

Immanuel
Baptist Church
Constitution

Revised 2010

Table of Contents

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	4
<u>ARTICLE I: NAME</u>	4
<u>ARTICLE II: NATURE</u>	4
<u>ARTICLE III: GENERAL PURPOSE</u>	4
<u>ARTICLE IV: VISION STATEMENT</u>	4
<u>ARTICLE V: CORE VALUES</u>	5
<u>ARTICLE VI: STATEMENT OF FAITH</u>	5
THE BIBLE	5
GOD	5
THE PERSON AND WORK OF GOD THE FATHER	6
THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST	6
THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	6
MAN’S CREATION AND FALL	6
SALVATION	7
THE ORDINANCES	7
THE CHURCH	7
EVENTS OF THE END TIMES	8
<u>ARTICLE VII: MEMBERSHIP</u>	8
QUALIFICATIONS	8
TERMINATION	8
RESPONSIBILITIES	9
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT	9
<u>ARTICLE VIII: DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION</u>	9
<u>ARTICLE IX: ELDERS</u>	10
QUALIFICATIONS	10
RESPONSIBILITIES	10
APPOINTMENT	11
OTHER	12
<u>ARTICLE X: DEACONS/DEACONESSES</u>	12
<u>ARTICLE XI: CHURCH STAFF</u>	13
SENIOR PASTOR	13

PASTORAL ASSOCIATES	13
ADDITIONAL MINISTERIAL AND SUPPORT STAFF	13
CALL OF THE SENIOR PASTOR	13
DISMISSAL/RESIGNATION OF THE SENIOR PASTOR	14
CALL OF PASTORAL ASSOCIATES/CO-PASTORS/INTERNS	14
DISMISSAL/RESIGNATION OF PASTORAL ASSOCIATES/CO-PASTORS/INTERNS	14
<u>ARTICLE XII: APPOINTED OFFICIALS</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>ARTICLE XIII: FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>ARTICLE XIV: CHURCH FINANCES</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>ARTICLE XV: RELATIONSHIPS</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>ARTICLE XVI: AMENDMENTS</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>INDEMNIFICATION STATEMENT</u>	<u>15</u>

Introduction

Immanuel Baptist Church is an elder-led local expression of the Church established by Jesus Christ, striving to practice His teachings as revealed in Scripture. These include the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the New Testament and the developing of a mature Christian lifestyle in all of its members. The Bible shall be the sole rule for faith and action in this body.

Immanuel may conduct any and all activities normally conducted by a church, including but not limited to: worship, Bible classes, gospel communities, youth activities, counseling, and other evangelistic activities, and the recruitment and sending out of missionaries.

Article I: Name

Immanuel Baptist Church of Kingsford, Michigan, was organized on June 11, 1880 in Norway, Michigan as the Norway Swedish Baptist Church. It was later incorporated as The Immanuel Baptist Church of Iron Mountain on February 14th, 1951. Immanuel is affiliated with Converge Worldwide and the Great Lakes Baptist Conference.

Article II: Nature

Immanuel Baptist shall be a non-profit organization. No income of the organization shall go to any private person. In the event of dissolution, the remaining assets shall be distributed by the church elders, subject to the liabilities, to the Great Lakes Baptist Conference.

Article III: General Purpose

The Church shall have as its purpose the worship of God, prayer, the exposition of Scripture as the standard of both faith and life, the discipling and equipping of the saved, evangelism of the lost, the promotion of faith, and such other purposes as are specified in the Holy Bible for a New Testament Church. The ministry of this church will flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to uphold this vision in worship, nurture and education, evangelism, missions, and loving deeds.

Article IV: Vision Statement

To be a community that encourages and equips people to know Jesus and grow in a life- changing relationship with Him.

Article V: Core values

- *Prayer*: practicing individual and corporate prayer in all that we attempt in ministry. Through this we acknowledge our total dependence upon the Lord and seek to align ourselves with His will.
- *Leadership*: an elder-led, lay-powered (Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim 3:17) church, all functioning under the leadership of Christ, committed to unity and good communication.
- *Involvement*: mobilizing Spirit-gifted, Spirit-empowered believer-priests who minister in their network of relationships to build the Body of Christ.
- *Stewardship*: discerning and utilizing our God-given resources including spiritual gifts, time, talents, and financial resources in order to edify the Body of Christ and evangelize our communities.
- *Excellence*: doing the best with what we have to accomplish our tasks and goals unto the Lord.
- *Cultural Relevance*: The Bible shall be the sole rule for faith and action in this body, presenting the unchanging message of the gospel in a culturally relevant manner through creativity, innovation, and ongoing evaluation of our ministries.
- *Integrity*: lovingly holding one another accountable to live lives that are holy, honest, trustworthy, and faithful to the Word of God.

Article VI: Statement of Faith

The Bible

We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired Word of God. “Verbal inspiration” means that inspiration extends to the words as well as to the thought. Scripture evidence for verbal inspiration may be briefly tabulated as follows: (Exodus 3:4, 5:1; Jeremiah 1:9; Ezekiel 3:4, 10, 11). Men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to record precisely the words that God intended. It is without error in the original writings. The Bible is God’s complete written revelation of Himself and His will for the salvation of mankind and is the final authority for Christian faith and life.

(Psalm 19:7-9; Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21)

God

We believe in one living and true God, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three equal persons – God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence while distinct in office and activity. God is a personal, spiritual, and intelligent Being, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

(Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2; I John 5:7)

The Person and Work of God the Father

We believe God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of human history according to His purpose and grace. In His nature He is completely holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent, eternal, transcendent, immutable, self-sufficient, self-existent, wrathful, just, gracious, good, merciful, and loving. He is the sender of His only Son, Jesus Christ. As the Father of the elect, He is their provider, disciplinarian, and restorer.

(Psalm 139:1-18, 145:8-9; Isaiah 40:18-31; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 3:17, 6:30-32; John 3:16; Acts 17:29; Romans 1:18, 3:26, 11:33-36; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:3-6; Hebrews 12:5-13; I John 1:5)

The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who became a man without ceasing to be God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a perfect life and died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. Our salvation is guaranteed by His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead. He is now exalted in heaven at the right hand of God the Father, where He ministers as High Priest for His people. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.

(Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-14, 10:23, 10:30, 11:35; Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3,4; Colossians 2:9; Acts 9:1-11; Hebrews 1:3, 3:1, 4:14-15, 7:25; I John 2:1-2)

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the ministry of God the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts people of sin and gives life to the spiritually dead who receive Jesus Christ as Savior, baptizing them at the moment of faith into the Church. He permanently indwells believers and bestows on them spiritual gifts. He leads, instructs, and empowers them for godly living and service. As they learn more about Him and His work through the Scriptures, pray and yield to Him (allow Him to direct and control their thoughts, words, and actions), He beautifies their character with the fruit of the Spirit and transforms them to be like Christ.

(John 3:8, 7:37-39, 14:12, 16-17, 26, 16:7-11; Romans 8:1-13, 26-27; I Corinthians 12:4-13; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14, 5:18)

Man's Creation and Fall

We believe that all things in heaven and on earth were created by God and exist by His power and for His glory. We believe in six days of creation according to twenty-four hour days. We believe that man was created innocent and in the image of God, but that he sinned, bringing both spiritual and physical death to himself and his posterity. While still made in God's image, humankind has inherited a sinful nature and is incapable of redeeming himself. All human life is sacred in that God created man in his own image and that Christ died for man; therefore, every human being, born and unborn, young and old, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

(Genesis 1:26-27, 2:17, 3:1-24; Psalm 139:13-16; John 3; Romans 3:10-12, 5:12-19)

Salvation

We believe that every person is lost in sin apart from Christ and in need of a Savior. Jesus Christ died as a full and sufficient payment for the sins of the entire world, and His blood is the only provision by which an individual may be delivered from the wrath of God. We believe that salvation is a gift of God and is received by man only through faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that man is justified by grace through faith alone, apart from human merit or works. We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever.

(John 1:12, 3:36, 5:24, 6:37, 10:27-30; Acts 4:12, 13:38-39; Romans 3:23-24, 6:23, 8:1, 29-30, 38-39; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; Philippians 1:6; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:22; I John 5:13)

The Ordinances

We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are to be observed by believers until He returns.

(Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26)

We believe that water 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 publicly announcing and 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.

(Acts 8:36-38; Romans 6:3-5)

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death by which He established the New Covenant, the elements being symbols of His body and blood. Every Christian has a right and an obligation to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper, but participation should be preceded by solemn self-examination.

(I Corinthians 11:20-34; Matthew 26:26-29)

The Church

We believe that the true, universal church is made up of all who have saving faith in Jesus Christ. The believer is placed into the church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, and is thus a part of the Body of Christ of which Jesus is the Head. We believe that the church, as defined by the New Testament, is distinct from Israel ("God's chosen people," as defined in the Old and New Testaments)

(Acts 2:1-4, 11:16-17; Romans 11; I Corinthians 10:32, 12:12-14; II Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27)

We believe that the true, universal church is comprised of local, visible assemblies of professing believers in Jesus Christ, who are voluntarily joined together in one locality for the purposes of worship of God, prayer, the exposition of Scripture, the discipling and equipping of the saved, evangelism of the lost, fellowship, and the carrying out of that congregation's ministries of such

other purposes as are specified in the Scriptures for a New Testament Church. We believe that every local church by the leadership of the elders has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.

(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; I Corinthians 5:1-5; Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 1Peter 2:5,9)

Events of the End Times

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe that every person will be raised from the dead. Believers will be raised to stand for evaluation at the judgment seat of Christ to determine rewards based on their faithfulness and obedience to God. Believers will then live with Him in everlasting blessedness and joy in glory. We believe that every unbeliever will be punished with everlasting, conscious torment away from the presence of the Lord.

(Matthew 10:28, 13:48-50, 25:46; Luke 16:19-26, 23:42-43; I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 9:27).

Article VII: Membership

Qualifications

1. Profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
2. Give testimony of baptism by immersion
3. Attend the membership class
4. Complete the membership questionnaire
5. Be interviewed by elders
6. Commit to the membership covenant in a worship service and be publicly affirmed as a member by the elders.

Termination

Termination of church membership shall result from one of the following:

1. Death
2. Written withdrawal
3. Transfer to a church of similar belief/doctrine.
4. Disciplinary action by the elders*

*Note: This action can be taken for reasons such as non-attendance, non-service, or continual unbiblical behavior.

Responsibilities

A person shall become a member to identify with a local Body of Christ, in this case, Immanuel Baptist Church. This is an elder-led congregation; therefore, membership is for ministry, not administrative reasons.

Church Membership Covenant

I believe in the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior. By the grace of God and to the best of my ability,

1. I will pray for the church regularly.
2. I will embrace the vision, core values, and statement of faith of the church.
3. I will submit to the leadership of the elders.
4. I will regularly attend weekly corporate worship service.
5. I will be in community with other believers, allowing myself to be shepherded and supported in meaningful relationships.
6. I will discover my spiritual gifts and use them to build up the Body of Christ.
7. I will support the church financially.
8. I will refrain from gossip or any other action that promotes disunity and division in the church.
9. I will strive to have a consistent testimony to those outside the church.
10. I will submit to church discipline and restoration.

Article VIII: Discipline and Restoration

Section A: If any member of this church is found not living in accordance with the teachings of the Bible, such member shall be admonished by the elders in brotherly love and exhorted to good works (Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 10:24-25). Evidence of repentance restores the member. Should such a member continue living in sin, the elders shall dismiss/terminate from church membership. If such a person sincerely repents, he/she may be readmitted to membership upon approval by the elders.

Section B: Members having grievances against one another should prayerfully attempt to be reconciled (Matthew 18:15-17; Colossians 3:12-13; Matthew 5:23-25). Should such reconciliation fail, the matter should be brought before the elders who shall carefully investigate complaints against members of the church. If they find it necessary after making real efforts to affect proper understanding and restoration, they shall make the decision regarding dismissal. No such dismissal shall be made without giving opportunity for a hearing if so desired by the person involved. (I Corinthians 6:1-6) For more detailed presentation of this area, refer to the Church's relational covenant.

Section C: Any member of this church who has not attended the regular services and supported the work of the church with some degree of regularity, provided he or she is not hindered by sickness or

other inability, shall be contacted by the elders to ascertain the desire of such persons regarding their church membership and may lead to dismissal/termination.

Section D: No accusation shall be brought against an elder or pastor except on the testimony of at least two members. The matter shall be taken up by the elders for investigation and final settlement. (I Timothy 5:19-21)

Article IX: Elders

Immanuel will be led by godly, qualified elders. These men will have final responsibility before the Lord for leading, feeding, and overseeing the flock. (I Timothy 5:17; I Peter 5:1-5)

Authority: The elders have the ultimate and final human authority under Christ for the direction, doctrine, discipleship, and discipline of the body. (Hebrews 13:17) Such authority is to be chiefly characterized by the humility of servanthood rather than acting as a “lord” over those placed in their charge. (I Peter 5:2-3)

Qualifications

1. The qualifications for the office of elder are outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-5. These qualifications have to do with character qualities as they relate to the community at large, the church, family, self, and God. We recognize that there is a higher ethical standard for an elder than for anyone else in the church. Attitudes of weak and immature believers are largely patterned after the acts of those they follow and hold in high esteem. Therefore, with due respect for the individual conscience and personal scruples, those who accept the role of elder shall carefully guard themselves, not only from what they believe is worldly, but also should ardently withdraw themselves from that which might cause others to stumble and from that which has the appearance of evil.
2. They are to be men who are in full agreement and visibly committed to the constitution of the church.
3. The first qualification, which the Apostle Paul lists, is that one should aspire to the office of elder. This means that an elder desires to assume responsibility for the souls of people and to stand before the Lord one day to give an account for those souls. (Hebrews 13:17)
4. Each elder shall serve for a life term. However, an elder may take a leave of absence from current elder status for rest, in a time of crisis, for a family need, or a qualification issue.

Responsibilities

- *Direction:* The elders set the overall philosophy, vision, and direction of the church and on a regular basis, communicate that information to the congregation. To seek God’s vision, the elders are to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6:4)
- *Doctrine:* The elders’ authority covers the matters of doctrine, i.e., what we believe the Scriptures teach as comprising the major issues. This responsibility includes teaching, exhorting, and refuting. (Ephesians 4:11; I Timothy 3:2, 5:17-18; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17)

- *Discipleship:* The elders are responsible for the overall teaching and training of the flock to the end that they may present every man and woman complete in Christ. (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14) This would involve the following areas:
 1. Providing oversight to the various ministries of the church.
 2. Defining and coaching the ministries of deacons.
 3. Having the heart and giftedness to lead a Gospel Community. (This is not required, but a shepherd's heart is vital.)
 4. Consistently attend elder meetings (rule well, I Timothy 5:17), as well as regular meetings of the church (Hebrews 10:25), with exceptions for health, family emergencies, and excused absences.
- *Discipline:* The elders are responsible for the discipline of believers who will not deal with known sin in their lives. (Matthew 18:15-17) They are to deal promptly with spiritual conflicts and problems that arise in the church before they become scandalous. (Galatians 6:1)
- *Modeling:* Each elder is responsible for modeling Christ-like attitudes and behavior. His life should demonstrate the following:
 1. Daily walk with God based on Scripture and prayer.
 2. Good character. (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5)
 3. Correctly balanced and prioritized areas of life, such as God, family, ministry, and employment.
 4. Strong and visible commitment to the constitution of the church.
- *Accountability:* Elders are responsible to hold each other accountable for their daily walk, character, balanced life, and commitment to the body of Christ.

Appointment

1. According to Acts 20:28, the Holy Spirit sets these individuals apart to the office of elder. As these individuals are identified by the Holy Spirit, the responsibility of the elders and the body is to confirm His choices.
2. The elders will nominate men in the church who apparently meet the above qualifications.
3. Process:
 - a. The elders will receive suggestions of men from the congregation who meet the qualifications for elder and are already ministering to the body.
 - b. The elders will identify candidates from those nominated and prayerfully discern those the Lord is leading to be called.
 - c. Upon consensus of the elders, an invitation will be extended to fill out the elder questionnaire.
 - d. Note: The Word “consensus” in this document means agreement that grows out of harmony and accord. Consent to proceed because the elder body believes it is the God-honoring thing to do because of biblical convictions.
4. The nominee and his wife (if married) will meet with the elders.

5. The candidate is presented to the members of the body for their consideration and will give a public testimony of his faith in Jesus and his call to be an elder. The body is given a period of two weeks to express any feedback to the elders.
6. After this two-week period, final approval or disapproval of the candidate will be made by the elders. If he is approved, the candidate will be installed publicly as an elder through the laying on of hands.

Other

1. The New Testament always speaks of a plurality of elders.
2. The New Testament sets no term for the office. The office is a lifetime responsibility unless one is disqualified according to I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16; and I Timothy 5:19-20. An elder who is no longer qualified for service may be removed by a consensus vote of the remaining elders.
3. The elders stand as equals. The only potential difference is that elders who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor, i.e., they serve the body in a vocational capacity and, therefore, are remunerated. (I Timothy 5:17-18).

Article X: Deacons/Deaconesses

1. The position of deacon/deaconess is set apart from any other ministry in our church by the following definition: According to I Timothy 3:8-13, deacons are qualified men and who closely assist the elders in the ministry of the church. A deaconess is a qualified woman who assists the elders in ministry, but her authority is limited by I Timothy 2:8-15. This implies oversight of whole ministries or major parts of large ministries, or leading a Gospel Community. As the deacons/deaconesses oversee the various ministries of the church, they free the elders to lead the church spiritually.
2. Deacon/Deaconess responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. Daily walk with God based on Scripture and prayer.
 - b. Good character. (I Timothy 3:8-13; I Timothy 2:8-15)
 - c. Biblically balanced and prioritized areas of life, such as God, family, ministry, and employment.
 - d. Regular attendance at church meetings. (Hebrews 10:25)
 - e. Faithfulness and diligence in overseeing the assigned area of responsibility (Romans 12:8)
 - f. Allowing responsibilities to be defined and coached by an elder.
 - g. The elders are responsible to hold each deacon/deaconess accountable for his/her daily walk, character, life, commitment to the Body of Christ, committed leadership of his/her ministry, and submission to the leadership of the elders.
3. Deacons/Deaconesses will be nominated by the elders in the following manner:
 - a. The elders will nominate those among the flock who are to be set apart as deacons/deaconesses, who meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3:8-13 and I Timothy 2:8-15 and who are in full agreement with the constitution of the church.

- b. Several elders will hold a personal interview with the nominee and his/her spouse (if married), to confirm his/her qualifications.
- c. The interviewing elders will provide feedback to the elders, who shall discern whether to proceed with the nomination process.
- d. The name of the nominee will be submitted to the congregation for two weeks, so that they might give any pertinent response. Any feedback should be given directly to an elder.
- e. After this two-week period, final approval or disapproval of the prospective deacon/deaconess will be made by the elders.
- f. With this confirmation, the candidate will be commissioned by the elders before the church by the laying on of hands.
- g. Deacons/Deaconesses who are no longer qualified for service may be removed by a consensus vote of the elders.

Article XI: Church Staff

Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be a man called of God, well-trained to lead the church. He shall preach the gospel, disciple leaders, exhort impartially as required, and lead the membership to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He shall lead in the general program of the church and shall serve as a vocational elder of the church.

Pastoral Associates

The pastoral associates shall be men well-trained and called of God. They shall assist the senior pastor in specialized areas of ministry. Responsibility for the delegation of assigned tasks shall be determined by the senior pastor in consultation with the elders.

Additional Ministerial and Support Staff

Additional ministerial and support staff shall assist the pastoral staff in specialized areas of ministry and specific duties. Responsibility for the delegation of assigned tasks shall be determined by the senior pastor in consultation with the elders.

Call of the Senior Pastor

The elders shall determine a process (e.g., pulpit search committee, etc.) for presenting to the congregation the one candidate they feel God has placed on their hearts. They shall normally have this candidate spend one week with the church meeting with small groups and with the larger congregation. During this time, he will share his vision, answer relevant questions, teach, and preach. The elders shall then follow the week of candidating with large and small “fellowship” meetings to hear the input of the congregation. As a result of these meetings, much prayer, and seeking the Lord’s will, the elders will determine by consensus whether or not to extend the call.

Dismissal/Resignation of the Senior Pastor

Dismissal: There will be a consensus of the elders, excluding the senior pastor, in making their decision to hold “fellowship” meetings to gain input from the congregation. This will be done with the full knowledge of the senior pastor. After listening, the elders shall seek the will of the Lord through discussion and much prayer. If dismissal is deemed necessary, a written and verbal notice will be given. Note: The elders shall be authorized to handle cases involving moral issues forthrightly and biblically, and the four-week period may be abrogated in such cases. The congregation may be informed after the fact if dismissal is immediate.

Resignation: The senior pastor will give written and verbal notice to the elders. The effective date of the resignation shall be mutually agreed upon. If agreement cannot be reached, the term of service may be ended in not less than four weeks or more than eight weeks, with written and verbal notice.

Call of Pastoral Associates/Co-Pastors/Interns

The pastoral associates/co-pastors/interns shall be called by the elders upon recommendation of the senior pastor. This shall be based on ministry needs as discerned by the elders.

Dismissal/Resignation of Pastoral Associates/Co-Pastors/Interns

The term of service may be ended in not less than four weeks or more than eight weeks with written and verbal notice on the part of the pastoral associate of this church for resignation, or on the part of the elders for dismissal. Note: The elders shall be authorized to handle cases involving moral issues forthrightly and biblically and the four-week period may be abrogated in such cases. The congregation may be informed after the fact if dismissal is immediate.

Article XII: Appointed Officials

The Deacons/Deaconesses, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and all money counters shall be approved and appointed by the Council of Elders.

Article XIII: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run from April 1 through March 31.

Article XIV: Church Finances

1. *In General:* No method of raising funds will be entertained which is in conflict with the biblical principles of good stewardship. No funding will be carried out without the prior approval of the Council of Elders. All funds donated for the mission of the church will pass through the Church Finance Secretary and Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given.
2. *Contributions:* It is understood that membership involves financial support of the Church and its ministries and should be done through regular and proportionate giving.

3. *Financial Planning:* The financial planning of the church shall be carried out through the establishment of an annual budget for the support of the various ministries of the church. These budgets will be established by the Council of elders and the leaders of each ministry team that is operating at the time. Matters involving staff compensation will be established by the non-vocational elders.
4. *Financial Accounts:* Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer of the church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the budget. All monies for missions shall be given monthly as designated by the Missions section of the budget, never less often than quarterly.

All financial records of the church will be audited annually by either internal or external audit.

5. *Indebtedness:* No note or contract exceeding 5% of the total budget, whereby the credit of the church is pledged, shall be made without a consensus approval of the elders. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have the authority to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

Article XV: Relationships

Immanuel Baptist Church will be independently governed as an elder-led church, but will joyfully participate as a member of Converge Worldwide and the Great Lakes Baptist Conference.

Article XVI: Amendments

As part of their leadership and oversight responsibilities, only the elders can make changes and amendments to this constitution. Such changes and/or amendments must be proposed and discussed at an elders' meeting at least three months prior to the meeting where final actions are taken. The proposed changes will be presented to the congregation for their information. The three months are intended to provide a time of prayer and seeking the Lord's will.

Indemnification Statement

The church shall indemnify any and all persons who may serve or who have served at any time in an executive level position (such as Pastor, Associate Pastor, etc.) or as a member of the Council of Elders, as a church officer, a Deacon, or member of any committee or organization of the church against any and all expenses, including amounts paid upon judgments, counsel fees, and amounts paid in settlement (before or after suit is commenced) actually and necessarily incurred by such persons in connection with the defense or settlement of any claim, action, suit, or proceeding in

which they, or any of them, are made parties, or a part, or which may be asserted against any of them or any of them by reason of being or having been in one or more of the aforesaid positions of responsibility with the Church, except in relation to matters as to which any such person shall be adjudged in any action, suit, or proceeding to be liable for his own negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties. Such indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any law, agreement, or otherwise. The church shall secure Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.