

**Acknowledgement of Sin & Repentance**

We, David Carr, Ben Larson, and Keith Magill, who were in 2020 Ruling Elders at Immanuel RP Church, herein, do address “the matter” referred by the Synod of the RPCNA to the Synod Judicial Commission, and do plead as follows:

1. We acknowledge charges and accusations formally brought against us; therefore
2. We confess we did not shepherd the flock of Jesus Christ in a biblical way in violation of the law of God (Acts 20:28,35; Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2) and the commitments of our ordination vow #8, as described in the statements below:
  - a. We failed to develop & implement a clear & rigorous safety plan for several months;
  - b. We failed to ensure that all impacted parties were informed of alleged inappropriate behavior during the session investigation;
  - c. We failed to adequately warn or inform the vulnerable, hindering essential parental oversight and protection;
  - d. We failed to act with sufficient urgency in informing the congregation, extending care to impacted families, completing the investigation, and in getting outside help, including presbytery, involved;
  - e. We made commitments to impacted families we were unable to keep, especially regarding continuous monitoring of all activity in all areas after services.
3. We confess we did not maintain the integrity of the eldership contrary to the biblical requirements and the law of God (Titus 1:6,7; 1 Timothy 3:2; Galatians 2:6, James 2:1-9) and the commitments of our ordination vow #8, as described above in 2b, 2c, and 2d, and below:
  - a. We did ignore conflicts of interest in both actions and communications;
  - b. We acted with partiality regarding the problems experienced in our congregation.
4. We mourn the loss and injuries suffered by all the victims, and are broken that our failures have compounded the struggle experienced by some of these families. These failures resulted in offenses multiplying, distrust and disunity in the congregation, and delay in both justice & reconciliation.
5. However, we sought to repent and remedy these aggressively from December 2020 onward. In mitigation of these sins, we offer the following considerations: (NOTE: the prosecution has a different view of some of the following statements, which both parties agree to be resolved in 7.c. below)
  - a. These public initiatives of confession, acknowledgement, and repentance:


- i. On January 2, 2021 in a meeting with the IRPC congregation the session confessed to items 2.a, b, c, and d above. Specific notes are included as an attachment.
  - ii. In this same meeting Nate Pfeiffer publicly confessed to several sins and failures, especially during the investigation. Nate's specific remarks are attached.
  - iii. The week of January 10, 2021 David Carr sent a letter of repentance to the entire congregation regarding a false statement made about Josh Bright's resignation from the office of deacon at IRPC. Previous to the email David had spoken directly with Josh seeking forgiveness and receiving it. This email is attached.
  - iv. In March of 2021 there were several public meetings at Presbytery and then with the IRPC congregation. Each of the elders addressed these bodies making statements acknowledging the last 3 items which were more clearly articulated to us by the IJC. Statements are attached and also recorded in the report of a presbytery Shepherding Committee, which is also attached.
  - v. Effective January 17, 2022, David Carr, Ben Larson, and Keith Magill tendered their resignations as ruling elders at IRPC. In a letter to the SJC and in public statements to the congregation we announcing these resignations we "recognize that we are not without fault, and we have sought faithfully to seek out and confess our sins."
- b. These specific and discrete initiatives of confessions, acknowledgement, and repentance:
  - i. On June 13, 2020, Nate Pfeiffer spoke with ██████████ asking forgiveness in carelessly not considering the hurt his family was experiencing when making initial contact (as the investigator); also for making the hasty assumption to be able to speak with (victims). ██████████ graciously granted forgiveness.
  - ii. In September of 2020 the IRPC ruling elders repented to ██████████ ██████████ for not helping to monitor a minor abuser more actively following the disclosure in late April. ██████████ bearing this burden without our immediate help. Forgiveness was granted.
  - iii. On December 3, 2020 the IRPC ruling elders met with the ██████████ family to repent of not shepherding them more holistically. We also came to spend considerable time doing just that: showing care and listening to them. They made a series of requests and recommendations at the end of this meeting, the vast majority of which we implemented by the end of the Jan. 2, 2021 meeting. This included: confessing and seeking forgiveness directly from


- them (see letter to them attached), confess and seek forgiveness from the church (see Jan. 2, 2021 congregational confession), and seeking to be more transparent (see Jan. 2, 2021 congregational confession, also note that this meeting included over 90 minutes of taking questions and comments from the congregation.)
- iv. In mid-December many IRPC elders called the [REDACTED] family to repent and seek forgiveness for our failure to communicate with them. This includes: Nate Pfeiffer (lead investigator) whose repentance is summarized in the attached; Keith Magill (responsible for Sept letter distribution) who apologized for failing to ensure they received this letter (see Shepherding Committee report under Keith Magill); Ben Larson (shepherding elder to the [REDACTED] family) whose repentance is summarized in the attached email to the [REDACTED]
  - v. In late Dec. 2020 or early Jan. 2021 in preparation for the Jan. 2, 2021 congregational meeting, David Carr, Ben Larson, and Keith Magill repented to Zachary Blackwood and Nate Pfeiffer for not supporting them in their investigation and pastoral work through a number of months during the spring / summer of 2020. This was a verbal repentance and forgiveness was granted.
  - vi. The ruling elders in a meeting with the IJC in Feb. of 2021 acknowledged our conflict of interest in acting as AIC to establish an advisory committee. This is also noted in several public statements in March 2021.
  - vii. On March 12, 2021 Ben Larson sent an email to the RPCL session repenting of a failure to communicate and involve them more directly to them regarding youth group. Both Keith Magill and David Carr spoke privately with several RPCL elders between March and June of 2021 (synod/presbytery timeframe). See Ben's letter attached.
  - viii. On April 23, 2021 the session met with [REDACTED] a victim family. The session apologized for the lack of shepherding care extended [REDACTED] and especially to [REDACTED] during the last months of 2020 (Sept – Dec.). They committed to extending care, which did occur. Forgiveness was granted. Session minute extract is attached.
  - ix. Summer of 2021 Zachary Blackwood confessed to several offended parents that he failed to recognize the need to either prevent a minor abuser from attending or ensure constant supervision during a party that youth group members were invited to in July of 2020. NOTE: Zachary was the only ruling elder involved in planning this


informal event, the rest of us were not aware of this issue until reading the stipulation of facts.

- c. Not included in the list above—are numerous private conversations with concerned members in the congregation. The session offered to meet with anyone, and nearly all families in the congregation were visited during the spring and early summer of 2021. Some of this also included direct involvement with the Shepherding committee and the substance of this renewal of trust is described in their report: “The Shepherding Committee sees God’s grace active in the Immanuel situation. Perhaps the most important way for our purposes is the repentance, confession, and reconciliation that has taken place in the congregation.”
  - d. The following revisions in IRPC policy regarding abuse of minors:
    - i. Motion was passed on Jan. 1, 2021 to create a diverse team in the congregation to lead a series of holistic improvement to our child safety policy and practices. This team began meeting in Feb. of 2021. Matt Wilburn is the chair of this team which spent substantial time working through “The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide” by Basyle Tchividjian & Shira Berkovits.
    - ii. IRPC contracted with MinistrySafe for backgrounds checks and training resources in Jan. of 2021.
    - iii. CPP changes already implemented:
      1. 2 adults in all classes (previously only for younger ages)
      2. Required attendance for each class
      3. Monitored transportation to and from classes
      4. Clarity that parents are responsible for children after classes / services / events.
      5. Locked classrooms and other ancillary rooms unless class is “in session” (prevent opportunities)
      6. Background checks and training for ministry volunteers (MinistrySafe is facilitating both of these) are being implemented
  - e. The current IRPC Session is working with the experienced people at MinistrySafe to work effectively and proactively to prevent abuse of minors and deal with abuse if it is revealed to the IRPC. Further direct external review of our CPP has been completed by Brotherhood, our insurance provider. Additionally, we are working with 2 external experts in church sexual abuse to offer detailed external counsel regarding the specific case history at IRPC.
6. We commit to the following steps of reconciliation.

- a. Freely & willingly submit to the SJC or a successor body to oversee the comprehensive steps of reconciliation. What follows is a starting point on the scope and steps of reconciliation.
  - b. Undertake training on the nature of abuse, trauma, and appropriate response (NOTE: this has already begun, but we need to align on what else would be appropriate here.)
  - c. Work together with the prosecution and Mr. Keenan to produce a harmonized factual narrative of the history of “the matter” to serve as a basis upon which reconciliation can occur. A suggested method: a brotherly and open review of the full stipulation of facts, which the defense is prepared to respond to with various mitigations, clarifications of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, and supplying missing information, as well as detailing how specific instances of sin relate to the categories of confession and demonstration of repentance above. Rationale: we believe that generating such a holistic and agreed narrative will be essential to form the basis of reconciliation and mediation with various parties.
  - d. Commit to reconciliation, including where needed, mediated reconciliation between offended parties, including:
    - i. RPCL session
    - ii. Victim families (should include some involvement from their sessions where applicable)
    - iii. Send letters to victim families (after reconciliation with them)
    - iv. Other offended parties, including:
      1. Families who have left IRPC, but remain in the RPCNA (confirmation of scope to be aligned with current sessions)
      2. Families who have left IRPC, but are outside the RPCNA, including those who have left the visible church (confirmation of scope to be confirmed with SJC / prosecutors – can name several)
      3. Other parties (scope to be confirmed with SJC)
    - v. It should be noted that the current IRPC session has some part to play in all of this, to be further discussed and defined.
7. Intending this to be our testimony and plea, we do offer our signatures below, and will confirm these points under oath.

David Carr  Date: 3/28/2022

Ben Larson  Date: 3/28/2022

Keith Magill  Date: 3/28/22

## Final Mediated Agreement – IRPC Ruling Elders of 2020

Attachments:

Report of Shepherding Committee  
 Jan. 2 IRPC Meeting notes (session confession)  
 Confession Session Letter to [REDACTED] 12-20-2020  
 Confession – March Pres Meeting Larson  
 Confession to [REDACTED] 122220  
 Confession - Bright resignation  
 Confessions from N Pfeiffer  
 Confession – Letter to RPCL session  
 IRPC Session minute extract, April 23, 2021

Affirmations:

The undersigned, having been appointed as investigators for the matter at IRPC, and having presented accusations to the Synod Judicial Commission, hereby accepts this mediation agreement as satisfying the critically important elements of the accusations. We commit ourselves to working with Mr. Carr, Mr. Larson and Mr. Magill to support and enable the process of reconciliation between all parties.

Joseph Friedly Joseph Friedly Date: 3/28/2022  
 Kyle Borg Kyle Borg Date: 3/28/2022  
 Peter Smith Peter Smith Date: 3-28-2022  
 Stan Copeland Stanley R. Copeland Date: 3-28-2022

The undersigned, having been appointed to serve on the 2021 Synod Judicial Commission, and having approved the accusations presented to Mr. Carr, Mr. Larson and Mr. Magill, do hereby accept this mediation agreement as satisfying the critically important elements of the accusations. This document now supersedes the accusations as the final document of record. We commit ourselves to working with Mr. Carr, Mr. Larson and Mr. Magill to oversee and enable the process of reconciliation between all parties.

Keith Wing, Moderator Keith Wing Date: 3-28-2022  
 Tom Fisher, Clerk Thomas A. Fisher Date: 3-28-2022  
 Bruce Backensto Bruce Backensto Date: 3-28-2022  
 John Bower John Bower Date: 4-18-22  
 Brian Coombs Brian Coombs Date: 3-28-2022  
 Kelly Moore Kelly Moore Date: 3/28/22  
 Tom Pinson Tom Pinson Date: 3/28/22  
 Micah Ramsey Micah Ramsey Date: 3/28/22