

# Immanuel Church Constitution

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**2414 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Wilmington, Delaware 19806  
As Amended July 12, 2020**

# **Immanuel Church Constitution**

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# **Immanuel Church Constitution**

## **PART I IMMANUEL CHURCH**

### **ARTICLE A WHAT WE BELIEVE**

#### **1) THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We believe in the verbal/plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and that they are inerrant and are the supreme and final authority in faith and life. II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21; Hebrews 4:12.

#### **2) THE TRUE GOD**

We believe in one God revealed in three co-equal distinct persons; God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; Ephesians 2:18; John 4:24.

#### **3) THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST**

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory. Matthew 17:5; Matthew 1:18, I John 3:5; Matthew 11:5; Romans 5:8; Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:19; Revelation 20:6; I Thessalonians 4:14-17.

#### **4) THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe in the separate and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit and that His ministry is to reveal Jesus Christ to men, to convict of sin, to regenerate repentant sinners, and to sanctify lives of the redeemed by His presence and power. We believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all Christians to empower us to be witnesses. We believe in the full operation and gifts of the Holy Spirit. John 16:13; John 15:26; John 16:8, 9; Titus 3:5,6; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Cor. 12; John 7:37-39; Matt. 3:11-12; Acts 1:4,5,8; Acts 2:1-21.

#### **5) THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN**

We believe that Satan is a fallen, created being who is called the god of this world, the deceiver of this age, and the author of all sin. He and his company of demons are opposed to the Kingdom of God and are at work to defeat and destroy the believer and the Church. While his activity is real, Satan and his demons were once and for all defeated, overthrown by Christ's victory at the cross of Calvary and destined by God's judgment to be cast into the lake of fire for eternity. Job 1:6, 7; John 8:44; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.

## **PART I, ARTICLE A (CONTINUED)**

### **6) THE FALL OF MAN**

We believe that man was created in the image of God, but by willful transgression became sinful and is justly under the condemnation and wrath of Almighty God. Genesis 1:27; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:13; Romans 3:23.

### **7) THE WAY OF SALVATION**

We believe that the necessary and only terms of salvation are repentance towards God from sin and a personal heartfelt faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ which results in regeneration. This salvation is entirely by grace and not by works Romans 5:1; Acts 3:19-20; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8, 9.

### **8) THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF MAN**

We believe that there is an essential difference between the saved and the lost. The saved shall be resurrected unto life everlasting to enjoy God's presence in Heaven; the lost unto damnation to be tormented forever in Hell. John 5:28,29; John 3:36; Revelation 20:11-15.

### **9) THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

We believe the Church is Christ's spiritual body on the earth today. It consists of born-again believers and has both universal and local expressions. We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing to mankind of Christ, through the spoken word and by living a daily life which exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 10: 42; Matthew 5: 16; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 28:19, 20.

### **10) THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only scriptural ordinances of the Church.

We believe that Baptism is the immersion of a believer in Water; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; symbolizing the essential facts in redemption - the death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life. Matthew 3:13-17; Romans 6:3-5.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is in memory of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The elements symbolize the broken body and shed blood of Christ at Calvary. They are to be partaken of, after solemn self-examination, at regular intervals by all members of the Church. Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:13-22; I Corinthians 11:23-29.

### **11) THE LORD'S DAY**

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and is to be kept sacred for spiritual purposes. Acts 20:7.

## **PART I, ARTICLE A (CONTINUED)**

### **12) BIBLICAL MARRIAGE**

We believe that God created mankind in His image. He created male and female for the purpose of glorifying His name through the institution of marriage. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as a foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. It is inconsistent with God's will for a follower of Christ to live in a way that dishonors God's original intent of one man married to one woman for life. Therefore, we will not conduct or host wedding ceremonies that are inconsistent with scripture. Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:31-33.

### **ARTICLE B THE CHURCH**

Immanuel Church consists of Christians who have confessed and received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, followed Him in baptism by immersion, and publicly placed membership in Immanuel Church.

### **ARTICLE C MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1 – The Purpose of Membership**

Membership is not predicated simply on acceptance into membership, but on affirmation of the Membership Agreement by an individual and that person's stated intent to participate in the life and ministry of the church. Membership exists not only for the purpose of determining participation in church government, but also for the purpose of defining pastoral responsibility and church family relationships.

#### **Section 2 – Requirements for Membership**

The criteria used for accepting an individual into membership are as follows:

Candidates must affirm publicly that:

- A. They are born again and committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, as expressed by biblical attitudes and patterns of living as well as outward conformity and performance. John 3:5-7; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:12-14; Titus 2:11-14.
- B. They have been baptized by immersion. Matthew 3:13-17; Romans 6:3-7.

Furthermore,

- C. They must have a basic understanding of Immanuel's church doctrine and are in agreement with it and have received a copy of Immanuel's constitution and understand and accept it.
- D. They must have demonstrated a willingness to be committed to the church by attendance at regularly scheduled services and activities. Luke 4:16a; Hebrews 10:24-25.
- E. They must have a strong belief that God has placed them in and wants them to be a part of this particular expression of the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 3:12-17; Hebrews 10:22-25
- F. They must give their personal testimony before the elders and the church verbally or in writing. Revelation 12:10-11; Romans 16:1.

## PART I, ARTICLE C (CONTINUED)

### Section 3 – The Membership Agreement

#### **MEMBERS OF IMMANUEL CHURCH AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING:**

- A. **JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH** – I agree to maintain and take responsibility for my spiritual life in Christ Jesus, the Head of the Body of Christ. As a member of The Body, I will endeavor to be an ambassador of His Gospel through personal example and evangelism, which will demonstrate to the world the power of the unity of the Body of Christ. Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47.
- B. **IN ESSENTIALS – UNITY, IN NON-ESSENTIALS – DIVERSITY, IN ALL THINGS – LOVE** I believe and support all the basic doctrines as expressed in the Statement of Faith and agree to avoid divisiveness regarding doctrinal positions as I walk out the truth of God’s Word with all grace and love. I will properly appeal to the elders when there is a conflict of conscience or doctrine, and not engage in complaining, backbiting, or slander. Ephesians 4: 29-32; Matthew 5:22-24; Matthew 18:15-16; Proverbs 6:19.
- C. **WITHOUT A VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH** – I will be loyal to the direction the Holy Spirit is leading Immanuel Church as a whole. Acts 15:30-32; Acts 16:4-5; Philippians 2:1-2.
- D. **BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP IS A LIFE WELL-SPENT** I agree to support Immanuel Church by being a generous giver as God blesses me with His abundance. I agree to become a tithing member and recognize the principle of equal sacrifice in the stewardship of not only financial resources, but in my time and talents as well. And I will do this as much as my personal responsibilities for my family and my employment will allow. Malachi 3:6-12; Haggai 1:2-15; Luke 11:42
- E. **REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE WATCH OVER YOU** – I will pray for the pastor, elders and servant leaders of the church. I will submit to them and honor them in Christ and believe the best about them. I recognize their human frailty and extend grace to them by not placing unreasonable expectations upon them that would cause them to sacrifice their family life or spiritual balance. Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Timothy 5:17; I Thessalonians 5:12-13.
- F. **MY COMMUNITY – MY FAMILY** – I agree to the best of my ability to be a meaningful part of the Immanuel community of faith. I will always resolve conflict according to Matthew 18, speak the truth in love and speak well of others. I am willing to be held accountable and to receive teaching, discipling, training and correction in righteousness from others, and will submit myself to biblical church discipline as stated in Matthew 18: 15-17. II Timothy 3:15-17, II Timothy 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-16; Ephesians 5:21; James 5:16.
- G. **EVERY MEMBER IS A MINISTER** – I will support and actively seek to be involved in loving service to others within this church body according to the gifts, talents, abilities, and resources that I may have to contribute and according to the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:22-25.

## **PART I, ARTICLE C (CONTINUED)**

### **Section 4 – The Procedure for Membership**

Anyone desiring membership in Immanuel Church must attend a class or classes as designated by the Elders, be interviewed by the elders and upon their recommendation and approval, be received publicly before the congregation. The congregation shall be notified in advance of the date the candidate is publicly received. Their names shall be recorded into the church records.

## **ARTICLE D CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP STATUS**

### **Section 1 – Letter of Transfer to Another Church**

The elders will, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in positive confirmation, grant church letters to members whom God leads to become part of another church body.

### **Section 2 – Dismissal**

In order to keep an accurate record of church membership, a periodic review will be made. Members may be dismissed by the majority vote of the elders after they have failed to fulfill the responsibilities of the Church Membership Agreement for a period of two (2) years without sufficient reason.

### **Section 3 – Discipline of the Church**

The elders shall be responsible for the administration of corrective discipline. The purpose of church discipline is always to bring the person to repentance and eventual restoration. II Cor. 2:5-11.

In private offenses, or such as one member may commit against another member, the course prescribed by our Savior in Matthew 18:15-17, shall be strictly followed.

Accusations against elders must be in accordance with I Timothy 5:19-20; Matt. 18:15-17.

If any member of the church becomes an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct whatsoever, the elders may, by a majority vote, censure, reprimand, remove from office, or remove that member from membership. I Cor. 5.

## **PART II THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT**

### **ARTICLE A ELDERS**

#### **Section 1 – Responsibilities**

Elders are responsible to God for the congregation and for oversight of all aspects of the local church. Some duties may be delegated to the deacons and/or others, as in Acts 6. An elder shall be confirmed by the congregation and shall continue to serve unless he is released with the blessing of the elders, resigns, or by unanimous vote of the remaining elders is dismissed or is removed for cause.



## **PART II, ARTICLE A (CONTINUED)**

### **Section 2 – Qualifications**

An elder must be a member and have served as a deacon of Immanuel Church, must be 30 years of age or older, and must meet the requirements of I Timothy 3. Pastoral staff members need not meet the above requirements of age or service to qualify for eldership.

### **Section 3 – New Elders**

The elders have the responsibility of nominating new elders as they are needed. Any member of the congregation may, however, submit in writing the names of men for consideration as elders at any time. For any man whose name is so submitted, the Elders shall determine the individual's qualifications, background and willingness to serve. The Elders may elect to designate an individual as an Apprentice Elder for a period of time as part of the evaluation process to determine whether to formally nominate that individual to the Congregation. A congregational vote of seventy-five (75) per cent of members present will be required for confirmation. Elders are confirmed at a special business meeting called for that purpose.

### **Section 4 – Minimum Number of Elders**

If the number of elders falls below four (4), the currently active deacons, by majority vote, will select one or more active or inactive Deacons who will be added to the elder board as acting elders, thereby bringing the total number of elders, and acting elders, to four (4). The acting elders will remain on the eldership only until new elders are confirmed and ordained, at which time the acting elders will step down and return to the deacon board. However, prior to the final selection of any acting elder, the Deacons shall submit the name(s) of candidates to the elders for their approval. The elders shall not withhold approval of any such candidate except when the candidate no longer meets the qualification requirements specified in Section 2, above.

### **Section 5 – Limitation on Elders Who are Employees of the Church**

At all times, the number of elders who are employees of the church must be less than the number of elders who are not employees of the church. If the number of elders who are not employees of the church declines sufficiently so that the number of non-employee elders no longer exceeds the number of employee elders, the remaining non-employee elders shall place an employee elder (other than the Senior Pastor) on inactive sabbatical. If administration of this limitation causes the number of active elders to fall below four (4), the requirements of Section 4 – Minimum Number of Elders shall apply. Any employee elder(s) on inactive sabbatical may be returned to active elder status at a later date so long as this rule is satisfied.

## **PART II, ARTICLE B**

### **ARTICLE B DEACONS**

#### **Section 1 – Responsibilities**

Deacons are responsible to God and to the elders for ministries of the church as delegated to them by the elders.

#### **Section 2 – Qualifications**

Deacon nominees will be selected from already ordained deacons, or from any members of Immanuel Church who are 21 years of age or older and who meet the requirements of I Timothy 3.

#### **Section 3 – New Deacons**

Recommendations for new deacons may be submitted by any member of the congregation to the elders for their consideration. The elders shall nominate candidates for deacons after a review of qualifications, background and willingness to serve. The elders may elect to designate an individual as an apprentice deacon for a period of time as part of the evaluation process. A majority vote shall be required for a candidate to be confirmed at the annual business meeting or at a specially called business meeting. After confirmation, candidates becoming Deacons for the first time shall be ordained for service to the ministries for which they may be assigned from time to time.

#### **Section 4 – Term of Office**

Deacons confirmed by the congregation shall continue to serve in that office for a term of three (3) years unless they are released with the blessing of the elders, resign, or are dismissed by a majority vote of the elders. Approximately one-third (1/3) of the deacons will be confirmed each year.

#### **Section 5 – Deacon Officers**

Within a reasonable length of time after the annual church election, the deacons will present to the elders for their approval all members of the board whom they feel are qualified to serve in any expiring officer positions. Upon receiving the approval of the elders, the deacons will then select persons from those members to serve as chair, vice-chair, and secretary as needed. At least two thirds (67%) of the active deacons must be present for the election. The duration of each specific officer term shall be established by the Deacons with advance approval of the Elders. In no event, however, shall any one term exceed three (3) years. An individual Deacon Officer may be elected to serve consecutive terms in the same office with the advance approval of the Elders.

### **ARTICLE C TRUSTEES**

The Trustees will administer all finances, raise all funds, and act as administrators and custodians of all real and personal property belonging to the church. Trustees report to the elders. See Part VI for more information.

**PART III RECOGNITION AND PLACEMENT IN MINISTRY**

**ARTICLE A ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS**

The elders shall ordain new deacons and elders in accordance with the understanding of New Testament examples. Generally, this occurred through the laying on of hands with prayer and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Acts 6:1-7; Acts 14:23

**ARTICLE B ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL**

A member may be ordained to the gospel ministry by applying to the elders, who will examine the candidate. If they are satisfied with the candidate's qualifications, and that the candidate meets the requirements of I Timothy 3, they will announce their intention to ordain that member. Before ordination, the church will be given the opportunity to give feedback to the elders in regard to the qualifications of the individual under consideration.

**ARTICLE C COMMISSIONING OF A MISSIONARY**

A member may be commissioned as a missionary by applying to the elders, who will examine the candidate. If they are satisfied with the candidate's qualifications, they will announce their intention to commission the candidate. Before commissioning, the church will be given the opportunity to give feedback to the elders in regard to the qualifications of the individual under consideration.

**ARTICLE D LICENSING TO PREACH**

The elders are responsible to determine those who should be licensed to preach and will issue licenses as required.

**PART IV SALARIED CHURCH STAFF**

**ARTICLE A SENIOR PASTOR**

The senior pastor of Immanuel Church shall be an ordained minister. He is an elder, is designated as the chief elder, and is responsible to the elders.

**ARTICLE B OTHER SALARIED STAFF**

All other salaried staff, both pastoral and non-pastoral, are responsible to the senior pastor or his designee.

**ARTICLE C REPLACING SALARIED PASTORAL STAFF**

When the office of a salaried pastoral staff member becomes vacant, the elders will examine the need and may appoint a committee to examine and recommend candidates to the elders for the vacated office.

## **PART IV (CONTINUED)**

### **ARTICLE D SELECTION OF SALARIED PASTORAL STAFF**

The committee (as appointed in article C above) recommends candidates to the elders, who in turn examine the candidates further. When they are satisfied with a candidate's qualifications, and that the candidate meets the requirements of I Timothy 3, they shall recommend that candidate to the church at a special business meeting. Confirmation will be by three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting. Any candidate who is expected to preach before the congregation on a periodic basis shall preach before the congregation on a Sunday prior to the confirmation meeting. Any salaried pastoral staff position where the candidate is expected to also serve as an elder shall be limited to men. I Timothy 3; Titus 1.

### **ARTICLE E SELECTION OF OTHER SALARIED STAFF**

When the need for a salaried staff member becomes apparent, the elders will examine the need and may appoint a committee to examine and recommend candidates to the elders for that office.

### **ARTICLE F REMOVAL OF SALARIED STAFF**

Salaried staff members serve at the discretion of the elders and may be removed by a majority vote of the elders. A staff member who is an elder may be removed only by a unanimous vote of the remaining elders.

## **PART V CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **ARTICLE A VOTING PRIVILEGES**

Only members of Immanuel Church, who are at least eighteen (18) years of age, may vote in a business meeting.

### **ARTICLE B QUORUM REQUIREMENTS**

A quorum is required for all business meetings, and no motion may be voted upon unless a quorum is present. A quorum is fifty (50) voting members.

### **ARTICLE C MODERATOR**

The elders shall appoint a Moderator who shall conduct the business meeting in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

### **ARTICLE D RECORDING SECRETARY**

A recording secretary shall be appointed by the elders to keep the records of church business meetings.

## **PART V (CONTINUED)**

### **ARTICLE E FREQUENCY**

#### **Section 1 - Annual Business Meeting**

A fourteen (14) day notice will be given in the church bulletin, through electronic media and/or by announcement from the pulpit before the annual business meeting. A convenient date will be set each September to receive and act on the proposed church program and budget.

#### **Section 2 - Special Business Meetings**

Special Business Meetings may be called by a majority vote of the elders, stating the purpose and time of the meeting. Notice of such meetings will be given in the church bulletin, through electronic media and/or by announcement from the pulpit at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.

No business shall be transacted at a special business meeting except that for which the meeting was called.

Any voting member of Immanuel Church who desires to have a matter placed before the church for action shall first discuss the matter with the elders. If there is, then, not agreement to place the matter before the church, the member may at any business meeting of the church ask for a vote on his or her request for a special meeting. If at least a majority of those present favors calling the special meeting, the motion carries. The membership shall be advised of such meetings in the church bulletin and/or by announcement from the pulpit at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting. If the motion to call a special meeting fails, the matter may not be brought before the church again for at least six (6) months. The foregoing notwithstanding, all recommendations for members to be nominated for consideration as an Elder shall be handled in accordance with Part II, Article A, Section 3.

#### **Section 3 – Variances from Roberts Rules of Order**

In the event that a government agency declares a state of emergency or issues some other directive that directly impacts on the church's ability to hold a business meeting in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, the elders are hereby authorized to cancel or reschedule a previously scheduled business meeting. In addition, the elders are hereby authorized to develop an alternative meeting format and venue that, to the extent reasonably possible, is intended to achieve the purposes of Roberts Rules of Order. The format and venue may include electronic participation for those members whose in-person participation is prohibited or significantly impeded by the action of the relevant government directive. A majority vote of elders is required to approve any action in accordance with this paragraph.

**PART VI ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH FINANCES AND PROPERTY**

**ARTICLE A TRUSTEES**

The trustees will administer all finances, raise all funds, and act as administrators and custodians of all real and personal property belonging to the church in accordance with guidance provided by the Elders. Trustees report to the elders as stipulated in Part II, Article C.

**ARTICLE B TRUSTEE CONFIRMATION**

Trustee nominees will be members of Immanuel Church and must be 21 years of age or older. Recommendations for new trustees may be submitted by any member of the congregation to the elders for their consideration. The elders shall nominate candidates for trustees after a review of each individual's qualifications, background and willingness to serve. A majority vote shall be required for a candidate to be confirmed at the annual business meeting or at a specially called business meeting. Trustees confirmed by the congregation shall continue to serve in that office for a term of three (3) years unless they are released with the blessing of the elders, resign, or are dismissed by a majority vote of the elders. Approximately one-third (1/3) of the trustees will be confirmed each year.

**ARTICLE C TRUSTEE OFFICERS**

Within a reasonable length of time after the annual church election, the trustees shall elect from their members a chair, vice-chair, and secretary from the floor, as needed to fill any expiring position. The chair shall represent the trustees in committee(s) as designated by the elders. The duration of each specific officer term shall be established by the Trustees with advance approval of the Elders. In no event, however, shall any one term exceed three (3) years. An individual Trustee Officer may be elected to serve consecutive terms in the same office with the advance approval of the Elders.

**ARTICLE D ENCUMBERING AND SELLING THE PROPERTY**

Should the need arise to deal with non-ordinary business transactions affecting the church's realty, including but not limited to, the purchase, sale, mortgage, or encumbrance of real church property, the Chair of the trustees shall, upon the request and approval of the elders, call the elders, deacons, and trustees into joint session to present such a need. After having been approved by a majority vote of each of these three bodies, the recommendation of the trustees shall then be presented to the congregation at a special business meeting. Upon the majority vote of the congregation the trustees will be empowered to act in the church's behalf in the purchase, sale, mortgage, or encumbrance of real church property.

## **PART VI (CONTINUED)**

### **ARTICLE E FINANCES AND UNIFIED BUDGET**

A budget committee appointed by the elders and consisting of representatives from the elders, the deacons and the trustees shall prepare a budget and present it to the elders and the deacons, who in turn will present it to the church for approval at the annual business meeting held in September.

- 1) Receipts: All received funds go into the Central Treasury to be allocated according to the budget, unless otherwise designated by the contributor.
- 2) Church Treasurer: The treasurer is a trustee, elected by the church, and takes authority and policy direction from the elders for the payment of bills. He/she keeps a true account of church funds, received and paid, and reports monthly to the elders. The treasurer shall be bonded.
- 3) Annual Audit: The elders are responsible to appoint an auditing committee (Chair and two (2) members) each October. This committee is responsible for annual audits of all books of account (treasurer and receipts committee) of the church. They will submit a written report to the elders and to the trustees not later than three (3) months after the close of the fiscal year. This report will be made available to any member of the congregation upon that member's request.

### **PART VII AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSIONS**

These rules of order, or any one of them, may be amended or suspended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a meeting, provided proper notice of the business meeting and the intention to amend or suspend the rules are given in accordance with the requirements of Part V, Article E. A quorum must be present.