

THE CONSTITUTION

**OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA**

Amended and approved December 3, 2023

**Constitution
Grace Baptist Church**

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization will be known as "Grace Baptist Church of Grand Forks, North Dakota", incorporated according to the laws of North Dakota, and hereinafter referred to as the "Church."

ARTICLE II – STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

The Statement of Beliefs of Grace Baptist Church is in agreement with the North American Baptist (NAB) Conference Statement of Beliefs adopted in August, 1982 including amended Section H in July, 2009.

- A. We believe the Bible is God’s Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God’s revelation of Himself to humanity (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error – the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17). It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31; I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2).
- B. We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence, and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3)
1. The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe; He hears and answers prayer (I Chronicles 28:11-13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).
 2. The Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever-present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).
 3. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Savior and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christ-likeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).
- C. We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation

and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

- D. We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be steward over His creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; Romans 8:22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18; 23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27; II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).
- E. We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).
- F. We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42; Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congregational (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:3-6; 15:22-23).

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship and a more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15; I Corinthians 16:1-3).

- G. We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27; John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4;

Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

- H. We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ-like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).

We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4).

We believe the Bible teaches that marriage refers to the covenant relationship exclusively between one man and one woman, as instituted by God in the beginning (Genesis 2:20b-24; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4)

- I. We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10; Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally, and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

ARTICLE III – MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to reach our community for Christ through living by faith, proclaiming the Gospel, making fully devoted disciples, and showing Christ's love in action to those around us.

ARTICLE IV – AFFILIATION

The Church will be affiliated with the NAB Conference, and the North Central Association, and the NAB Northern Plains Region. The Church will submit reports annually for Conference and Association records. In its affiliations, the Church recognizes and affirms the obligation of mutual cooperation.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership Requirements

1. A testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and evidence of a desire to live a Christian life consistent with that testimony of faith.
2. Believer's baptism by immersion.
3. Agreement with the Statement of Beliefs of Grace Baptist Church.
4. Written application for membership and interview by members of the Council of Elders.
5. Affirmation by the Members at any scheduled meeting of the Members.

B. Responsibilities of Members

All Members should consider it a privilege and responsibility to:

1. Attend worship services and meetings as regularly as possible (Heb. 10:24-25).
2. Use their spiritual and material gifts for the furtherance of God's work through the Church (Eph. 4:11-13).
3. Endeavor, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to grow in Christ-likeness in order to honor Him and reflect His character to the world (Phil. 2:1-11).
4. Pray regularly for the Pastoral Staff, other staff, church leaders, and the congregational body (I Thes. 5:16-17).
5. Be spiritually accountable to each other and to the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:7-18).
6. Give intentionally, cheerfully and generously of their finances to support the work of the Church (II Cor. 9:6-15).

C. Changes in Membership

1. Changes in membership made necessary by transfer request, relocation, or lack of attendance or participation will occur according to procedures established by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders will provide notification to the Church membership regarding all changes in membership, which are subject to affirmation by the Church membership.
2. Membership changes necessary in any cases of discipline, whether of private or public character, will be conducted in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament and Christ's specific teaching as recorded in Matthew 18:15-17. In accordance with Matthew 18:17, no charge will be acted upon by the Church until this course has been pursued. All charges for consideration by the Council of Elders against the Church or individuals must be in writing and will be submitted to the Council of Elders for such action by the Church as may be deemed proper, reflecting the instruction of scripture in Matthew 18 and Galatians 6:1-5.

Any Member whose conduct brings reproach upon the name of Christ, has been approached and admonished in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Titus 3:10-11, and shows no sign of repentance and renewal of life will be excluded from the membership of the Church, upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and a majority affirmation of the Members. Where there is repentance and desire for reconciliation, the Church's response should be one of forgiveness and a reaffirmation of love (II Corinthians 2:5-11).

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH STAFF

A. Pastoral Staff

Pastoral Staff will include the Lead Pastor and other Pastors, as determined by the Council of Elders, with approval of the Members. The Council of Elders will construct and maintain job descriptions and titles for all Pastoral Staff members.

1. Qualifications of Pastoral Staff

Each Pastoral Staff member will:

- a. Be a Member of the Church.
- b. Subscribe to and annually affirm the Church's Statement of Beliefs.
- c. Meet biblical qualifications for eldership as outlined in scripture (I Peter 5:2-3, I Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:6-9).
- d. Possess experience, education and abilities as deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders and the Members.

2. Calling of Pastoral Staff

When it is necessary to call a Lead Pastor or other Pastoral Staff member, the Council of Elders will appoint a Calling Committee. The size and membership of the Calling Committee will be determined by the Council of Elders; only Members of the Church may serve as members of the Calling Committee. The Chairman of the Calling Committee will be a member of the Council of Elders. The committee will work in a timely way to make known the availability of the position, identify and recruit potential candidates, investigate the standing and qualifications of prospective candidates, and make a recommendation for the candidacy of an individual to the Council of Elders based upon the results of their work.

The issue of extending a call to a Pastoral Staff candidate will come before the Members at a business meeting called by the Council of Elders specifically for that purpose, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been publicly announced on the two preceding Sundays. A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of Members present will be necessary to extend a call.

3. Dissolution of the Pastoral Staff Relationship

- a. By resignation. Resignation of a Pastoral Staff member will be presented to the Members through the Council of Elders.
- b. For reasons other than resignation. If, following a process of seeking biblical reconciliation, the Council of Elders decides to recommend to the Members dissolution of the Church's relationship with a Pastoral Staff member, a written ballot vote of two-thirds (2/3) of Members present at a special or regular business meeting will be required to dissolve the pastoral relationship. Notice of such meeting, stating the issue to be considered, will be provided to Members, in writing, at least two weeks before the meeting.

Except by mutual consent and agreement with the Council of Elders, sixty (60) days notice will be required of a Pastoral Staff member and the Church for completion of the dissolution of the Pastoral Staff relationship.

B. Other Staff

All staff other than Pastoral Staff, including ministry Directors, will be hired by the Council of Elders. Resignations and terminations of such other staff will be acted upon by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH LEADERS

A. Church Officers

The Officers of the Church will include the:

1. Lead Pastor
2. Chairman of the Council of Elders
3. Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders
4. Moderator
5. Treasurer
6. Clerk

B. Elders

For any man who aspires to the office of elder, to serve as an elder he must:

1. Be a Member of the Church.
2. Subscribe to and annually affirm the Church's Statement of Beliefs.
3. Meet biblical qualifications for eldership as outlined in scripture (I Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:2-3).

C. Deacons

For any man or woman who aspires to the office of deacon, to serve as a deacon he or she must:

1. Be a Member of the Church.
2. Subscribe to and annually affirm the Church's Statement of Beliefs.
3. Meet biblical qualifications for deacons as outlined in scripture (I Timothy 3:8-13).

D. Other Church Leaders

All other church leaders, including but not limited to members of Standing Ministry Committees, will meet standards as established by the Council of Elders and the Members, provided that the standards for ministry leaders will be biblical standards of character and conduct and a commitment to the ministry of the Church. This will ordinarily be interpreted to mean:

1. Being a Member of the Church.
2. Having demonstrated leadership in ministry.
3. Being committed to, active in, and having biblical knowledge and spiritual giftedness appropriate to the specific ministry area in which they serve.
4. Meeting biblical qualifications for inward purity, public lifestyle, family life and church ministry life.

ARTICLE VIII – GOVERNMENT

Grace Baptist Church recognizes that the fundamental biblical principle from which church leadership and organization emerges is that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (Matthew 23:8-12; Colossians 1:15-20) and, therefore, any form of church government that gives pre-eminence to men rather than to

Jesus Christ is unbiblical. Congregational polity, as stated in our Statement of Beliefs, implies that the congregation governs itself under the lordship of Jesus Christ with each Member sharing a responsibility in decision-making with regard to the affairs of the Church.

We also recognize that there are Members of the body who are called and specifically gifted for leadership. Affirmed as qualified by the Members and committed the responsibility of being examples to the Church, these individuals serve as Elders and Deacons accountable to God.

A. The Congregation

The "Congregation" is, collectively, all the Members of Grace Baptist Church. As the Congregation, the Members are expected to uphold their responsibilities as stated in Article V, Section B (1-6). Any Member may present a matter of business directly to the Council of Elders or to the Church. Final human authority rests with the Congregation when it gathers to exercise its decision-making responsibilities under the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, except when decision-making authority has been delegated by the Congregation to affirmed church leaders or to groups of church leaders.

Congregational decisions are required for:

1. Approval of an annual budget.
2. Approval of annual audited financial statements.
3. Receiving or removing Members from the membership roll.
4. Affirmation of Elders and Deacons.
5. Affirmation of Church Officers.
6. Calling of Pastoral Staff.
7. Construction of, financing of, or addition to the church facilities outside of a budgeted expenditure
8. Sale, lease, transfer, or change in disposition of all or substantially all of the church property and assets.
9. Amendments to the Constitution or Articles of Incorporation.
10. Any other decisions that Church Leaders deem as necessary and appropriate for the decision and action of the Members.

B. Elders and The Council of Elders

The Council of Elders will provide the spiritual and directional authority and oversight of the church. Their authority over the church is not by force or by dictatorial power, but by precept and by example (Hebrews 13:7). The life of an elder must show evidence of devotion to the Word of God, and the elder must lead by imitating the character of Christ as a servant (Mark 10:43-45) and as a shepherd (I Peter 5:1-4). Evidence of a life conducted "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27) should be most visible in the life of an elder.

In their role, the elders bear principal responsibility for devoting themselves first of all to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:3-4). As spiritual overseers, the Council of Elders:

- preaches and teaches.
- prays for the congregation, giving attention to the congregation's needs and thoughts.
- guards the church in all ministry areas against spiritual, legal and financial challenges.
- provides spiritual counsel and exhortation on sensitive or disciplinary matters.

- establishes and carries out the biblical vision and values of the church.
- responds to and leads the congregation, acting as shepherds and pastors as they set an example for all.

The Council of Elders will consist of the Pastoral Staff and biblically-qualified, non-pastoral staff Members in a ratio of no fewer than two Members for every Pastor, with the minimum number of non-pastoral staff Members established at four (4). In the event that fewer than the constitutionally-designated number of biblically-qualified elders are identified to serve on the Council of Elders, the work of the Council of Elders will be undertaken by such number of ~~elders~~ leaders determined by the Church and the ~~existing Council of Elders~~ remaining (if any) elders to be necessary and appropriate for accomplishing the responsibilities of the Council of Elders. This Church-affirmed Interim Leadership Team will serve until such time that the constitutionally-designated number of biblically-qualified elders can be identified and affirmed to reconstitute the Council of Elders, unless otherwise decided by the Church.

The Council of Elders will meet at least monthly and at other times as necessary to accomplish its duties, and will maintain minutes of all its meetings.

The Council of Elders will operate by rule of consensus, *i.e.*, if all elders are guided by the same Spirit and all have the mind of Christ, there should be consensus in the decisions they make. If there is division, the elders should study, pray and seek the will of God together until consensus is achieved. Unity and harmony in the Church begin with this principle as it is applied in practice to the work of the Council of Elders.

Individuals may be identified to the Council of Elders or the Nominating Committee for potential service as an elder by any Member or by self-identification on the basis of a testimony of a sense of calling or aspiration to that office.

The Nominating Committee will interview each potential elder to ascertain whether that individual meets the qualifications for elder. The interview will also include examination of the individual with regard to their sense of calling or aspiration to that office, knowledge and understanding of doctrinal issues, spiritual giftedness, and the exercise of practical ministry skills.

Upon unanimous determination of the Nominating Committee that the individual meets the qualifications of elder, the individual's name will be placed on a ballot by the Nominating Committee for affirmation by the Members at any meeting called for that purpose, including the Annual Meeting.

In addition to individuals being newly affirmed to the Council of Elders, each elder serving on the Council of Elders, with the exception of members of the Pastoral Staff, will be affirmed annually by the Members at the Annual Meeting.

C. Deacons and The Diaconate

Deacons will, in general terms, be Church Leaders who are committed to assisting the elders by devoting themselves to the ministries of membership care, helping, and service. Toward that end, ministry teams led by deacons will be established from within the body and equipped to assist the elders in the accomplishment of their duties by identifying areas of general or spiritual service necessary for the function of the church, as necessary and appropriate.

The Diaconate is a specifically-designated small group of deacons who have been selected by deacons from among all deacons. The Diaconate will be assembled annually and will serve as the body that organizes the serving ministries of the Church.

The Diaconate will have specific responsibility for organizing individuals and teams to carry out the ministries of visitation of sick and shut-ins, the preparation and serving of communion, weekly greeting, ushering, and collecting and providing for safekeeping of offerings, and serving meals at organized Church functions. The Diaconate will administer the Deacon Fund and provide oversight of the self-governance of the deacons. The Diaconate will consist of no fewer than eight (8) members. The Council of Elders will select a member of the Diaconate for affirmation as Chairman of the Diaconate.

The Diaconate will normally meet monthly and at other times as necessary to accomplish its duties, will maintain minutes of all its meetings, and will be in regular communication with the Council of Elders. Like the Council of Elders, the Diaconate will operate by rule of consensus.

Individuals may be identified to the Council of Elders or the Nominating Committee for potential service as a deacon by any Member or by self-identification on the basis of a testimony of a sense of calling or aspiration to that office.

The Nominating Committee will interview each potential deacon to ascertain whether the individual meets the biblical qualifications for deacon. The interview will also include examination of the individual with regard to their sense of calling or aspiration to that office, knowledge and understanding of doctrinal issues, spiritual giftedness, and the exercise of practical ministry skills.

Upon unanimous determination of the Nominating Committee that the individual meets the qualifications of deacon, their name will be placed on a ballot by the Nominating Committee for affirmation by the Members at any meeting called for that purpose, including the Annual Meeting.

In addition to individuals being newly affirmed as deacons, each deacon selected to serve on the Diaconate for that year will be affirmed by the Members at the Annual Meeting. The ongoing annual affirmation of individuals serving in the role of deacon following their initial affirmation by the Members will be the responsibility of the Diaconate; there are no designated term limits for individuals affirmed as deacons.

D. Standing Ministry Committees

The Standing Ministry Committees are established to carry out the ongoing administrative ministry needs of the Church, and are appointed by and are under the spiritual and directional authority of the Council of Elders. Standing Ministry Committees are appointed annually, and there are no designated term limits for individuals serving as members of Standing Ministry Committees or the Leadership Advisory Council.

1. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will conduct ongoing work, as necessary, to maintain a full complement of Church Officers and members on the Council of Elders, Standing Committees and the Leadership Advisory Council.

All names presented to the church membership for affirmation must appear on the ballot at the Annual Meeting by a unanimous recommendation of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee will consist of six (6) members; three members will be from among the Council of Elders and three members will be from among the Diaconate. An elder will serve as committee chairperson.

2. Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee will be in charge of publicity of financial matters to the Council of Elders, the Diaconate, the Standing Committees, and the Church. The Budget and Finance Committee will coordinate and assist the Council of Elders, the Diaconate, and Standing Ministry Committees in the preparation of annual budgets. The Budget and Finance Committee will present an annualized budget, to the Council of Elders for its consideration and to the Church for its action, before the end of the fiscal year.

All monies received will be recorded by two or more Budget and Finance Committee members as designated by the Chairperson.

The Budget and Finance Committee will regularly review the financial status of the Church, giving specific attention to actual expenditures in comparison to the annual budget. The Committee will make recommendations for spending to the Council of Elders.

The Budget and Finance Committee will consist of at least four (4) members. The committee chairperson will be elected by the membership of the committee from among its members.

3. Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee will hold in trust all properties of the Church and be responsible for its care and maintenance. They will arrange for needed repairs, additions and equipment.

The Facilities Committee will provide feedback for annual evaluations of the custodian to the lead pastor, who will document and recommend the salary of this individual to the Council of Elders. They will also be part of the hiring committee of new personnel.

The Facilities Committee will authorize expenditures to be made on the basis of the approved budget and will also code and approve payment of bills.

The Facilities Committee will consist of at least four (4) members. The committee chairperson will be elected by the membership of the committee from among its members.

4. Evangelism and Outreach Committee

The Evangelism and Outreach Missions Committee will oversee the home and foreign missions interests of the Church. It will develop and direct programs of local Church missionary education through church services, auxiliary organizations, conferences, special events, productions, distribution of missionary literature, bulletin boards and visual aids; preparing the annual missionary budget for recommendation to the Council of Elders and making recommendations to the Members regarding special missionary offerings and goals for project support.

The Evangelism and Outreach Committee will authorize expenditures to be made on the basis of the approved budget and will also code and approve payment of bills.

The Evangelism and Outreach Committee will consist of at least four (4) members. The committee chairperson will be elected by the membership of the committee from among its members.

5. Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee will review and assess all financial and standing committees' processes and procedures annually. The result of the review will be reported to the Council of Elders.

The Auditing Committee will recommend to the Elder Council whether a compilation, review, or audit of the Church's financial records is necessary. Upon approval by the Council of Elders, an independent third party will be engaged by the Auditing Committee to perform the required compilation, review, or audit. The results will be reported to the church congregation at the Annual Meeting or as otherwise directed by the Council of Elders.

The Auditing Committee will count all votes during business meetings and provide reports to the Council of Elders.

The Auditing Committee will consist of three (3) members. The committee chairperson will be elected by the membership of the committee from among its members.

E. Other Ministry Committees

The Council of Elders has the authority to appoint ministry committees to carry-out specific ministry activities or tasks in any ministry area, as deemed necessary and appropriate.

F. Leadership Advisory Council

The Leadership Advisory Council promotes the overall mission and vision of the church. The Leadership Advisory Council assists the church leadership in overall planning to achieve the mission and vision, facilitates communication among all ministries and coordinates quarterly and annual business meetings. The Leadership Advisory Council is responsible to review, assess and evaluate church policies and programs; propose short-and long-range goals to pastoral staff, the Council of Elders, the Diaconate, standing ministry committees and ministry teams as well as to the church at large; provide guidance and leadership in responding to the needs and goals of the church as stewards of the resources with which God has blessed the church; give due consideration to all proposals and recommendations from individuals, committees and ministry teams in order to reach a consensus of agreement on any matter before presenting it to the congregation for consideration and action; and, bring a full report of the work of the Leadership Advisory Council to the church at quarterly business meetings and the annual meeting.

The Leadership Advisory Council will consist of the Pastoral Staff; the Moderator; the Treasurer; the Clerk; the chair and vice chair of the Council of Elders and the Diaconate; the Standing Ministry Committee chairs (Nominating Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Facilities Committee, Evangelism and Outreach Committee and Auditing Committee); ministry team chairs; and, three church members affirmed at-large by the church membership.

G. Operational Decision-Making

The Church Officers, Council of Elders, the Diaconate, the Leadership Advisory Council, the Standing Ministry Committees, along with Ministry Directors and other ministry area leaders and teams will carry out their ministry leadership responsibilities with the authority to make operational decisions such that their work can be effectively and efficiently carried out, except where Congregational decisions are either required or prudent.

ARTICLE IX – DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS

A. Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor will:

1. Be the spiritual and executive leader of the Church.
2. Defend the body against harmful or corruptive influences from within or without.
3. Carry out his duties in accordance with the job description established by the Council of Elders.
4. Be a member of the Council of Elders, and an ex officio member of the Diaconate, Standing Ministry Committees, other ministry teams, and other committees and organizations. In such capacity, he will strive to establish and accomplish objectives in conjunction with the purpose of the Church.

Other Pastoral Staff members will carry-out duties in specific ministry areas as assigned by the Council of Elders under the direction and supervision of the Lead Pastor in accordance with the job description established by the Council of Elders, and assist the Lead Pastor in his duties. If the position of Lead Pastor is vacant or the Lead Pastor is unable to serve, the Council of Elders will appoint other Church Pastoral Staff, Church Leaders, or other outside-hired pastoral staff to perform the duties of Lead Pastor in an interim capacity.

B. Chairman of the Council of Elders

The Chairman of the Council of Elders will be selected by the Council of Elders and presented to the Members by the Nominating Committee for affirmation. The Chairman of the Council of Elders will serve as moderator of the Leadership Advisory Council and Annual Meeting and all special meetings of the Members in the absence of the Moderator. In the absence of the Chairman of the Council of Elders, the Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders or another Elder designated by the Council of Elders will serve in place of the Chairman of the Council of Elders. The Chairman of the Council of Elders will serve as chairman of the Nominating Committee, and will be an ex officio member of the Diaconate, Standing Committees, and all other church ministry teams, other committees and organizations.

The Chairman of the Council of Elders will evaluate the work of the Council of Elders on a regular basis to determine its effectiveness.

C. Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders

The Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders will be appointed by the Council of Elders from among their membership. The Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders may also serve as an ex officio member of specific church ministry teams, committees and other organizations in place of the Chairman of the Council of Elders.

D. Moderator

The Moderator will be nominated for the position by the Nominating Committee and affirmed annually by the church members. The Moderator will be the church officer responsible for establishing agendas for Leadership Advisory Council meetings and church quarterly and annual business meetings in collaboration with the Lead Pastor, Elder Council chair and Diaconate chair. The Moderator will facilitate all business meetings of the church and all meetings of the Leadership Advisory Council. The Moderator will facilitate the Leadership Advisory Council in carrying out its responsibilities and will appoint ad hoc committees as directed by the Leadership Advisory Council or the congregation. The Moderator will call special meetings of the Leadership Advisory Council, as need arises. The Moderator will be a non-voting, advisory member of all councils and committees.

E. Treasurer

The Treasurer will be nominated for the position by the Nominating Committee and affirmed annually by the church members. The Treasurer will be the custodian of all contributed monies. The Treasurer will be responsible for assisting in the implementation of the church's long-term financial strategies and will assist in the establishment, administration and appointment of processes and personnel to control handling and disbursement of funds in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and as a responsible Christian steward. The Treasurer will accurately maintain and regularly review the financial records of the Church, and report on the same and the overall financial condition of the church to the Budget and Finance Committee and the Council of Elders. The Treasurer will keep an account of contributions and render summary statements accordingly at the end of each calendar year. The Treasurer will also work with designated individuals to facilitate, among other things, review and audit of the church's financial statements.

F. Clerk

The Clerk will be nominated for the position by the Nominating Committee and affirmed annually by the church members. The Clerk will be responsible for maintaining official church records and recording minutes of Church business meetings and meetings of the Leadership Advisory Council. The Clerk will issue letters of transfer and certificates of recommendation as authorized by the Council of Elders or by the Church, keep a complete roll of the members of the Church and their addresses, and keep a register of baptism, receptions, dismissals and death. The Clerk will conduct all the official correspondence unless otherwise directed. The Clerk will assure that contracts or legal documents are appropriately reviewed prior to signature. The Clerk will be responsible for preparing the Association and Conference yearly reports, preserving all documents, papers, and letters coming in the Clerk's hands during the term of office, and delivering the same and all books, records, files and other documents kept by the Clerk to the successor.

ARTICLE X – TERMS OF OFFICE

A. Members of the Council of Elders will be affirmed for three-year terms in such a manner that the terms of service of not more than half of their number will expire in the same year. Upon completion of a three-year term, an elder may be eligible for reaffirmation following the Nominating Committee's process for the selection of elders. There is no limit to the successive number of terms an individual elder may serve.

- B. All other Church Officers, except the Lead Pastor, are to be affirmed for terms of three years. Upon completion of a three-year term, Church Officers may be eligible for reaffirmation following the Nominating Committee's process for the selection Church Officers. There is no limit to the successive number of terms an individual Church Officer may serve.
- C. A Member of the Church, who has been a Member for at least six months, will be eligible to serve in an affirmed or appointed position.
- D. The Elders, Church Officers, and all other affirmed or appointed church leaders assume responsibility on the first day of the leadership service year, unless appointed during the year to fill a vacancy.
- E. Members holding affirmed or appointed church leadership positions may be terminated from office by expiration of a term, by resignation, or upon a vote of dismissal by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members present at any regular or special meeting.
- F. On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Council of Elders will seek to fill any elder position that becomes vacant for reasons other than the normal termination of a term of office, subject to the minimum qualifications for the particular position described elsewhere in this Constitution. Any person selected to fill any such vacancy will be subject to affirmation by the Members at the next business meeting in accordance with stated terms before assuming the responsibilities of their position. To the extent such person is not affirmed in accordance with the terms hereof, such person will not assume that position, and the Nominating Committee will nominate to the Council of Elders for appointment another person to fill any such vacancy created. Affirmation will be to fill the balance of the unexpired leadership term.

ARTICLE XI – MEETINGS

The mind and attitude of Jesus Christ will be exhibited in all discussions and meetings of the Church, the Council of Elders, the Diaconate, the Leadership Advisory Council, the Standing Ministry Committees, and all other ministry teams and committees. The authority of Scripture will govern on all questions of procedure. Issues not addressed in Scripture will be determined by majority consensus.

- A. The Council of Elders and the Diaconate will meet at least monthly.
- B. Standing Ministry Committees and the Leadership Advisory Council will meet at least quarterly.
- C. The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Church will be held within thirty days of the end of each church fiscal year, as specifically determined by the Council of Elders. The agenda of the Annual Meeting will include:

1. Affirmation of members and chairman of the Council of Elders.
2. Affirmation of Deacons.
3. Affirmation of Church Officers.
4. Affirmation of the Members and Chairman of the Diaconate.
5. Affirmation of Members of Standing Committees and the Leadership Advisory Council.
6. Affirmation of new members and other membership action.
7. Discussion and affirmation of the church's objectives for the current year.
8. Other matters as determined by the Council of Elders and Leadership Advisory Council.

In preparation for the Annual Meeting, the Council of Elders will supply Members with written reports from each Standing Ministry Committee and church ministry area, together with a financial report, annual budget, report from the Leadership Advisory Council, and the Lead Pastor's report at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting, as well as any special meetings, may be restricted in whole or in part to Members, as determined by the Council of Elders.

The names of all individuals nominated for affirmation at the Annual Meeting will be publicly communicated to the Members at least four weeks prior to the meeting. Notwithstanding the responsibility of the Council of Elders, the Nominating Committee and the Members in certain circumstances to fill vacancies among the Council of Elders and Church Officers, individuals may only have their name placed in nomination for affirmation by the Nominating Committee; at the Annual Meeting, no Member may submit from the floor for consideration by the Members the name of any proposed elder, Church Officer, or deacon. An affirmative action of two thirds (2/3) of Members present is required for affirmation of individuals to any position.

D. Special Meetings

Other meetings, in addition to the Annual Meeting, may be convened by the Council of Elders and/or the Leadership Advisory Council, as need arises. A special meeting may also be convened by written petition signed by at least five percent of all Members.

E. Proper Notice

Proper notice for all annual and special meetings will include prior publication of notice in a form of notice or communication regularly used by the church for communicating to Members, and announcement in regular Sunday morning services for at least two consecutive weeks and not less than fourteen days before the meeting is to be held. Such notice will include any special items for action at any special meeting, and, in the case of proposed amendments to this Constitution or the Articles of Incorporation of Grace Baptist Church, will make available written copies of the proposed amendments.

Proper notice of a meeting to amend this Constitution or the Articles of Incorporation of Grace Baptist Church will be pursuant to Article XIV of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XII –VOTING

A. Voting

Members may vote at meetings, whether annual or special, with each Member being entitled to cast one vote on each submitted matter in which such Member is eligible to vote.

On all matters *not* pertaining to the construction of, financing of, or addition to the church facilities outside of a budgeted expenditure, or any sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of all or substantially all of the church property and assets, any Member is entitled to vote, with a simple majority of those present and voting required to transact business, unless otherwise indicated elsewhere in the Constitution.

On all matters pertaining to the construction of, financing of, or addition to the church facilities outside of a budgeted expenditure, or any sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of all or substantially all of the

church property and assets, only Members who are 18 years old or older are entitled to vote, with a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting required to transact business.

All votes respecting the affirmation of elders, deacons, Church Officers, and members of Standing Committees, calling of Pastoral Staff, construction of, financing of, or addition to the church facilities outside of a budgeted expenditure, or any sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of all or substantially all of the church property and assets will be by written ballot vote. The meeting moderator may call for written ballot votes on other key questions, as determined by the Council of Elders.

Absentee ballots will be valid if received by the Chairman of the Council of Elders in advance of the meeting, the governing policies and procedures for which will be established by the Council of Elders.

B. Quorum

A quorum of the Members for conducting business at a meeting of Members will be equal to the number of Members in attendance at a properly noticed Annual Meeting or special meeting.

ARTICLE XIII - FISCAL AND LEADERSHIP SERVICE YEAR

The fiscal year and leadership service year of the Church will be determined by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Members of the Church may vote to amend this Constitution or the Articles of Incorporation of Grace Baptist Church. A two-thirds vote of Members of the Church present will be required to amend the Constitution or the Articles of Incorporation, providing such amendments have been submitted in writing at a previously called business meeting with the date of consideration fixed thereon. Amendment proposals will be distributed by methods used commonly to communicate information to Members.