

# **Imago Christi Constitution and Bylaws**

## **Preamble**

These by-laws are adopted, ordained, and established for our church government and plan of ministry. Since by-laws are meant to implement the provisions of the Constitution, no by-laws shall be effective that are contrary to the Constitution. It is not intended that a code of church by-laws be permanent and unalterable. From time to time, a revision may be necessary. In these by-laws the church is giving expression of Divine government as a basis for closer Christian fellowship and a clearly defined statement of procedure for biblical leadership and ministry in the church of Jesus Christ.

## **Constitution**

### **Article I Name**

The name of this church will be Central Park Church of Cedar Rapids, DBA: Imago Christi Church.

### **Article II Foundation, Object and Priorities of Ministry**

1. The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).
2. The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
3. The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

## **Affirmation of our Faith**

### **1. Scripture, the Word of God Written**

1.1 We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, and without error in the original manuscripts.

1.2 We believe that God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not explicitly addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

1.3 We believe God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' intention was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as, for example, in the case of some Old Testament prophecies. Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed historical reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors. However, while meaning does not change, the application of that meaning may change in various situations. Nevertheless it is not legitimate to infer a meaning from a Biblical text that is not demonstrably carried by the words which God inspired.

1.4 Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible (which is its fullest meaning) is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure Biblical texts. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is essential for right understanding of the Bible, and prayer for His assistance belongs to a proper effort to understand and apply God's Word.

### **2. The Trinity, One God as Three Persons**

2.1 We believe in one living, sovereign, and all-glorious God, eternally existing in three infinitely excellent and admirable Persons: God the Father, fountain of all being; God the Son, eternally begotten, not made, without beginning, being of one essence with the Father; and God the Holy Spirit, proceeding in the full, divine essence, as a Person, eternally from the Father and the Son. Thus each Person in the Godhead is fully and completely God.

2.2 We believe that God is supremely joyful in the fellowship of the Trinity, each Person beholding and expressing His eternal and unsurpassed delight in the all-satisfying perfections of the triune God.

### **3. God's Eternal Purpose and Election**

3.1 We believe that God, from all eternity, in order to display the full extent of His glory for the eternal and ever-increasing enjoyment of all who love Him, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will, freely and unchangeably ordain and foreknow whatever comes to pass, without in any way diminishing his holiness.

3.2 We believe that God upholds and governs all things – from galaxies<sup>29</sup> to subatomic particles, from the forces of nature to the movements of nations, and from the public plans of politicians to the secret acts of solitary persons – all in accord with His eternal, all-wise purposes to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins, nor ever condemns a person unjustly; but that His ordaining and governing all things is compatible with the moral accountability of all persons created in His image.

3.3 We believe that God's election is an unconditional act of free grace which was given through His Son Christ Jesus before the world began. By this act God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin and brought to repentance and saving faith in His Son Christ Jesus.

### **4. God's Creation of the Universe and Man**

4.1 We believe that God created the universe, and everything in it, out of nothing, by the Word of His power. Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His joyful self-sufficiency, God was pleased in creation to display His glory for the everlasting joy of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

4.2 We believe that God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. We believe that Adam and Eve were the historical parents of the entire human race; that they were created male and female equally in the image of God, without sin; that they were created to glorify their Maker, Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all-sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel; and that, in God's love and wisdom, they were appointed differing and complementary roles in marriage as a type of Christ and the church.

## **5. Man's Sin and Fall from Fellowship with God**

5.1 We believe that, although God created man morally upright, he was led astray from God's Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit, and chose to take what was forbidden, and thus declare his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward his all-good and gracious Creator. Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God.

5.2 We believe that, as the head of the human race, Adam's fall became the fall of all his posterity, in such a way that corruption, guilt, death, and condemnation belong properly to every person. All persons are thus corrupt by nature, enslaved to sin,<sup>62</sup> and morally unable and unwilling to delight in God and overcome their own proud preference for the fleeting pleasures of self-rule.

5.3 We believe that the essence of sin is failure to glorify God. We believe that the essence of glorifying God is to experience him as more satisfying than his gifts. Thus, idolatry is at the root of all sinful attitudes and behaviors. Sins flow from sin.

5.4 We believe God has subjected the creation to futility, and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness, decay, calamity, and loss. Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil of moral depravity in the heart of mankind; and every new day of life is a God-given, merciful reprieve from imminent judgment, pointing to repentance.

## **6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God**

6.1 We believe that in the fullness of time God sent forth His eternal Son as Jesus the Messiah, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. We believe that, when the eternal Son became flesh, He took on a fully human nature, so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one Person, without confusion or mixture. Thus the Person, Jesus Christ, was and is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ and the only Mediator between God and man.

6.2 We believe that Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life. He preached, taught and lived with truth and authority unparalleled in human history. He worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation: dispatching demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the storm, walking on water, multiplying loaves, and foreknowing what would

befall Him and His disciples, including the betrayal of Judas and the denial, restoration, and eventual martyrdom of Peter.

6.3 We believe that His life was governed by His Father's providence with a view to fulfilling all Old Testament prophecies concerning the One who was to come, such as the Seed of the woman, the Prophet like Moses, the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the Son of David, and the Suffering Servant.

6.4 We believe that Jesus Christ suffered voluntarily in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, that He died, was buried and on the third day rose from the dead to vindicate the saving work of His life and death and to take His place as the invincible, everlasting Lord of glory. During forty days after His resurrection, He gave many compelling evidences of His bodily resurrection and then ascended bodily into heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for His people on the basis of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, and reigning until He puts all His enemies under His feet.

## **7. The Saving Work of Christ**

7.1 We believe that by His perfect obedience to God and by His suffering and death as the immaculate Lamb of God, Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of perfect righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross and all who would trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment, appeased the wrath of God against us, vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification, and removed the condemnation of the law against us.

7.2 We believe that the atonement of Christ for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all persons, so that to every person it may be truly said, "God gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life." Whosoever will may come for cleansing at this fountain, and whoever does come, Jesus will not cast out.

7.3 We believe, moreover, that the death of Christ did obtain more than the bona fide offer of the gospel for all; it also obtained the omnipotent New Covenant mercy of repentance and faith for God's elect. Christ died for all, but not for all in the same way. In His death, Christ expressed a special covenant love to His friends, His sheep, His bride. For them He

obtained the infallible and effectual working of the Spirit to triumph over their resistance and bring them to saving faith.

## **8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit**

8.1 We believe that the Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation, awakening faith in the remnant of God's people, performing signs and wonders, giving triumphs in battle, empowering the preaching of prophets and inspiring the writing of Scripture. Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the Father on His Church.

8.2 We believe that the newness of this era is marked by the unprecedented mission of the Spirit to glorify the crucified and risen Christ. This He does by giving the disciples of Jesus greater power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ, by opening the hearts of hearers that they might see Christ and believe, by revealing the beauty of Christ in His Word and transforming His people from glory to glory, by manifesting Himself in spiritual gifts (being sovereignly free to dispense, as he wills, all the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10) for the upbuilding of the body of Christ and the confirmation of His Word, by calling all the nations into the sway of the gospel of Christ, and, in all this, thus fulfilling the New Covenant promise to create and preserve a purified people for the everlasting habitation of God.

8.3 We believe that, apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith, because all are dead in trespasses and sins; that they are hostile to God, and morally unable to submit to God or please Him, because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God. Thus, for God's elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, wakens the dead, removes blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart.

8.4 We believe the Holy Spirit does this saving work in connection with the presentation of the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Thus neither the work of the Father in election, nor the work of the Son in atonement, nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration is a hindrance or discouragement to the proclamation of the gospel to all peoples and persons everywhere. On the contrary, this divine saving work of the Trinity is the warrant and the ground of our hope that our evangelization is not in vain in the Lord. The Spirit binds His saving work to the gospel of Christ, because His aim is to glorify the Christ of the Gospel. Therefore we do not believe that there is

salvation through any other means than through receiving the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **9. The Justifying Act of God**

9.1 We believe that in a free act of righteous grace God justifies the ungodly by faith alone apart from works, pardoning their sins, and reckoning them as righteous and acceptable in His presence. Faith is thus the sole instrument by which we, as sinners, are united to Christ, whose perfect righteousness and satisfaction for sins is alone the ground of our acceptance with God. This acceptance happens fully and permanently at the first instant of justification. Thus the righteousness by which we come into right standing with God is not anything worked in us by God, neither imparted to us at baptism nor over time, but rather is accomplished for us, outside ourselves, and is imputed to us.

9.2 We believe, nevertheless, that the faith, which alone receives the gift of justification, does not remain alone in the person so justified, but produces, by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love and leads necessarily to sanctification. This necessary relation between justifying faith and the fruit of good works gives rise to some Biblical expressions which seem to make works the ground or means of justification, but in fact simply express the crucial truth that faith that does not yield the fruit of good works is dead, being no true faith.

## **10. God's Work in Faith and Sanctification**

10.1 We believe that justification and sanctification are both brought about by God through faith, but not in the same way. Justification is an act of God's imputing and reckoning; sanctification is an act of God's imparting and transforming. Thus the function of faith in regard to each is different. In regard to justification, faith is not the channel through which power or transformation flows to the soul of the believer, but rather faith is the occasion of God's forgiving, acquitting, and reckoning as righteous. But in regard to sanctification, faith is indeed the channel through which divine power and transformation flow to the soul; and the sanctifying work of God through faith does indeed touch the soul and change it into the likeness of Christ.

10.2 We believe that the essence of sanctification is fuller awareness and embracing of the superior delight in all of God's promises for us. Thus, the essence of Christ-likeness is not merely behavior, but inclinations and affections. Obedience by faith is that obedience which flows from this

delight. The lack of proper affections is not a basis for disobedience, rather it is a basis for obedience saturated with repentance for faulty affections. Since the essence of sin is idolatry, the essence of sanctification is right worship.

10.3 We believe that the reason justifying faith necessarily sanctifies in this way is fourfold:

*First*, justifying faith is a persevering, that is, continuing, kind of faith. Even though we are justified at the first instant of saving faith, yet this faith justifies only because it is the kind of faith that will surely persevere. The extension of this faith into the future is, as it were, contained in the first seed of faith, as the oak in the acorn. Thus the moral effects of persevering faith may be rightly described as the effects of justifying faith.

*Second*, we believe that justifying faith trusts in Christ not only for the gift of imputed righteousness and the forgiveness of sins, but also for the fulfillment of all His promises to us based on that reconciliation. Justifying faith magnifies the finished work of Christ's atonement, by resting securely in all the promises of God obtained and guaranteed by that all-sufficient work.

*Third*, we believe that justifying faith embraces Christ in all His roles: Creator, Sustainer, Savior, Teacher, Guide, Comforter, Helper, Friend, Advocate, Protector, and Lord. Justifying faith does not divide Christ, accepting part of Him and rejecting the rest. All of Christ is embraced by justifying faith, even before we are fully aware of, or fully understand, all that He will be for us. As more of Christ is truly revealed to us in His Word, genuine faith recognizes Christ and embraces Him more fully.

*Fourth*, we believe that this embracing of all of Christ is not a mere intellectual assent, or a mere decision of the will, but is also a heartfelt, Spirit-given (yet imperfect) satisfaction in all that God is for us in Jesus. Therefore, the change of mind and heart that turns from the moral ugliness and danger of sin, and is sometimes called "repentance," is included in the very nature of saving faith.

10.4 We believe that this persevering, future-oriented, Christ-embracing, heart-satisfying faith is life-transforming, and therefore renders intelligible the teaching of the Scripture that final salvation in the age to come depends on the transformation of life, and yet does not contradict justification by faith alone. The faith which alone justifies, cannot remain alone, but works through love.

10.5 We believe that this simple, powerful reality of justifying faith is God's gift which He gives unconditionally in accord with God's electing love, so that no one can boast in himself, but only give all glory to God for every part of salvation. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the decisive agent in this life-transformation, but that He is supplied to us and works holiness in us through our daily faith in the Son of God whose trustworthiness He loves to glorify.

10.6 We believe that the sanctification, which comes by the Spirit through faith, is imperfect and incomplete in this life. Although slavery to sin is broken, and sinful desires are progressively weakened by the power of a superior satisfaction in the glory of Christ, yet there remain remnants of corruption in every heart that give rise to irreconcilable war, and call for vigilance in the lifelong fight of faith.

10.7 We believe that all who are justified will win this fight. They will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls. This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant, obtained by the blood of Christ, and worked in us by God Himself, yet not so as to diminish, but only to empower and encourage, our vigilance; so that we may say in the end, I have fought the good fight, but it was not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

## **11. Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer**

11.1 We believe that faith is awakened and sustained by God's Spirit<sup>216</sup> through His Word and prayer. The good fight of faith is fought mainly by meditating on the Scriptures and praying that God would apply them to our souls.

11.2 We believe that the promises of God recorded in the Scriptures are suited to save us from the deception of sin by displaying for us, and holding out to us, superior pleasures in the protection, provision, and presence of God. Therefore, reading, understanding, pondering, memorizing, and savoring the promises of all that God will be for us in Jesus are primary means of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin's deceitful promises in our lives. Therefore it is needful that we give ourselves to such meditation day and night.

11.3 We believe that God has ordained to bless and use His people for His glory through the means of prayer, offered in Jesus' name by faith. All prayer should seek ultimately that God's name be hallowed, and that His kingdom come, and that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

God's sovereignty over all things is not a hindrance to prayer, but a reason for hope that our prayers will succeed.

11.4 We believe that prayer is the indispensable handmaid of meditation, as we cry out to God for the inclination to turn from the world to the Word, and for the spiritual ability to see the glory of God in His testimonies, and for a soul-satisfying sight of the love of God, and for strength in the inner man to do the will of God. By prayer God sanctifies His people, sends gospel laborers into the world, and causes the Word of God to spread and triumph over Satan and unbelief.

## **12. Christ's Church and Her Ordinances**

12.1 We believe in the one universal Church, composed of all those, in every time and place, who are chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit in one Body, with Christ Himself as the all-supplying, all-sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head. We believe that the ultimate purpose of the Church, and thus all ministries and gifts, is to glorify God, having as their aim the increase of God's people's ever-increasing gladness of worship.

12.2 We believe it is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches in which believers agree together to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to engage in corporate worship, to practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to build each other's faith through the manifold ministries of love, to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline, and to engage in local and world evangelization. The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry for His gifts; it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells; it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world; and it is a city set on a hill so that men may see the light of its good deeds – especially to the poor – and give glory to the Father in heaven.

12.3 We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith express their union with Christ in His death and resurrection, by being immersed in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a sign of belonging to the people of God, the true Israel, and an emblem of burial and cleansing, signifying death to the old life of unbelief, and purification from the pollution of sin.

12.4 We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which gathered believers eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood. We do this in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually, in that, by faith, they are nourished with the benefits He obtained through His death, and thus grow in grace.

12.5 We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of pastor-elder in the ministry of the Word and prayer. Women are not to fill the role of pastor-elder in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel.

### **13. Christ's Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations**

13.1 We believe that the commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church to the end of the age. This task is to proclaim the Gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, baptizing them, teaching them the words and ways of the Lord, and gathering them into churches able to fulfill their Christian calling among their own people. The ultimate aim of world missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience. Missions exists because worship doesn't. When the time of ingathering is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions.

### **14. Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord**

14.1 We believe that when Christians die they are made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, and are taken consciously into the presence of Christ, which is more glorious and more satisfying than any experience on earth.

14.2 We believe in the blessed hope that at the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory; and that He will gather His elect, raise the dead, judge the nations, and establish His kingdom. We believe that the righteous will enter into the everlasting joy of their Master, and those who

suppressed the truth in unrighteousness will be consigned to everlasting conscious misery.

14.3 We believe that the end of all things in this age will be the beginning of a never-ending, ever-increasing happiness in the hearts of the redeemed, as God displays more and more of His infinite and inexhaustible greatness and glory for the enjoyment of His people.

## **15. The Spirit of This Affirmation and the Unity of the Church**

15.1 We do not believe that all things in this affirmation of faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be saved.

15.2 Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach "the whole counsel of God." Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.

15.3 We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

15.4 We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

## Our Church Covenant

I confess Jesus as my Lord and Savior, believing that he lived the perfect life on my behalf, that he died for my sins on the cross, that God counts me completely righteous by faith alone, that Jesus rose from the dead and will come back, and that I was saved for a purpose, namely to pursue gladness in Jesus and spread that gladness to others.

### Getting Gladness

- I commit to pursue increasing gladness in all that Jesus is for me through the study of the Bible and through an ever improving prayer life.
- I commit to involvement in the community of God through the local church, namely the Imago Christi community.
- I commit to live a lifestyle of repentance, pursuing increasing holiness that flows from the gladness of knowing Jesus.
- I commit to pursuing authentic community, welcoming correction and instruction, as well as speaking truth in love to others in the community.

### Spreading Gladness

- I understand that God put me on this earth to spread this gladness in Jesus, beginning with my family and my church.
- I commit to share my time money and talents with the community of God and the world. I will pursue the discovery and use of my gifts. I will pursue increased generosity as a mark of my character.
- I commit to growing in my ability to communicate the truths of the gospel.
- I commit to building relationships with people outside of the believing community, with the aim of loving them sincerely and welcoming them into the family of God.

*I will strive to consider my commitment to this Core Covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing conviction and purpose. My responsibility will be to notify the Imago leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Imago Christi Church.*

### **Article III Membership/Core**

The Core of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

Imago Christi will have only non-voting members.

### **Article IV Leadership and Organization**

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Pastoral Team (PT) is the final authority within this local Church. Members exercise authority by engaging in, or withdrawing from, the mission of the church through serving, giving, witnessing, and following. In this way, the leadership has an internal self-destruct; if no one is following, the Pastoral team will not have a church to lead.
2. The offices of the Church shall be Pastor and Servant Leader. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
3. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the PT who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. They shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.
4. Servant Leaders shall assist the PT by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

### **Article V The Church Property**

1. In the event of a division of this Church the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Ruling Board of the NCCBA, and their decision shall be final.
2. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to the NCCBA or its successor.

3. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the PT shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

#### **Article VI Additions, Revisions, and Amendments**

1. Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:

- a. by unanimous vote of the PT

## **By-Laws**

### **Article I Membership/Core**

The membership of the church shall be referred to as the Core.

#### Section 1 General Procedure

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the PT. At any of the PT meetings, the PT may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches.

#### Section 2 Admission by Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the affirmation of Faith, Core Class and Church Covenant, may be received into membership by baptism.

#### Section 3 Admission by Experience or Restoration

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

#### Section 4 Instruction to New Members

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Sections 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the PT, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Pastoral Affirmation of Faith.

#### Section 6 Dismissal of Members

a. Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Pastors, shall upon request be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll.

b. Members are removed from the church roll at death.

c. Any member residing in the Cedar Rapids area who has not shown a pattern of faithful attendance for the period of six months may, after personal contact has been made, be removed from membership by the PT.

## **Article II Church Government**

### Section 1 General Statement

a. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be the Pastors and Servant Leaders. Pastors shall be appointed to office by unanimous vote of the PT. Servant Leaders shall be appointed by Pastors. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. The Pastors shall be men only. The Servant Leaders may be both men and/or women. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the Pastors and the Servant Leaders are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.

b. Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The Pastoral Team may appoint members to the positions of Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The functions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be performed by one member.

c. Committees and Appointees. The PT has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The PT has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The PT also has the authority to appoint Pastors, Servant Leaders or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions.

### Section 2 Vocational Pastors

a. Definition. Vocational Pastors are the Licensed Pastors of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational Pastors are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

b. Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Section 4 below, Vocational Pastors shall perform the duties determined by the PT. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the church. The church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Pastoral Team of the church. Therefore

Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Pastoral Team and have all the Biblical qualifications of a Pastor.

c. Vocational Call by the Church. The PT shall call Vocational Pastors by appointment. The Core shall be notified of pending appointment and be given the opportunity to examine the candidates and voice any concerns. Silence on the part of the Core shall be considered as affirmation.

d. Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

1. By resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's resignation.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a Pastor, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Pastor, such grievance may be brought before the PT by any two members in good standing. If the Pastors, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or may be terminated at any business meeting by unanimous vote of the remainder of the PT.

e. Licensing and Ordination. In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall follow, as far as possible, the procedure recommended by the NCCBA.

### Section 3 Lay Officers

a. Definition. Lay Officers are the non-Vocational Pastors and Servant Leaders of the Church.

b. Duties. Lay Pastors and Servant Leaders shall have the duties of their offices as described in Sections 4 and 5 below.

c. Calling. The PT shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Pastor and Servant Leader. The PT shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Pastor as candidates for office and for the Pastor's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Pastors conclude that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion.

d. Removal.

1. Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his/her part unfitting a Pastor or Servant Leader, such grievance may be brought before the Pastors by any two members in good standing. If the Pastors, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon unanimous vote of the PT.

Section 4 Pastoral Team

a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The PT shall be composed of men only, both Lay Pastors and Vocational Pastors. The Pastoral Team shall be composed of at least three members, with the number of Pastors at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. There shall be at least twice as many Lay Pastors as Vocational Pastors. Each Pastor shall be called to an indefinite term. That call shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these By-Laws.

b. Qualifications. Pastors and nominees for Pastor shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4. Pastors are also required to be in agreement with the Imago Christi Pastoral Statement of Faith. In the event a Pastor can longer affirm the Pastoral Statement of faith, said Pastor is by default unqualified for said position.

c. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Pastors is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Pastors are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Pastors shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, overseeing the work of the Servant Leaders and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel,

equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

d. Organization. The Pastoral Team shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Pastors shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Pastors must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Pastors may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Pastors may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Pastoral Team provides otherwise, meetings of the PT may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Pastors is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Pastors plus at least one-half of the Vocational Pastors, except for matters on which only Lay Pastors are entitled to vote in which case a majority of the Lay Pastors shall constitute a quorum.

#### Section 5 Servant Leaders

Deacons shall be referred to as Servant Leaders.

a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Servant Leaders may be both men and/or women, both Vocational and Lay Servant Leaders. The number of Servant Leaders shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the church. Each Servant Leader shall be appointed by the Pastoral Team.

b. Qualifications. Servant Leaders and nominees for Servant Leaders shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12.

c. Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Servant Leaders' responsibilities, accountability, and authority are limited to the design of the ministry to which they have been appointed

#### **Article III Church Employees**

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Servant Leaders, the church may employ additional personnel. The PT shall be responsible for determining

the duties of and hiring such personnel. The Pastoral Team reserves the right to discriminate on religious grounds with regard to employment.

## **Article IV Church Finances**

### Section 1 In General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Church Finance Secretary and the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church.

### Section 2 Contributions

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Pastors. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

### Section 3 Financial Planning

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be developed and authorized by the PT. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay Pastors. The PT may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay members of the Church.

### Section 4 Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations.

### Section 5 Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the PT.

#### Section 6 Authority to Bind the Church

The Pastors are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

### **Article 5 Meetings**

#### Section 1 For Worship

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first and second Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Pastors may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

#### Section 2 For Business

a. The Annual Meeting. There shall be a minimum of one business meeting a year. The annual meeting shall be held for the purpose of calling the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business.

b. Special Meetings. The Pastors or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.

c. Quorum. A quorum of two-thirds (2/3) of the Elder/Deacon leadership and twenty-five (25) per cent of the local membership is necessary to approve business at congregational meetings. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

d. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

## **Article VI Organization of Members for Ministry**

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Pastors as an official ministry of Imago Christi. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church, or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Pastors. Sanction by the PT does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

## **Article IX Church Discipline**

a. Purpose. Discipline is that procedure including Christian teaching; training, admonition, and rebuke, both private and public with the view to helping a person grow in grace and mature in the faith. Reconciliation and restoration of fellowship is always the goal, even in the midst of discipline. If a member refuses to receive such help, it will be necessary to exclude him or her from membership.

b. Procedure. The Pastors and congregation will follow the guidelines in Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1 and other related scriptures.

c. Persons entering into membership accept and expect to be disciplined biblically.

## **Article X Statement on Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe 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 the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

### **Article XI Due Diligence Requirements for all Volunteers and Staff Who Work With Children**

All children's ministry volunteers and staff shall be required to undergo background investigation.

### **Article XII Amendments**

Amendments to the Pastoral Statement of Faith, the Constitution or By-Laws may only be amended by unanimous vote of the Pastoral Team.