

# GOSPEL GRACE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been brought by the grace of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and having been baptized by immersion upon our profession of faith in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

By God's gracious aid, we will walk together in Christian love, working and praying for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We will seek to promote the affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonish and entreat one another, as occasion requires. We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. We will aid one another in sickness and distress and cultivate Christian compassion toward the needy and downtrodden. We will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others. We will seek to sustain the church's worship, community, ordinances, doctrines and discipline. We will contribute of ourselves and our resources cheerfully, sacrificially, and regularly to the support of the ministry, expenses of the church, relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout the world.

We will endeavor to bring up those that are under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example seek the salvation of our family and friends. We will pursue a living relationship with God through the reading and application of His word. We will walk wisely in the world, be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct. We will seek to pursue peace with men and holiness before God.

To these and all other Christian duties we humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, striving to faithfully perform them in the strength of our Lord. We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# MISSION STATEMENT

We exist as a church to glorify God by making gospel-centered, grace-saturated disciples of Jesus Christ.

## CULTURE CODE (CORE VALUES)

Our culture is defined by what we celebrate, the ideologies we embrace, the rules we follow (written or unwritten), the heroes we honor, and the behaviors for we perpetuate. Our culture represents the outworking of our hearts - it is belief in action.

As we seek to carry out our mission, we prayerfully pursue the following as our culture code...

### *Authentic Worship*

God made us to magnify His greatness and live for His pleasure. Therefore, the overarching goal of Gospel Grace Church is to glorify Him in word and deed. Our personal pursuit of God should overflow in joyful worship together as a church, involving the whole man—mind, emotion, and will.

### *Christian Community*

Christians are born into a new community through the reconciling work of Christ. This new identity compels us to live in a communion of brotherly love. This is because when we are secure in God's love, we are free and responsible to radically love one another in transparency, accountability, and mutual edification.

### *Committed Discipleship*

Committed discipleship is a life-long process of becoming more like Christ and helping others do the same. We want believers of all ages to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. With the help of God's Spirit, we lovingly commit ourselves to helping other believers mature in Christlikeness. We will provoke one another to love and good works through scriptural instruction and life example.

### *Intentional Evangelism*

As recipients of God's grace, we are motivated to be outward facing with the message of Christ. We will intentionally seek to build redemptive relationships by serving and loving others. In addition, we will strive to make purposeful life choices that maximize our opportunities to proclaim the gospel locally and afar. Ultimately, we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord.

## *Scriptural Truth*

We want God's revealed truth to permeate all of life and ministry. To live means to consume God's Word (Matt. 4:4). Our goal is that believers would mature in Christlikeness by means of an ever-increasing knowledge of and submission to the Word (2 Tim. 3:15-16). We want to study God's Word in depth and be grounded in sound doctrine (Heb. 5:12-14). Therefore, the Bible will take priority and prominence in our worship services, for it has the power to change lives. Scripture makes it clear that our true problems are internal rather than external. Therefore, we apply the Word to the heart and not just to outward symptoms (Heb. 4:12).

## *Mercy and Compassion*

The gospel both humbles us to our desperate need for God and moves us to meet the needs of the poor, marginalized, broken, and downcast. Therefore, we want to be known for not just speaking the gospel, but also joyfully living it out in acts of mercy for the church, our neighborhood, Salt Lake City, and the world. Our priority in ministry is to point everyone to the source of all mercy—Jesus Christ.

## *Evident Faith*

At Gospel Grace Church, we understand that without faith it is impossible to please God. We are willing to be risk-taking, sacrificing-making, logic-breaking people because we know that the just shall live by faith. We want to obey God regardless of the cost and even if we don't know all the details. We refuse to dig our roots into that which is passing away. And we will prayerfully invest our families, our finances and our futures in the work of God because we trust the promises of God.

## *Commitment to Holiness*

As a people called out to be God's own possession, we no longer find our identity with the world, but have been delivered by grace from a lifestyle of sin and taught to live in holiness. Therefore, we are committed to personal and corporate purity through accountability, discipline and separation from sin and false teaching.

## *Eternally-minded Stewardship*

As people who have received everything by the grace of God, we commit both personally and corporately to wise and generous stewardship of all that God has entrusted to us. We will not hoard people or resources but will joyfully give to bless the body of Christ. In a world that values what is passing away, we will invest in eternity by valuing people over programs and facilities.

## *Purposeful Multiplication*

By means of the church, God displays his character and declares his message to a lost and broken world. We believe that the gospel's work naturally eventuates in the formation of new churches. Therefore, we will invest in reproducing church-planting churches in strategic communities throughout the Salt Lake valley and beyond. Such an endeavor requires leaders who will train leaders and teams who will pioneer new works (2Tim 2:2)

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## **The Bible**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, (2 Pet. 1:20-21) is the only, authoritative, sufficient, infallible Word of God, verbally inspired and without error in the original manuscripts. (2 Tim. 3:16) We hold to a normal, literal interpretation of Scripture.

## **God**

We believe in one God, (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7) existing in a unity of three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who are coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial. (2 Cor. 13:14) He is the Creator of all things, (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9) holy, sovereign, (Rev. 4:8; Psalm 103:19) loving, and infinitely perfect in every way.

## **The Father**

We believe that God the Father is the first person of the Trinity who is the only absolute, omnipotent ruler in the universe (Rom. 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is the Father of all men (Eph. 4:6), but He is Spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14). God the Father elects (Eph. 1:4-6), calls, justifies (Rom. 8:30), adopts (Rom. 8:15), and ultimately glorifies His own.

## **Jesus Christ**

We believe in the eternal deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His becoming a man without ceasing to be God, (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9) in His virgin birth, (Is. 7:14) in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His substitutionary and atoning death through His shed blood on the cross, (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24) in His bodily resurrection, (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:20,23) and in His ascension to the right hand of the Father. (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33) We believe He ever lives to make intercession for His saints, (Heb. 7:25) and that He is coming again to rule and reign in power and glory. (Is. 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33)

## **Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:7-9) He regenerates sinners (Titus 3:5) and places them into the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13) He also seals (Eph. 1:13), comforts (John 15:26), indwells, (Rom. 8:9-11) illuminates (1 Cor. 2:12), guides (Rom. 8:14), equips and empowers (Gal. 5:22-23) believers for Christ-like living and service. He gives gifts for the building up of the church. (1 Cor. 12:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11) Every Christian is gifted by the Spirit of God for the purpose of edifying the church and doing the work of the ministry. (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Rom. 12:6-8)

## **Mankind**

We believe that man was created sinless in the image of God (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; James 3:9) and that through transgression he incurred physical and spiritual death. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23) As a result, all human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. (Eph. 2:1-3) Apart from God's gracious intervention, man is without help, hope and completely depraved. (Rom. 5:12)

## **Salvation**

We believe that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life is a miraculous work of God by grace alone, through faith alone, (Eph. 2:8-9) in Christ alone. (John 14:6; 1 Pet. 1:18-19) It is the unmerited demonstration of God's love, available to all those who repent (turn from their sin) and trust in Jesus' atoning death and victorious resurrection. (2 Cor. 7:10; Luke 13:3; Heb. 9:28; John 1:12) It is only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ that man can be justified, sanctified, and ultimately glorified. (1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:30)

### **Christian Living**

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. This should result in a life that is separate from sin and set apart to God. (Rom 6:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:7) He commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, (Matt. 22:37-39; John 15:12-13) and to live out our faith in growing obedience to the Word and Holy Spirit such that we are progressively changed into the likeness of Christ. (2 Cor. 3:18) Growing Christians use their God-given gifts for the purpose of edifying the church, (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Pet. 4:10) doing the work of the ministry, and obeying our Lord's command to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19-20)

### **Things to Come**

We believe in the imminent return of Christ and the gathering up of his church known as the blessed hope. (1 Thess. 4:16; Titus 2:13) We believe in the tribulation, (2 Thess 2:7-12; Rev 16) the personal and physical second coming of Christ to establish His millennial kingdom, (Rev. 20:1-7) and the eternal state wherein the unsaved are judged and condemned to a literal hell (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15) and the saved are glorified to enjoy everlasting blessing in the presence of God. (2 Pet 3:10; John 17:3; Rev. 21:2)

### **The Church**

We believe that church is the body and bride of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8) into which all true believers of the present age are placed and that the members of this spiritual body should assemble themselves together in local churches (1 Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25) which consist of committed, baptized believers. We believe that the New Testament describes congregational

church government as being pastor/elder led and deacon served. (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) We believe that the commission of the church is to make disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teach them to obey Christ's commands. (Matt 28:19-20) The fulfillment of this commission eventuates in the perpetual, intentional, establishment of new local churches. (Acts 13; Acts 14:23,27; II Tim. 2:2) We believe that the church must maintain its purity by practicing biblical discipline (Matt. 18:15-19) and separation from false teaching. (Matt. 7:15-20; 2 Timothy 3:14; Titus 3:10)

### **The Ordinances**

We recognize believer's Baptism by immersion (Matt. 3:13-17; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-4) and the Lord's Supper (Communion) (Acts 2:38-42) as the Scriptural ordinances for the church in this age. Both of them visibly and tangibly express the gospel, and though they are not means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in faith-filled obedience, these ordinances spiritually nourish the believer and bear witness to the work of our Savior. (I Cor. 11:23-26)

### **Historic Baptist Distinctives**

We identify with a rich heritage of those who have held to the following scripturally derived principles: biblical authority, autonomy of the local church, priesthood of the believer, two ordinances, individual soul liberty, saved and baptized church membership, two church offices, and separation of church and state. (see *Week #3 - Understanding Our Identity* for thorough explanation and definition of the historic Baptist distinctives)

# CONSTITUTION

*Adopted, April 21, 2013*

*Revised and Amended, April 10, 2016*

*Revised and Amended, December 2, 2020*

It has pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite in 2012 under the name Gospel Grace Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore we, the members of Gospel Grace Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the Utah Nonprofit Corporation and Cooperation Association Act and Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Bylaws of this church.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this Corporation is Gospel Grace Church as recorded in the Articles of Incorporation in the state of Utah. It is a Utah nonprofit religious Corporation with its principal offices in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

This church exists for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. It is organized as a Baptist congregation for exclusively religious reasons (including charitable purposes common to church ministry as defined by Scripture). This church seeks to worship God in truth, build communities of faith, serve others with love, and share the story of grace.

## **ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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### **ARTICLE IV – CHURCH COVENANT**

Summary - The church covenant of Gospel Grace Church describes a member's commitment to the body. By signing it upon membership and affirming it regularly, we express our commitment to live out our faith. It reminds us that we cannot live in isolated individualism or unrepentant sin. It provides a biblical standard of behavior and reminds us of the obligations that membership entails for our lifestyles and interactions with each other. Living out the spirit of this covenant reduces nominalism and enhances accountability and growth in the church.

Covenant - Having been brought by the grace of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and having been baptized by immersion upon our profession of faith in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

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toward the needy and downtrodden. We will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others. We will seek to sustain the church's worship, community, ordinances, doctrines and discipline. We will contribute of ourselves and our resources cheerfully, sacrificially, and regularly to the support of the ministry, expenses of the church, relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout the world.

We will endeavor to bring up those that are under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example seek the salvation of our family and friends. We will pursue a living relationship with God through the reading and application of His word. We will walk wisely in the world, be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct. We will seek to pursue peace with men and holiness before God.

To these and all other Christian duties we humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, striving to faithfully perform them in the strength of our Lord. We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

## **ARTICLE V – CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

This church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its only head and Chief Shepherd. The Bible shall be the sole authority in matters of faith and shall prescribe the nature and practice of this congregation. The government of this church shall be congregational with authority vested in its members. They shall hold title to all properties, and their vote shall be final in all matters pertaining to the church. The congregation shall be led by scripturally qualified pastor/elder(s) and served by scripturally qualified deacon(s).

For the purpose of education, missions, and church planting endeavors, the pastor/elder(s) may enter into cooperative partnerships through congregationally approved funds, as long as those partnerships advance the church's mission and values and do not threaten its autonomy or statement of faith.

## **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP**

Summary - Members of this church shall be believers in Jesus Christ who profess faith in Him as the sole basis for their salvation. They shall believe wholeheartedly in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, have lives that give evidence of regeneration, and have been baptized by immersion following their conversion. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith, pledge to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant, and identify with the Mission Statement and Core Values. The pastor/elder(s) shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or other such evidence as the pastor/elder(s) deem appropriate. Voting in congregational meetings is limited to members who are 18 years or older.

Reception of Members – To be admitted into membership at Gospel Grace Church, applicants shall be recommended by the pastor/elder(s) for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members. In preparation for membership recommendation, applicants must fill out an application form which includes a written testimony of their salvation, a testimony of believer's baptism by immersion, a declaration that they are not under discipline from another church, and a signed affirmation of agreement with the Constitution of the church. In addition to this, applicants are required to complete the New Members curriculum in order to better understand the history, vision, and values of Gospel Grace Church.

Duties and Privileges of Membership – Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. In accord with the duties outlined in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the pastor/elder(s). Non-members may serve the church for the purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Termination of Membership – The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership after a three-month period of inactivity or absence (without satisfactory explanation to the pastor/elder(s)), after he or she has voluntarily resigned, after joining with another church, or following his or her death. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline upon vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

Church Discipline – Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord

Jesus may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. It can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and/or excommunication. Upon the exercise of Scriptural excommunication, all membership privileges shall be immediately suspended, and all tokens of Christian fellowship shall immediately cease until such time as restoration and reconciliation take place. Instruction and examples concerning this can be seen in Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. It should be for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. It should protect the purity of the church as a whole, and the integrity of its witness to non-Christians. Church discipline is supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

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## **ARTICLE VII – CHURCH MEETINGS**

Worship and Edification Meetings – The church will meet regularly each Lord’s Day (Sunday) for the worship of our God. Additional meetings may be held throughout the week as the church determines. Home discipleship groups, Bible studies, fellowship meetings, baptismal services and other meetings which complement the advancement of the church’s objectives may be organized by the pastor/elder(s) as seen fit.

Members’ Meetings – In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of Christ. Things shall be done decently and in order for the glory of God. All members shall actively seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There shall be a regular members’ meeting at least bi-annually, in the months of June and December. The fiscal year for Gospel Grace Church begins January 1, and ends December 31 each year. As such, the December meeting will include the presentation of the next annual budget to be approved by the membership in attendance. Prior to this approval and subject to the pastor/elder(s)’ discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year’s level.

A pastor/elder shall preside as moderator at all members’ meetings of the church unless an alternate is chosen by the pastor/elder(s). It is the pastor/elder(s) responsibility to see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Prior to any regular or special members’ meeting, an agenda shall be published, made available and announced at least one week in advance. Only recommendations or motions appearing on the meeting agenda will be addressed. Members with ideas or input shall submit a motion in writing to the pastor/elder(s) prior to the posting of an agenda. This will allow the pastor/elder(s) opportunity to evaluate the suggestion and include it in the agenda upon approval. This will allow the pastor/elder(s) to administrate members’ meetings in an orderly and expeditious manner with a minimum of confusion.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by the members present. No vote of any member shall be by proxy. A member must be personally present in order to vote. The voting process shall follow a simple majority rule. At any regular or special members’ meeting, officers may be elected, and positions filled as needed so long as all relevant constitutional requirements are met.

Routine policy matters, such as receiving members into the church, may be transacted when necessary by majority vote, without regard to agenda or previously stated time requirements.

Special Members’ Meetings – Special members’ meetings may be called as required by the pastor/elder(s), or at the written signed request, submitted to the pastor/elder(s), of ten percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at the public services of the church at least one week preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the pastor/elder(s) shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Emergency Members’ Meetings – Emergency members’ meetings may be called by the pastor/elder(s) to deal with issues that are considered extremely important in which it is impractical to wait one week or more. In such cases, widest dissemination of the agenda shall take place to the membership informing them of the impending need. Such meetings shall never be secret or spontaneous. Their intended use is limited to responding to urgent and important matters.

## **ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS**

Summary – The Biblical offices in the church are pastor/elder(s) and deacon(s). In addition, Gospel Grace Church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of the church in good standing. All officers shall be spiritually mature, of irreproachable Christian character, dedicated, and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual and material welfare of the church. They shall have faithful attendance and participation in the church. Officers should be a model of spiritual transparency and single-mindedness.

Pastor/Elder(s) – The pastor/elder(s) shall be men who satisfy the qualifications for the office set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Subject to the will of the congregation, the pastor/elder(s) shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the pastor/elder(s) shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by preaching, teaching, counseling, and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding the flock of God. When more than one pastor/elder comprise the leadership team, one of them shall serve as the “lead pastor/elder.” We recognize that there are leaders among the leaders. This was true of the apostolic company, in the early church at Ephesus and Crete, Old Testament Israel, the angelic company, and even the Godhead. We believe that there are distinctions among pastors/elders. 1 Timothy 5:17 conveys that all elders rule, but some also labor in the Word and doctrine. The lead pastor/elder shall be designated as the “first among equals” and function as the primary voice for preaching and vision at Gospel Grace Church.

The pastor/elder(s) shall provide leadership through oversight, spiritual guidance, and shepherding for the congregation. We believe that when this leadership team arrangement is possible, the harmonious blend of scripturally qualified men will enhance the longevity, wisdom, and health of pastoral leadership at Gospel Grace Church. Each member of the pastor/elder(s) shall find great satisfaction in submitting their gifts to the mission of the team as a whole. Leadership decisions will be made by consensus amongst the pastor/elder(s). If consensus cannot be reached, the pastor/elder(s) will abide by the conflict resolution policy which is to be signed at the time they assume office.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling and seek to train them up as pastor/elder(s) for service in ministry. According to 2 Timothy 2:2 and Acts 13:1-3, the church has the responsibility and privilege of reproducing faithful servant leaders who will advance the Kingdom cause through pastoral ministry/eldership.

The pastor/elder(s) shall examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine, practice, admonish, and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline and stewardship of resources, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church to advance the Great Commission. The pastor/elder(s) are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our foundational convictions and faithfully proclaim the Truth.

The pastor/elder(s) may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. They may also propose funding for new paid positions to include additional pastor/elder(s), ministry staff, pastoral assistants, and interns. The membership shall elect by vote all candidates to fill the positions of pastor/elder. All other positions are filled by pastor/elder appointment predicated upon congregational approval of funding.

The scope and approval of job descriptions for ministry staff, pastoral assistants, and interns shall reside in the hands of the pastor/elder(s). The pastor/elder(s) shall have primary responsibility for hiring, employment, supervision, evaluation and when necessary, termination. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each pastor/elder shall serve for an undesignated period of time.

The pastor/elder(s) shall perform an annual assessment and affirmation regarding the fulfillment of Biblical qualifications, heart for pastoral ministry, unity and health of each elder. For the longevity and health of the pastor/elder(s), regular sabbaticals shall be taken in accordance with the church policy manual. A pastor/elder’s term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that a pastor/elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the other pastor/elder(s) (or deacon(s) if there is no other elder). Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Following such actions, any pastor/elder may be dismissed by a majority vote of the members at any members’ meeting of the church.

Deacon – The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize, nominate and elect men who are scripturally qualified and given to the service of the church. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

New deacons shall be nominated by the congregation, screened for qualification, ability, and desire by the pastor/elder(s) and then voted upon by the congregation at a regularly scheduled members’ meeting. The number of deacons at Gospel Grace Church shall correlate with the need as determined by the pastor/elder(s), and the availability of able, qualified, and willing men. A deacon shall be elected to a two-year term. He may be reelected for consecutive terms as long as both he and the pastor/elder(s) concur with the unbroken extension. There may be times when the best interests of the church and/or the deacon’s family are served by sabbatical rest. In such cases, reelection would be declined by the pastor/elder(s) and or the deacon for at least one term.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and serve the church in ways that promote and benefit the ministry. They shall disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the pastor/elder(s) at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements.

Paid Ministry Staff and Interns – Church ministry staff and interns shall be called and employed when the church and pastor/elder(s) determine the need for such positions. All ministerial staff and interns will be under the direction of the pastor/elder(s) and shall be required to be in harmony with pastor/elder(s) and their leadership of the church. It is required that all staff members and interns be scripturally qualified and have adequate professional training to perform their designated ministry objectives. The pastor/elder(s) may terminate the employment of any staff member or intern at any time.

Additional Ministry Employees - Gospel Grace Church requires all employees to sign a statement affirming that they agree with and are willing to abide by our organization's statement of faith, standard of conduct and employee handbook.

Clerk – It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular, special, and emergency members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, to keep baptismal records, to render reports as requested by the pastor/elder(s), deacon(s), or the church. The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a three-year term. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

Treasurer – The treasurer may not be an active pastor/elder, deacon, or paid church staff member. He or she shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at least each month to the pastor/elder(s) and to the church at large at least twice a year in June and December at members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the pastor/elder(s). The treasurer shall ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the pastor/elder(s) an account of all transactions and the financial condition of the church whenever they may require it. The treasurer shall be nominated by the pastor/elder(s) and elected by the congregation to serve a term of two years.

Removal of Officers – The church congregation has the authority, for good and sufficient cause, to remove from office any elected or appointed person. Grounds for dismissal include immorality, apostasy, heresy, unfaithfulness to duties or Scriptural qualifications, departure from the spirit or principles of the Constitution, or a lack of agreement with the direction or stand of the church. No one shall be removed from office until positive effort has been made to assist that person in correcting (if possible) the cause for proposed removal. All charges against an officer must first be brought directly to the individual(s) concerned. If there is not resolution, the matter must be submitted to the pastor/elder(s) in the form of a signed, written statement. The pastor/elder(s) shall determine if there is sufficient cause for removal and bring recommendations to the church according to Matthew 18:15-20. A simple majority vote of members present at a members' meeting shall be necessary for the removal of an officer.

## **ARTICLE IX – ELECTIONS**

Summary Principles – The process for church election shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: First, biblical standards and qualifications for church leadership shall supersede all other factors under consideration. Second, substantial prayer both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process. Third, nominations should proceed with the support of the pastor/elder(s). Fourth, all candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members. And fifth, the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Selection of Officers – The election of officers shall be held at a church members' meeting. The names of approved nominees to serve as pastor/ elder shall be presented by the pastor/elder(s) or (search committee when necessary) at least two weeks prior. The names of approved nominees to serve as deacon, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented at least one week prior. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process of deacon. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the pastor/elder(s). Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the pastor/elder(s) as far in advance as possible before the time of discussion at the members' meeting for election. The election shall proceed as directed by the moderator of the members' meeting. He shall declare elected all men (or women perhaps in the case of treasurer and clerk) receiving a majority of all votes cast for the office under consideration. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The person elected shall assume his or her respective office upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Election of a Pastor/Elder – In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of election of an officer must be followed. The current pastor/elder(s) shall nominate prospective candidates. Prior to making its judgment on a potential pastor/elder, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess his aptness for teaching and his scriptural qualifications regarding character and family. The church shall be given a time for question and answer with the candidate. A majority vote of the congregation at a members' meeting is required for election.

Election of a Lead Pastor/Elder – In the election of a lead pastor/elder, the search committee for prospective candidates will be composed of the other pastor/elder(s) of the church in conjunction with up to three other wise, godly men from the congregation. The inclusion of these additional men is at the discretion of the pastor/elder(s) and may or may not include deacons. In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of election of an officer must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential lead pastor/elder before being asked to express its judgment. They shall be given the opportunity to have an open forum question and answer session with the candidate, and a time to meet and evaluate the candidate's family. Any potential candidate for lead pastor/elder must offer wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant.

In the event that Gospel Grace Church has no pastor/elder(s), the deacons will function as a search committee seeking a biblically qualified man to candidate for the office. If the deacons deem fit, they may invite up to three other wise and godly men from the congregation to join the committee and aid in the pastoral search process.

Election of Paid Ministry Staff and Interns– The pastor/elder(s) shall propose funding for new ministry staff and/or interns. Upon approval by majority vote of the congregation at a members' meeting, the pastor/elder(s) may fill ministry staff and intern positions by appointing skilled and scripturally qualified individuals.

## **ARTICLE X – ORDINATION, LICENSING, AND COMMISSIONING**

Licensing & Commissioning – Licensing is available to men called by God to the ministry of the Gospel. It is for those qualified for the role of pastor/elder who have yet to meet the requirements for ordination. License is issued by the pastor/elder(s) and is given in recognition of a man's pursuit of service in ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church while he progresses toward eventual ordination. Licenses will be evaluated and issued or renewed annually at the discretion of the pastor/elder(s). Licenses are issued only to members of Gospel Grace Church.

Where ordination or licensing would be unnecessary or inappropriate, a person is commissioned by the pastor/elder(s) to minister. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains in effect and as long as the person maintains the qualifications for ministry.

Ordination – Ordination is conferred upon men who receive a consensus recommendation from the pastor/elder(s) and a vote of affirmation from the congregation. Ordination examines a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, qualification to serve and represents the setting apart of a man for gospel ministry. An ordination council shall be composed of ordained ministers including at least one pastor/elder from Gospel Grace Church. The examination for ordination shall include but is not limited to: the applicant's personal relationship with Christ, the qualifications set forth in Scripture, knowledge of Bible content, knowledge of theology, church polity, and practice of piety. After examination, and upon the recommendation of the council, the congregation shall vote to ordain the applicant to the gospel ministry. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

## **ARTICLE XI – FINANCES**

Gospel Grace Church is supported by partnering churches of like faith and voluntary contributions from its members who shall give according to their abilities, according to the principles of Scripture, and according to the dictates of their own consciences.

The church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through its elected pastor/elder(s), when authorized by congregational vote. No profit from the assets, or holdings, or other transactions in which this Corporation may become involved, shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individual(s).

Records of all financial transactions shall be kept by the church treasurer, who shall submit a financial report to the pastor/elder(s) at least monthly. A financial report shall be presented to the congregation for approval at least bi-annually at regular members' meetings. The pastor/elder(s) shall prepare an annual budget for the ministry of the church in conjunction with selected member(s)' consultation as deemed fit. This proposed budget shall be presented at the December members' meeting for examination and approval by congregational vote. The elder/pastor(s) are responsible for all properties and financial dealings of the church within the guidelines of the congregationally approved budget. The pastor/elder(s) may not disburse annually more than 10% of the approved annual budget for non-budgeted church expenditures without congregational approval. Non-budgeted discretionary expenditures will be reported in the financial report. Each year the church financial records will be submitted to an outside audit to maintain accuracy and ensure integrity.

## **ARTICLE XII – OTHER PROVISIONS**

**God's Design of Gender** - We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6)

**God's plan for Marriage** – Men and women are created as spiritual and ontological equals, yet designed in complementary<sup>1</sup> order to assume God-given roles in the home, the church, and society. We believe that God designed the marriage relationship to portray Christ's love for the church, to produce godly offspring, to provide companionship, and to promote sexual purity and fulfillment. Marriage is designed by God to join one man and one woman in an exclusive life-long covenant of fidelity and love. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Gospel Grace Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of Gospel Grace Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property<sup>2</sup> of Gospel Grace Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

**God's plan for Singleness** - The members of Gospel Grace Church believe that God allows some people to be single in order that they may serve Him without the cares of a spouse or children. Singleness carries with it the responsibility to maintain sexual purity as prescribed by Scriptures. Some are divinely gifted to remain single so that they may live their lives with a privileged focus on the things of the Lord and service to others.

**God's plan for Moral Purity** - The members of Gospel Grace Church believe that God gave sex as a good gift in marriage between one man and one woman, therefore He forbids intimate sexual activity outside of it. We further believe that any form of adultery, fornication, incest, polygamy, homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. These fleshly practices are contrary to God's creative design and reflect a heart that does not submit to God's good and sovereign right to determine our sex and our boundaries for sexual activity. For an examination of scriptural directives mentioned above, see: (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18, 24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Matthew 19:11-12; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 7:6-11; Galatians 3:28; 5:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

**Standard of Conduct** – Ministry functions and meetings are private events held on private property according to the policies and procedures enacted by the membership. These should not be considered open to the general public under all circumstances. The pastor/elder(s) reserve the right at their discretion to have any participant removed for any reason. A person may be dismissed or removed from any ministry function and asked not to return if he or she demonstrates by conduct or spirit that he or she is out of harmony with the Constitution, the spirit, or the policies of ministry whether on or off property. Readmission considerations following a dismissal or removal will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the pastor/elder(s).

**Dispute Resolution** – Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the church (See Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the members of Gospel Grace Church are required to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or not and whether individuals or corporate entities.

### **ARTICLE XIII – DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION**

In the event of the dissolution of Gospel Grace Church as a non-profit corporation, all of its debts and liabilities shall be fully satisfied, and the remaining assets or holdings shall be irrevocably given and paid over to a non-profit corporation(s) of like faith and practice. The recipient(s) of assets upon dissolution shall be selected by corporate vote of church members prior to dissolution at a special members' meeting. Distribution of assets and holdings shall be in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 501(c)(3).

### **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution of Gospel Grace Church (including the Statement of Faith and By-laws) may be amended or revised by a majority vote at any regular members' meeting on the recommendation of the pastor/elder(s), provided at least one week's notice of such proposed revision or amendment is posted on an agenda according to constitutional standards.

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<sup>1</sup> "We affirm that the Scripture reveals a pattern of complementary order between men and women, and that this order is itself a testimony to the Gospel, even as it is the gift of our Creator and Redeemer. We also affirm that all Christians are called to service within the body of Christ, and that God has given to both men and women important and strategic roles within the home, the Church, and the society. We further affirm that the teaching office of the Church is assigned only to those men who are called of God in fulfillment of the biblical teachings and that men are to lead in their homes as husbands and fathers who fear and love God.

We deny that the distinction of roles between men and women revealed in the Bible is evidence of mere cultural conditioning or a manifestation of male oppression or prejudice against women. We also deny that this biblical distinction of roles excludes women from meaningful ministry in Christ's kingdom. We further deny that any Church can confuse these issues without damaging its witness to the Gospel." (Together for the Gospel. "Affirmations & Denials - Article XVI" April, 2006. Accessed April 9, 2016. [http:// t4g.org/about/affirmations-and-denials-2/](http://t4g.org/about/affirmations-and-denials-2/).)

<sup>2</sup> Information about facility use can be found in the facility use policy.