

Report from the 2025 Ministry Evaluation Committee

To Immanuel church congregation

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Introduction and mission

The Ministry Evaluation Committee (MEC) hereby submits its final report from the review of the 2025 financial year. The assignment is to assess whether the congregational activities are conducted in a manner that is essentially appropriate and to what extent decisions made at annual meetings, congregational meetings and board meetings have been implemented, as well as how the prioritized areas of the ministry plan have been handled. Working with the review, the MEC shall cooperate with the church's auditor and assist in the management audit.

Approach

The MEC has reviewed and analyzed minutes from the annual meeting, congregational and board meetings and supplemented them with interviews with the Senior Pastor, the board chairman, representatives from the language groups' various councils, as well as with representatives of the diaconal ministry and music activities. In the final phase of the review, a reconciliation has also been made with the management audit.

The congregation's governance and working methods

The congregation has a basic democratic structure that functions, is maintained and improved, where responsibilities are clarified, meetings are recorded, decisions are made and activities are managed. The congregation has well-functioning activities that are conducted in an appropriate manner.

All of the congregational councils make a valuable contribution within their respective language groups and operate in the Free Church tradition influenced by lay people, providing the board and pastors with guidance and direction. The board's dialogue with the councils also strengthens the advisory role of these councils. The board dialogue that began in 2024 with the international council is now a model and will be carried out periodically between the various councils and the board.

Follow-up on the 2025 prioritized areas

The prioritized areas for 2025 were decided at the congregational meeting on December 8, 2024 and are the same as 2024, with the addition of activities during the summer.

The MEC's follow-up is primarily focused on what can be improved. For a more detailed description of the prioritized areas, see the activity report in the annual report.

Diaconal ministry

The diaconal ministry is the mission and life of the congregation. This is shown in caring for people in vulnerable life situations. Lunch in community, Christmas in community and Breakfast in community are the activities that meet the most people based on their need for food and community. The deacons bear the main responsibility for meetings with individuals for conversation, support and help.

How the diaconal work should be designed in the longer term is referred to in the investigation into the diaconal ministry initiated by the board. As a follow-up, the board has commissioned a reference

group to develop a basis with two to three scenarios that will be decided upon as the next step in the process.

Children and youth

The Sunday school in the international and Korean part as well as the children's church in the Swedish part are run well. In 2025, the Eumenia association was re-established to help develop youth work and give young people a voice. The association contributes to insight into association knowledge and how to practically make a democratic organization function.

In the afternoons, children/youth activities are now arranged, making the congregational activities known "outside the church". Good and appropriate premises have been prepared for the activities at K3. It is positive that Immanuel's confirmation is popular and that young people from different language groups participate.

During 2025, leadership training was carried out in collaboration with Eumenia and Bilda. The Eumenia board participated in an international leadership training course together with the Senior Pastor with the theme "lead with your life".

Volunteers

The concept of volunteering is new and unusual in a congregational context. As a member of the congregation, you can contribute to volunteer work as an elected representative and as an active member of various working groups. The concept of volunteering has primarily been used within parts of the diaconal ministry.

The fact that more targeted activities have not been carried out within volunteering may be due to uncertainty about what volunteering encompasses. Are all non-profit efforts a form of volunteering, or is volunteering only a small part of the congregation's non-profit efforts? There is a need to clarify what is required to support the efforts of members and volunteers.

Increased fellowship between groups

Within a multi-annual framework, the fellowship between the worship groups has increased with joint worship services and other activities such as congregational weekends, camp trips and confirmation. Organizationally, a management group has been established, which includes the leading pastors for each worship group.

Going forward, the task is to manage what has been achieved and continuously seek new and more opportunities for further development of the community.

Summer activities targeted at children, youth and seniors

Summer activities are a new prioritized area for 2025 and have been well received. It was decided at the congregational meeting in December 2024 that summer activities should be a priority area. From the MEC's perspective, it is worth mentioning that the congregation is flexible and able to handle new priorities.

Areas chosen for review by the MEC in addition to the prioritized areas

The MEC has chosen to look at the music activities and what is being done regarding the organization and ministry planning of Immanuel Church. The reason is that these are issues that have been raised in the MEC's previous reports and in congregational meetings.

The music activities

Music activities are an important part of the congregational activities. There are a large number of employed musicians, which means that the music offering is both extensive and professional. The activities consist of two organizational parts, the music school and the congregation's music activities.

It is desirable that all musical resources, students in the music school, volunteer and employed musicians are used to jointly develop the music activities. One step in this direction is to investigate possible coordination benefits in organizationally integrating the music school and the congregational music activities.

The congregational music committee, which represents various parts of the musical life of the church, is tasked with collaborating with the church's employed musicians. A complementary step in developing the music activities is to make greater use of the music committee's musical expertise.

Organization and ministry planning

The MEC's 2024 report addressed the fact that it was unclear to the congregation what the division of responsibilities of the employees was, which meant that many questions came directly to the chairman of the board and the Senior Pastor. The lack of clarity was also a contributing factor to the Senior Pastor's sometimes very high workload.

The ministry planning is an area for improvement that was highlighted at the 2025 annual meeting. The prioritized areas that guided the 2025 planning have had more of a role in defining operational areas than in providing objectives for the language groups and the prioritized areas.

To the delight of the MEC, the organization and ministry planning have been handled by the Senior Pastor and board during 2025. A new, clearer organization has already been introduced and the ministry planning will begin its implementation in 2026.

Follow-up on recommended actions in the 2024 evaluation

The 2024 evaluation highlighted the following areas for improvement.

- The committee requests its mission statement for the upcoming evaluation and a focus on a collaboration with the auditor. **Done.**
- Recruitment of a Head of Operations is ongoing, which is deemed satisfactory. **Done.**
- The investigation into the diaconal work is ongoing and is expected to be presented in a final report by the summer. **Interim report ready, see comment in the section on diaconal ministry.**
- The committee sees the need to recruit more leaders and to develop mentoring programs for young leaders. **Leaders in youth activities recruited and training has been carried out.**
- The music activities and the music school need a clearer organizational structure, which has been pointed out earlier. **Work in progress, see comment in the section on music activities.**
- The committee looks forward to in-depth conversations about baptism, LGBTQ issues and about the meaning of membership being carried out. **In-depth conversations about membership, baptism and same-sex weddings are planned for 2026.**
- The committee requests an easily accessible organizational plan. **Done.**

Conclusion

The MEC's summary assessment is that the congregation's work is conducted in an appropriate manner. Within the areas we have examined in more detail, the MEC has given the advice and made the observations and to ensure that:

- the board continues its dialogue with the councils and thereby strengthens the advisory role of the councils
- a decision is made on the direction of the future of the diaconal work
- the children's and youth activities have been developed and given better conditions
- since volunteering is unclear in a congregational context, there is a need to clarify what is required to support the efforts of members and volunteers
- the newly added summer activities have been appreciated
- the good fellowship that has been achieved between the language groups is managed and further developed
- a new and clear organization has been introduced
- a new and requested change in the planning of activities is being introduced
- the coordination benefits of organizationally integrating the music school and the congregation's music activities are investigated
- the music activities make greater use of the expertise of the music committee

Recommendation for upcoming evaluation

Major changes have been made to the organization of Immanuel Church and the ministry planning during the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026. An important task for the upcoming evaluation is to assess whether the changes have been implemented and goals achieved.