

# **CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS**

of  
**Grace Bible Church**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **PREAMBLE**

As an assembly of believers who are members of the Church, the Body of Christ, we form Grace Bible church to glorify God by operating upon Scriptural principles, primarily from doctrine set forth by the Apostle Paul contained in his 13 books (Romans—Philemon). We recognize Jesus Christ as head of our church but yet understand we are still subject to God-given powers of government (Romans 13:1—7). Since we find our authority in Scripture (Romans 1:16; 1 Timothy 3; 2 Timothy 3:16—17; etc.), all bylaws and activities must be in conformance to God’s Word.

### **ARTICLE I—NAME OF CORPORATION**

The name of this corporation shall be: Grace Bible Church

### **ARTICLE II—REGISTERED OFFICE AND AGENT**

The principle address of the office of this nonprofit shall be: 7909 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave N., Brooklyn Park, MN 55445 and the registered agent at this address is Gary Johnson.

### **ARTICLE III—PURPOSE**

The purpose of this corporation is to establish and maintain a church to teach, preach and proclaim Scriptures in light of the revelation of the Gospel of Grace, which was a mystery until revealed to the Apostle Paul by the ascended and glorified Jesus Christ. We are to work to make all men see the fellowship of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9). We will regularly meet for corporate worship of God and to edify and build up like-minded, believing attendees while encouraging evangelism locally and worldwide. We will also license and ordain ministers of the Gospel. We will engage in activities necessary for the accomplishment of the purpose.

This corporation is a church that uses the Bible as our rule and standard of conduct. Our beliefs are summarized in the Statement of Faith as listed below:

#### **Statement of Faith**

We are an independent church whose purpose is to edify and build up each other through fellowship and teaching (Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:11—13). With the proper equipping of the saints we will be better able to reach others with the gospel of the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:1—4) so we can ultimately make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9).

We believe that all Scripture is given for our benefit and understanding (Romans 15:4). We also acknowledge that the last words of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed to the Apostle Paul, have been given especially for the church, the body of Christ (Romans 16:25; Galatians 1:11—12). In this age of grace, we find our doctrine, position, walk and destiny exclusively within the thirteen books of Romans through Philemon as written by the Apostle Paul.

The following tenets are a summary of what we believe and are not meant to be complete or exhaustive.

## **THE BIBLE**

We understand that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” written by holy men as they “were moved by the Holy Spirit.” We therefore believe that the whole Bible (66 books) is without error in the recording of this divine revelation and has absolute and complete authority (2 Timothy 3:16—17; 2 Peter 1:21).

## **THE GODHEAD**

There is one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16—17; John 4:24; 10:30; Romans 1:1—4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4—6; Titus 3:4—6).

## **THE PERSON OF CHRIST**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:32—35; John 1:1—2, 14; Romans 1:3—4; 2 Corinthians 5:19—21; Galatians 4:4—5; Philipians 2:6—9; Colossians 1:15—19; Hebrews 4:15).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person, who convicts the world of sin, and who regenerates, baptizes, seals, indwells, enlightens and empowers (John 16:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13, 17—18; 3:16; Titus 3:5).

## **MANKIND’S NATURAL CONDITION**

We believe that man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26—27), but that in Adam’s sin, the race fell (Romans 3:23; 5:12), inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God (Ephesians 2:1—3, 12) and is totally unable to please God in this lost condition (Romans 3:9—12; 8:7—8). All men are thus, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and are therefore totally unable to do anything pleasing to God. Sin separates man from God (Ephesians 2:1—3).

## **SALVATION**

God justifies (declares not guilty) ungodly sinners by His grace, upon the ground of the blood of Christ, through the means of faith. Complete salvation, forgiveness and justification are given as an unconditional gift of God through our faith in Christ and not by any work of our own. This gift of salvation is given to us when we only believe in the Person of Jesus Christ and His completed work on the cross (Romans 3:20—28; 5:1—9; Ephesians 2:8—9; 1 Corinthians 15:1—4).

## **ETERNAL SECURITY**

All believers are eternally secure in Christ. Eternal life begins at the point of believing (Romans 8:1—2, 29—39; Ephesians 1:13—14; 4:30; Colossians 3:1—4; Philipians 1:6).

## **BAPTISM**

All saved persons have been made members of the Body of Christ by one spiritual baptism into Christ by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). By that one baptism every member of the body of Christ is identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3—6; Colossians 2:11—12). In light of the statement concerning one baptism in Ephesians 4:5 and the statement concerning baptism in Colossians 2:12, and Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel,” we affirm that water baptism is not relevant in God’s Spiritual program for the Body of Christ in this present dispensation of grace.

## **OUR WALK**

By reason of Christ’s victory over sin and of His indwelling Spirit, all the saved may and should experience deliverance from the power of sin by obedience to Ephesians 4:23. When we live in the state of renewing the mind we have put off the old nature and we have put on the new (Ephesians 4:22—24). However, we deny that man’s nature of sin is ever eradicated during his life (Romans 6:6—14; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 10:2—5; Galatians 5:16—25).

As saints (literally “set-apart ones”) and members of the true church (literally “called-out ones”) we are to maintain a Christ-honoring testimony, separate from all forms of worldliness and apostasy, and to demonstrate obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and love to all men (Romans 12:1—2, 9; 2 Corinthians 6:14—18; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 6:20—21).

## **FAMILY**

We believe that God created and blessed the family as the foundation of society. Marriage unites one genetically defined naturally born male (man) and one genetically defined naturally born female (woman) in a lifetime commitment to each other (Genesis 2:23—24; Matthew 19:4—6; Romans 7:1—3). We believe civil unions and domestic partnerships do not constitute a biblical marriage nor do we acknowledge them as such. The marriage relationship is biblically the only legitimate and accepted sexual relationship (Hebrews 13:4). A husband is commanded to love and provide for his wife, as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). A wife is commanded to respect and submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians

5:22—33). Marriage is designed by God to be a monogamous lifelong commitment between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4—6; Romans 7:1—3; 1 Corinthians 7:10—11). Children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception (Psalm 127:3; 139:13—16; Luke 1:41, 44; Exodus 21:22—25). Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel (Deuteronomy 6:4—7; Proverbs 1:8—9; 13:24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

### **DISPENSATIONS**

We believe that God has dispensed His dealing with mankind in different ways throughout history. Those who are chosen to announce these changes of dispensations are called stewards. We are currently living in the dispensation of grace, the steward of which is the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25; 1 Corinthians 4:1). This current dispensation of grace was a mystery that was hid in God from the beginning of the world until revealed to the Apostle Paul (Romans 16:25—26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:2—9; Colossians 1:25—26).

### **THE CHURCH**

The church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:4—5; Ephesians 1:22—23) and functions to carry out His work, ministry and mission while here on earth. Its power, commissioning and authority come from the ministry of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. By God's grace the Apostle Paul received the revelation of the mystery that every individual (Jew or Gentile) can receive salvation through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection (Ephesians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12—13). We look to the Pauline epistles for guidance on church conduct, doctrine and practice (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2).

### **MISSION**

The mission and commission of the church, the body of Christ, is to build up and edify believers (Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:16), proclaim the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14—21) and to teach and preach sound doctrine given to us through the Apostle Paul according to the revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:8—9; 1 Timothy 1:3, 1 Timothy 4:6, Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:11), with all boldness but in gentleness (2 Timothy 2:25; Ephesians 4:1—3), in accordance with rightly dividing the word of truth (Scripture) (2 Timothy 2:15). In this we should follow the example of the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Timothy 1:11—16). That distinctive message which the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; 15:16) calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25) is also called "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) which embraces Jew and Gentile together in the church, the body of Christ (Romans 10:12—13; Ephesians 2:14—16; Galatians 3:28). We, like Paul, must preach the entire Word of God in the light of Paul's gospel (Galatians 1:8—9; 2 Timothy 3:16—17; 4:2), and strive to reach those in the regions beyond where Christ is not yet named (Romans 10:14—15; 15:20; 2 Corinthians 10:16).

### **GIFTS**

The spiritual gifts necessary for the ministry of the body of Christ in Paul's day are those enumerated in Ephesians 4:7—16, Romans 12:6—8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7—10. Of these, only the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers are in operation today. The gifts of ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving and showing of mercy as listed in Romans 12:7—8 may also be considered operational today. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and the gift of healing, were temporary because they were related to God's reaching out to the nation of Israel (1 Corinthians 1:22; 12:8—11; 28—31). These sign gifts have ceased since God has temporarily set Israel aside (1 Corinthians 13:8—11; Romans 11:1—11, 25).

### **RESURRECTION**

Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead (Luke 24:39), and He will raise all of the saved to everlasting glory and, at the end of the age, He will raise all of the lost to everlasting condemnation (Acts 24:15). The church, the body of Christ, will be the first to be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:22—24). Then, according to Israel's prophetic program, there will be a resurrection unto life for those who have believed outside this special dispensation of grace (Revelation 20:5—6) and finally a resurrection unto death for all unbelievers since creation (Revelation 20:11—15; Daniel 12:2).

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

The rapture of the Church "which is His body," and the second coming of Christ are two distinct events, both pre-millennial and unrelated to each other. He will come first to receive the members of His body to Himself "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:13—18; Philippians 3:20—21; Titus 2:13—14; 1 Corinthians 15:51—53), and later to receive His millennial kingdom on this earth, over which He will reign (Zechariah 14:4, 9; Acts 1:10—11; Revelation 19:11—16; 20:4—6). Because of the distinctive nature of the body of Christ, the resurrection and rapture of the Church, which is His body, will take place before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9). The

tribulation (the time of Jacob's trouble) will be a purging and a cleansing of the nation of Israel (Malachi 3:2—3; Zechariah 13:8—9; Jeremiah 30:7; Psalm 2:5; Matthew 24:15—31). The resurrection of believers who are not a part of the church, the body of Christ, will occur after the tribulation (Revelation 20:4—6).

#### **STATE OF THE UNSAVED DEAD**

The Scripture in no place extends the hope of salvation to the unsaved dead, but instead reveals that they will ever continue to exist in a state of conscious suffering. The teachings of universalism, probation after death, and annihilation of the unsaved dead are opposed by us as being thoroughly unscriptural and dangerous doctrines (Luke. 13:23— 28; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 3:19; Colossians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11; 20:14—15).

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP**

All believers are members of the Body of Christ, evidenced by the sealing of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). As members of the Body of Christ we are to edify, support, admonish and care for each other (Romans 12:10; 14:19; 15:14; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13, 16). This is only possible by meeting and interacting with each other on a regular basis. We do not have a formal membership but consider those who regularly meet together and are involved in edifying the saints as members of our local congregation. These members have no voting rights.

### **ARTICLE II—LEADERSHIP**

#### **Section 1: The Head of the Church**

We recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the Church, the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22—23; 4:15; Colossians 1:18). The only manner in which He speaks to us today is through Scripture, so we stand upon God's Word to help us determine the structure of the local congregation.

#### **Section 2: Pauline Model of Organization**

We specifically follow Paul's instructions for structuring a local church. He presents a system of elders who are charged with spiritually nurturing, teaching, overseeing and protecting the Apostle Paul's doctrine of Grace within the local church (1 Timothy 5:17—22). This board of elders is lead by the head elder (bishop or overseer, also known as pastor). Elders are always appointed, never elected (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5—9).

In like manner, Deacons may also be appointed to assist the Elders as needed.

#### **Section 3: Board of Elders**

##### **Clause A: Qualifications of Elders**

An Elder must be male, over the age of 21, a regular attendee of Grace Bible Church, in agreement with the Statement of Faith, and satisfy the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1—7 and Titus 1:5—9.

**Clause B: Selection of Elders**

The initial Board will be selected by the overseer (pastor) and must consist of a minimum of three people, including the Pastor. The Board may select however many they feel are needed to properly oversee the congregation and the governance of the church. The determination to add to or reduce the number of Elders shall be made at first Elder Board meeting at the beginning of the year.

**Clause C: Removal of an Elder**

Any Elder can be immediately removed without cause by a simple majority vote of the Board of Elders, including the vote of the Pastor. The Pastor may unilaterally remove any Elder board member at any time if the board member fails to fulfill the qualifications of Elder (as listed above), or demonstrates conduct in violation of Scripture.

**Clause D: Term of Office**

An Elder may serve until the earlier of his resignation or removal.

**Clause E: Responsibilities of an Elder**

Elders have broad responsibilities over the congregation and the governance of the church. They are the overseers of the spiritual condition of Grace Bible Church, making sure the assembly is being nourished from Scripture properly and setting a climate for spiritual growth. They are responsible to work in bringing the congregation together as one with a common objective, strategy, philosophy and activity, all for the glory of God and the advancement of the doctrine of the mystery.

They are to accomplish this by being role models of proper behavior and godliness, giving the congregation examples to strive for (1 Timothy 3), devoting themselves to prayer, Bible study and teaching of the Word (1 Timothy 5:17), guarding the church from false teaching that does not conform to the Apostle Paul's teaching (Acts 20:28—30; Titus 1:9—11), and disciplining those who stir up discontent, engage in behavior contrary to Scripture or propagate incorrect doctrine (2 Timothy 2:24—26; 1 Corinthians 5; Titus 3).

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for all decisions made on behalf of Grace Bible Church. The Board may delegate authority as they see fit. Although the final decision rests on the Board of Elders, the Elders are responsible to make these decisions in a manner that respects the congregation. All decisions must be made on the basis of Scripture and in sensitive consideration of the congregation, much as a spiritually mature and loving husband would consult with his wife. The congregation must be informed, in a timely manner, of all significant decisions made by the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders is also authorized to ordain or license pastors. The ordination process will be set up and administered by the Board of Elders.

**Clause F: Compensation**

The Board of Elders is responsible for setting financial compensation for all paid positions. Compensation for any position must be approved by a greater than 50%

vote of the Board of Elders. No monies will be paid without the direct authorization by the Board.

Compensation for the Pastor will be discussed and determined at the first meeting of each year. The Pastor will not vote when determining his compensation. As part of this discussion, the Board of Elders will present an evaluation of the Pastor, outlining weaknesses and strengths and then presenting goals that should be worked on in the coming year. If the Board of Elders desires the Pastor to work on specific goals, or if they expect the Pastor to accomplish a particular task in the upcoming year, such goals and tasks will be presented in writing.

**Clause G: Organization of the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders shall select a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. The Pastor may serve as Chairman if approved by a majority of the Elder Board. These three positions shall also serve on the Board of Directors to fulfill legal requirements of incorporation with the State of Minnesota.

The Chairman shall preside over all meetings of the Elder Board, shall act as spokesman for the Board of Elders and work at setting goals for Grace Bible Church.

The Treasurer shall be responsible to oversee all financial matters and report regularly the financial condition of Grace Bible Church to the Board of Elders.

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all Board of Elders meetings and maintain all Grace Bible Church records.

**Section 4: Pastor (Overseer, Teaching Elder, Bishop)**

**Clause A: Qualifications of Pastor**

The Pastor must be a male, at least 21 years of age, agree with the doctrinal statement of Grace Bible Church, and satisfy the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1—7 and Titus 1:5—9.

**Clause B: Purpose**

The Pastor shall be placed over the congregation to shepherd and to teach. He is to watch over the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation, and ensure that doctrine is preserved and propagated. He must strive to assure that Pauline doctrine is committed to faithful men who can teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

**Clause C: Selection and Removal of the Pastor**

The Pastor is to be selected by the Board of Elders with a two-thirds vote of approval. Likewise, he may be voted out by a two-thirds vote at any time.

**Clause D: Term of Office**

The Pastor shall serve in this position indefinitely, until his resignation or his removal by a two-thirds vote by the Board of Elders, whichever comes first.

**Clause E: Responsibilities**

The Pastor is the first line of defense to preserve and protect doctrine. He is to do this by maintaining the integrity of the doctrine contained in Paul's 13 books (Romans—Philemon) by preaching and teaching according to the revelation of the mystery and training the congregation about the dangers of heretical teaching. The Pastor is charged with assessing and meeting the spiritual needs of the

congregation, overseeing all activities within Grace Bible Church, serving on and working with the Board of Elders to set ministerial goals and working to accomplish those goals and to train up faithful men within the congregation. Ultimately, he shall do all he can to have all men understand the revelation of the mystery, as given to the Apostle Paul by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). The Pastor will also serve as President of the corporation.

## **Section 5: Deacons**

### **Clause A: Qualifications**

A Deacon must be male, over the age of 21, a regular attendee of Grace Bible Church, in agreement with the Statement of Faith, and satisfy the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8—13.

### **Clause B: Selection of Deacons**

The Elders may select as many qualified men as needed to accomplish what needs to be done. Approval to become a Deacon requires the consent of the candidate, and a majority vote of the Elders.

### **Clause C: Removal of a Deacon**

Any Deacon can be immediately removed without cause by a simple majority vote of the Board of Elders, including the vote of the Pastor. The Pastor may unilaterally remove any Deacon board member at any time if the board member fails to fulfill the qualifications of Deacon (as listed above).

### **Clause D: Term of Office**

Deacons have no specific term of office, but are selected as needed by the Elder board to serve the needs of the church. They can be removed from their position by resignation or removal by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

### **Clause E: Responsibilities of a Deacon**

Deacons help the Board of Elders accomplish the spiritual goals of Grace Bible Church by assisting them when called upon. This may include maintaining the physical assets of Grace Bible Church, or assisting in teaching and spiritual nourishment of the congregation. Deacons are to be role models to the congregation. They are to hold to the mystery of the faith, blameless and have their family under control (1 Timothy 3:8—16).

Deacons are leaders within the church but do not serve on the Board of Elders nor do they have voting rights.

## **ARTICLE III—Prohibited Activities**

The Pastor, Elders, Deacons and congregation are all obligated to conduct themselves in conformity with Scripture and with the Statement of Faith of Grace Bible Church. Anyone disregarding these standards will be brought before the Board of Elders and given a chance to repent. Those who refuse will be removed from any leadership positions and may be asked to leave the congregation.

Grace Bible Church and its leadership are prohibited from engaging in activities that violate its written doctrines. In addition, the church is also prohibited from condoning,

promoting, or allowing any of its assets to be used for activities that violate its written doctrines.

#### **ARTICLE IV—Official Meetings**

The Board may conduct its business informally, but in the event of a dispute, Robert's Rules of Order, as last revised, shall be the parliamentary manual for Grace Bible Church.

Regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held four times each calendar year, or as needed. Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called at any time by order of the Chairman of the Board or a majority of the Elders.

Notice can be sent via verbal announcement, email, telephone, regular mail or any other method as agreed upon by all persons involved as long as a concerted effort is made to contact all Elders five days prior to the meeting. Notice will be defined as the date notification was actually sent, if using electronic notification, or three days after the postmark on a letter.

All decisions made at official meetings will be made by a majority vote of the Board of Elders, except as noted otherwise. A quorum of the Board of Elders shall be two-thirds of its membership. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Meetings are to be conducted in person, if practical, but can also be attended via remote communication, such as Skype, telephone conference call or other means where all voting members are able to interact with each other in real time. If there are handouts, all members must have them available to them at the time of the meeting. Meeting minutes shall specifically state who is remotely attending the meeting and how they are participating in the meeting. Remote attendance will be considered the same as attending a meeting in person with all meeting rules adhered to.

#### **ARTICLE V—Property**

The Board of Elders along with the Deacons are charged with the responsibility of proper oversight, maintenance and care of the church facilities and other assets. Use of church property for purposes other than the regularly scheduled meetings and activities of our assembly is permitted at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

#### **ARTICLE VI—Dissolution**

If the dissolution of this corporation occurs, the Board of Elders shall, at their discretion, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all assets of the corporation in full accord with the then existing regulations of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding provision of any United States law).

#### **ARTICLE VII—Amendments**

Any article or section of this Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the Board of Elders at any properly convened meeting.



Approved 3/9/2016