



**International Baptist Church of Cologne  
Constitution**

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## **ARTICLE 1. Preamble**

We the members of the International Baptist Church of Cologne, establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to honor and preserve the liberties of each member, to define our legal form and affiliations, and to provide for orderly conduct of the affairs of the church internally, as well as dealing with other parties and legal authorities externally. We voluntarily commit ourselves to this constitution.

## **ARTICLE 2. Name**

1. The name of this church is “International Baptist Church of Cologne im Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland, K.d.ö.R.” This church may also be referred to as “International Baptist Church of Cologne”; “IBC Cologne” or “IBCC”.
2. This church has its seat in Cologne, Germany.
3. Based on Article 4 of the “Verfassung des Bundes” this church is a legally dependent body within the Bund, participating in the corporate rights of the Bund. Within the rules and regulations of the Bund, this church manages its own affairs independently.

## **ARTICLE 3. Affiliations**

This church is a member of the International Baptist Convention, Frankfurt, and fully supports the International Baptist Convention’s mission. The Membership Meeting may determine that this church shall also be a member of other organizations, as long as they do not violate the purpose of this church.

## **ARTICLE 4. Purpose**

1. The Purpose of IBCC is to glorify God as a church filled with the Holy Spirit, dedicated to the proclamation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will seek to make disciples of all nations according to the word and will of God. We sum up our purpose with the statement, “Reaching the nations for Jesus Christ, one disciple at a time.”
2. This church pursues directly and exclusively public-benefit (gemeinnützige), charitable (mildtätige), and religious (kirchliche) purposes.

## **ARTICLE 5. Statement of Faith**

1. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We believe that it is the exclusive, final and complete revelation of God for all people and is the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and daily life. (Galatians 1:8-9; Ephesians 3:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:20)
2. We believe there is one God who exists in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Father is creator of heaven and earth. He is righteous, holy, sovereign, all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present. In perfect love, he concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of all people. He hears and answers prayer. He forgives sin and saves from condemnation all who by his grace come to him through Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 4:25, 30, 31; Psalm 139; Psalm 145; Isaiah 6:3; John 4:24; Ephesians 2:8-9, 4:6; Titus 3:4-5)
3. We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe in his sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe that he died in our place for our sin, that he rose again, and that he ascended into heaven. We believe he continually intercedes for his people and will personally and visibly return to earth. (Luke 1:27-28; John 1:1-2; Romans 5:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15, 7:25)
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit, sent to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He restores, sets apart for God's purpose and empowers all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ and that he is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (Genesis 1:2; John 14:1-16:33, 16:8-9; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 2:20)
5. We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation from which they are incapable of saving themselves. We believe that God, by his grace alone, has provided the only means for salvation through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We receive eternal life and enter a personal relationship with God, when we confess and repent of our sin and commit our lives to Jesus Christ, our only Savior. (John 1:12; Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-13; 1 John 1:9)
6. We believe in the global church, the living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all followers of Jesus Christ are members. We believe in the local church, accountable to God alone, where we unite for worship, work, learning and fellowship as a community of believers in Jesus Christ. We believe that we, in response to the Great Commission, have been sent out and given the task of making disciples (committed followers of Jesus Christ) from among all peoples. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 1:11)
7. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells and endows each believer with spiritual gifts to love, serve and edify the Church according to the biblical definition, order, and function of those gifts for the glory of God. (Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:4; Romans 12:4-8 )

8. We believe that Christ has, according to the Scriptures, instituted two church ordinances for believers:
  - a. Baptism, as an act of obedience and a joyful, public expression of a previous, personal commitment to Christ and discipleship. The baptism of the believer into and under water “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” is symbolic of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; the end of an old way of life and the beginning of a new life in Christ. (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-4)
  - b. The Communion of the Lord’s Table is a proclamation, celebration and a repeated reminder of Christ’s death, resurrection and future return. (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26)
  
9. We await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth in his full glory and power and the establishment of his eternal kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment of all humanity, the eternal joy in heaven of those who are made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ alone and the endless suffering in hell of those who did not place their faith in him. (Matthew 24:1-25:46; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 15:50-54; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-4)

## **ARTICLE 6. Membership**

Although we welcome everyone to come and worship the one true God, membership is reserved for those who are believers in Jesus Christ. To become a member, a person must agree with the purpose and doctrine of this church, and be actively involved in the ministry of IBCC.

We maintain a membership roll of active members who have the rights and responsibilities as given in the following sections.

### **Section 6. A. Full Membership**

1. Full membership candidacy is available to anyone regardless of gender, race, age or background and shall be attained in one of the following ways:
  - a. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as one's Savior and Lord, followed by a believer's baptism as a visible outward sign of their inward belief and commitment.
  - b. By submitting a letter from a church of like faith and order and who have experienced believer's baptism.
  - c. By statement of prior salvation experience and believer's baptism when no letter is obtainable.
  
2. A candidate, who has met the requirements listed above, can become a member through the following process:
  - a. Attend a new member's orientation class.
  - b. Agree with this constitution.
  - c. Acknowledge that his or her life comply and conform to the principles of Scripture.
  - d. Affirm his or her membership by acclamation in any worship service of the church.
  
3. Rights and responsibilities of full members:
  - a. Every full member of the church over the age of 18 can confirm leaders and vote on all questions submitted to the membership meeting, provided the member is present.
  - b. Every full member of voting age is eligible for consideration as a candidate for positions in the church.
  - c. Every full member of the church has the right to be heard in any regularly called or special membership meeting.
  - d. All full members are expected to mature in their Christian faith. It requires devotion, discipline and discipleship as one's will is surrendered to God's will. Every member then is expected to practice the following five disciplines: study the Bible diligently, worship regularly, pray daily, give systematically, and serve faithfully.
  - e. Every member is encouraged to be actively involved in the ministries of IBCC.

## **Section 6. B. Associate Membership**

We offer a church home to those who are members of another congregation. We will offer this service without compromising our distinguishing beliefs.

1. Candidacy for Associate Membership: Candidates may be anyone who was a member in another Christian church, making a statement of a prior salvation experience through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and who has experienced a baptism.
2. Admission of candidates to associate membership is the same as for full membership. (Refer to Sec.6A, paragraph 2).
3. Associate members have all of the rights of full members except for the following:
  - a. Associate members may only serve on ministry teams whose purposes do not involve doctrinal or constitutional changes, or the selection of pastors or elders.
  - b. Associate members may not serve as pastors or elders.
  - c. Associate members may not take part in confirmation or dismissal of pastors, elders, or on constitutional changes.

## **Section 6. C. Discipline of Members**

1. Through God's grace, the four-fold purpose of church discipline is:
  - a. To help conform us individually and corporately to Christ, in terms of the purity and unity of his church, for the glory of God (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
  - b. To help bring a wandering soul back to Christ (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1- 5).
  - c. To help deter others from sin (1 Timothy 5:20).
  - d. To help protect the church from false teachers, sin, and division (Acts 20:25-31; Titus 1:10-11).
2. General categories of offences in the Bible that may result in church discipline include:
  - a. Divisiveness (Titus 3:9-11; Romans 16:17-18)
  - b. Immorality (1 Corinthians 5:9-11, 6:9-10; Exodus 20:12-17)
  - c. Rejecting doctrines of the Christian faith (1 Timothy 1:19-20, 6:3-5; 2 John 9-11)
3. The objective shall be the restoration and reconciliation, through genuine repentance, of the person or persons concerned and the preservation of the true identity, witness and unity of the church of Jesus Christ. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of gracious and loving concern.
4. Members of this church who err in doctrine, and who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the elders, shall be subject to appropriate church discipline. Application of church discipline shall be consistent with the biblical approach outlined in Matthew 18:15-18. As such, it is to be exercised against offenders who are members of IBCC. This includes:
  - a. Confronting the offender with scripture to show his or her erring.
  - b. If there is no repentance, a group of two or three will confront the offender again.
  - c. If after the second attempt the offender does not repent, the elders are to take it to the church.
  - d. If the offender does not listen and repent after this final attempt, the elders will call for the removal of that person's membership. They are to be treated as an unbeliever.

## **Section 6. D. Termination of Membership**

Membership may be terminated if one of the following has occurred and after communication has been attempted:

1. Transfer of Membership: Members of the church in good standing may be granted letters of transfer to churches of like faith and order. Requests for letters shall be brought before the church elders. Letters of transfer shall be sent directly to the requesting church.
2. Lack of active participation: Members of the church for whom there is no record or knowledge of attendance at services or engaging in activities for over 12 months.
3. Relocation: Anyone who has relocated out of the area.
4. Anyone who has become a member of another church.
5. By personal request.
6. By death.
7. By discipline. (Refer to Section 6. C. paragraph 4)

## Article 7. Organizational Structure

Our organizational structure consists of the congregation, elders and deacons. The qualification of elders and deacons are defined in the Bible, and referenced in this constitution. The process of confirming elders and deacons are laid out in the by-laws of this constitution.

### Section 7. A. Elders

1. **Lead pastor** is the title given to the lead elder of the church who is responsible for providing oversight and leadership to the church. The basic responsibilities and duties unique to the office of pastor are specified below. The qualifications of a pastor are laid out in the Bible. The hiring and calling of the pastor are laid out in the by-laws of this constitution. (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
  - a. **Oversight.** The pastor, in conjunction with the elders, is responsible for the spiritual care and oversight of the church.
  - b. **Pulpit ministry.** He will have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church, conducting regular and special services, and he is the primary preacher at Sunday services. The responsibility for finding a replacement person to fulfil the pulpit ministry when the pastor is unavailable rests with the pastor, in coordination with the eldership. The content of the preaching and teaching program should be broadly agreed with the eldership under the leading of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. **Direction of public worship.** The responsibility for the format, content, conduct and execution of all public worship services rests with the pastor, in coordination with the eldership.
  - d. **Elders & deacons.** It is the pastor's responsibility to guide and encourage the elders and deacons in fulfilling their functions.
  - e. **The ministries of the church.** The pastor will provide guidance and encouragement for the church in every aspect of its ministries.
  - f. **Outreach.** The pastor will, in conjunction with those elders and members of the church who display the appropriate gifts, encourage outreach on an ongoing basis to win converts to Christ and coordinate the necessary resources in order to make known the existence of the church to the community.
  - g. **Administration of church staff.**-The leadership and oversight of church staff (if any) rests with the pastor and the elders.

2. **Elders** shall be men who work in a leadership capacity alongside the pastor in cultivating the spiritual life of the church. They are servants of God and commissioned by God to give biblical direction and spiritual oversight to the church, along with helping “shepherd the flock” of God (Acts 20:28). It is the responsibility of the elders to make sure the ministries and direction of the church is in line with its teaching. The qualifications and responsibilities of an elder are defined in the Bible, and described in this constitution. (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The primary functions of the elders are:

- a. Praying for the church
  - b. Spiritual oversight and leadership
  - c. Teaching and preaching
  - d. Making disciples of Jesus
  - e. Resolving doctrinal issues
3. Any other pastors hired by the church for the ministry will automatically be members of the elder team, but will not have decision-making privileges within the elder board until a period of one year of service in the church is complete.

## Section 7. B. Deacons

Deacons are servants of the church who function to help administer the physical and practical needs of the church. The three types of deacons at IBCC are administrative, ministry, and the trustees.

1. Administrative officers are deacons who serve in an administrative capacity to ensure that the church maintains good stewardship legally, financially, and that the church remains in good standing with the German Bund and the International Baptist Convention. Any member nominated to serve on the Administrative team must fulfil the biblical qualifications found in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:8-12).

The officers are:

- a. **Administrative Chairperson** – the chairperson is the leader of the administrative team, and oversees relations with the German Baptist Bund, and the International Baptist Convention, and organizes and leads all church business meetings.
- b. **Financial Secretary** – The financial secretary is responsible for the handling of all cash and bank accounts of the church. In addition the financial secretary also oversees the administration of the church’s payroll. Upon election, the financial secretary shall be provided with legal authorization (power of attorney) by the Bund in order to enable them to execute banking transactions (BankKontovollmacht).
- c. **Church Secretary** – The secretary is responsible for maintaining the church membership list, directory, taking role and keeping minutes in all official church meetings.
- d. **Fellowship Director** – the fellowship director is responsible for keeping the church calendar up to date and for overseeing the organization of events and activities within IBCC.
- e. **Representative Elder** – The lead pastor or qualified elder will be member of the administrative Team.

The responsibilities of the administrative team are:

- a. Leading and taking minutes of the Membership Meetings.
- b. Organizing and communicating church activities and events.
- c. Managing the expenditures within the overall spending budget as approved by the Business Meeting. The Administrative Team also ensures that spending is in compliance legally, with the authority given by the Membership.
- d. Safeguarding the church assets.
- e. Preparing and approving all contracts prior to the trustees signing them.
- f. Maintaining the membership roll and issuing transfer letters.
- g. Creating and implementing administrative policies.
- h. Working with elders to accomplish the plans and actions for the church.

The Administrative Team is responsible for supervising relevant sub-committees such as:

- a. Building Committee
- b. Grounds Committee
- c. Finance Committee
- d. Personnel Committee

If a member of the administrative team resigns, a special membership meeting may be called to elect a new member for the remainder of the vacated position's term.

2. **Ministry Leaders** are persons appointed by the church to attend to and implement the service ministries of the church. Any member nominated to serve as a ministry leader must fulfil the biblical qualifications found in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:8-12). All ministries shall be under the spiritual authority of the elders and shall be in accordance with the statement of faith found within this constitution. These ministries can include, but are not limited to:

- a. Counting team
- b. Children's Church
- c. Nursery
- d. Fellowship
- e. Hospitality
- f. Men's Ministry
- g. Women's Ministry
- h. Youth Ministry
- i. Community Outreach
- j. Service

3. **Trustees** – For legal purposes, IBCC will have two members who serve as trustees (legal signatories). This role can be filled by any deacon or elder in the church.

The responsibilities of the trustees are:

- a. The trustees are responsible for the signing of any and all contracts requiring official signature(s) by a legal representative of the church, including but not limited to employment contracts, purchasing contracts for items of a significant nature, leasing and rental contracts as well as any contracts which commit the church for a period exceeding 12 months.
- b. The trustees ensure that all contracts requiring official signatures by a church official have been duly approved by the elders and administrative team, and are, to the best of their knowledge, in line with this constitution and legal requirements.

## **Article 8. Membership Meetings**

The church shall hold regular meetings throughout the year to communicate the ministries and conduct the business of the church. The frequency and rules of governance of these meetings are found in the by-laws of this constitution.

1. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised will be followed for order and process in all meetings and committees. The meeting chairperson may deviate, but may at any time use the rules to maintain an effective process.
2. The following resolutions must only be taken by the membership meeting and cannot be delegated otherwise:
  - a. Calling and dismissal of the pastor.
  - b. Confirmation and dismissal of the members of the elders, administrative team, and trustees.
  - c. Decisions about membership in the church.
  - d. Approval of the annual budget, approval of the annual financial statements, and the indemnification of the elders and administrative team.
  - e. Changes of this constitution and the by-laws.

## **Article 9. Church Finances**

1. This church is funded through voluntary contributions of its members, donations, collections and other income. IBCB does not receive any funds from the German church tax.
2. This church uses its finances directly and exclusively for charitable and church purposes in accordance with the "Abgabenordnung" (Fiscal Code of the German Federal Republic).
3. The fiscal year equals the calendar year.
4. The members do not participate in the assets of this church; they cannot claim refund of paid donations or other contributions. Members are not entitled to private use of the church property.
5. Assets of this church may only be used for the constitutional purposes, and no member shall benefit from expenditures that are against the purpose of this church or unreasonably high compensation. Members and other persons, who are volunteers for this church, may be reimbursed for proven and reasonable expenses. Compensation based on a separate contract is not affected by this.

## **ARTICLE 10. Closure**

1. The church can be closed by an affirmative vote of 75 percent of the members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose. Advance notification of a called business meeting must be provided to the church during the worship service on two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.
2. In the event of IBCB ceasing to exist as a church, it will seek appropriate advice from the IBC and the Bund for handling legal issues such as disposal of assets.

## **ARTICLE 11. Amendments**

1. Proposed amendments to the constitution must be written and forwarded to the elders. After proper review and study by the relevant team, the administrative team will report proposed amendments to the church along with the elders' recommendation.
2. The constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the church if proper notice has been given. Proper notice shall consist of making available a copy of the proposed amendment to each active member or family group at least one month prior to the meeting when the vote on the proposed changes will be taken and making an announcement during the worship service on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.
3. The constitution may be revised or amended by an affirmative vote of 90 percent of the members present and voting at the meeting where such changes are presented. A quorum for this meeting is 60% of active members.

## **ARTICLE 12. Effectiveness**

The content of this constitution and its appendices is established as the will of the membership upon their vote at the membership meeting of \_\_\_\_\_. Those elected as elders will be brought into office following the membership meeting where they will be affirmed by the church membership.

# International Baptist Church of Cologne Bylaws

Purpose: To provide guidance in the fulfillment of the responsibilities set forth in the IBCC constitution, these bylaws establish the specific rules and procedures of guidance by which the church is to function. This church is to provide regular occasion of worship, including administering the Christian Ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), supporting Bible study and spiritual nurture/growth through a program of Christian education, and offering opportunities for Christian service.

## Section 1. Meetings:

**A. Membership Meetings** – Regular meetings will be held at least semi-annually with one expected during the first four months of each year to review the previous year's financial statements, present and approve the budget, and elect positions of leadership. The second meeting of the year will at least provide an update of the financial position of the church.

1. To ensure compliant notice and format, membership meetings will generally be called and moderated by the chairperson of the administrative team.
2. The administrative team is to ensure that minutes will be taken and archived of all decisions in each meeting.
3. The following topics shall only be voted upon if included in the meeting notice:
  - a. Calling or removing the lead pastor.
  - b. Amending the constitution.
  - c. Adopting, amending or repealing bylaws.
  - d. Disposing of a significant portion of the church's assets.
  - e. Adopting or amending a merger agreement.
  - f. Approving a proposal to dissolve the church.
  - g. Approving the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness.
  - h. Permanent change of location for regular worship services.
4. For all membership meetings where voting will occur, the administrative team must appoint a counting team.
  - a. Counting by show of hands for simple majority votes shall be carried out by a counting team of two members.
  - b. Written ballots will be tallied for votes concerning people and any other sensitive topic as determined by the meeting chairperson. The ballots are to be prepared by the administrative team. The ballots will be handed out while names are checked off of the membership list in order to determine the number of eligible votes cast.  
The counting team shall have three members.
5. The membership meeting is comprised of all full and associate members of voting age.
6. Non-members are invited to observe membership meetings but do not have the right to speak publicly or vote.
7. Membership meetings require a quorum of 30% of the full and associate members to conduct business. If the quorum is not present, the meeting will be rescheduled with a quorum of 15%.
8. The regular membership meetings are called by the chairperson of the administrative team, or a vice-chairperson, with at least a two-week notice through announcement in the regular worship service and written invitation by e-mail or letter.

9. Special membership meetings may be called when 3 administrative team members or the elders request it. A membership meeting may also be called upon written notice by 20% of the members of IBCC who are eligible to vote on the matter.
10. The membership meeting can make decisions only if it has been duly called.
11. Decisions are to be taken by simple majority of all votes cast, unless this constitution requires differently.
12. Confirmation and dismissal of people are always to be taken by written ballot.
13. The elders will report assessment of church ministries in relation to the vision of IBCC.
14. Although the ultimate authority rests with the church membership the elders and deacons are given authority, within the context of their responsibilities, to make decisions.

**B. Elder Meetings** – The elders are expected to meet at least once per month under the direction of the lead pastor.

1. The elders are to keep secrecy concerning matters that are confidential by their nature.
2. The elders will strive for unity in leading the church and implementing ministries.

**C. Administrative Team Meetings** – The administrative team is expected to meet at least once per month.

1. Special Meetings - An administrative team meeting can also be called if at least two members of the administrative team request this.
2. Quorum - The administrative team meetings require a quorum of at least one half of its members. Decisions are taken by simple majority vote of the members participating in the meeting. Time-sensitive decisions may also be taken by circulation if at least half of the administrative team vote positively.
3. Minutes - All meetings are to be documented in written minutes which are to be approved by the administrative team at their next meeting. The meeting minutes are to be made available to all members of the church. The chairperson determines any items of such confidential nature which must not be made public and must therefore be excluded from the minutes. The minutes shall instead contain a reference of a more general nature that a confidential topic had been addressed by the administrative team.
4. Deacons are to keep secrecy concerning matters that are confidential by their nature.
5. Deacons will strive for unity in serving and administrating the church ministries.

**D. Elders and Administrative Meetings** – The elders and administrative team are expected to meet at least 4 times a year, with the administrative team meetings being the best venue for them to meet.

## Section 2. Personnel - Call, Elections and Term of Office

**A. Pastor** – A pastor search committee shall be formed from among the full members of this church. Election of the committee shall be in accordance with the procedure set up for the election for the administrative team members. The call of the pastor shall be as follows:

1. Members of this church may submit candidates to this committee in sufficient time to allow review. No nominations may be brought forward on the day of the meeting.
2. The pastor search committee shall bring only one candidate to the church at a time. Pastoral candidates must exhibit Christian character and qualifications that fit them for the position which is in accord with the qualifications written in the Bible.
3. The recommendation of the committee shall include the financial portfolio offered to the candidate.
4. The call of the pastor shall take place at a duly called special membership meeting following a regular church service, typically on a Sunday. The tally of ballots shall be taken immediately and reported to the membership meeting. If 75% affirmative vote is not obtained, there shall be no discussion. The pastor search committee shall then continue the selection process.
5. The pastor shall, by virtue of the elected position held, be permitted to assume responsibilities with the Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland and the International Baptist Convention.
6. The pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least three months' notice shall be given to terminate the relationship unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.
7. There will be a vote of confidence made by the church members every three years for the lead pastor. If 30% of all active church members vote a "no confidence", then the pastor will be dismissed from his position.
8. If a pastor is found to be in a moral failing which would disqualify him from the office of pastor, or in doctrinal conflict with the stated beliefs of the church body, the elders, in cooperation with the administration team, can ask him to resign. If the pastor is unwilling to resign then a special church member meeting will be called to confirm the recommendation for his removal from office. If 30% of the active church members vote "no-confidence" he will be removed from his position.

**B. Confirming elders** – The following process will be followed for the confirmation of elders:

1. As a guideline, but not as a strict rule, there should be one elder for every fifty regular church attendees. The number of candidates will be determined by the elders and communicated prior to the nomination period.
2. Candidates for the position of elder may be proposed by any member of the church at least four weeks before the membership meeting. The candidates will then be interviewed by the elders, determine their personal motivation and biblical qualification for the position. Two weeks before the membership meeting, the candidates presented for confirmation will be made known to the church body by the elders. If there is an issue or concern regarding a candidate by a church member, these concerns must be brought to the current elders during this two-week period for their consideration.
3. Prior to the membership meeting the candidate will present to the church body a brief statement of their Christian journey and experience at IBCC.
4. A 70% Confirmation will be required to affirm an elder, whereby he will serve for a term of three years. Elders can be re-confirmed after completing a full term, and after the elder has taken at least a one year leave of absence from serving on the elder team.

5. Once confirmed the elder will go through a training process to ensure they are equipped to serve and shepherd the church of Christ.
6. If an administrative team member is confirmed as an elder, they will step down from the administrative team with immediate effect.

**C. Confirmation of administrative team** – The guidelines for confirming the administrative team members are as follows:

1. The members of the administrative team are nominated from among the membership. The nominees are to be interviewed by the elders to determine if they are spiritually qualified to serve in this manner. This report will be given to the church administrative team. Two weeks before the membership meeting, the qualified candidates will be made known to the church body and presented during a regular worship service as well as communicated by email. If there is an issue or concern regarding a candidate's spiritual qualification by a church member, these concerns must be brought to the elders during this two week period for their consideration. The elders will review concerns and share their conclusion with the administrative team.
2. Prior to the membership meeting each qualified candidate will be presented to the church.
3. Confirmation at the membership meeting will result in a three-year term and may be re-confirmed after they have taken a one-year absence from the administrative team.

**D. Ministry Leaders** – Ministry leaders are chosen from among the members with whom they are serving in an elder-approved ministry. After review and approval by the elders the ministry leader will be presented to the church at the next membership meeting.

**E. Financial Secretary** - Upon confirmation by the membership meeting, the position of financial secretary is for a three-year term. Re-election is permitted after they have taken a one-year absence from the administrative team.

**F. Trustees** - Upon confirmation by the membership meeting, the position of trustee is for a five year term. Re-election is permitted.

### **G. Personnel Hiring**

1. All hiring of paid staff, except for pastors, will be performed by the administrative team with agreement of the elders.
2. The administrative team will maintain written policies that ensure that all hiring will be done with contract and in compliance with all legal requirements.
3. The financial secretary is to ensure that all staff payments are in compliance with church policies as well as tax and social security laws.
4. An annual review will be performed by the elders and administrative chairman for all hired personnel.

### **Section 3. Finance**

**A. Budget Process** - The creation and management of the annual budget is the responsibility of the elders and administrative team working together as a unit.

1. The elders and administrative team shall prepare an annual detailed spending budget which is to be approved by the membership meeting within the first four months of the new budget year. For this reason a budget will always be proposed for two consecutive years. By this the proposed budget for the second of these two years can be used as the operating basis until the new revised budget is approved by the membership meeting. The budget approval will be for the total spending amount as well as any specific values that are not open to modification during the year.
  - a. The elders are responsible for the overall guidance of the budget, to ensure that the vision and mission of IBCC have the right financial emphasis and priorities placed on the corresponding ministries.
  - b. The administrative team has the responsibility to create and manage the budget of the non-ministry functions, as well as enforcing and overseeing the budget for ministries.
2. The budget shall be presented in detail along with the clear understanding of ministry priorities.
3. The membership meeting approval is for the total budgeted amount, as well as any designated expenditures that must not change without notifying the congregation. Those restricted expenditures will be clearly documented in the budget.
4. The administrative team must notify the church if the total spending is projected to exceed the approved budget by 2% or more, or if anything threatens the financial health of the church, whether overspending or an anticipated reduction in income. Amounts can move between spending categories, as long as the overall budget is not affected.
5. All income and expenditure must be completely recorded and documented by the financial secretary in this church's bookkeeping.
6. Petitions from membership to make adjustments to the budget during the financial year are to go through the administrative team, with approval from the elders.
7. This church's financial records shall be audited biannually by a professional third party. The auditors shall provide an opinion which shall be approved together with the financial statements by the membership meeting within the first four months of the following budget year.

**B. Offering Counting** - The following process applies to counting of the offering:

1. The counting of the offering must take place in a non-public room.
2. The counting must be performed by two non-related adults who must remain present during the entire process.
3. The offering counting form must be used to tally and record the offering.
4. Bank notes and coins are recorded individually and tallied.
5. Donations are recorded individually with the name of the donor.
6. Foreign currencies are recorded separately.
7. Both counters are to physically count and then upon recording the entire offering on the counting form, must sign the form in each other's presence to attest to the accuracy of the count.
8. The financial secretary is responsible for recording the offering in the church ledger.
9. The financial secretary is responsible for organizing and overseeing the deposit of the money into a designated IBCC account.

**C. Expense Reimbursement** - Members and other voluntary, unsalaried people as well as paid staff may receive reimbursement of expenses incurred in the service of the church, provided such expenses are supported by proof of payment, invoice or receipt. Such payments will normally be authorized by the responsible ministry leader.

#### **Section 4. Membership Roll**

Membership Roll - The administrative team is responsible for maintaining the membership role.

#### **Section 5. Ministries**

The elders approve all ministries of this church. They determine if the ministry fits within the doctrine, vision and mission of IBCC. They support the church ministries and appoint ministry leaders, who are in turn responsible for the direction of the ministries they oversee. The responsibilities of the ministry leaders are to encompass, but are not limited to the following:

1. Function as contact person for all who are serving in a particular ministry.
2. Obtain approval from the elders to determine the appropriate material and distribute curriculum for the ministry. Purchase approval is to be obtained from the administrative team.
3. Develop an annual plan for helpers.
4. Facilitate teacher/helper training annually.
5. Organizing events.

#### **Section 6. Amendments**

Changes or additions to these bylaws may be made only:

1. At a regular membership meeting, or a special membership meeting called specifically for this purpose.
2. After notice of the proposed change or addition has been given in writing, and announced from the pulpit on at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.
3. Approved by simple majority of the votes cast.