

Constitution 2006
The Immanuel Baptist Church
Hamilton, Ohio

PREAMBLE

We, a body of Christians with Baptist convictions, set forth in constructional form rules for procedure in our church government.

ARTICLE I

Name/Affiliation

This organization shall be known as the Immanuel Baptist Church of Hamilton, Ohio, incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio on August 27, 1940.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

Depending wholly on the Lord Jesus Christ for our redemption through His blood, we are organized for the purpose of worship, fellowship, and preaching of the gospel of our Lord and Savior according to the Holy Scriptures. We accept the whole Bible as the Holy Spirit-inspired, authoritative, and infallible Word of God. We observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and promote and cooperate in Christian missionary and educational enterprises at home and abroad.

Mission Statement

It is our intent to carry out the above purpose by:

- **Proclaiming** the gospel message locally and abroad.
- **Developing** individuals to their full, spiritual potential.
- **Serving** our community by providing a loving place of forgiveness, fellowship and worship.
- **Building** families... Building friendships... on the foundation of faith.

Covenant

As a called-out body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, we, the members of The Immanuel Baptist Church, commit to the following;

Believing our chief purpose is to glorify God, we covenant to worship the Lord together in the power of His Spirit and the light of His Truth.

Believing the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, we promise to diligently study God's Word and submit our lives to its authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

Believing that eternal life is gained only through faith in Jesus Christ, we agree to bear witness to the Gospel and seek together to win, baptize, and teach disciples for Jesus Christ.

Believing Christ has commissioned His church to make disciples of all nations, we pledge to make the cause of missions a priority.

Believing that all we have belongs to God, we agree to contribute as faithful stewards, such time, talent, and money, in the measure that God prospers each of us, so that the responsibility of the work of this fellowship and the worldwide ministry of spreading the Gospel will be faithfully and effectively carried out.

Believing Christ has called us to love one another in the spirit of oneness, we covenant to give and receive admonition with humility and affection, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to refrain from all forms of gossip and divisive behavior, to be gracious in speech, slow to take offense, and eager for reconciliation.

Believing that families are of vital importance of God, we promise to place our homes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, seeking to instruct and exemplify His teachings and values; as a fellowship of believers we commit ourselves to a ministry of strengthening Christian families; further, believing that all life is a gift from God, we oppose the practices of abortion and euthanasia.

Believing the Bible to very clear on the matter, we agree that marriage is to be between a man and woman; further, we agree that all forms of homosexual behavior are sin and incompatible with Christian doctrine and lifestyle.

Believing that we need to be distinctly different from the world, we affirm the traditional stance of abstinence from the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and all other harmful substances.

Believing a Christian's life should be a testimony to Christ's love and purity, we agree to be just in our dealings and faithful in our responsibilities, to be merciful to those in need, to avoid all practices that would limit, diminish, or compromise the effectiveness of our witness, and to make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal.

ARTICLE III

Section 1 – Membership

A person may join The Immanuel Baptist Church by a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and by Baptism: Candidate will be received into full fellowship of the church after baptism by immersion.

-OR-

Letter: Members of other Baptist churches who have been baptized by immersion may become members of this church upon receipt of a letter of dismissal and/or *transfer* from their respective church and by a majority vote of the membership of the church at any Wednesday night Prayer Service or business meeting.

-OR-

Experience: Those who have been members of Baptist churches, or have been baptized by immersion in another evangelical Christian church, and because of circumstances have no letter of dismissal, may be received by giving a satisfactory statement of faith through meeting with the Pastor or representative(s) from the Deacon Ministry Team and by a majority vote of the membership of the church at any Wednesday night Prayer Service or business meeting.

Section 2 – Moving of Letter

Any member in good standing shall be entitled to receive a letter of transfer to any Baptist church upon request by said church. Whenever such a member shall request a letter through a non-Baptist church, only a letter of dismissal shall be granted. Transfers and dismissals shall be granted upon

recommendation of the Deacon Ministry Team and a majority vote of the membership at any Wednesday night Prayer Service or business meeting.

Any member who fails to attend any regular service of the church six consecutive months shall be sent a letter of concern and moved to the inactive list. If at the end of another six months there is no response, the individual shall be removed from the church roll. Persons on the inactive list shall not be entitled to vote. An inactive member can be restored to the active membership by reaffirming his/her desire for active fellowship at any service of the church.

A member's name may also be removed from the church roll by one of the following ways:

- Said member may submit a written request to the Deacons that his name be removed from the church roll.
- Joining another church without a letter having been granted by Immanuel Baptist Church.
- The event of death.

Exclusion: In any cases involving gross immorality and/or in case of delinquency through failure to comply with covenant obligations, members may be excluded. Upon charges prepared and first submitted to the Deacon Ministry Team in writing for investigation and recommendation and after due notice and opportunity to be heard, said member may be excluded by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at a regular or duly notified business meeting.

ARTICLE IV – STAFF

Section 1 – Senior Pastor

Work of the Pastor

Being the spiritual leader, elected by the church for an indefinite period, he is the chief executive officer of the body. He is accountable to the church for all that is or is not accomplished. His job is to work within the legislative guidelines of the body as a whole. Thus, his duties shall be:

- To regularly preach the Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and conduct the worship services of the church.
- To administer the two ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- To supervise the teaching ministry of the church.
- To faithfully perform the scriptural and pastoral duties among members and prospects.
- To be ex-officio member of all ministry teams and committees of the church and its organizations.

Calling Procedure

If there are qualified associate ministers within the church body, upon recommendation by the Deacon Board, the church shall prayerfully consider them first according to the voting procedure. If none of these are believed to be the Lord's choice, then a pulpit/search committee shall be formed with the express assignment of finding the Lord's choice to succeed the departing pastor. The pulpit/search committee shall consist of one member from each ministry

team and three elected member at large. The Moderator shall ask for nominations from the floor for elections of members at large. The election shall be by secret ballot, the three nominees having the highest number of votes and having reached legal age (18) shall be declared representatives on this committee.

No two members of one family or any church employee shall serve on the pulpit/search committee. The committee shall contact other pastors, schools, churches, and denominational resources where potential candidates may be found. All candidates shall be ordained Baptist ministers. The committee shall prepare an informational guide to be given to all potential candidates. This guide would include:

- A letter explaining that their name has been submitted as a pastoral candidate.
- A questionnaire to be returned by those who are interested.
- Information about the church: constitution, handbook, member directory and a copy of the current budget are things that would be helpful to a candidate.

The committee shall consider only one man at a time. After having heard and investigated one candidate they shall then move on to the next. The committee's recommendation to the church to call a particular man must come only as the result of unanimous agreement of the committee.

Voting Procedure

A special business meeting shall be called for the purpose of discerning a pastoral call. For a call to be issued a candidate must secure a minimum of 90% of the voting members. This vote shall be by secret ballot. If the 90% is not reached, the committee shall reconvene and continue the process, prayerfully seeking God's will. In the event of the calling of a Senior Pastor, all staff personnel will be reviewed in light of the needs of the church.

Section 2-Pastoral Staff

Additional pastoral staff shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Ministry Team, and approved by the church at any regular or special called business meeting as follows:

- Associate Pastors must receive a 90% majority vote.
- Non-clergy directors must receive a 75% majority vote.

Section 3- Non-Pastoral Staff

Non-pastoral staff shall be hired upon the joint decision of the Senior Pastor and the appropriate ministry team.

Section 4-Termination of Employment

All staff positions shall be held for an indefinite period of time. Upon termination of employment the following shall be expected:

Voluntary Termination:

Clergy shall be expected to submit written resignation at least 30 days in advance. Non-Clergy shall be expected to submit written resignation at least 14 days in advance.

Involuntary Dismissal:

- Non-Clergy employees- the dismissal of a non-clergy employee shall require a majority vote of the Senior Pastor and appropriate ministry team. A letter of termination shall be give to said employee.
- Non-Clergy Directors- The dismissal of non-clergy directors shall require a recommendation from the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Ministry Team and a majority vote by the members present at a regular or special called business meeting. A letter of termination shall be given to said employee.
- Clergy Staff- The dismissal of a clergy staff person shall require a recommendation from the Deacon Ministry Team and a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of members present at a special called business meeting. A letter of termination shall be given to said person.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1 – Election

The term of office shall be based on the calendar year as outlined by the Church Election Chart.

All elected officers shall be current active members of Immanuel Baptist church for a minimum of one year, shall have reached the legal age of 18, and have demonstrated a willingness to serve by a proven pattern of participation in the ministry of this church. He/she shall not be the pastor or the pastor staff.

No two elective offices, shall be held by any one person simultaneously, except as a member of the nominating committee. Vacancies may be filled for an unexpired term upon recommendation of the nominating committee at any regular or special business meeting of the church.

The number of officers on a ministry team or elected committee shall be determined as outlined in the Church Election Chart. Official enrollment of active members shall be taken from

the Clerk's second quarter enrollment report.

A person may not succeed himself/herself for at least one year if he has fulfilled an unexpired term of two years or more. Any person resigning from an elected ministry team shall not be eligible to serve a full term on the same board until at least one year has elapsed.

Section 2-General Statement to Officers and Ministry Teams

Officers

All officers of the church should be an example to others in fulfilling their covenant obligations. They are expected to faithfully strive to attend all services of the church, and to carry out the duties of their position. If circumstances arise that prevent fulfillment of those duties, then resignation is encouraged.

Ministry Teams

- All ministry teams and officers are subject to the ultimate authority of the church body.
- All ministry teams and elected committees shall strive to meet monthly or more often if necessary.
- All ministry teams shall submit a report of general interest at each quarterly business meeting and a full detailed report at the annual business meeting.
- All ministry teams and elected committees should elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and a secretary/treasurer.
- All ministry teams and elected committees shall submit for consideration their budget needs to the Finance Ministry Team on or before the last Sunday in August.
- Each ministry team shall write and maintain procedures manual.

Section 3- Duties of officers

Moderator

The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings and cast the deciding vote when necessary. The Moderator shall appoint temporary committees of the church membership. The Moderator shall appoint an auditing committee of three members at the annual business meeting.

In the absence of the Moderator or assistant moderator at any business meeting, the Moderator shall have appointed a moderator pro-tem to preside.

Assistant Moderator

The Assistant Moderator shall preside in the absence of the Moderator at business meetings and shall assist the Moderator with other duties as requested.

Clerk

The Clerk shall make a permanent record of proceedings of annual, quarterly, and special business meetings of the church, sign all letters of dismissal, maintain a membership roll and make revisions as the constitution requires. The Clerk and a Trustee shall be entrusted with all official documents of the church and shall deposit them in a bank safety deposit box or the church safe. It is the responsibility of the Clerk to post the time and purpose of each specially called business meeting.

Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk shall perform the Clerk's duties in his/her absence and shall assist the clerk with duties as requested.

Financial Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to count, record, and deposit all monetary church contributions in the church financial institution each week. The Financial Secretary shall compile a written weekly report of all monetary contributions. A copy of this report shall be forwarded to the church office for filing and a copy forwarded to the church Treasurer. A written quarterly report of all church contributions shall be submitted to the church quarterly business meetings.

The Financial Secretary shall compile accurate individual records for each contributor, and provide the contributor with an annual statement of giving for income tax purposes. This statement shall be available by January 31 of each year. The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Finance Ministry Team. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded, bonding to be the responsibility of the Trustee Ministry Team.

Assistant Financial Secretary

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall perform the duties of the Financial Secretary in his/her absence and assist with other duties as requested.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall account for all monies deposited by the Financial Secretary, record the purpose for which monies have been distributed, and for what purpose expenditures are

made. The Treasurer shall pay out all monies by check. The Treasurer shall make quarterly and annual reports to the church, giving detailed statements of receipts and disbursements, money on hand and negotiable holdings, and shall prepare financial reports for budget preparation or at the request of the Finance Ministry Team. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the preparation of required governmental tax reports, payments and returns. The Treasurer shall submit the Treasurer's records to the auditing committee. The Treasurer is a member of the Finance Ministry Team.

Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall perform the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence and assist with other duties as requested.

Deacon Ministry Team

The Deacon Ministry Team shall, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor, exercise general spiritual oversight of the entire membership, encouraging members to participate in the fulfillment of all covenant obligations.

This team shall be responsible for, but not limited to the following:

- Assistance with Baptism
- Member grievances
- Communion
- Pulpit supply
- Benevolence
- Visitation
- Altar calls
- Ushers
- Approval of fund raisers
- Sports eligibility
- Mission ministry
- Administrative personnel

The Deacon Ministry Team shall formally review the performance of the Senior Pastor, and along with the Pastor, each pastoral staff person and make compensation recommendations to the Finance Ministry Team. These recommendations are to be submitted by August 1st.

The Deacons shall, at least once a year, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor revise the church membership roll as prescribed by Article III, Section 3.

The Deacons shall recommend to the church the licensing of individuals for ministry.

Deaconess Ministry Team

The Deaconess Ministry Team shall in cooperation with the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Ministry Team, promote the general spiritual welfare of the entire membership,

This team shall be responsible for, but not limited to the following:

- Assisting with Baptism
- Assisting with Communion
- Bereavement
- Visitation
- Altar calls
- Appointment of floral and decorating coordinator
- Appointment and oversight of a Special Events Committee.

Trustee Ministry Team

The Trustee Ministry Team shall be recognized as the official representatives of the church in all legal matters. It shall fulfill the requirements of civil law and this constitution. It shall have charge of all church properties and maintain adequate insurance upon it, and shall authorize payment of taxes, repair and maintenance expenditures, and such other budgeted expenditures as may be necessary. The Trustees shall be responsible to provide bond coverage to those whose office would require it. Proposed contracts shall be executed upon approval of the church by a majority vote at a regular or special business meeting.

The Trustees shall not purchase or sell real estate or encumber the same unless authorized to do so by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a regular or special business meeting.

The Trustees shall see that contracted labor by outside vendors is properly executed and that authorized payments are made. They shall, in conjunction with the Finance Ministry Team, have authority to negotiate loans when authorized to do so by two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a regular or special business meeting. The Trustees shall have the responsibility to seek legal counsel as the need arises.

The Trustees shall engage, supervise and annually review the custodians. They shall make compensation recommendations to the Finance Ministry Team by August 1st.

A Trustee and the Clerk shall be entrusted with all official documents of the church and shall deposit them in a bank safety deposit box or the church safe for safekeeping.

Finance Ministry Team

It shall be the duty of the Finance Ministry Team to prepare and submit a budget to be approved at the third quarterly business meeting. Changes to an approved budget may be made at any business meeting of the church upon recommendation of the Finance Ministry Team.

The Finance Ministry Team shall provide and review guidelines for the Audit Committee

to use in conducting the annual audit. This team shall help promote responsible stewardship within the church. The basic financial support of the church shall be the tithes and freewill offerings. This team shall manage all negotiable holdings that may be generated from freewill offerings.

Voting members of this team shall include the Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Chairman of the Trustees in addition to elected members as described in the Church Election Chart.

Sunday School Ministry Team

The purpose of the Sunday School Ministry Team is to organize, promote, direct and encourage Sunday School participation throughout the church. This team shall, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor and/or his designate, be responsible for the entire Sunday School program which includes:

- Literature
- Teachers
- Budget
- Outreach
- Seasonal Programs
- Vacation Bible School
- Promotional Activities
- Special Days

This team shall consist of elected officers as follows:

- Sunday School Director – General oversight, promotion and coordination of all Sunday School ministries.
- Assistant Sunday School Director – Assists the Sunday School Director in carrying out the Sunday School ministries and assumes the Director's duties in his/her absence.
- Sunday School Secretary – Maintains attendance records, orders curriculum, submits quarterly attendance reports and takes minutes at Sunday School team meetings.
- Assistant Sunday School Secretary – Assists the Sunday School Secretary and assumes the Secretary's duties in his/her absence.
- Children's Team Leader – Oversees and coordinates the education ministry of children first through sixth grade.
- Youth Team Leader – Oversees and coordinates the education ministry of youth seventh through twelfth grade.
- Adult Team Leader – Oversees and coordinates the education ministry of adults.

Section 4

Future Ministry team Creation

- As future needs of the church warrant the creation of additional teams or offices, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- A temporary committee of office may be created upon a recommendation of the Deacon Ministry Team and a majority vote of the church membership at a regular or special called business meeting.
- This committee should meet at least quarterly.
- This committee shall develop goals and/or a mission statement.
- This committee shall be accountable to the Deacon Ministry Team until it is accepted by constitutional amendment.
- Progress of this committee shall be reported at regular business meetings.
- This committee shall present a recommendation for amendment to the constitution within 12 months as outlined under Article VIII.

ARTICLE VI – Miscellaneous

Section 1 –Quarterly Business Meetings

The quarterly business meetings shall be held the fourth week in April, July, October, and January.

Section 2 – Special Business Meetings

A meeting of the membership may be called for special business by the Moderator. Notice of special meeting and all business to be transacted must be posted and announced at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

Section 3 – Voting Age

“Active” members of the church, who are (14) years of age or over, shall be eligible to vote in church business meetings.

Section 4 – Quorum

At all business meetings of the church a quorum shall consist of 10% of the active members, including at least one officer from each ministry team. A quorum must be maintained throughout the business meeting.

Section 4 – Business Limitations

Business to be transacted during a mid-week prayer service shall be limited to granting and accepting of letters of reception or transfer of membership. There shall be no business transacted during a Sunday worship service.

All Financial and personnel matters shall be submitted to the proper ministry team prior to any business meeting.

Section 6 – Order of Business

The Order of Business at quarter business meetings shall include but not be limited to:

- Call to order by the Senior Pastor or his designate of the body of Christ.
- Call to order by the Moderator of the parliamentary body
- Reading of minutes from previous business meeting
- Reports of ministry teams and other organizations
- Old business
- New business
- Adjournment

Section 7 – Nominating Team

The Nominating Team shall consist of (5) members elected at the third quarter business meeting whose purpose it shall be, in conjunction with the pastor, to recommend candidates to fill vacancies of officer positions. This team shall submit a list of officer nominees for the next year to the church membership at the third quarter business meeting. This team shall be made up of a ratio of 2/3 male or female. Election of this team shall be by nominations from the floor and voting shall be by secret ballot. The (5) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall act as chairperson. Other officers may serve on the team concurrently. If a vacancy should occur on this team, the person who received the next highest number of votes shall be asked to fill the vacancy.

Section 8 – Ordinance of Communion

The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of the month, unless otherwise changed by the Deacon Ministry Team.

Section 9 – Ordinance of Baptism

The Ordinance of Baptism shall be observed at such times as the Senior Pastor and Deacon Ministry Team request.

Section 10 – Services

Sunday School, Morning and Evening Worship Services shall be held each Sunday at regularly stated times. The mid-week Prayer and Bible Study shall be held on Wednesday evening of each week at a regularly stated time. Any variance for a special service must be approved by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Ministry Team. Any permanent change in times must come from the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Ministry Team and voted on by the

membership of the church at any business meeting.

Section 11 – Rules of Order

The Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) shall be the Parliamentary Procedure for all meetings, except that nothing therein shall take precedence over any part of the Constitution of the organization. A copy of the Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) and a copy of the Constitution (amended to date) shall be in the possession of the Church Clerk for reference at all regular business and special called meetings of the church membership.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

This Constitution may be altered or amended by two-thirds (2/3) Vote of membership present at any business meeting, the proposed amendments having been posted in the church for at least thirty (30) days prior to vote by the church membership.

Constitution Committee Members: 2006

Bill Reichle – Chairman
Sheila Jones
Orville Roach
Becky Simpson
Debbie Tillery
Cheryl Johnson
Jerry Tillery
Dave Burnside
Pastor Mark Wurzelbacher