

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

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CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this congregation shall be called the Grace Baptist Church of Grandview, Texas.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

ALL BIBLE REFERENCES ARE KING JAMES VERSION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

The purpose of Grace Baptist Church is to praise and worship God, obeying the commands of His son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. To lead others to know Christ as Savior and to follow Him as Lord and to study and teach the Bible, to train and equip believers, to pray and to develop Christian fellowship. Our purpose is also to minister in the name of Christ to the church, community, nation, and world through the generous personal giving of time, talents, and possessions. To spread the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, according to the Great Commission (“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Mathew 28:19, 20) and (Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15).

ARTICLE III. CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH¹

HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is God’s written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (I Corinthians 2:7-14; II Peter 1:20, 21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (I Corinthians 2:13; I Thessalonians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (II Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31.17). The literal or natural are shadows of the spiritual meanings (I

¹ Adapted from the doctrinal statement of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, and Second London Confession (1677).

Corinthians 15:44-46). The natural points to the spiritual. We should never emphasize the literal over the spiritual, but to truly understand the spiritual meaning we must have the right understanding of the literal meaning (Colossians 2:17; Ephesians 5:29-32; Romans 2:23, 29; Hebrews 8:1-13; 9:1-28; 10:10-18; John 3:1-15; Matthew 12:39, 40; John 6:31-36; 6:58; 4:10-14).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12, 13; 17:17-18; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20, 21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (II Peter 1:20, 21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; II Timothy 3:16).

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; I Corinthians 2:7-15; I John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture recognizing the proper application is binding on all generations. That part of Scripture written to the church is applicable to all the church (anyone who has ever put their trust in Jesus) for all time. We do not believe parts were written to certain churches and thus they do not apply today. We believe that the Scripture is absolute truth that applies to all men for all time (Psalms 100:5; Matthew 5:18).

GOD

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; I Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to his own purpose and grace (Psalms 145:8, 9; I Corinthians 8:9). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is Sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is Spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; II Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (I Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author of nor approves of sin (Habakkuk 1:13),

nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (I Peter 1:17). He saves from sin all those who come to Him; and he becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrew 12:5-9).

God the Son

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is co-equal, co-substantial, and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that God the father created “the heavens and the earth and all that is in them:” according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9, 10; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men and rule over God’s Kingdom (Psalms 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25, 26; I Peter 1:18, 19).

We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to full prerogatives of co-existence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8).

We teach that Our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24, 25; 5:8; I Peter 2:24).

We teach that Jesus Christ did not only die for our sins but became our sin on the cross. When our sin came upon Him, God’s Spirit left Him. God cannot be in the presence of sin. Jesus Christ did not fear physical death but separation of fellowship with God (John 10:18; Mark 15:34; Hebrews 9:28; II Corinthians 5:21). We teach that Jesus Christ died for all mankind but that the Blood Atonement only applies to those who receive Him as Lord (Romans 10:9, 10; I John 2:2; Titus 2:11; II Peter 2:1; John 3:17).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, that believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8, 9; II Corinthians 5:14, 15; I Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that he is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High-Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38, 39; Acts 2:30, 31; Romans 4:25; 6:5-10; I Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 4:25; 6:5-10; I Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the second coming (Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that The Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22, 23):

- A. Believers (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10).
- B. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-36);
and
- C. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, not derived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (I Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30, will (I Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13, 14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is co-equal and co-substantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 28:25, 26; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in the creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18, the written revelation (II Peter 1:20, 21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16, 17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ. His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming

believers into the image of Christ (John 16:9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regenerating, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers believers for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9-11; II Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13, 14; Acts 1:18; I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today (I Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Relation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, became separated from God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Timothy 2:13, 14; I John 1:8; John 1:9).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages. Jesus Christ is the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, thus being born into sin (Psalms 14:1-2; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. We are saved by grace, through faith, we are justified by grace, sanctified by grace and

preserved by grace (Jude 1:24,2-5; II Timothy 1:122; II Timothy 4:18; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:4; 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; I Peter 1:2). There is no righteousness in man worthy of salvation (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 64:6).

We teach that sovereign election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty (Romans 8:28-30). God is truly sovereign, but he exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; II Timothy 1:9).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:12-17; II Peter 1:4-11). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:16-17; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:2-3). Obedience to God's Word is a result of our salvation and not part of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:30-33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; II Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the placing of our sins on Christ (Colossians 2:14; I Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (I Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:11; II Corinthians 5:21). By this means, God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous. Sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; I Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11, 3:1, 10:10,14; 13:12; I Peter 1:2).

We teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the likeness of Christ through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; II Corinthians 3:18; I Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23). In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this early life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; I Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrew 7:25; 13:5; I Peter 1:4-5; Jude 23-24; II Timothy 1:12; II Timothy 4:18; Psalms 37:38).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 16-17, 25-26; Titus 3:11-14).

Separation

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; II Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved will desire to live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from any association with religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God

(Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 5:9-13; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a beatitude attitude (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; I John 3:1-10).

THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (I Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the second coming of Christ for His own (I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (I Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one scriptural body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (I Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (males, who are also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons (also males), both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that these elders lead or rule as servants of Christ (I Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; II Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:15-17), as well as the need for discipline for sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of

Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

We teach the authority of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Local churches, however, through their elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be sole judges of the measure and method of their cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; I Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (II Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16, 17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; I John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (I Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach that all the gifts are still given to Christians by the agent of the Holy Spirit today (I Corinthians 12:11, 27-31). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to minister to Christians, to point non-Christians to the Lord Jesus Christ, to edify the body and to glorify God (I Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:3-16; Romans 12:4-21). The exercising of a spiritual gift will always glorify God and is not for the purpose of drawing attention to the agent of that gift. A manifestation of a spiritual gift outside of the structure in God's Word is not of God. Satan has the authority to counterfeit these gifts today (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

We teach that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:108; John 5:09; II Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15). We teach that the gift of tongues is used to point non-believers to Jesus Christ in their own language or dialect (Acts 2:5-11; I Corinthians 14:22). The exercising of the gift of tongues will always follow the structure that God has ordained in His Word (I Corinthians 14:1-40). We teach that love is above all the gifts, will never fail, and endures forever (I Corinthians 13:1-13). We must always speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

We teach that two ordinances have been commanded of the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (I Corinthians 11:23-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual Communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (I Corinthians 10:16).

The church, as the bride of Christ, must be submissive to His Word in our lives (Ephesians 5:2).

THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

We teach that the marriage covenant that God has ordained is a portrait of our covenant of salvation with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). The husband is commanded to love his wife unconditionally, as Christ loves us. He will never stop loving us. His love is not dependent upon our performance. Also, just as the wife is commanded to submit to her husband, so also we should submit to Jesus' authority in our lives as the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7).

We teach that the bond of marriage is one man, one woman for life until death parts them (Romans 7:2-4).

MARRIAGE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

We teach that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

Marriage — Grace Baptist Church defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33)

Sexual Immorality — Grace Baptist Church believes that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, Grace Baptist Church members are

expected to resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside of marriage — (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:7-23, Leviticus 20:10-21, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 15:19, Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 15:19, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5)

Sexual Identity — Grace Baptist Church believes that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, Grace Baptist Church members are expected to affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. (Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Sexual Orientation — Grace Baptist Church believes that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, Grace Baptist Church members are expected to affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9, Revelation 21:2)

Sexual Redemption — Grace Baptist Church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, Grace Baptist Church members are expected to welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to Grace Baptist Church’s Confession of our Faith. (Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16)

Celibacy — Grace Baptist Church believes that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within the Grace Baptist Church. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Holy Scripture

Marriage and Human Sexuality

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:18-24
- Genesis 19:5-10
- Exodus 20:14
- Leviticus 18:7-23
- Leviticus 20:10-21
- Deuteronomy 5:18
- Judges 19:22-24
- Matthew 5:27-28
- Matthew 15:19
- Matthew 19:4-9
- Mark 10:5-9
- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-13
- 1 Corinthians 5:21
- Galatians 5:19
- Ephesians 4:17-19
- Ephesians 5:25-27
- Ephesians 5:31
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3
- Hebrews 13:4
- 1 Timothy 1:8-10
- Jude 1:7
- Revelation 19:7-9
- Revelation 21:2

Pastoral Care

- Matthew 11:28-30
- Romans 3:23
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Hebrews 2:17-18
- Hebrews 4:14-16

ABORTION

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our inspired, infallible, and inerrant guide. (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Because Holy Scripture speaks to creation and human life, it is imperative that we correctly understand, articulate, and abide by what Holy Scripture teaches on this matter.

We believe that God has created mankind in His image (*Imago Dei*) and that human life begins at fertilization. God, in his infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God and to be good and faithful stewards of creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in his mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14). God has ordained all the days of each person's life before they came to be (Psalm 139:16).

Religious Beliefs

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

From the moment of fertilization until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God, in His image and likeness.

From the moment of fertilization, every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the inviolable right to life.

The right to life and physical integrity of every unborn human life is inviolable — it is not a concession made by society or the state, but is instead inherent to the unborn human life by virtue of its creation in the image of God.

Because human life begins at the moment of fertilization, it is against our religious and moral conviction to formally or materially cooperate in the termination of unborn human life.

We are strongly committed to the preservation and defense of unborn human life, which compels our religious, moral, and ethical duty to defend unborn human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or services that have the intent, design, effect, or risk of terminating unborn human life or preventing its implantation and growth post-fertilization.

The Church and all her ministers and ministries should publicly witness to society and to the state regarding the intrinsic, inherent, and inviolable dignity of all human life, from fertilization to natural death.

Holy Scripture

In standing against abortion, this church incorporates by reference the following Holy Scriptures (NIV), which are cited in the statements, resolutions, commentaries, or doctrines of Christian denominations that are expressly and vocally opposed to abortion: Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church in America, Roman Catholic Church, and Southern Baptist Convention.

Genesis 1:26-27

Genesis 25:21

Exodus 20:13

Psalms 22:9

Psalms 139:13-16

Isaiah 44:1

Isaiah 49:5

Job 10:8-12

Jeremiah 1:4-5

Luke 1:39-45

Redemption

This church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, church members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who have endured the tragedy of abortion but are sincerely and resolutely committed to conform their behavior to this church's Confession of our Faith on Abortion.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIAN MEN

To God

We teach that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart; with all your soul; and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39). These passages mean that we must submit our emotions, will, and intellect to the Lordship of Christ, through His Word which He has given us.

To Wife

We teach that the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her (Ephesians 5:25, 33; Colossians 3:19). The word for love in Ephesians 5:25 is the same word for love in John 3:16 of God towards the world. This type of love is a sacrificial, unconditional, type of love that loves no matter what type of response or lack of response it receives. This type of love is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and can only manifest itself when the husband is under the authority of the Holy Spirit. The husband is commanded of God to remain faithful to his wife (Malachi 2:14-16). The husband should be a disciple of God's Word so that he may instruct or teach his wife the Word of God (I Corinthians 14:34-35). The husband is to bestow honor upon his wife, and he should cherish her as the gift that God has given him, so his prayers may not be hindered. If the husband does not have the right relationship of open understanding and honor towards his wife, then his prayers will be hindered (I Peter 3:7). The husband is to be the provider for his household (I Timothy 3:8).

To Children

We teach that fathers are to raise their children by teaching them God's Word, by example, and through studying the scriptures with them. Fathers are commanded to discipline their children with love and not provoke them to anger (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 1:8; 13:24; 22:6).

To the Church

We teach that men are to be leaders in the structure of the church that God has ordained. This is clear from the qualifications in the Word of God for pastors and elders. The men of a body of believers, should lead the body with love, always looking out for the best interest of the body and encouraging a constant growth in its relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, by guidance of the Holy Spirit (Titus 2:1-2, 6-8; I Corinthians 15:34-35; I Timothy 2:12).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN

To God

We teach that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart; with all your soul; and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39). These passages mean that we must submit our emotions, will, and intellect to the Lordship of Christ, through His Word which He has given us.

To Husband

We teach that the wife is instructed in scripture to submit to the leadership of her husband, unless it clearly contradicts the Word of God (I Peter 3:1-6; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18). Wives should respect, love, and live with their husbands until death (Ephesians 5:33; Titus 2:5; Romans 2:2-3). The attributes of Godly women will be the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4). These are qualities of an inward change that result in an outward change. I Peter 3:1 teaches that inward submission can be such a strong influence that it can change a non-believing husband to a believer or correct the path of a husband that is already a believer. This same inward spirit of submission of the heart and its attributes, are mentioned in Titus 2:3-5; I Timothy 2:9-11; and Proverbs 30:10-31.

To Children

We teach that the mother is instructed in scripture to love her children (Titus 2:4). She is also to teach them the Word of God by example and through study (Proverbs 12:8). The mother is to provide and look after the needs of her children (Proverbs 30:15, 27).

To the Church

We teach that women are to be examples to others by their submissive spirit in the structure of the church. The Word of God forbids women to have authority over men in the church (I Timothy 2:12). Older women are to instruct the younger women in the ways of the Lord (Titus 2:4, 50). Women are not permitted to teach men the Word of God in the church (I Timothy 2:1, 12).

A woman's beauty should not come merely from outward adornment, such as arranging the hair, and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine apparel. Instead, it should be that of her inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God (I Peter 3:3, 4).

ANGELS

Holy Angels

We teach that angels are holy created beings, messengers, and servants, and are therefore not to be worshipped. They are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11, 21).

Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Revelation 9:11), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

LAST THINGS

Death

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that there is a separation of soul and body (James 2:26), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (I Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; Philippians 3:21). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with Our Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of everyone, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; II Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrected body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Second Coming

We teach the personal, glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (I Corinthians 15:51-53; I

Thessalonians 4:15-5:11) and to reward believers according to their works (II Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10).

The Final Judgment

We teach that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world. His judgment will be according to His own righteousness and will be carried out by the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27). On that day, all persons shall be judged including fallen angels (I Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6), and shall be required to give an account of thoughts, words, and deeds. Each one shall receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil (II Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:32).

Application

All of our members are expected to affirm and adhere to this Confession of our Faith to qualify for involvement with the ministry of this church. All of our employees, ministry staff, and volunteers must affirm and adhere to this Confession of our Faith to qualify for involvement with the ministry of this church. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals, and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission, inviting scandal on this church.

Authority

Holy Scripture is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle, and conduct. Grace Baptist Church Elder Council is charged with the ministerial responsibility of Biblical interpretation and application as well as determining final matters relating to church policies, Christian practice, faith, divine truth, morality, and theological and doctrinal resolutions.

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the

expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel thorough all nations.

We also engage to maintain family; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossip, slander and excessive anger; to abstain from drunkenness and any ungodly conduct, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

ARTICLE V. CHURCH POLITY

The government of this church is vested solely in the body of members who compose it. It shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.

This church shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, being in general accord with the doctrines and polity they represent.

ARTICLE VI. ADOPTION, SUSPENSION, AMENDMENT OR REPEAL

(a) Adoption

This Constitution and By-Laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present, at the business conference, at which a vote is taken, shall vote in favor of it. Such vote shall be taken not less than twenty calendar days after formal presentation of the Constitution and By-Laws to the church membership.

(b) Suspension, Amendment or Repeal

This Constitution and by-Laws may be suspended, amended, or repealed by two-thirds vote of those present and voting at any regular church business conference. The proposed suspension, amendment, or repeal must first be presented to the Elders in writing, and upon recommendation of the Elder Council, the proposed suspension, amendment, or repeal shall be presented to the church membership at least twenty calendar days prior to the time the vote is taken.

ARTICLE VII. ORDINANCES

(a) Baptism

The ordinance of baptism by immersion may be administered at any worship service for the benefit of all candidates who have united with the church upon public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The pastor shall be

the one duly authorized to administer this ordinance except in extenuating circumstances where the pastor may designate a person to administer.

(b) Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once every three months. Those persons receiving the Lord's Supper shall be Christians and baptized believers.

ARTICLE VIII. REGULATIONS

BY-LAW 8.01 MEMBERSHIP

(a) Qualification for Membership

a. Persons are invited to join the fellowship of grace Baptist Church who have experienced and given evidence of regeneration in Jesus Christ, who have been baptized by immersion in a New Testament church of like faith and order, who will strive to follow and live by the teachings of the Holy bible, and who are expected to agree and abide by the Constitution and By-Laws contained herein.

(b) Admission to Membership

a. Upon Profession of Faith. Any person publicly professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and declaring that it is their purpose to be His disciple, may be received by affirmation of the church into full fellowship subject to baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

b. From Another Church of Like Faith and Order. A person from another church of like faith and order may be received, by affirmation of the church and upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from that church.

c. By Statement. Anyone who has been a member of a Baptist Church and has no regular letter of recommendation may be received affirmation into the fellowship upon a statement satisfactory to the church.

d. By Restoration. Any person from whom fellowship has been withdrawn may be restored to membership upon presentation of evidence of repentance to the Elder Council and then must be received by affirmation of the church.

(c) Duties of Members

a. Each member of Grace Baptist Church is expected to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life, to attend regularly the services of the church, to give regularly, systematically, and cheerfully their tithe and offering to the support of Kingdom causes; to share the responsibilities of

its organized work; to witness to others of Jesus Christ and His saving power.

(d) Termination of Membership

- a. Death: The name of a member shall be removed from the church roll upon his death.
- b. Separation: Letters of recommendation may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. A person's membership in this church shall cease at the time the church, in business conference, votes to grant him a letter of recommendation. (The church shall not grant letters of recommendation except upon request of another church, and only to another church).
- c. Removal: When a member of this church joins a church of a different faith and order, membership in this church immediately terminates without a letter of recommendation. After confirmation of member's decision and majority vote of the membership present, that person's name shall be removed from the church roll.
- d. Discipline: If a member is determined to be guilty of conduct unbecoming a Christian, so that the church and the name of Christ is brought into disrepute, it will be the duty of the pastor and/or the elders to confer with such person in the hope of restoring him to the fellowship of the church. If the member will not be reconciled the Elder Council shall then make a recommendation to the church to exclude said member from its membership. The church will adopt the recommendation if two-thirds majority of the membership voting shall vote for the exclusion.

BY-LAWS 8.02 MEETINGS

(a) For Worship and Work

- a. For public worship, preaching, Bible study, instruction and evangelism, regular meetings shall be held each Lord's Day and other planned times as desired by the church. Any exception shall be determined by the Elder Council.
- b. There shall be Bible teaching in groups and at times that meet the needs of the congregation. There shall be ministries established, which may be deemed advisable by the church for the purpose of teaching the word of God and training in Christian life and service.
- c. The church shall conduct evangelistic meetings from time to time as agreed upon by the church upon recommendation by the elder body.

- (b) For Transaction of Business
- a. Business meetings: a regular Business Conference shall be conducted on a frequency that meets the needs of the church at a day and time determined by the Elder Council.
 - b. Special Called Business Meetings: these may be called by the elders of the church at a designated time, and notice of the time, place and purpose of such meeting shall be given at the regular morning worship service on the Lord's Day preceding such meeting. Only stated business may be transacted at such meetings.
 - c. Emergency Business Meetings: the elders of the church for the purpose of transacting emergency matters only, may call emergency business meetings. The elders will determine the matter of emergency.
 - d. Quorum: a quorum for the transaction of church business, as, determined by the moderator, if less than 50% of church members are present, shall be the members of the church present at such meeting. A majority vote of the members present and voting shall determine any matter voted upon, except those matters covered in the constitution and requiring a specific type vote.
 - e. In all questions of procedure at any business meeting of the church, the meeting shall be guided and governed by Robert's Rules of Order. An exception to the rules is granted when the majority of the elders present request that an issue be tabled until the issue is deliberated within the Elder Council. The moderator shall put the issue on the following business meeting agenda, if appropriate.
 - f. The chairman of elders, or his appointed designee, shall be the moderator of all church business meetings.

BY-LAW 8.03 CHURCH OFFICERS

- (a) Qualifications, Duties, and Responsibilities:
- All church officers shall be of good repute, regular in attendance, supporters of church ministries, and qualified to perform the duties demanded by the office to which they are elected. All officers of Grace Baptist Church: the pastor, associate pastors and ministers, elders, and deacons shall be reviewed and approved through Elder Council oversight and Biblical qualifications. All church officers must adhere to the Grace Baptist Code of Conduct.
- a. Pastor
 - a. Qualifications, duties and responsibilities for pastors are based on biblical qualifications and a Christ-centered life (Acts 20:28;

11:29-30; 15:4, 6, 23; James 5:14-15; I Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17).

- b. The primary duties and responsibilities of the church pastor are planning and leading the church in worship, preaching and teaching, leading the church in God's work, and leading lost souls to Jesus Christ all of which result in growth of God's Kingdom and Grace Baptist Church.
 - c. The called pastor shall attend all elder meetings and shall serve as a voting member on the Elder Council.
- b. Youth, Music and Other Associate Pastors or Ministers
- a. Qualifications, duties and responsibilities for youth and music and other associate pastors/ministers are based on biblical qualifications and a Christ-centered life (Acts 20:28; 11:29-30; 15:4, 6, 23; James 5:14-15; I Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17).
 - b. The primary duties and responsibilities of the church's associate pastors/ministers are planning and leading the church in a specific ministry such as youth or music. Duties include preaching and teaching, leading the church in God's work, and leading lost souls to Jesus Christ all of which result in growth of God's Kingdom and Grace Baptist Church. Filling in at the pulpit when requested by the Elder Council.
- c. Elder
- a. Qualifications, duties and responsibilities for elders are based on Biblical qualifications and a Christ-centered life (Acts 20:28; 11:29-30; 15:4, 6, 23; James 5:14-15; I Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17).
 - b. The duties of the elders are to exercise oversight in the church, assisting in counseling with the pastor and the church membership, promoting the Kingdom's work by precept and example, and to see that the activities of the church are carried out in a scriptural and orderly manner (Philippians 1:1-11).
 - c. The elders shall elect a chairman, and other officers, as they deem suitable to serve the Elder Council each year.
- d. Deacon
- a. Qualifications for deacon are based on biblical qualifications and a Christ centered life (I Timothy 3:8-13). Deacons shall be of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

- b. The duties of deacons are to serve the church body with works, promoting the Kingdom's work by precept and example. (Acts 6:1-7; John 2:5; Philippians 1:1-11)
- c. Deacons are to give assistance to the pastor and elders when called upon to use the gifts given to them by God. The Deacons have oversight of specific ministries with the election of the congregation and at the direction of the council of elders.
- d. The elected Deacons should serve as the chairperson on ministries in which they are members.

(b) Officer Placement, Dismissal and Vacancies:

The procedures described below shall be followed for placement of church officers, dismissal of church officers, and to fill vacancies of the church's officer positions.

a. Pastor, Associate Pastor/Minister

- a. Placement – a pastor, associate pastor/minister will be called to serve Grace Baptist Church with Elder Council recommendation and three-fourths vote of the voting members present at a called conference meeting. The council of elders will interview prospective pastor/ministers and recommend to the church only the pastor/ministers that have agreed to lead the church body in accordance with the church's Constitution and By-Laws.
- b. Dismissal – Pastors and associate pastor/ministers can only be dismissed from service with recommendation from the Elder Council and a subsequent two-thirds vote of the church membership. The following procedures shall be used if a grievance warranting Elder Council oversight is brought to the attention of an elder.
 - 1. The Elder Council in private conference with the pastor/minister shall discuss the grievance.
 - 2. The Elder Council, after much prayer and deliberation with the pastor shall either:
 - i. Inform the person(s) that grievance does not warrant dismissal, or
 - ii. recommend the pastor for counsel and requirements for restoration
 - iii. Bring recommendation to the church body for dismissal

3. If dismissal is recommended, the Chairman of the Elder Council or Vice Chairman (if the pastor/minister is currently the chairman) shall bring the recommendation before the church body.
 4. Voting shall be done on Sunday Morning following Worship and announcement to attending members the week preceding church action.
 5. Should the dismissal fail to receive an affirmative two-thirds vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.
 6. Should dismissal receive an affirmative two-thirds vote, termination of responsibility shall occur immediately.
- c. Vacancy – When vacancies occur, the elders will be responsible to seek out and recommend to the church body a Minister of the Gospel for consideration. The elders may request deacons to assist with the search.
- b. Elder
- a. Placement – The number of active elders will be established, based on church needs, as recommended by the Elder Council and approved by two-thirds vote of the church. This position will be filled only after recommendation from the Elder Council.
 - b. Dismissal – elders shall not be dismissed from service except by recommendation of the Elder Council and two-thirds vote of the church membership. The following procedures shall be used if a grievance warranting elder termination is brought to the attention of the Elder Council.
 1. The Elder Council in private conference with the elder shall discuss the grievance.
 2. The Elder Council, after much prayer and deliberation with the elder shall either:
 - i. Inform the person(s) that grievance does not warrant dismissal, or
 - ii. recommend the elder for counsel and requirements for restoration
 - iii. Bring recommendation to church body for dismissal.
 3. If dismissal is recommended, the Chairman of the Elder Council or Vice Chairman (if the elder grievance is brought

against the Chairman) shall bring the recommendation before the church body.

4. Voting shall be done on Sunday Morning following Worship and announcement to attending members the week preceding church action.
 5. Should the dismissal fail to receive an affirmative two-thirds vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.
 6. Should dismissal receive an affirmative two-thirds vote, termination of responsibility shall occur immediately.
- c. Vacancy – the Elder Council will be responsible to seek out and recommend to the church an elder for church consideration when there is a vacancy.
- c. Deacon
- a. Placement – the number of active deacons will be established, based upon church needs, as recommended by the Elder Council and approved by the church. Nominations of men scripturally qualified under the church guidelines, and willing to serve will be presented to the church for election.
 - b. Dismissal – deacons are dismissed from service based on recommendation from the Elder Council and majority vote of the membership present at the time of voting.
 - c. Vacancy – deacons will be nominated by the church body when vacancies of specific church ministries exist. Church members will be requested by the council of elders to nominate adult male resident members of the church, who are 21 years of age or older, whom they feel meet the spiritual qualifications, and whom are gifted in the specific ministry being requested.

BY-LAW 8.04 CHURCH STAFF, OTHER THAN OFFICERS

(a) Qualifications, Duties, and Responsibilities:

All employees of the church will have his or her duties and other information concerning employment listed on a job description and approved by the church. The pastor is to supervise the activities of each church staff member. Paid staff shall be ex-officio members of all ministries of the church that are related to their work. All church staff must adhere to the Grace Baptist Code of Conduct.

- a. Placement – the paid staff members shall be selected by the church upon recommendation of the elders whenever a vacancy shall occur or when the church shall decide a need exists.
- b. Dismissal – no paid staff member may be dismissed from employment except by Elder Council approval.
- c. Vacancies – when vacancies occur, the Elder Council shall recommend a replacement.

BY-LAW 8.05 COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The Elder Council consists of biblically designated men serving under Christ and overseers of the assembly. The Elder Council is responsible for the following:

- (a) Leadership and management
 - a. The council is responsible for planning, coordinating, and evaluating church ministries.
 - b. Drafting church objectives and goals for recommendation to the congregation.
 - c. Developing and recommending to the congregation strategies for reaching church goals.
 - d. Reviewing and coordinating ministry plans and actions.
 - e. Preparing recommendations for the congregation regarding the use of resources in terms of the need for church ministries as they work toward the achievement of the objectives and goals of the church.
 - f. Providing for adequate communication among church officers, organizations, and committees.
 - g. Evaluating ministry achievements in terms of church objectives and goals, and in reporting evaluations to the church body.
 - h. Administering the constitution and By-Laws of the church.
 - i. Considering and attending to disciplinary matters.
 - j. Ensuring the pastoral ministry is carried out in the church.
 - k. Filling the pulpit, either filling it themselves or ensuring that it is filled.
- (b) Financial Matters
 - a. Ensuring that the church's financial matters are properly managed.

- b. Reviewing and recommending to the church all matters regarding the purchase or disposition of church property prior to legal execution of the matter.
- (c) Training – approving all church training ministries.
- (d) Personnel
 - a. Survey the need for additional employees and/or new positions and make recommendations to the church.
 - b. Prepare job descriptions for new church employees and rewrite job descriptions as needed.
 - c. Recruit and interview prospective employees and recommend their employment to the church.
 - d. Recommend salaries and develop benefits for all church employees.
 - e. Development and recommend personnel policies and procedures in the following areas: supervision of staff, relationships, work schedules, absences, vacations, holidays, salary, benefits and pay periods, staff meetings, handling of church funds, conferences and convention attendance, telephone calls, and training opportunities for self-improvement.

BY-LAW 8.06 USE OF FACILITIES

(a) Religious Activities

All Grace Baptist Church property and facilities (including furniture, fixtures, and equipment) are holy and set apart for worshiping God, regardless of the location of the facility (Colossians 3:17). Grace Baptist Church facilities are consecrated to our religious ministry and mission because they are a provision from God. Use of Grace Baptist Church property shall be for the propagation of the Christian faith, for fellowship, witnessing, religious teaching, and charity. Therefore, all use and occupancy of Grace Baptist Church property shall be limited to persons of our particular religion, the propagation of our religion, or related religious purposes.¹

All activities on church property must cohere with the religious purpose of Grace Baptist Church and further its Christian mission, whether the activity has an overt liturgical religious purpose (preaching, worship services, Bible instruction, communion, baptism) or a non-liturgical religious purpose (social service, mentorship, community service, benevolence, charity, school, wedding, recital, etc.). Grace Baptist Church conducts all activities in order to advance or express its Christian purpose, message and viewpoint. Church facility use shall be

¹ See, e.g., City of Houston Ordinance No. 2014-530, §§ 17-2, 17-54(2), 17-122(a)(1)—(2).

exclusively conditioned on whether the use promotes Grace Baptist Church mission, message and viewpoint, as all facility usage is an opportunity to glorify God. In addition, church property is exclusively reserved for persons and organizations who agree to abide by Grace Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws contained herein..

Likewise, Grace Baptist Church facilities are not generally open to the public and may not be used by persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs that conflict with the Grace Baptist Church faith or moral teachings – including but not limited to Grace Baptist Church Written Confession of Our Faith contained herein.

Any facilities that are made available to approved non-members for usage are meant to further Grace Baptist Church calling to minister to others, in the vein of charity and witnessing to our faith. For this reason, Grace Baptist Church property cannot be used for purposes that contradict the church’s beliefs, which would constitute a grave violation of the church’s faith and religious practice, as well as degrade Grace Baptist Church religious integrity (II Corinthians 6:3; and 14; I Thessalonians 5:22).

(b) Ownership/Control

Grace Baptist Church Elder Council possesses the exclusive power to enforce conformity of belief. In regards to facility usage, Grace Baptist Church seeks to avoid member confusion, formal or material cooperation with evil, and scandal by not associating with any conduct that contradicts its religious beliefs (1 Peter 2:12). Church property issues or disputes are directly related to religious doctrine and practice, as all facilities are utilized in a manner to advance or express Grace Baptist Church Christian mission, message, and viewpoint. (Colossians 3:17.) In the event that church facility use departs in any way from Grace Baptist Church doctrine, Written Confession of our Faith, teaching or policies, Grace Baptist Church designated religious authority shall exclusively resolve any disputes. The Elder Council alone may make inquiry into the religious law and usage of Grace Baptist Church facilities and is therefore essential to the resolution of the controversy.

(c) Facility Usage Fee Rate

Grace Baptist Church is a not-for-profit corporation. Because the facility is exclusively utilized for religious and ministry purposes, it may be reserved by members free of charge. The facility is not available to non-members except where authorized and under conditions set by the Elder Council.

(d) Requirements

Each member(s) or guest(s) utilizing Grace Baptist Church facilities (including equipment and property) are required to abide by all church guidelines,

requirements and use restrictions at all times. Each reserving member is required to sign Grace Baptist Church Facilities Usage Agreement.

Each event on church property must be authorized through the Elder Council prior to reservation.

Use of any controlled substance including, but not limited to illegal drugs, alcohol, smoke or e-cig tobacco products, all forms of marijuana, etc. is strictly prohibited on church property.

Church facilities are to be used with care and left in good, clean condition. If setup, teardown, cleaning, kitchen, or other services are required, there are fees to cover the cost of these services payable to the church office at the time of reservation.

Member(s) reserving Grace Baptist Church facilities or property must confine said usage to pre-approved areas of the church property, as provided for in their Facility Usage Agreement.

Any events involving children and/or youth require adequate adult supervision, provided by the reserving members(s) or invitee(s). Grace Baptist Church reserves the right to coordinate and schedule alternative activities and events in other church facilities. Reserving member(s) must understand that other areas of Grace Baptist's facilities may be in use simultaneously and must respect the reservation and use of other parts of our facilities by others.

Member(s) reserving Grace Baptist Church facilities or property must coordinate with the Grace Baptist Church audio/visual team prior to reserving any date on which church owned sound reinforcement or video equipment is required. Only authorized church personnel may operate sound reinforcement or video equipment that is church property. There may be costs associated with these requirements that must be coordinated separately with the audio visual team.

Grace Baptist Church reserves the right to accept or deny any applicants who seek to utilize or reserve Grace Baptist Church facilities. Permission that is granted to member(s) to utilize Grace Baptist Church facilities or property shall not be transferred or passed to any alternative individual, group, or organization without the prior permission of Grace Baptist Church.

Any and all damage occurring to Grace Baptist Church facilities as a result of their use or reservation, shall be repaired and replaced by the member(s) or invitee(s), at a cost determined by Elder Council or their designee. All who reserve Grace Baptist Church property or facilities for use agree to release, protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless Grace Baptist Church and its trustees, officers, employees, members and other representatives from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, actions, costs and expenses (including, without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and other legal costs)

directly or indirectly arising out of their use of any Grace Baptist Church facilities.

BY-LAW 8.07 CODE OF CONDUCT

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
(Philippians 1:27)

This Code of Conduct is necessary to protect the Grace Baptist Church family and to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. All employees, teachers, childcare, ministry staff and volunteers of Grace Baptist Church must affirm and adhere to this Code of Conduct, Confession of Our Faith, and other requirements referenced herein to qualify for employment with or involvement in any ministry of Grace Baptist Church.

Use of any controlled substance including, but not limited to illegal drugs, alcohol, smoke or e-cig tobacco products, all forms of marijuana, etc. is strictly prohibited on church property.

All members, employees, and volunteers who work in the nursery, children's ministries, youth ministries, or any special children's or youth functions must submit to a criminal background check.

All members, employees, and volunteers involved with any Grace Baptist Church ministry must maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries. Any physical contact between an adult and a minor child must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor, not the supervisory adult.

All members, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline for the behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable for any behavior except as may be required to restrain a minor from hurting themselves or others. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must be contacted if a minor is disrupting others, or is danger to themselves or others.

Grace Baptist Church is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect with a confidential *non-accusatory* report to law enforcement (Texas Family Code, Chapter 261).

Any reported or observed action that stands in contradiction of this code of conduct will be referred to the Elder Council, as the sole Grace Baptist Church designated religious authority, to make inquiry and resolve any controversy prior to action. Any employee who is found in violation of this code of conduct faces disciplinary action or dismissal at the sole discretion of the Elder Council. Any member or volunteer who is found in violation of this code of conduct faces removal from ministry at the sole discretion of the Elder Council. As the sole Grace Baptist Church designated religious authority, all Elder Council decisions are final. Re-admittance of a previously sanctioned

individual to any ministry is at the sole discretion of the Elder Council based on Grace Baptist Church's Confession of Our Faith.

BY-LAW 8.08 STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE MINISTRIES

Voluntary tithes, offerings, and gifts shall support the financial needs of this church, its organizations and causes fostered by it. These will be given to the church and disbursed by the church.

- (a) Budget – for the sake of efficiency the church shall operate on a budget determined and adopted by the church upon recommendation of the Stewardship and Finance Committee or Elder Council.
- (b) Stewardship Plan – the Stewardship and Finance Ministry or Elders develops and recommends an overall stewardship plan, and administers the gifts of the church as set forth in the by-laws.
- (c) Gifts to the church
 - a. Those authorized for money counting of the church are to ensure that all offerings are properly counted, recorded, and deposited in accordance with established procedures.
 - b. A record of such deposits shall be supplied to the church Office Administrator.
 - c. All money that comes into the church funds and not designated otherwise will be applied to the general church budget.
 - d. Special offerings, other than those for foreign, home, and state missions, are to be reviewed by the Elder Council before presentation to the church.
- (d) Expenditures
 - a. Anyone making non-budgeted purchases for the church shall obtain permission from the Elders or a designated staff member. In case there is a question concerning authorization of the person attempting to secure a purchase order, the Elders will review the question involved.
 - b. To obtain money for a church related purchase, a request for a purchase should be made to the applicable ministry budget manager or Elder.
 - c. After-the-fact Purchases: to obtain reimbursement from the church for items purchased for the church and paid by the purchaser, a reimbursement request should be obtained from the church office, completed, and returned, so that person may obtain payment. Pre-approval should be obtained when possible.

- d. The Elders are to administer expenditures of funds not included in the church's budget by taking requests and recommendations from a proper ministry or group and present requests to the church for approval if necessary.

BY-LAW 8.09 MINISTRY GROUPS (ESTABLISHED AS NEEDED)

A ministry is a person or a group of persons elected or appointed to investigate, report, or act in special cases. Ministry Groups of Grace Baptist shall be classified as standing and special.

- i. Ministry Group members must be members of Grace Baptist Church, or get Elder approval if non-members are requested to participate.
 - ii. The number of members and terms of office will be determined by the deacon or Ministry Group lead in cooperation with the Elder Council.
 - iii. Each Ministry Group will establish written objectives for its effort based on this constitution.
 - iv. Meetings will be held as deemed necessary.
 - v. Reports shall be made to the Elders or church as stated when assignments are made.
 - vi. All group vacancies will be reported to the Elder Council promptly for additional support if needed.
 - vii. No member shall concurrently serve on more than two (2) standing ministry groups with the exception of church officers designated to serve on special standing groups.
 - viii. Each ministry group will be responsible for maintaining an active record of all equipment and materials under their responsibility.
 - ix. All church ministry staff must adhere to the Grace Baptist Code of Conduct
- (a) Special Ministry Groups – Special Ministry Groups shall be authorized for specific obligation as determined by Grace. They are temporary in nature. Special Ministry Groups shall be formed and the number of members shall be decided at the time the need arises. Special Ministry Groups will cease to exist upon completion of their assigned obligation. Special Ministry Groups shall be determined by the Council of Elders.