
Constitution & Bylaws

Of



Increasing Faith International Ministries, Inc

IFIM CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Constitution and Bylaws of Increasing Faith International Ministries, Inc

Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing Church members.

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be *Increasing Faith International Ministries Inc.*

Article II. Business Location

The address of the principal office of this church shall be: 3125 Rainbow Circle, Decatur, Georgia, 30034. The Church shall have full power and authority to change the principle office from one location to another. Other Church locations are in Liberia, West Africa.

Article III. Purpose

The purposes of Increasing Faith International Ministries are:

1. To worship and serve God and to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ as set forth in Matthew 28:19-20.
2. To minister to the needs of the members and others in the community, nationwide and abroad as the church is spiritually and financially able to do so.
3. To do any and all things related to and in connection with the carrying out of the objectives and purposes set forth above.

Article IV. Articles of Faith/Beliefs

We believe:

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the God, conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. That Jesus was crucified, buried and raised from the dead and that he ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
5. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.
6. That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
7. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.
8. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
9. In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.

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10. In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19)
 11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement (1 Peter 2:24)
 12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:14-15)
 13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air and that the saints will reign on the earth a thousand years.
 14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.
 15. That salvation cannot be earned through our good works but by faith in Jesus Christ.
 16. That without faith it is impossible to please God.

Article V. Government

The government of this Church is vested in the Pastor with the assistance of the Board under the guidelines of the Holy Bible. All internal ministries and groups created shall be governed by the Church's constitution and bylaws. This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation as guided by the Bible. The officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, Board members and Trustees as provided by the bylaws of the Church. The Pastor and First Lady with the assistance of the Board are responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, internal ministries, and the Church staff to perform their tasks effectively. The Pastor with the assistance of the Board will call meetings and the Pastor under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be the final authority and the only veto power. The material and business affairs of the church are to be administered by the Board under the direction of the Pastor and the First Lady.

(1) The Pastor with the assistance of board members and/or trustees shall make and execute all contracts, deeds, bonds, notes, negotiable instruments, mortgages, trusts and other instruments of indebtedness or conveyance of the incorporated Church upon the order thereof, by resolution by the board sitting in a duly called meeting, adopted for such purposes. All such documents be signed for or on behalf of the Trustees/ Board by any two or three members and attested by the

secretary of the Church. (2) Pastor, board members and/or trustees shall have such other duties and authority as provided by the bylaws of the Church. (3) In the absence of availability of the requisite number of trustee, board members and/or the secretary, the Pastor, sitting in a duly called and held board meeting may designate another member or members of the board or trustees to execute and attest the instruments outlined above.

Article VI. Leadership

God anoints individuals to serve in various capacities in the church. He equips church leaders, pastor and lay persons with compassionate hearts and leadership skills which unite for effective ministry. The administration of Increasing Faith international Ministries Inc is under the leadership of the Pastor Easton V. Brooks (Founder), First Lady- Monica F. Brooks, with assistance from the Assistant Pastor and Board members. The Pastor and First Lady are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church and assigned duties from the Pastor are given to the Assistant Pastor and Board members. In case of the Pastor's untimely demise, the First Lady will become the Senior Pastor and will be assisted by the Assistant Pastor and Board members.

Article VI. Nonprofit Status and Liquidation

This church is not organized for profit. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description shall be used to pay all outstanding creditors.

Article VII. Amendment

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a regular church business meeting and then circulated to the membership. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be two-thirds vote of members of the church who are qualified to vote and are present in the business meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter.

BYLAWS

I. Church Membership

This is a sovereign and spiritual Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Pastor and the Board retain unto itself the exclusive rights of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church. Also, the Pastor and the Board reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures. Procedures for admission, dismissal, and transfer shall be as provided by the bylaws of the Church.

A. Qualifications:

Membership of Increasing Faith International Ministries, Inc shall consist of people who have made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who, having been scripturally baptized by immersion, and are in agreement with the Articles of Faith, and Covenant of the church.

B. Reception:

Membership in the church may be attained in one of the following manners:

- (i) By scriptural baptism by immersion after profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- (ii) By transfer of church letter from another church.
- (iii) By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism by immersion in another evangelical church of like faith and practice.
- (iv) By restoration to the church membership after having been dropped.

C. Termination:

Membership in this church shall be terminated when a member:

- (i) Requests a letter of transfer to join another church.
- (ii) Is dropped from the roll of membership when evidence of blatant disregard for the teaching and adhering to the

principles of the Church. The pastor and Board members will do all they can to counsel such member for restoration prior to action of dismissal or a request of the member to be dismissed from the church membership.

3. Dies

D. Orientation of New Members:

Candidates for membership and new members need to attend the Church Membership Class to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of members to God and the church.

(i) Members in good standing shall have the right to a voice and vote in all church transactions and shall have the right and privileges to full participation in the life and work of the church.

(ii) It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Articles of Faith/Beliefs, Constitution and Bylaws.

II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church in good standing.

A. The Pastor:

(i) The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.

(ii) His responsibilities:

(a) These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.

(b) He shall lead the church, the organizations, and all leaders of the church in performing their tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.

(c) The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all church standing committees.

B. Church Staff:

This church shall employ or call staff, as it shall need.

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- (i) Staff members other than that of the pastor shall be recommended for employment by the Board members.
 - (ii) A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined

C. Board members/Officers:

Until further counsel/recommendation, the Board members/officers are selected by the Pastor. Term of service will be revisited as congregation expands.

Qualifications:

- (i) Board members/officers must be loyal tithe paying members.
- (ii) Board members/officers shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and supporter of the pastor; also, promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

D. Duties:

- (i) Board members/officers serve as a committee of counsel to assist the pastor concerning the progress and welfare of the Church.
- (ii) Seek to help solve fellowship problem of the Church.
- (iii) Assist the Pastor in promoting the Church ordinances.
- (iv) Serve as the Church membership committee.
- (v) In the absence of the pastor and First Lady, the assistant Pastor along with some Board members/officers shall continue with assigned duties from the Pastor.

E. Secretary:

- (i) The church secretary shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions
of the church and preparing the annual report to the Church.
- (ii) He or she shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the church members with dates of admission, dismissal, dedication of children, and deaths of members of the Church family.
- (iii) He or she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and write letters of transfer of membership, prepare

written

reports of the church, and keep an accurate history of the church.

(iv) An assistant church secretary may be elected to assist the secretary.

F. Treasurer/Financial Team

(i) The treasurer/financial team shall be elected and shall be responsible for seeing that the offerings are properly received,

counted, and deposited in the church's bank account.

(ii) He or she shall properly credit each contributor and their offerings.

(iii) He or she shall be responsible for preparing for mailing a quarterly or annual record of contribution to donors.

(iv) The church treasurer under the guidance of the Pastor and/or Board members shall assist with funds of the church in preparing to disburse or funds as needed by the ministry.

(v) He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.

(vi) The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee.

H. Trustees:

(i) At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to hold trust the property of the church.

(ii) They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

(iii) It shall be the function of the trustees to sign any, and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease

of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

(* At present the mortgage is being held in the name of the Pastor and a former member, therefore all real estate transactions are being conducted as such.)

III. Records and Reports

The Church will maintain the following records and reports:

- (i) Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records).
- (ii) Minutes of the proceedings of its members and Board of Directors.
- (iii) A record of its members, giving their names and addresses.
- (iv) Contribution statements for contributors.
- (v) Reports of annual review of all church financial books, records, and proceedings.

IV. Church Committees

All church committee members shall be elected by the Pastor from nominations presented by the Board members/officers. There shall be a minimum of three (3) committee members with a chairperson. Any committee member elected to fill any vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the position vacated. Each committee chairperson shall submit an annual budget request to the Budget Committee.

A. Budget Committee:

This committee shall have the responsibility of assuring that the adopted budget is adhered to. It shall recommend financial policies to the church and shall foster and promote programs of stewardship. In consultation with the Pastor and Board members for the new church year, it shall draw up and submit to the church an annual budget during the month of December for the next calendar year and recommend the chairperson of budget promotion annually. The taking of special offerings shall be approved by this committee. This committee shall be responsible for the annual audit of the treasurer's books.

B. Properties Committee:

This committee shall be responsible in matters to properties administration. Throughout the year, this committee shall give attention to and study the condition and state of repair and appearance of the building and grounds of the church and equipment therein, making arrangements for repairs and improvements authorized by the Pastor and Board

members/officers and included in the church budget. All matters of major repairs, changes, improvements or items of equipment not included in the budget shall be referred back to the Pastor and Board members/officers.

C. Missions Committee:

This committee shall be responsible for discovering possibilities for starting new missions/projects. If this occurs, this committee will work alongside the Pastor and board to have missions/projects materialized. It shall also seek possibilities for local, state, national missions/ projects, share findings with church program organizations, and serve the church in establishing and conducting such missions/ projects that mutually benefit the church.

D. Music Director:

The director will plan and evaluate the music program of the church, in the formation of choirs in the church and planning special musical programs throughout the year. The director is responsible for recommending people for the positions of pianist and song leader, and in assisting the pastor with special music in the regular and other services of the church. The music director reports directly to the Pastor and First Lady. This position will eventually be compensated.

E. Youth Committee:

This committee is responsible in planning and coordinating youth programs and activities inside and outside of the church. These activities are to be correlated with the activities of the church program organization in attaining objectives set forth by the church. An elected representative of the Youth Committee shall serve as a member of the Church board.

F. Ordinance Committee:

This committee shall assist the pastor in preparing for the two ordinances of the church. The members of this committee shall be responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance of baptism and will prepare the elements of the Lord's Supper.

G. Christian Education Committee:

This committee shall lead the church in developing and implementing an effective education-training program. Foremost of these are:

I. Sunday School:

The Sunday School shall be divided into classes and departments as it grows and conducted under the direction of the Superintendent for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Bible; lead in reaching all prospects; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

H. Church Training:

The discipleship program shall serve as the training organization and arm of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach Christian doctrine, ethics, church policy and organization; train leaders for the church and denomination; provide for specialized training for special projects of ministry for the church; and to provide organization and leadership for special activities in the church.

I. Outreach Committee:

This committee is under the immediate leadership of the pastor. He forms a committee to develop and implement a strategy for effective programs of community evangelism outreach such as visitation; Bible studies in homes, offices, places of works; special evangelistic meetings inside and outside of the church; and other needed programs to reach people with the gospel. This committee is also responsible for planning training events for soul-winning, as well as the production or securing evangelistic printed materials to be used by the church.

J. Other committees:

Other committees may be formed as needed by the church.

IV. Church Meetings

A. Worship Services:

The church shall regularly meet each Sunday morning and some Sunday evenings for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction and evangelism. Wednesdays are designated for prayer and Bible Study (Word in Action). Every other Friday night for Youth meetings. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or designated church officer in the absence of the pastor.

B. Regular Business Meetings:

Regular business meetings shall be held on every three months. The agenda shall be circulated or made known to the church one week prior to the business meeting. Should there be any unusual meeting or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular meeting, notice shall be given to the membership one week prior to that meeting.

C. Special Business Meeting:

A special called business meeting may be called by the pastor, and with other church officers, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week written notice or announcement must be given for the especially called business meeting.

D. Quorum:

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. At least one-fourth of the members shall constitute a quorum.

E. Church Year:

The Church fiscal year shall extend from the first day of January for a period of twelve months, and each twelve-month period thereafter. In all other matters, the Church year shall be dictated in the bylaws.

F. Parliamentary Rules:

Robert's Rules of Order (revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings.

V. Licensing and Ordaining

A. Licensing:

When a member announces to the Church that he/she feels the call to the ministry, the Pastor will require candidate to wait a season - timeframe to be decided by Pastor to determine the seriousness of said candidate. Responsibilities will be assigned to said candidate and completion of assignments and commitment level of candidate will be evaluated. Said candidate(s) must maintain good standing in their commitment to the Ministry, such as attendance, finance, involvement of evangelism and out-reach ministries. The candidate(s) will then be granted license as to the designated area of ministry. It is also understood that the performance of civil duties by candidate(s) will be governed by State Laws.

B. Ordination:

In the event Increasing Faith International Ministries is requested to ordain a member for the ministry, the following procedure will be followed:

- (i) Careful observation of said candidate(s) for a period of one year, with assigned responsibilities from the Pastor.
- (ii) Said candidate(s) must maintain good standing in their commitment to the Ministry, such as attendance, finance, involvement of evangelism and out-reach ministries.
- (iii) Then said candidate(s) name will be furnished for ordination. It is also understood that the performance of civil duties by candidate(s) will be governed by State Laws.

VI. Church Discipline

- (i) Should any serious differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17.
- (ii) Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur, the Pastor shall endeavor to resolve the conflict; and if this effort fails, the case shall be reported to the Church.
- (iii) All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the Pastor may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the

church.

(iv) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored, upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation; or if an account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

VII. Position Statements

Church and State

We stand for a free church in a free state. Neither one should control the affairs of the other. We support the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, with its "establishment" and "free exercise" clauses. We do, of course, acknowledge the legitimate interplay of these two spheres. For example, it is appropriate for the state to enact and enforce fire codes for the church nurseries. It is also appropriate for ministers to offer prayer at civic functions. Neither the Constitution nor Church tradition would build a wall of separation against such practices as these.

Being Good Citizens

As Christians we are members of the kingdom of God as well as a social order of this world. Obedience to God requires us to act in a responsible manner as citizens of our country (Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). Therefore, we should support civil law and order; hold our leaders in respect and pray for them; participate in school, community and governmental activities; exercise our voting rights; and speak out on clear-cut moral issues. God's law is supreme, but we are to obey the laws of our country insofar as they are not in conflict with obedience to God (Acts 5:29). When it becomes necessary to disagree with practices and requirements of government, we should do so out of a concern for the promotion of righteousness and not out of delight in discord and controversy.

Addiction and Enslavement

One of the primary benefits of our liberty in Christ is freedom from the domination of negative forces (John 8:32, 36; Romans 6:14; 8:2). We are counseled not to put ourselves again under bondage (Galatians 5:1). Therefore, a Christian must totally abstain from all alcoholic beverages and other habit-forming and mood-altering chemical substances and refrain from the use of tobacco in any form, marijuana and all other addictive substances, and further, must refrain from any activity (such as gambling or gluttony) which defiles the body as the temple of God or which dominates and enslaves the

spirit that has been made free in Christ (Proverbs 20:1; 23:20-35; Isaiah 28:7; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 5:11; 6:10; 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 1:21).

Appearance and Dress

Our life, character and self-image are reflected by our apparel and mode of dress. The admonition of Scripture, "Be not conformed to this world," reminds us that our manner of dress must be modest and decent (Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 23). It is not displeasing to God for us to dress well and be well groomed. However, above all we must seek spiritual beauty, which does not come from outward adornment with jewelry, expensive clothes or cosmetics, but from good works, chaste conversation, and a meek and quiet spirit (Philippians 4:8; 1 Peter 3:3-5).

Women in Ministry:

Women participate equally with men in the priesthood of all believers. Their role is crucial, their wisdom, grace and commitment exemplary. Women are an integral part of our Churches, faculties, mission teams, writer pools, and professional staffs. We affirm and celebrate their Great Commission impact.

Sanctity of Life:

Procreation is a gift from God, a precious trust reserved for marriage. At the moment of conception, a new being enters the universe, a human being, a being created in God's image. This human being deserves our protection, whatever the circumstances of conception (Genesis 1, Psalm 31:14-15, Jeremiah 1:5)

Sanctity of Marriage:

Marriage is ordained of God and is a spiritual union in which a man and a woman are joined by God to live together as one (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7). Because of the divine character of marriage, it is a lifelong commitment with the only clear biblical allowance for divorce being fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Sexual involvement, either before marriage or with someone other than the marriage partner, is strictly forbidden in Scripture (Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-18). Understanding the sanctity of marriage, partners should strive to maintain a happy, harmonious and holy relationship. Should divorce occur, the church should be quick to provide love, understanding and counsel to those involved. The remarriage of divorced persons should be undertaken only after a thorough

understanding of and submission to the scriptural instructions concerning this issue (Matthew 19:7-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; I Corinthians 7:2, 10, 11). Should a Christian desire to remain single, this decision should be respected and should be seen as a viable scriptural alternative (II Corinthians 7:8, 32-34).

Sexuality:

We affirm God's plan for marriage and sexual intimacy – one man, and one woman, for life. Homosexuality is not a "valid alternative lifestyle." The Bible condemns it as sin. It is not, however, an unforgivable sin. The same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, too, may become new creations in Christ.

Increasing Faith Statement Regarding Same-Sex Marriage

The June 26, 2015, ruling by the Supreme Court legitimizes same-sex marriage in all 50 states and overturns all state laws to the contrary. Based on their interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment, they declared that no legal impediment should stand in the way of any couple who wishes to marry. Yet the First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered." The Church stands with fellow Christians who understand that God intended marriage to be between a man and woman, as explained in Genesis and confirmed by Jesus, when He declared that the Creator has "made them male and female," and that "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh".

The Church will continue to hold high the biblical standard for godly marriage. A legal definition of marriage may have changed, but the orthodox understanding based on God's revelation has not changed. We call upon men and women to demonstrate to a confused world the fulfillment that results when they covenant in marriage to practice faithful and sacrificial love.

Based on personal religious beliefs and the beliefs and polity of the church, the pastors and ordained ministers refuse to perform same-sex marriages. We base this refusal on our First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom, and on any and all exemptions granted to us under Federal and State laws.

This refusal shall extend the church's refusal to allow its facilities to be used for same-sex marriages or any celebration relating to same-sex unions.

VIII. Amendments to the Bylaws

New Bylaws may be adopted, or these Bylaws may be amended or repealed by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the votes represented at a duly held meeting of the members.

Certificate Of Secretary

I, the undersigned, certify that I am the acting secretary of *Increasing Faith International Ministries, Inc.*, a Nonprofit Religious

Corporation and the above Constitution and Bylaws, consisting of five (18) pages, are the Constitution and Bylaws of this

Corporation as adopted **January 2, 2020**

Executed at **3125 Rainbow Circle, Decatur, GA 30034** this **2nd** day of **January 2020**.

Sheena Sillah

Secretary