immanuel Church**

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### **Article I – Name**

The name of the congregation is Immanuel Church.

### **Article II - Purpose**

The Church exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made and grow in their relationship with Him. God is glorified as we manifest His presence as we do His work (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

### **Article III – Five Pillars**

Immanuel Church shall be characterized and guided by her emphasis on the following five pillars:

1. Proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology (2 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 4:12);
2. Boldly sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:36-38; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:19-20);
3. Lifting high the name of Jesus Christ through worship (John 4:24);
4. Believing in the power of prayer (Jeremiah 33:3; Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16);
5. Creating disciples through community (Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 6:1-2).

### **Article IV – Doctrine (Statement of Faith)**

#### **I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is completely true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

#### **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

#### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

#### **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His penal substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

The Holy Spirit equips every believer with spiritual gifts to use for the edification of the church at the point of salvation. The use of sign gifts within the church is not encouraged. Instead, Scripture emphasizes the more excellent way of love, the speaking of the Word, and a zeal for the gifts that edify the church.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 13:15; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; 16:8; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-17,26-27; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13,19; 14:1-12; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 4:6; 5:25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1:22; 4:11-12; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 4:1-4; 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

### **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse. As soon as man is capable of moral action, he is culpable as a transgressor and justly under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

### **IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

**A. Regeneration**, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

**B. Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

**C. Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

**D. Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

#### **V. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

#### **VI. The Harmony Of The Law And The Gospel**

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

*Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 16:17; Romans 3:31; 7:4-25; 10:4; Galatians 3:11-25; 1 Timothy 1:8-11.*

#### **VII. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are elders and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

### **VIII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

### **IX. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

### **X. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

### **XI. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2*

*Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## **XII. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## **XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

## **XIV. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## **XV. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.

She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth.

Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

## **Article V - Christian Living**

### **Section 1 - Concerning Conduct**

The Bible teaches that all believers are saints, set apart unto God and are thus responsible to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord lest the Word of God be blasphemed. As Christians we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things which are above, walk as He walked, and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world. A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do.

*Matthew 29:19-20; Romans 6, 7, 12:1,2; 21:1-2; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18,23; Colossians 3:1; 1 Timothy 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:19; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 1:14-19; 1 John 2:3*

### **Section 2 - Concerning Separation**

Because of God's holy nature and the believers' high calling, Scripture teaches and commands personal and ecclesiastical separation from religious apostasy, from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and from professing believers living in willful disobedience to the Word of God. This does not include separation from unbelievers who need the Word of God to penetrate their world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, 14, 15; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 7-11*

## **Article VI - Membership**

### **Section 1 – Qualifications**

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Church Doctrine (Statement of Faith) and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The Elders will be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the Elders deem appropriate.

### **Section 2 – Admission of Members**

To be admitted into church membership, applicants must submit a signed copy of the church covenant to the elders. He/She must then be recommended by the Elders for admission and presented to the members for approval by placing the applicants name in a publicly visible location for a period of not less than two weeks. If there exist any reasons that the applicant should not be allowed into membership, a member is, under the spirit and direction of Matthew 18:15-17, to attempt to facilitate restoration with the applicant, and then, if unsuccessful, to bring the matter before the Elders with the applicant present. Any issue concerning an applicant's eligibility for membership that is brought before the Elders will be investigated. Final judgment of the merit of all accusations will be determined by the Elders. If no such accusations are made during the two week period, the

applicant will be welcomed into full membership with all duties and privileges. At that point the applicant shall relinquish their membership in all other churches.

### **Section 3 - Membership Covenant**

The effectiveness of our joining together will be determined by the level of the commitment we make. In a society where so few make commitments and fewer still keep them, Immanuel Church is seeking those who are determined to know the joy Christ intended for His body, the church. To this end, members of Immanuel Church must be willing to live in accordance with our membership covenant.

1. That, by faith, I have been brought by God's grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ; and have been subsequently baptized by immersion; and am in full affirmation of the church statement of faith.
2. That we will care for one another as members of one body to promote the growth of the whole body in holiness so that we may all stand perfect and complete in the will of God.
3. That we will continue to faithfully worship God together and observe the ordinances of His Church, believer's baptism and communion.
4. That we will cheerfully and sacrificially give of our property for the support of those in need, and for the continuation of the faithful ministry of the gospel among us.
5. That we will practice both personal and family devotions at home; that we will biblically train our children and those under our care.
6. That we maintain a godly witness in the world, that we may lead others to faith in Christ.
7. That we will frequently encourage, exhort, and if necessary, rebuke one another, according to Matthew 18, in a spirit of humility.

### **Section 4 – Duties and Privileges of Membership**

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only members will be entitled to lead in the ministries of the church. Non-members are welcomed to serve within the various ministries of the church (excluding those involving leadership and biblical instruction) on an individual basis with the approval of the Elders.

This congregation has Christ as its head, elders for its leaders, and is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to vote on the following matters:

- The election or dismissal of elders, deacons, and the church treasurer;
- Decisions regarding membership status;
- Amending of the church constitution, doctrinal statement, or membership covenant;
- The purchase of land or buildings;
- The adoption of the annual budget;
- And on such other matters as may be submitted by the Elders for congregational approval.

### **Section 5 – On Church Discipline**

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, will be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the church, in accordance with Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture.

Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the Elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and removal from membership (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

In accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19, if the accused should be an elder, then at least two witnesses to the sin are required or else the accusation will not be heard by anyone.

Being in this process in any step forfeits the partner's privileges of affirmation should any vote arise.

The purpose of such discipline should be

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5;

Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1: 22);

- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);
- For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
- For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10);
- And supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

### **Section 6 – Termination of Membership**

The church will recognize the termination of a person’s membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline, at the recommendation of the Elders and upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

Absence from regular services for at least four months will result in the member being placed on the inactive roll pending a satisfactory answer to the inquiry of the Elders. While on the inactive roll members forfeit their privileges should any vote arise. No name shall remain on the inactive roll for longer than six months. Persons who satisfactorily give reason why they should remain on the active roll shall be replaced on that roll at the discretion of the Elders, or alternatively a majority vote of the membership. No person who is absent because of illness, military service, missionary work or schooling may be removed while in such capacity.

## **Article VII - Church Government**

### **Section 1 – Autonomy**

Believing that there is no authority over the Church other than Christ, this church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.

### **Section 2 - Two Offices: Elder and Deacon**

The Bible’s teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Although there are several terms used for the offices of the church, i.e. bishop, elder, pastor, overseer, and deacon, analysis of these terms indicates that bishop, elder, pastor, and overseer are used interchangeably.

### **Section 2A – Elders**

The Scriptures show that the Elders serve by leading and that their responsibility involves the spiritual oversight of the congregation. Elders must be men (1 Timothy 2:12) who are actively serving in the ministries of the church and have demonstrated a Christian testimony, spiritual gifting, and leadership skills in keeping with the office. The Elders will be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9 and have been ordained by the church. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church. The Lead Pastor will serve as the greatest among equals among the Elders and will be considered the chairman of Elders’ meetings. The Elders will elect a secretary to keep written records of elder meetings and members’ meetings. Decisions of the Elders will be arrived at by consensus.

### **Section 2B – Elders’ Responsibilities**

The Elders will oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the Elders must devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.



The Elders will take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, oversee the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

Also, the Elders may:

- Establish, alter, or eliminate ministry positions or committees (other than those mandated by the church constitution) to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities;
- Hold primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member;
- Sign legal documents on behalf of the church as the church may direct;
- Hold any real estate belonging to the church "In Trust" for the church;
- Establish or dissolve affiliations with fellowships, associations, or other para-church groups.

#### **Section 2C - Election and Termination of Elders**

The church will recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, with a vote of at least three-fourths of the members present and in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men are to be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition will be reaffirmed by the church triennially. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action must be done in accordance with Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

#### **Section 2D – The Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to triennial reaffirmation.

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential Lead Pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as Lead Pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

In the instance of the absence or incapacity of the Lead Pastor, his responsibilities will be carried out by an elder appointed by the Elders, until such time that he is able to reassume his duties or the congregation elects a new Lead Pastor.

#### **Section 2E – Associate Pastors**

The church may call associate pastors as necessary. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the vocational ministry of teaching.

His call shall not be subject to triennial reaffirmation for elders. His call shall be according to the same process of calling an elder. He shall assist the Lead Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of elder, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation, the Elders, or the Lead Pastor.

#### **Section 2F – Pastoral Assistants**

The Elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These will not be considered pastors, though they may be recognized as Elders should they be nominated by the Elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with the process of calling an elder.

The Elders shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the Elders.

### **Section 2G – Deacons / Deaconesses**

The office of deacon is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualification for deacons are the same as elder in the area of character, but different in aptitude. The elders are to be "apt to teach" while the deacons are to be "able and proved as servants" (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1).

Deacons lead by serving in various capacities within the church to support and advance the various ministries of the church. The office of deacon is described in Acts 6: 1–7 and I Timothy 3: 8–13. The church will recognize, with a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present and in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess particular gifts of service, and who meet the qualifications of the office found in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. The office of deacon/deaconess will be a non-ordained position. This recognition will be reaffirmed by the church biennially.

Deacons and deaconesses care for the individual physical and emotional needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support the ministry of the elders.

The deacons and deaconesses will oversee the benevolent operations of the church, reporting on the use of such funds to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

### **Section 3 – Non-Ministerial Staff**

Non-ministerial staff members may be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The Elders shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members.

### **Section 4 – Treasurer / Assistant Treasurer**

The church treasurer and assistant treasurer will be appointed by the congregation at the annual members' meeting. The treasurer will carry on the banking business in the name of the church. The treasurer shall receive and account for donations to the church in a way that establishes accountability and conduct above reproach. The treasurer shall maintain the accounting records in a manner required by the State of New York. The treasurer shall supply a quarterly financial statement upon request to any member. The assistant treasurer will aid the treasurer in fulfilling these responsibilities, and in the case of absence or inability, fulfill the responsibilities of the treasurer.

### **Section 5 – Ministry Team Leaders**

As deemed necessary, the Elders may appoint members in good standing to serve as a leader within a specific ministry area. The team leader will work with the Elders and Deacons to further the church's ministry in that particular area, including advising the Elders of needs and budgetary requests. The team leader will serve the volunteer workers in their area of ministry by implementing accountability, providing direction and general oversight.

### **Section 6 – Members' Meetings**

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Members' meeting will be scheduled by the Elders annually, at some time apart from a public worship service. A special members' meeting may also be called by the Elders as necessary or by any member of the church in good standing. In the instance of a meeting called by the members, any matter other than those delineated in Article VI, Section 4 of this document may not be put to a vote.

Attendance at members' meetings will be open to all who regularly attend the church. Participation (i.e. speaking publicly, asking questions, affecting consensus, etc.) shall be limited to the members in good standing. A member in good standing will be one who is not under the discipline of the Board of Elders and who gives clear evidence of

seeking to fulfill the membership commitment. *Robert's Rules of Order, Modern Edition* will be used as a guideline for conduct in business meetings.

The elders, deacons, and treasurer will be responsible to ensure that regular and full disclosure of all business matters of the church is made. This will be done in the form of an annual report to be distributed at least four weeks prior to the annual members' meeting.

The annual report will include a full financial statement of the previous year and a proposed budget for the following year. The church commits itself to a program of fiscal responsibility that precludes over-budget spending. Any item of business that a member wishes to raise at any business meeting that is not part of the published agenda (which will be published at least 14 days prior to the annual members' meeting) must be given in writing to one of the elders at least seven days before the business meeting.

An elder designated by the Elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.

All members must be appropriately notified of members' meetings no less than four weeks prior to the scheduled date of the meeting. Provided proper notification requirements have been met, a quorum will be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be based on the number of votes cast by members present. Voting in absentia will not be permitted. Unless otherwise stated, all votes of the members will require a simple majority.

### **Section 7 - Amendments**

Amendments to the church constitution, covenant, and doctrine may be made by a three-fourths vote of the members. Notice of the proposed amendment (including the suggested text of the change) shall be supplied by the Elders in writing to all members at least four weeks prior to the meeting at which the decision is to be made.

## **Article VII - General Provisions**

### **Section 1 - Saving Clause**

In the event that any section of this constitution shall be declared unlawful or otherwise unenforceable, such declaration shall not affect any other provision of this constitution.

### **Section 2 - Dissolution**

In the event this church discontinues and is dissolved, its assets not required for payment of its liabilities and obligations shall be paid over and transferred to one or more organizations engaged in activities similar to our own and in agreement with statement of faith in this Constitution. Such distribution shall be decided by the members of the church.

### **Section 3 – Affiliations**

As an autonomous church, Immanuel Church recognizes the benefit of affiliating with other organizations in order to further our mission. We willingly partner and cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention. The elders may also affiliate the church with other organizations and fellowships deemed to further the mission and purpose of the church. The elders may also disassociate from those organizations and fellowships no longer deemed to further the mission and purpose of the church.