



IMMANUEL
BYLAWS

Bylaws of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock (adopted 11.17.24.)

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PREAMBLE: Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock (IBCLR) has historically operated “under the Lordship of Christ according to democratic processes” in accord with the Baptist Faith & Message (BFM-VI) and has operated since 1892 with no written bylaws. A church is not required to have bylaws and does not have to be incorporated to have bylaws. The purpose of these Bylaws is not to create a new entity; rather, it is to state in writing the bylaws to be used going forward. These Bylaws attempt to memorialize the way IBCLR has historically operated as well as incorporate specificity and changes deemed necessary by the Bylaws Drafting Committee. In accord, our church polity remains “congregational,” which is sometimes referred to as the “shepherd and sheep” model.

ARTICLE 1: Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock

1.1. Name.

Founded in 1892, this unincorporated association is known as Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock (“the Church”).

1.2. The Church, Generally.

1.2.1. The Church is an organized, local body of baptized believers (the “Church Family”) submitted to the Headship of Christ, united in belief in what He taught, bound together in a covenant to do what He commanded, cooperating in the spread of the gospel alongside other Baptist churches and those who are like-minded in faith and practice, democratic in spirit and principles of government, and sovereign in authority in administering its affairs.

1.2.2. Our Church Family believes the Bible “did not originate in the minds of men [because] God so directed the writing of Scripture that without waiving their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feeling, or any other factor, His complete, coherent message to man was recorded with perfect accuracy, the very words of the original Scripture bearing the authority of divine authorship” (Dr. W.O. Vaught, Senior Pastor 1945-1983). Thus, our Church accepts the Bible as “the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried” (BFM-1).

1.3. Member Governed.

1.3.1. As a general rule, the Church will be pastor-led, deacon-served, committee-operated, & congregationally-affirmed.

1.3.2. The Church will be operated under the Lordship of Jesus Christ according to democratic processes.

1.3.3. The governance of the Church is vested in its members.

1.3.4. The Church Family is the final authority and Church Action is final approval (4.1.1.).

1.3.5. The Church will act and approve matters through its members by the taking of Church Action.

1.3.6. No member or group of members will have any governing authority whatsoever over the Church, except for the taking of Church Action collectively with other members of the Church as provided by these Bylaws.

1.4. Officers of the Church.

1.4.1. The two scriptural offices of the New Testament Church are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon (BFM-VI). Pastor means shepherd. Bishop means overseer. Pastor, shepherd, overseer, bishop, and elder all refer to the one office of pastor, which is further defined in Section 5.1. The office of deacon is defined in Section 7.1.1.

1.4.2. The Church may elect other officers by Church Action, with such action also establishing their duties and function.

1.5. Statement of Faith.

The Church affirms its agreement with the BFM 2000 (as amended 2023) adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which statement of faith includes our historical distinctives as B-A-P-T-I-S-T-S: **B**iblical authority (BFM-I); **A**utonomy of the local church (BFM-VI); **P**riesthood of all believers (BFM-Preamble); **T**wo ordinances: believer's baptism & Lord's Supper (BFM-VII); **I**ndividual soul competency (BFM-Preamble, VI, & XVII); **S**ecurity of the believer (BFM-V); **T**wo offices of the church: pastor & deacon (BFM-VI); and **S**eparation of church and state (BFM-XVII).

1.6. Charitable Organization.

1.6.1. The Church is an unincorporated association organized for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its assets are to be used in performing the Church's functions.

1.6.2. Upon any dissolution of the Church, the assets will be transferred to a religious, charitable, educational, or other similar organization that is of like faith and order, committed to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, and qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as determined by Church Action.

ARTICLE 2: Governance Summary

2.1. Church Governance.

2.1.1. Christ is Head over the Church and Chief Shepherd over the flock called Immanuel Baptist Church (5.1.3.).

2.1.2. The Senior Pastor of the Church is Christ's Undershepherd over our Church (5.1.3.), and he will operate the Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ through democratic processes (1.3.2.; BFM-VI).

- 2.1.3. As God has established authority of the husband within marriage and the father within the family, so God has established the authority of the pastor/elder/overseer (BFM-VI) within the church, imposing higher qualifications for pastoral service (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7) and a unique responsibility to God (James 3:1). The Church acknowledges and will respect pastoral authority within the Church (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17) in spiritual matters (5.1.4.).
- 2.1.4. The Senior Pastor will lead the Church Pastoral Staff to work together as a team of pastors/elders/overseers (BFM-VI) who will preach & teach the word of God, pastor the flock, and lead the Church (5.1.1.).
- 2.1.5. The Senior Pastor will collaborate with the Church Staff, Deacon Body, and Church Committees to develop, communicate, and implement a multi-year Church Ministry and Mission Action Plan (5.1.7.).
- 2.1.6. The Senior Pastor and the Church Staff will have the cooperative efforts of the Church Staff, Deacon Body, Church Committees, and Church Family in carrying out the Church Ministry and Mission Action Plan (5.1.7.).
- 2.1.7. The Senior Pastor, together with the Staff Pastors, Ministers, and Department Heads, will engage in dialogue with Church Committees, providing each committee the opportunity to serve and minister to the Church by offering review and advice on matters pertaining to the purpose and responsibilities outlined in each Committee Charter (8.5.).
- 2.1.8. The Deacon Body, as ordained lay ministers to the Church, will serve the Church (7.1.1.), assist the Senior Pastor and Church Staff (7.1.2.), and consider and recommend a proposed course of action on matters arising within or brought before the Deacon Body in the normal course (4.2.1. & 7.1.4.).
- 2.1.9. The Deacon Body holds no final authority in approving Church matters, as ultimately, the governance of the Church is vested in its members (1.3.3., 1.3.4., & 7.1.4.).
- 2.1.10. As the final authority for the Church, the Church Family will act and approve Church matters by voting at Church Family Business Meetings (1.3. & 4.1.).

2.2. Member Self-Governance, Generally.

As members of the same body submitted to the Headship of Christ, and having experienced the grace and forgiveness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we follow the example of 2 Cor. 8:5 to give ourselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to the saints. Following Scripture's word to lay down our lives for each other (1 John 3:16) and to love one another in a way that uniquely marks us as Jesus' disciples (John 13:34-35), we hold to biblical expectations of each other in order to reflect the life that Christ now lives in us (Gal. 2:20), collectively and individually.

2.3. Member Self-Governance, Specifically.

In striving to "live by the Spirit" (Rom. 8), we seek to follow the teachings of Scripture on the obedience that faith produces (Rom. 1:5). Therefore, it is the expectation and desire that members of our Church Family, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, will humbly and solemnly undertake to govern themselves to:

- 2.3.1. Regularly attend worship and other Church services for the edification of our souls (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42).
- 2.3.2. Cultivate a life of devotion by prayer, meditation, and consecration to God (1 Thess. 5:17; Col. 4:2).
- 2.3.3. Prayerfully and willingly aid the Pastor and Church Staff in our Church's witness (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).
- 2.3.4. Participate in the work of ministry to build up the body of Christ in unity, faith, and knowledge (Eph. 4:12-13).
- 2.3.5. Cooperate with earnestness in redemptive, missionary, and social tasks of God's Kingdom (Matt. 25:40, 28:19-20).
- 2.3.6. Aspire to character and conduct that will be approved by God and our consciences (Rom. 12:2; 1 Tim. 1:5).
- 2.3.7. Maintain an attitude of spiritual integrity and love in all relations with fellow members (John 13:35; Eph. 4:25, 32).
- 2.3.8. Order the life in our homes so they may be truly Christian and dwelling places of God (Eph. 5:33-6:4; Heb. 13:4-6).
- 2.3.9. Bear ourselves in social and business relationships according to principles of Christ (Rom. 12:16-18; Col. 3:17, 23).
- 2.3.10. Contribute cheerfully, regularly, and meaningfully to the financial support of the work of our Church and its various beneficences (2 Cor. 9:7; Mal. 3:10).

ARTICLE 3: Membership of the Church

3.1. Presentation.

Church membership will be open to anyone who gives credible evidence of personal faith in Jesus Christ and indicates a desire to join the Church. Prospective members will be informed of the Church's biblical beliefs and practices, framed by the BFM and these Bylaws. If a prospective member's biblical beliefs and practices align with the Church's biblical beliefs and practices, the person may present for admission by Church Action. Requests for membership shall be presented at a Regular Church Family Business Meeting and will be: (i) upon profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ for baptism by immersion; (ii) by letter of transfer from a church of like faith and order that recognizes members who upon profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ have been baptized by immersion; (iii) by statement of prior membership in a church of like faith and order that recognizes only members who upon profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ have been baptized by

3.2. Reception.

Reception of a new Church member will require a two-thirds vote of Church members present and voting at a Regular Church Family Business Meeting (4.1.4.). Upon any objection to a new member request stated by any Church member before the vote is taken, further action will be postponed, an investigation of the objection will be conducted at the direction of the Deacon Body, and a report to the Church Family will be made prior to further Church Action.

3.3. Dismission & Erasure.

- 3.3.1. The Church may administratively grant any Church member a letter of dismission if requested by the member.
- 3.3.2. Any Church member may request a transfer letter to join another church of like faith and order by Church Action.
- 3.3.3. Membership in the Church may be administratively terminated upon receipt of notice of a member's death.
- 3.3.4. Membership may be terminated by Church Action based upon reasonable evidence that a member has otherwise indicated an intent to cease his or her affiliation with IBCLR and/or has united with another church. In any such event, and before any Church Action, the Church will make reasonable effort to contact the absent Church member and confirm whether or not that person desires to continue to be a participating member of our congregation.
- 3.3.5. Membership may be administratively terminated by Church discipline (11.3.).

3.4. No Partition.

As a condition of membership, each Church member submits to the authority of these Bylaws, agrees that membership does not confer right to claim personal ownership in any of the property of the Church, and understands that all Church facilities and equipment are the property of the Church Family with individual members having no ownership rights at all.

ARTICLE 4: Church Action & Church Family Business Meetings

4.1. Church Action.

- 4.1.1. The Church will take all action by a vote cast by Church members who are present and eligible to vote on the date of any Regular or Special Church Family Business Meeting (hereinafter referred to as "Church Action").
- 4.1.2. The minimum age for a voting member is 13 years old.
- 4.1.3. The calling of a Senior Pastor, Staff Pastor, or Staff Minister will require at least a three-fourths vote.
- 4.1.4. The approval of a person for membership, amending these Bylaws, and electing or removing a Pastor Search Committee (or any one or more members thereof) will each require at least a two-thirds vote.
- 4.1.5. Unless specifically provided otherwise herein, all other Church Action will require a majority vote.
- 4.1.6. Voting members of the Church present at a Church Family Business Meeting will constitute a quorum.
- 4.1.7. Any unbudgeted and capital expenditures over \$2,500 must be referred to the Finance Committee and considered by the Deacon Body prior to Church Action, unless it has already recommended such item of business in the affirmative.
- 4.1.8. Prior to Church Action, any personnel issue must be referred to the Personnel Committee for its review and advice.
- 4.1.9. Any Church member who does business, directly or indirectly (Article 14), with the Church or any of its officers or employees, will not be eligible to vote on any budget or other matter that could be considered a conflict of interest.

4.2. Normal Course.

- 4.2.1. Although not a strict prerequisite for Church Action, the normal course is that the Deacon Body may be asked by the Senior Pastor to consider and recommend a course of action to the Church before a matter is presented to the Church Family for Church Action. The purpose of such consideration and recommendation is to promote unity in the Church by ensuring that a matter coming before the Church has been considered and recommended prudently and wisely.
- 4.2.2. The Deacon Body may make a recommendation to the Church Family on a given Church matter in the form of Deacon Action, which is determined by a majority vote of the active members of the Deacon Body present and voting at any Deacon Body meeting at which a quorum is present, with Church Action holding the final authority (1.3.4.).
- 4.2.3. Prior to such Church Action, the result of Deacon Body consideration will be communicated to the Church Family, whether it is a recommendation for approval, disapproval, or if no Deacon Action is taken on the matter (7.1.5.).

4.3. Annual Budget.

The Finance Committee will present an Annual Church Budget for Church Action at a Regular Church Family Business Meeting prior to the beginning of each calendar year, or as soon thereafter as practicable. In the normal course (4.2.1.), this proposed budget will be considered by the Deacon Body prior to Church Action.

4.4. Churchwide Policies & Procedures.

4.4.1. The Church, by Church Action, may adopt churchwide policies and procedures to address Church operations or to address Church expenditures, indebtedness, or financial obligations and commitments.

4.4.2. Such policies and procedures, upon adoption, will be published in writing and maintained by the Church Clerk.

4.4.3. In the event of conflict between these Bylaws and churchwide policies and procedures, the Bylaws will prevail.

4.5. Regular Church Family Business Meetings.

4.5.1. Regular Church Family Business Meetings for the transaction of Church business by voting as a congregation will be held at least every other month in a Church organizational year, with notice of the date, time, and known agenda items to be given to Church members through “Public Notice” (Article 14), all to the extent practical and achievable.

4.5.2. A summary financial report showing revenues, expenses, and balances in a format authorized by the Finance Committee will be presented at all Regular Church Family Business Meetings when available.

4.5.3. Meetings will be scheduled at a day and time that reasonably enable Church Family participation.

4.6. Special Church Family Business Meeting.

In the event a matter requires Church Action sooner than an already scheduled Regular Church Family Business Meeting, a Special Church Family Business Meeting may be called by the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Body Chair, or by Deacon Action. While Public Notice is the normal expectation, if time does not allow for Public Notice due to the potentially emergent nature of the matter, notice will still be given to the extent reasonable under the circumstances.

4.7. Moderator.

The Senior Pastor or his designee will moderate all Church Family Business Meetings (except as provided in 5.8.3.). The Deacon Body Chair will preside as moderator in the absence of the Senior Pastor or his designee. If the Deacon Body Chair cannot serve, the Church will, by Church Action, elect a moderator for any such Church Family Business Meeting.

4.8. Rules of Order.

It will be the duty of the moderator at all Church Family Business Meetings to enforce these Bylaws and the usual rules of procedure recognized in *Robert's Rules of Order*, as most recently amended, when not in conflict with these Bylaws.

4.9. Minutes & Attendance.

4.9.1. Minutes of each Church Family Business Meeting will be taken by the Church Clerk (6.4.2.), or other person appointed to perform Church Clerk duties, and kept as part of the historical records of the Church after those minutes have been reviewed and approved by the Church Family at a subsequent Church Family Business Meeting.

4.9.2. All Church Family Business Meetings will be open to attendance by all Church members.

ARTICLE 5: Senior Pastor

5.1. Preach/Teach, Pastor, & Lead.

5.1.1. The Senior Pastor called by Church Action will be a man who has been ordained by a Southern Baptist Church and is called of God to preach the gospel and lead the Church Pastoral Staff to work as a team of pastors/elders/overseers (BFM-VI) to teach the word of God, pastor this local congregation, and lead this Church.

5.1.2. The specific biblical qualifications for any pastor are set forth in the Holy Bible (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

5.1.3. As declared by Holy Scripture, Christ is Head over the Church and Chief Shepherd of the flock. The Senior Pastor of the Church is regarded and recognized as Christ's Undershepherd; he will shepherd the Church and oversee the Church's staff, ministries, and operations. He may delegate some of these responsibilities as he deems fit or necessary.

5.1.4. As God has established authority of the husband within marriage and the father within the family, so God has established the authority of the pastor/elder/overseer (BFM-VI) within the church, imposing higher qualifications for pastoral service (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7) and a unique responsibility to God (James 3:1). The Church acknowledges and will respect pastoral authority within the Church in spiritual matters (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17).

5.1.5. The certain powers, duties, and prerogatives inherent in the office of Senior Pastor (even if delegated to a Staff Pastor or Staff Minister by him or by Church Action) are his final responsibility to be discharged under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the counsel of the Deacon Body, Church Committees, and Church Family.

5.1.6. Among the Senior Pastor's specific duties are to maintain a close walk with Jesus, devote himself to Scripture and prayer, give special attention to the spiritual needs of Church members, and administer the ordinances of the New Testament: believer's baptism and Lord's Supper. While still his final responsibility, certain duties may be delegated at the Senior Pastor's discretion (e.g., inviting others to administer believer's baptism).

5.1.7. The Senior Pastor will collaborate with the Church Staff, Deacon Body, and Church Committees to develop, communicate, and implement a multi-year Church Ministry and Mission Action Plan for adoption by Church Action, with a progress report to be given annually by the Senior Pastor at which time the Church Family may be asked to approve modifications to the Church Ministry and Mission Action Plan (2.1.5. & 2.1.6.).

5.2. Executive Leadership.

5.2.1. As the executive leader of the Church, the Senior Pastor is an ex officio, non-voting member of all Church Committees and overseer of all Church departments.

5.2.2. In the discharge of his responsibilities as the executive leader of the Church, the Senior Pastor may delegate certain responsibilities to Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, Department Heads, or other Church members at his discretion (5.1.3.).

5.2.3. The Senior Pastor will remain finally accountable for work done (or not done) by his Church Staff and/or designees.

5.3. Pastoral Accountability.

5.3.1. In either September or October of each year, the Senior Pastor will present to the Personnel Committee and the Deacon Body an annual written self-evaluation of his ministry work and personal/professional growth based on his performance in consideration of his job description and any goals he may have set for the year.

5.3.2. He will discuss this self-evaluation with each group to receive honest feedback, encouragement, and prayer.

5.3.3. The Senior Pastor is also encouraged to regularly obtain feedback from his Pastoral and Ministerial Staff.

5.4. Pastor Search.

5.4.1. Upon the resignation, removal, or death of the Senior Pastor, the Church will call to its pastorate a minister of good report recommended by the Pastor Search Committee, with Public Notice to be given of such Church Family Business Meeting with the intent to vote on the call.

5.4.2. When the situation arises, the Chair of the Deacon Body and the Chairs of the five Operating Committees – together with three to five (3-5) at-large Church members to be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by Church Action – will serve as a Committee to Nominate persons to serve as a Pastor Search Committee.

5.4.3. The Committee to Nominate should have a balance of men and women from among the general membership with members of various age groups represented, all to the extent prudent and achievable.

5.4.4. The Committee to Nominate the Pastor Search Committee will strive to nominate Church members who will use biblical knowledge, maturity, and experience to identify a prospective pastor who demonstrates a balance regarding the three roles of our Senior Pastor: preaching/teaching, pastoral care, and administrative leadership (5.1.1.).

5.4.5. Persons on the Committee to Nominate the Pastor Search Committee (and their spouses) cannot serve on the Pastor Search Committee.

5.4.6. Before the Pastor Search Committee is nominated, Church members will be asked to submit to the Committee to Nominate in writing or by electronic form names of Church members to serve on the Pastor Search Committee.

5.5. Pastor Search Committee.

5.5.1. The Pastor Search Committee will be composed of a balance of seven (7) men and women from among the general membership, including at least one deacon, and have members of various age groups represented, all to the extent prudent and achievable.

5.5.2. Prospective Pastor Search Committee members must be approved by Church Action by a two-thirds vote.

5.5.3. The Church may at any time, with a two-thirds vote by Church Action, vote to dismiss the previously-approved Pastor Search Committee (or any one or more members thereof) and secure a new Pastor Search Committee (or replacement member or members) in the same manner as specified above.

5.6. Interim Senior Pastor Search.

5.6.1. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Interim Senior Pastor Search Committee will be composed of the Acting Head Pastor (non-voting), five (5) Operating Committee Chairs, Deacon Body Chair, and three to five (3-5) at-large Church members nominated by the Nominating Committee, for approval by Church Action. The addition of the at-large Church members is to help balance representation on the committee, similar to the desired balance stated in Section 5.5.1.

- 5.6.2. The committee will seek a candidate to be the Senior Pastor of the Church during the interim.
- 5.6.3. The committee will develop a job description in consultation with the proposed candidate, and both the proposed candidate and the proposed job description will be presented for Church Action.
- 5.6.4. The man serving as the Interim Senior Pastor will not be eligible for the vacant Senior Pastor position.

5.7. Church Action Regarding Pastor.

- 5.7.1. The Church's vote to call a new Senior Pastor will be upon recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee. Prior to making such recommendation, the Personnel and Finance Committees will review the salary and benefits proposed.
- 5.7.2. Church Action to call a new Senior Pastor will require a three-fourths vote of Church members present and voting at a Regular or Special Church Family Business Meeting, with notice given as provided in Sections 4.5. and 4.6.
- 5.7.3. The Senior Pastor will be elected to an indefinite tenure, terminated only by his own pleasure or by Church Action.

5.8. Termination of Tenure.

- 5.8.1. A vote by ballot to terminate the tenure of the Senior Pastor will be taken at a Regular or Special Church Family Business Meeting, following the same notice required for a vote to call a new Senior Pastor (4.5., 4.6., & 5.7.2.).
- 5.8.2. Prior to such meeting, the Deacon Body may offer its recommendation on the issue of the Senior Pastor's tenure in the form of Deacon Action (4.2.2.), with the Church Family being informed of such Deacon Action (4.2.3.). While not the normal course, the matter may be presented for Church Action without a recommendation from the Deacon Body.
- 5.8.3. The Deacon Body Chair (or his designee) will preside over any Special Church Family Business Meeting called to vote on whether to terminate the tenure of the Senior Pastor, the result of which will be determined by majority vote.

ARTICLE 6: Church Staff

6.1. Staff, Generally.

- 6.1.1. The four categories of Church Staff are Pastors, Ministers, Department Heads, & Staff Employees (Article 14).
- 6.1.2. Each member of the Church Staff will hold the position "at-will."
- 6.1.3. Members of the Church Staff will maintain the highest standards of spirituality and integrity.
- 6.1.4. The Senior Pastor will be responsible for securing staff needed for all four categories of Church Staff and will work with the Finance and Personnel Committees in discharging this responsibility.
- 6.1.5. The Senior Pastor will be responsible for overseeing all four categories of Church Staff, all of whom are hired to assist him in operating and conducting the ministries of the Church.

6.2. Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, & Department Heads.

- 6.2.1. All Staff Pastors & Ministers will be chosen by the Senior Pastor with concurrence from the Personnel Committee, with each having demonstrated evidence of a personal call of God to the ministry of the gospel and work of the Church.
- 6.2.2. Selections of Staff Pastors & Ministers must be ratified by Church Action at the next Regular or Special Church Family Business Meeting (4.1.3. & 9.6.4.).
- 6.2.3. The Personnel Committee will enlist Church members with expertise in the applicable department area as needed to assist in identifying qualified candidates to fill Staff Pastor, Staff Minister, or Department Head vacancies, but such members will be non-voting on Personnel Committee matters.
- 6.2.4. The Personnel Committee will review and approve the salary and benefits proposed for every Staff Pastor, Staff Minister, and Department Head prior to employment (including interims).
- 6.2.5. The employment of a Staff Pastor, Staff Minister, or Department Head may be terminated by the Senior Pastor (or the employee's supervisor) upon prior concurrence by majority vote from the Personnel Committee (9.6.7.), with the Church Family being notified of such termination.

6.3. Staff Employees.

- 6.3.1. All Staff Employees (full-time & part-time Church Staff other than Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, and Department Heads) will serve the Church and the Senior Pastor within the guidelines set by the Personnel Committee, working in close consultation with the Senior Pastor, subject to termination of employment upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and/or the employee's supervisor with concurrence from the Personnel Committee Chair (or the Chair's designee).
- 6.3.2. The Personnel Committee will elect a committee member to serve as the temporary Chair in the event its current Chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest regarding an employee recommended for termination (8.9.7.).

- 6.4.1. The Church will elect a Church Clerk by Church Action upon nomination of the Nominating Committee each year.
- 6.4.2. The Clerk or the Clerk's designee will record minutes of all Church Family Business Meetings, allow for changes and corrections at the next Regular Church Family Business Meeting prior to Church Family approval (4.9.1.), and store the minutes for future Church use as a permanent historical record. In the event the Clerk or the Clerk's designee will not be able to attend a particular meeting, the moderator will appoint someone to take minutes at that meeting.
- 6.4.3. The Clerk will receive and store minutes from all Church Committees (8.4.2.).
- 6.4.4. The Clerk will maintain a record of all policies and procedures approved by Church Action (4.4.2.).
- 6.4.5. The non-confidential historical and financial records of the Church (excluding, for example, personnel records and donor giving records) will be open at reasonable times for reasonable inspection by any member of the Church.
- 6.4.6. The Clerk will maintain the current number of Church members.

ARTICLE 7: Deacons

7.1. Duties.

- 7.1.1. The deacons of the Church (collectively, the "Deacon Body") are ordained lay ministers and officers of the Church who will serve the Church with the primary purpose of this service being to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" in the Church so that the "word of God" may be advanced (Eph. 4:1-16, Acts 6:1-7).
- 7.1.2. It will be the duty of the Deacon Body and each deacon individually to assist the Senior Pastor in the discharge of his pastoral duties, readily and heartily cooperating with him and his Church Staff, giving them the benefit of their advice, information, and services in the conduct of all the ministries, missions, and interests of the Church.
- 7.1.3. In serving Church members, the Deacon Body is expected to: visit and render aid for the sick and needy; address needs for widows, orphans, and the disabled; encourage and strengthen recent converts and the weak; ensure visitors feel welcomed and at home in worship services; ensure new Church members are invited to fully participate in all the rights and privileges of the Church; assist in serving the Lord's Supper; be and build reproducing disciples; and faithfully perform such duties as the New Testament and common Baptist usage and principles require of the office of deacon.
- 7.1.4. The Deacon Body holds no final authority in approving Church matters but may serve the Church by offering its consideration and recommendation on matters arising within or brought before the Deacon Body (1.3.4., 2.1.9., & 4.2.).
- 7.1.5. The result of Deacon Body consideration will be communicated to the Church Family prior to Church Action, whether it is a recommendation for approval, disapproval, or if no Deacon Action is taken on the matter (4.2.3.).
- 7.1.6. The Deacon Body will consider the annual written self-evaluation of the Senior Pastor for the purpose of providing honest feedback, encouragement, and prayer (5.3.).

7.2. Governance.

- 7.2.1. The Deacon Body will operate pursuant to published operating procedures (the "Deacon Bylaws") as adopted by the Deacon Body and approved by Church Action.
- 7.2.2. In the event of any conflict between Deacon Bylaws and either these Church Bylaws or churchwide policies and procedures (4.4.), the Church Bylaws or churchwide policies and procedures will take precedence over Deacon Bylaws.
- 7.2.3. The Deacon Body will hold regular meetings, as established by the Deacon Body Chair and published to the Church Family by Public Notice, with attendance open to Church members unless called into an "Executive Session" (Article 14).
- 7.2.4. A deacon who does business, directly or indirectly (Article 14), with the Church or any of its officers or employees, will not be eligible to vote as a deacon on any budget item or other matter that could be considered a conflict of interest.

7.3. Deacon Body Membership.

- 7.3.1. The general scriptural qualification of a deacon is to be "of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). The specific scriptural qualifications for a deacon are those set forth in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
- 7.3.2. There are also implicit biblical expectations (such as 1 Cor. 6:12, 8:9-13, 10:23-33 and Rom. 12:1-2, 14:15-23, 15:1-7) imposed on deacons as well as all other Christians by Holy Scripture.
- 7.3.3. Additions to the membership of the Deacon Body will be elected by Church Action after an open application period has been extended at least biennially to the entire Church membership and after recommendation by Deacon Action.
- 7.3.4. Additional deacons (including former deacons of the Church & transfers from other Southern Baptist Churches) may be elected by Church Action at any Church Family Business Meeting upon recommendation by Deacon Action.
- 7.3.5. Effort will be made to have the Deacon Body reflect a range of age groups as seen in the Church and be comprised of individuals who meet the scriptural qualifications and biblical expectations.
- 7.3.6. A deacon may be removed from the Deacon Body by Church Action or Deacon Action, for cause.

ARTICLE 8: Church Committees, Generally

8.1. Establishment of Committees.

- 8.1.1. There are three categories of “Church Committees” – Operating, Ministry, and Special-Purpose.
- 8.1.2. The five “Operating Committees” – Acts 1:8 Missions, Building & Maintenance, Finance, Nominating, and Personnel – may only be modified or discontinued by amending these Bylaws (Article 13).
- 8.1.3. The Church, by Church Action, may establish a “Ministry Committee” or “Special-Purpose Committee” to serve other ministries or special purposes of the Church (Article 14), while acknowledging not every ministry or special purpose of the Church may require a designated Church Committee.
- 8.1.4. The Church, as necessary and by Church Action, may establish temporary committees to serve specific functions (e.g., Pastor Search [5.5.], Interim Senior Pastor Search [5.6.], special building committee [9.3.5.]).
- 8.1.5. The Church will maintain the *Caring Well Initiative* as a unified call to action to prevent and confront abuse as well as provide responsive and compassionate care for abuse survivors, with such effort to include a Caring Well Committee, a designated Church Staff Liaison, and Caring Well policies and procedures (4.4.).
- 8.1.6. The Deacon Body may recommend to create or discontinue a Ministry or Special Purpose Committee, provided the recommendation is presented at the next Regular Church Family Business Meeting for approval by Church Action.

8.2. Composition.

- 8.2.1. Each committee will have a non-voting Staff Pastor, Minister, or Department Head act as its Church Staff Liaison.
- 8.2.2. The work of the Church Staff Liaison is “to equip the saints [on the Church Committee] for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” for works of service (Eph. 4:12); the Church Staff Liaison will attend the meetings, provide guidance and direction concerning what the Church needs from that committee, coordinate any follow-up needed with appropriate Church Staff, and facilitate making Church resources available to enable the committee’s work.
- 8.2.3. Paralleled with the Church’s acknowledgment of and respect for pastoral leadership (2.1.3.), a general expectation of all Church Committee members is to acknowledge and respect the leadership of their assigned Staff Liaison and partner with him or her in carrying out the Church Ministry and Mission Action Plan as it pertains to that ministry area.
- 8.2.4. Each Church Committee is to have representation of men and women from various age groups, all to the extent prudent and achievable.
- 8.2.5. As a general rule, spouses are not to be appointed to serve simultaneously as voting members of the same Church Committee unless deemed necessary by the Nominating Committee (e.g., the Baptism Committee).
- 8.2.6. All Operating Committees are to have at least one deacon to help facilitate communication with the Deacon Body.

8.3. Candidates.

- 8.3.1. The Nominating Committee will seek as candidates Church members who demonstrate the member self-governance attributes outlined in Section 2.3. and are qualified to participate in the work assigned to Church Committees.
- 8.3.2. Unless already specified in a Church Committee’s Charter, the Staff Liaison for that committee will provide a list of preferred qualifications to inform all as to realistic experience, knowledge, and expectations for service on that committee.
- 8.3.3. The Nominating Committee will request all Church Staff Liaisons and Sunday School teachers, specifically, and all Church members, generally, to submit names of nominees electronically or by written form.
- 8.3.4. It is to be understood by all nominating parties that no party except the Church Family has final authority, by Church Action, to approve candidates for membership on Church Committees.
- 8.3.5. Recognizing that people have different spiritual gifts, experience, and training, the Nominating Committee will nominate well-suited, actively involved, and spiritually mature Church members from various age groups for the different Church Committees while ensuring the Church is involving both new and experienced committee members (8.2.4.).
- 8.3.6. In an effort to maximize Church Family participation, Church members may only serve on a maximum of two (2) Church Committees, and no Church member may serve as Chair on more than one (1) Church Committee at a time.

8.4. Chair.

- 8.4.1. The Nominating Committee will nominate a Chair for each Church Committee every year from among the members who have served at least one year on that committee, for final approval by Church Action. Prior to such nomination, a committee may propose its next Chair to the Nominating Committee for consideration, with such proposal to represent the collective recommendation of the Staff Liaison and a majority vote of the current committee members.
- 8.4.2. Each Church Committee Chair and/or Staff Liaison will call committee members to meetings at which the Chair will appoint a member to record minutes to be submitted to the Church Clerk after such minutes have been approved by the committee at its next meeting. A committee may elect for minutes to be prepared in duplicate form, with one version including confidential financial or personnel information for retention in the Church archives and review by the Church’s

auditors, and a second version from which such confidential information has been excluded or redacted, which will be the version made available in the Church office to be viewed by any Church member who wishes to review such minutes. 8.4.3. The Chair will encourage meaningful, non-voting participation by other Church members, including utilization of the list of nominees provided by the outgoing Nominating Committee Chair after each nominating cycle (8.9.5. & 9.5.3.).

8.5. Charter.

- 8.5.1. Each Church Committee will have a Charter outlining its purpose, composition, and responsibilities.
- 8.5.2. With the guidance and leadership of the assigned Church Staff Liaison, each Church Committee will draft its own Charter and seek final approval by Church Action. The Church Staff Liaison for each Church Committee will also initiate and lead the Church Committee to review and update its Charter annually, as needed.
- 8.5.3. All Charters or Charter amendments must be approved by Church Action.
- 8.5.4. In the event of conflict between the Church Bylaws (or policies and procedures adopted under Section 4.4.) and the Charters, the Church Bylaws (or churchwide policies and procedures) will take precedence over Committee Charters.

8.6. Role.

- 8.6.1. In addition to fulfilling its Committee Charter, each Church Committee will engage in dialogue with Church Staff to serve as a sounding board for decisions being contemplated and subsequently offer its review and advice on matters relevant to its function to the Church Staff, Deacon Body, and Church Family.
- 8.6.2. A Church Committee may use voting as a means of communicating agreement or dissent on a given matter being contemplated so its review and advice is an effective resource for Church Staff; however, a Church Committee has no authority to make final decisions for any Church Staff member.
- 8.6.3. The Church Staff Liaison is to encourage, motivate, and provide ideas for committee members in order that the Church Committee can, in turn, be a helpful resource and source of assistance to the Church Staff.
- 8.6.4. The Church Staff Liaison will also act as an administrator for the committee by doing such things as designing a handbook, coordinating meetings, developing policies and procedures, and proposing budgeted funds for committee work.

8.7. Nomination, Election, & Terms.

- 8.7.1. The Nominating Committee will annually nominate Church members to be elected by Church Action at or before the last Regular Church Family Business Meeting of the Church calendar year, or as soon thereafter as practicable.
- 8.7.2. Members of any newly constituted Church Committee will be nominated and elected in the same manner as outlined in 8.7.1., contemporaneous with the formation of the new Church Committee.
- 8.7.3. Each Church Committee member will be elected for a term of three (3) years. Terms will be staggered so approximately one-third (1/3) of the committee members are replaced with new or reelected members each calendar year.
- 8.7.4. At the conclusion of any committee member's term, that committee member may be reelected for a successive term, so long as renominated by the Nominating Committee and reelected by Church Action. Renomination is not to be used to the exclusion of adding new persons to serve on a given Church Committee.
- 8.7.5. After two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms, committee members must be off that committee for at least one (1) year before being eligible for renomination and reelection to that committee, with the only exception to this rule being Nominating Committee members, who must rotate off the Nominating Committee for at least one (1) year after a single three (3) year term expires before being eligible for renomination and reelection to the Nominating Committee.
- 8.7.6. The Chair of any Church Committee may not serve more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms before being required to rotate out of the Chair position for at least one (1) year.

8.8. Vacancies, Removal, & Readjustment.

- 8.8.1. If a vacancy should occur mid-term, the Church will, as soon thereafter as practicable, elect a person to complete the unexpired term, utilizing the same process as for nomination and election. The Chair can temporarily fill the vacancy by selecting any person who was formerly a member of that particular Church Committee until a new member is elected.
- 8.8.2. Any member of a Church Committee may be removed from the position by majority vote of committee members or by Church Action for failure to comply with these Bylaws or meet Charter requirements.
- 8.8.3. Any member of a Church Committee who violates Church policy or volunteer expectations may be subject to discipline or sanctions including temporary or permanent forfeiture of his or her committee position (11.1.5. & 11.1.6.).
- 8.8.4. Upon adoption of these Bylaws, and thereafter as needed, the Nominating Committee will readjust Church Committees to ensure they comply with the parameters outlined in these Bylaws (such as Sections 8.2., 8.3., 8.7., & 8.8.).

8.9. Operations.

- 8.9.1. Church Committees are expected to meet as often as necessary (at least every six months) to fulfill all Church Committee responsibilities outlined either in these Bylaws or in the respective Committee Charters.
- 8.9.2. A Church Committee may hold meetings and allow attendance at meetings by using any equipment or system that permits each individual participating in the meeting to communicate with other meeting participants, including but not limited to: videoconferencing technology, conference telephone, or other suitable electronic communications systems.
- 8.9.3. Due to the nature of their work, meetings held by Nominating, Personnel, and Caring Well Committees will always be in Executive Session (Article 14) unless that committee decides otherwise by majority vote.
- 8.9.4. All other Church Committee meetings will be open to attendance by Church members. Any Church Committee can vote to discuss a matter in Executive Session (Article 14).
- 8.9.5. Church members interested in a particular ministry area are encouraged to attend meetings even if they are not voting members of that committee. Attendance prior to membership will better equip interested persons to serve as potential future committee members and inform attendees of current opportunities to work in that area of Church ministry.
- 8.9.6. Any Church Committee member who does business, directly or indirectly (Article 14), with the Church or any of its officers or employees, will not be eligible to vote on any committee matter that could be considered a conflict of interest.
- 8.9.7. The Chair or any member of the Personnel Committee who is of the same household or is related by blood, adoption, or marriage to a Church employee or candidate for employment by the Church will be deemed to have a conflict of interest and will recuse himself or herself from any decision requiring concurrence of the Committee Chair or any discussion or vote on any matter regarding such employee or candidate.

ARTICLE 9: Operating Committee Responsibilities

9.1. Generally.

The responsibilities stated in these Bylaws are each Operating Committee's primary expectations. While secondary responsibilities may be included in a committee's Charter and approved by Church Action, these Bylaws (or churchwide policies and procedures) will take precedence over a committee's Charter, in the event of conflict.

9.2. Acts 1:8 Missions Committee.

- 9.2.1. Provide leadership alongside the Church Staff Liaison, Missions Staff, and Strategy Leaders in setting the missional tone and direction of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock locally, nationally, and globally.
- 9.2.2. Work with the Staff Liaison to develop an annual budget proposal for submission to the Finance Committee, including strategic utilization of the Acts 1:8 Fund and the annual disbursement of partnership project request funds.
- 9.2.3. Provide oversight and accountability regarding the Church missions budget and missions-designated accounts.
- 9.2.4. Provide guidance and support for existing, new, and potential strategic partnerships through continual prayer, research, encouragement of partners, and promotion of trips and missions offerings throughout the Church Family.
- 9.2.5. Assist in the planning and execution of key churchwide GO events (e.g., Missions Conference, GO Day).
- 9.2.6. Propose fresh and relevant ideas to best equip and mobilize Church members to be obedient in pursuing the lost.
- 9.2.7. The Staff Liaison, with input from this committee and other Church Staff members, will give an annual report at a Church Family Business Meeting after evaluating GO partnerships and implementation of churchwide missional goals.
- 9.2.8. Those serving on this committee should exemplify missional living and a passion for bringing the gospel to our "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

9.3. Building & Maintenance Committee.

- 9.3.1. Assist in developing, reviewing, and updating the job description for the Department Head; advise and assist the Senior Pastor and Personnel Committee in the selection of a qualified Department Head.
- 9.3.2. Advise and assist the Department Head regarding building and maintenance staff and vendors to ensure that the buildings and grounds are maintained in an acceptable manner, while also helping to identify needed improvements, repairs, and upgrades; assist as needed in securing and reviewing bids from various vendors to accomplish these tasks.
- 9.3.3. Assist the Department Head in examining any needed expenditures and seek the approvals needed to ensure prudent funding is available for immediate projects and future multi-year project planning.
- 9.3.4. Review and identify building or maintenance needs that are beyond the scope of the committee's regular annual functions and advise the Department Head and Finance Committee.
- 9.3.5. Request the creation of a special building committee – to be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by Church Action – to address, oversee, and help coordinate any special building project deemed desirable or necessary.

9.4. Finance Committee.

- 9.4.1. Ensure Church financial duties are performed by the Church financial department and supervised by the appropriate Church business manager. The Church financial department will be a unit of the Church staffed with employees with job descriptions which include policies and procedures to follow. The Church will have a Church business manager employee who will be responsible for supervising the day-to-day operations performed by the Church financial department.
- 9.4.2. Promote the scriptural teaching of supporting the Church and the Church's ministries through the voluntary giving of tithes and offerings from the Church's membership and its organizations.
- 9.4.3. Monitor budgeted and actual departmental and churchwide spending.
- 9.4.4. Facilitate an audit by an independent, qualified auditing firm showing the Church's financial condition at the end of each financial year, reporting such information at a Church Family Business Meeting and making the report available to Church members through records kept by the Church Clerk.
- 9.4.5. Oversee the Church financial department's response to any recommended action set forth in the annual audit report, including any letter to management from the auditing firm accompanying such report.
- 9.4.6. Authorize the signers on bank accounts for the Church.
- 9.4.7. Maintain controls, safe-guards, and limits for all purchases and use of Church credit cards, accounts, and the like.
- 9.4.8. Approve the receipt and expenditure of Church-designated funds after approval by Church Action.
- 9.4.9. At its discretion, the committee may agree to receive donor-designated funds for non-budget items for various Church ministries and authorize the expenditure of those funds for their designated purpose, according to the conditions or instructions for the donor-designated gift.
- 9.4.10. Approve the receipt and expenditure of Church-designated or donor-designated funds contributed by donors on the condition that their names remain anonymous, with the exception of standard federal and state tax reporting requirements.
- 9.4.11. Work in collaboration with the Personnel Committee to establish the annual personnel budget.

9.5. Nominating Committee.

- 9.5.1. Nominate Church members to fill new, expired, or vacant terms on Church Committees, including nominations for Chairs, pursuant to objectives for balanced and qualified committee membership and Chairs set forth in Article 8.
- 9.5.2. Periodically and timely secure indications of interest from Church members in serving on various committees and maintain a list of interested parties for each committee (8.3.3., 8.4.3., & 9.5.3.).
- 9.5.3. The outgoing Chair will provide the full list of persons considered for each committee to the newly elected Chair after each nomination cycle with the expressed purpose of effectively connecting members who were not elected by Church Action with opportunities to utilize their spiritual gifts in areas of interest. The goal is for members to understand their service and input is valuable to the Church and Kingdom even if they are not current, voting committee members.
- 9.5.4. Ask each Church Committee to review its Charter annually and offer advice regarding any updates it deems necessary or appropriate to the Church Family.
- 9.5.5. Maintain a current Church Committee packet with Charters, Chairs, Staff Liaisons, and other committee members listed along with the term years in which those members are serving. This packet will be available to Church members on the Church website and provided to Church members any time Church Committees are seeking new members.
- 9.5.6. The Nominating Committee will nominate a Church Clerk each year to be elected by Church Action (6.4.1.).

9.6. Personnel Committee.

- 9.6.1. Work in close collaboration with the Senior Pastor and other employee supervisors to evaluate the effectiveness of each employee and recommend appropriate salary and benefit changes to the Finance Committee for approval (9.4.11.).
- 9.6.2. Review at least annually the job descriptions, salaries, and benefits of all employees in order to clearly state expectations and seek fairness in compensating employees for their experience, expertise, and labor.
- 9.6.3. Assist in the hiring of Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, and Department Heads (6.2.).
- 9.6.4. After review of the proposed salary and benefits by the Finance & Personnel Committees, the Personnel Committee will present Staff Pastors and Staff Ministers (including interims) for ratification by Church Action (6.2.2.).
- 9.6.5. Assist the Senior Pastor or his designated employee supervisor in recruiting and hiring other employees.
- 9.6.6. Work in close collaboration with the Senior Pastor to set guidelines for all Staff Employees (full-time & part-time Church Staff other than Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, and Department Heads) to serve the Church (6.3.1.).
- 9.6.7. In the event the Senior Pastor (or an employee's supervisor) determines the employment of a Staff Pastor, Staff Minister, or Department Head needs to be terminated, the Senior Pastor (or the employee's supervisor) will seek concurrence from the Personnel Committee before proceeding toward employment termination (6.2.5.).
- 9.6.8. In the event the Senior Pastor (or an employee's supervisor) determines the employment of a Staff Employee needs to be terminated, the Senior Pastor (or the employee's supervisor) will seek concurrence by the Chair of the Personnel Committee (or the Chair's designee) before proceeding toward employment termination (6.3.1.).
- 9.6.9. The Personnel Committee will review the annual written self-evaluation of the Senior Pastor for the purpose of providing honest feedback, encouragement, and prayer (5.3.). This information may help inform decisions made regarding

ARTICLE 10: Church Trustees

10.1. Duty.

10.1.1. The Trustees, as their only duty, are entrusted to perform the administrative task of signing loans, deeds, and other legal documents for the IBCLR unincorporated association, when and exclusively as directed by Church Action with respect to "Material Obligations," which are: (i) any mortgage, conveyance, or other document affecting or involving the real estate title; (ii) any loan, note, or other evidence of financial obligation or indebtedness not already approved by Church Action as part of the Annual Budget, if the amount of such loan, note, or other evidence of financial obligation or indebtedness is in excess of 1.0% of the Church operating budget for the then current fiscal year, or such other amount determined for this purpose by Church Action; (iii) any agreement or contract in writing that by its term extends for more than one year for which the aggregate of all current and future financial obligations or commitments is in excess of 1.0% of the Church operating budget for the then current fiscal year, or such other amount determined for this purpose by Church Action; or (iv) any other agreement or instrument to be entered into by the Church outside of the ordinary course, including renewals of indebtedness or financial obligations (but not including agreements or instruments entered into in the ordinary course, such as employment agreements or letters).

10.1.2. The execution and delivery of agreements, instruments, or documents by the Church constituting or representing Material Obligations (10.1.1.) will be accomplished only by a majority of the Church Trustees, unless Church Action authorizes execution and delivery by a specific number of Trustees constituting less than a majority.

10.2. Selection.

10.2.1. A candidate for Church Trustee must be an active Church member of good repute who is in good standing, devout, faithful, prudent, a tither, and of a sound business mind.

10.2.2. Six (6) persons will be elected as Church Trustees and should be qualified persons with effort made to have both men and women with different experience in the categories of law, banking, accounting, significant business management, or real estate, as these individuals are chosen to represent and serve the Church in its dealings involving contracts, deeds, loans, mortgages, insurance, and other business instruments that must be signed by Church Trustees.

10.2.3. Trustees will be nominated (or renominated) by the Nominating Committee and elected by Church Action at or before the last Regular Church Family Business Meeting of the Church calendar year, or as soon thereafter as practicable.

10.2.4. Trustees will be elected for staggered three-year (3-year) rotating, calendar-year terms. At the conclusion of any Trustee's term, that Trustee may be reelected for a successive term, so long as that person resubmits to nomination, is renominated by the Nominating Committee, and is then reelected by Church Action.

ARTICLE 11: Other Church Processes

11.1. Church Volunteer Expectations.

11.1.1. Volunteers are vital in carrying out the ministry and mission of the Church. The Church recognizes its need for volunteers and encourages participation of men and women whose servant hearts imitate Christ's humility (Phil. 2:1-5).

11.1.2. Certain volunteer positions may be limited by Church-approved policies and procedures (4.4.) to members only.

11.1.3. Church Pastors, Ministers, and Department Heads may decline a volunteer's participation.

11.1.4. Persons serving in volunteer capacities are to meet appropriate training requirements set forth by Church-approved policies and procedures (4.4.), including but not limited to applicable Caring Well policies and procedures (8.1.5.).

11.1.5. A volunteer who violates Church policies or volunteer expectations may be subject to discipline or sanctions including temporary or permanent forfeiture of his or her current and/or future volunteer position(s).

11.1.6. If a volunteer is removed from an area of Church service due to misconduct or violation of Church volunteer policies or expectations, the removal will be reported to the Church Clerk for record keeping. The imposed discipline or sanction will continue until modification is approved by unanimous decision of the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff.

11.2. Church Messengers.

11.2.1. The Senior Pastor (or the Deacon Body Chair in the absence of a Senior Pastor) will nominate Church members to serve as messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and such other denominational meetings and conventions in which the Church, by Church Action, chooses to meet or convene. Church members may also make nominations at any Church Family Business Meeting prior to approval by Church Action.

11.2.2. Church Messengers will be elected by Church Action at a Church Family Business Meeting a reasonable time in advance of the particular denominational meeting or convention.

11.2.3. If the Church has not elected its full allotment of Church Messengers by the last Church Family Business Meeting preceding such meeting or convention, the Senior Pastor may select Church members (or authorize any requests) to serve as Church Messengers, up to our allotted representation limit at such meeting or convention.

11.3. Church Discipline.

11.3.1. Church discipline is a biblically-founded conflict resolution process used to restore a believer to right relationship with God (1 Cor. 5:3-5), protect the Church body (1 Cor. 5:6), and act as a warning for Church members (1 Tim. 5:20).

11.3.2. The doctrine of church discipline, as an act of love, is taught in the New Testament (Matt. 18:15-20).

11.3.3. While Church discipline is designed for restoration (of the offender to right behavior & attitude) and reconciliation (with God & between fellow believers), if those ends are not achieved, Church discipline may progress to disfellowship.

11.3.4. Any matter requiring the church discipline process outlined in the New Testament of a Church member will be addressed in a manner that meets biblical requirements and principles, as determined by the Pastoral Staff.

11.4. Biblical Peacemaking & Conflict Resolution.

11.4.1. In the spirit of the exhortation in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Church members are asked to resolve disputes between themselves with love and forgiveness in accord with Jesus' commands (John 13:34-35; Matt. 6:14-15) rather than through statements made to the general public, media, or via the Internet with intent to breach Church business confidentialities or injure the Church or members of the Church Family.

11.4.2. Church members are to use the Matthew 18:15-17 process to resolve disputes between believers for the purpose of reconciliation, restoration, and unity.

11.4.3. Parallel to the process set forth in 1 Timothy 5:19-20, Church members are asked to report any perceived need for correction of a Church leader to the team of pastors/elders/overseers (described in 5.1.1.).

11.4.4. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all Church Staff and Church Family members are to comply with requirements of federal and state law (Rom. 13:1), including: (i) report any suspected child abuse to the hotlines available at 1-800-482-5964 (Arkansas Department of Human Services) or 1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD (Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas); (ii) report any suspected criminal conduct to law enforcement agencies and/or the Prosecuting Attorney; (iii) inform or provide relevant information to regulatory authorities or law enforcement; and (iv) comply with any subpoena, court order, or other authoritative legal directive.

ARTICLE 12: Church Statement on Marriage

12.1. Definition & Ceremony.

12.1.1. The Church's affirmation of the BFM expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one biological man with one biological woman in an exclusive, covenantal commitment for their joint lifetime, and thus, is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church.

12.1.2. The Church believes marriage is a divine institution created by God, and thus, wedding ceremonies are spiritual observances of worship. As worship services, weddings on Church property will be officiated by one or more ministers who have been licensed or ordained to the gospel ministry by a like-minded church with at least one of the ministers being licensed by the state of Arkansas to perform weddings. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Senior Pastor.

12.1.3. The Church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined one or both parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determination may be made by the Senior Pastor or other member of the Church Pastoral Staff. In the event a member of the Pastoral Staff is unable or unwilling to make such determination, a Deacon Body representative approved by Church Action will make the determination.

12.1.4. No minister will officiate any marriage ceremony on Church property unless such marriage abides by this policy.

12.2. Conduct in Accord Required.

The Church believes that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who are officers of the Church, full-time and part-time members of the Church Staff, members of Church Committees, Church Messengers, or Church members who serve as volunteers in the functioning of the ministries and missions of the Church, will agree with, abide by, and conduct themselves according to the Statement on Marriage in this Article 12.

ARTICLE 13: Amendments of the Church Bylaws

13.1. Submission.

Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws must be submitted in writing (with signatures of the person(s) proposing such amendment) to the Deacon Body Chair and the Senior Pastor, who, in turn, will cause such amendment to be presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Deacon Body for consideration and recommendation.

13.2. Presentation.

After Deacon Action has been taken on the proposed amendment (whether for or against), the Deacon Body Secretary or Chair will forward the proposed amendment and official record of Deacon Action to the Senior Pastor, who, in turn, will cause both to be presented to the Church Family at a Regular Church Family Business Meeting for Church Action. The Deacon Body will first relay any negative recommendation to the person(s) who proposed the amendment in the event such person(s) may wish to withdraw the proposed amendment before Church Action is taken. If the Deacon Body does not offer its recommendation within forty-five (45) days after submission of a proposed amendment, the proposed amendment may be presented by the person(s) proposing such amendment to the Church Family for Church Action.

13.3. Publication.

Before presentation for Church Action, proposed amendments will be presented to the Church Family by Public Notice, posted on the member section of the Church website, and made available in a conspicuous place on Church premises for at least ten consecutive days, including two Sundays, for any Church member who desires to review or obtain a copy.

13.4. Vote.

Church Action to approve an amendment to these Bylaws will require at least a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church present and voting at two (2) consecutively scheduled Regular Church Family Business Meetings (4.1.4.).

13.5. Six-Month Bar.

If a proposed amendment is not approved by Church Action, it will neither be presented again, nor will any amendment embodying the substance thereof be presented, for six months from the date of the previous amendment presentation.

ARTICLE 14: Definitions

“Church,” as in “the Church,” refers to Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock (“IBCLR”), as defined in Section 1.1.

“Church Action” is defined in Section 4.1.1.

“Church Family” is defined in Section 1.2.1.

“Church Family Business Meeting” is defined in Sections 4.5. & 4.6.

“Church Committee” is to include: Operating Committees, Ministry Committees, & Special-Purpose Committees (8.1.1.).

“Church Staff” is to include: Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, Department Heads, & Staff Employees (6.1.1.).

“Conflict of Interest – Indirect” includes business being done by or issues involving a person in the same household or family or any business entity in which the member or a person in his or her same household or family has a material (10% or more) ownership interest or individually or in combination with one or more members of the same household or family either controls or has the right to control. See Sections 4.1.9., 7.2.4., & 8.9.6.

“Deacon” is defined in Section 7.1.1.

“Deacon Action” is a recommendation on a given Church matter that is to be determined by majority vote of the active members of the Deacon Body present and voting at a Deacon Body meeting at which a quorum is present. The result of such a vote will come to the Church Family as a recommendation, with Church Action holding the final authority.

“Deacon Body” is defined in Section 7.1.1. The Deacon Body offers its consideration and recommendation regarding Church matters as an act of service to the Church but does not function as a governing authority or Deacon Board.

“Deacon Bylaws” refer to operating procedures adopted by the Deacon Body and approved by Church Action (7.2.1.).

“Department Head” is the supervisor of a department of Church operation. Titles may include Manager or Director, such as (i) Director of Finance & Human Resources, (ii) Building Services Manager, (iii) Director of Security, (iv) Director of Communications, (v) Director of Technology, (vi) Director of Operations, (vii) Director of the City Center, (viii) Director of Food Services, etc. This list is not exhaustive and is simply intended to provide examples of “Department Heads.”

“Executive Session” is used in reference to Deacon Body and Church Committee meetings in which a majority vote may be taken by the members of that body or committee to discuss and vote on matters confidentially without guests present (persons who are not members of that body or committee). Committees which always meet in Executive Session (8.9.3.) may suspend Executive Session by majority vote to allow guests to be present for all or any part of a meeting.

“Material Obligations” is defined in Section 10.1.1.

“Ministry Committee” is introduced in 8.1.3. A non-exhaustive list may include: (i) Caring Well, (ii) Preschool, (iii) Children’s, (iv) Student, (v) Music, (vi) City Center, (vii) Recreation, etc.

“Officers” is defined in Section 1.4.

“Operating Committee” is introduced in 8.1.2. and refers to only those committees listed.

“Public Notice” will mean notice published to Church members at least ten (10) days prior to the applicable meeting and/or vote by means designed to reasonably enable Church Family participation. Notice may include electronic and/or written means so long as a current and common communication method is utilized. Public Notice is used in reference to Church Family Business Meetings (4.5.1. & 4.6.), calling of a pastor (5.4.1.), Deacon Body meetings (7.2.3.), and publication of proposed amendments to these Church Bylaws (13.3.).

“Special-Purpose Committee” is introduced in 8.1.3. A non-exhaustive list may include: (i) Baptism, (ii) Lord’s Supper, (iii) Endowment Fund, (iv) Media, (v) Food Service, (vi) Wedding/Receptions, (vii) Decorating, etc.

“Staff Employees” is to include the Church Staff other than Staff Pastors, Staff Ministers, and Department Heads (6.3.).

“Staff Liaison” is defined in Sections 8.2.1. & 8.2.2.

“Staff Ministers” are non-ordained Church employees hired as ministers to assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his duties. Titles could be Minister or Director, and a non-exhaustive list may include: (i) Director of Preschool Ministry, (ii) Director of Children’s Ministry, (iii) Minister of Worship Ministries, etc. See Sections 6.1.5. & 6.2.1.

“Staff Pastors” are men ordained as ministers of the gospel employed by the Church as associate pastors to assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his duties. A non-exhaustive list may include: (i) Missions Pastor, (ii) Pastor for Biblical Counseling, (iii) Pastor of Recreation, (iv) Middle School Student Pastor, etc. See Sections 6.1.5. & 6.2.1.

“Trustees” are defined in Article 10.

These Bylaws are in effect as of November 17th, 2024, upon the congregation of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock voting for adoption in a Special Church Family Business Meeting immediately following the morning worship service.

John McCallum, Senior Pastor (interim)

Mark Carter, Executive Pastor (interim)

Mike Rainwater, Chair of the Bylaws Drafting Committee