

# Grace Bible Church Constitution

## PREAMBLE

Having received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and desiring to live for Him and to promote His work in the world, we bond ourselves together as a body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

## ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND PURPOSE

### **1.01 Name**

The name of this church shall be the Grace Bible Church of Southgate, Michigan.

### **1.02 Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be to provide worship, fellowship, and instruction for Christian believers, and to proclaim the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ at home and abroad.

## ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

### **2.01 The Scriptures**

We believe that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. Thus, the Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches. Furthermore, this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings-historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic-as recorded in the original manuscripts. Therefore, being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teachings, no less in what it states about God’s acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God’s saving grace in individual lives.

We believe that all Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming and hence that no portion, even of the old Testament, is properly read or understood until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction.

We believe the authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible’s own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the church. (Matt. 5:18; 22:32-46; Mk. 12:26, 36; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; 10:35; 17:17; Acts 17:2-3; I Cor. 2:13; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21)

## **2.02 The Godhead**

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and that these three are one God; having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience. (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; II Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6)

We believe that God is infinite in being and perfection, a completely pure spirit, without body, unchangeable, eternal, almighty, completely wise, completely holy, completely free, and completely absolute. He works everything according to the purpose of his own unchangeable and completely righteous will for His own glory. He is completely loving, gracious, merciful, and long-suffering. He overflows with goodness and truth. He forgives wickedness, transgression, and sin and rewards those who diligently seek Him. His judgments are completely just and awesome. He hates all sin and will not acquit the guilty. (Job 26:14; Jer. 23:24; Ps. 147:5; I Kings 8:27; Ps. 139; John 4:24; Deut. 4:15, 16; I Tim. 1:17; James 1:17; Mal. 3:6; Ps. 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Rom. 16:27; Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; Ps. 115:3; Is. 44:6; Acts 17:24, 25; Eph. 1:11; Rev. 4:11; Prov. 16:4; I John 4:8-10, 16; Ex. 34:6, 7; Heb. 11:6; Neh. 9:32, 33; Ps. 5:5, 6; Nah. 1:2, 3; Ex. 34:7)

We believe that God has all life, glory, goodness and blessedness in and of Himself. He alone is all sufficient in and unto Himself, and has no need of any of His creations nor does He derive any glory from them. Rather, He manifests His own glory in, by, unto, and on them. He has completely sovereign dominion over all things and does with, to, or for them whatever He pleases. Everything is revealed and completely open to Him. His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and does not depend on any created being, so that to Him nothing is conditional or uncertain. He is completely holy in all His purposes, works and commands. To Him is due whatever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require from angels, human beings, and all other creatures. (John 5:26; Acts 7:2; Ps. 119:68; I Tim. 6:15; Acts 17:24, 25; Ps. 50:12; Dan. 4:35; Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:33, 34; Ps. 147:5; Is. 46:1-11; Ps. 145:17; Rev. 5:12-14; Rev. 7:11-12)

## **2.03 Angels, Fallen and Unfallen**

We believe that God created and innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels; that one sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan; that a great company of the angels followed him in his moral fall, some of whom became demons and are active as his agents and associates in the prosecution of his unholy purposes, while others who fell are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; I Tim. 3:6; II Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)

We believe that Satan is the originator of sin, and that, under the permission of God, he, through subtlety, led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or

that is worshipped; and that he in his warfare appears as an angel of light, even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering religious movements and systems of doctrine, which systems in every case are characterized by a denial of the efficacy of the blood of Christ and of salvation by grace alone. (Gen. 3:1-19 Rom. 5:12-14; II Cor. 4: 3-4; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:10-12; II Thess. 2:4; I Tim. 4:1-3)

We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, though not then executed, and that he, a usurper, now rules as the "god of this world" that, at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years, and after the thousand years he will be loosed for little season and then "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where he shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3, 10)

We believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God, from whence they are sent forth as ministering spirits to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Luke 15:10; Eph. 1:12; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:12)

## **2.04 Man, Created and Fallen**

We believe that man was originally created in the imaged and after the likeness of God, and that he fell through sin, and as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably bad, apart from divine grace. (Gen, 1:26; 2:17; 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:53; Rom. 3: 10-19; 8:6-7; Eph. 2:1-3; I Tim. 5:6; I John 3:8)

## **2.05 The First Advent**

We believe that, as provided and proposed by God and as preannounced in the prophecies of the Scripture, the eternal Son of God, came into this world that he might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the virgin, and received a human body and a sinless nature. (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:18; 3:36; Heb. 4:15)

We believe that, on the human side, He became and remained a perfect man, but sinless throughout His life; yet he retained His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man and that His earth-life sometimes functioned within the sphere of that which was divine. (Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2; Phil. 2:5-8)

We believe that in fulfillment of prophecy He came first to Israel as her Messiah-King, and that, being rejected of that nation, He, according to the eternal counsels of God, gave His life as a ransom for all. (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; I Tim. 2:6)

We believe that, in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin of the world; bearing the holy judgments against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was,

therefore, Substitutionary in the most absolute sense-the just for the unjust-and by His death He became the Savior of the lost. (John 1:29; Rom. 3:25-26; II Cor. 5:14; Heb. 10:5-14; I Peter 3:18)

We believe that, according to the Scriptures, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers. (John 20:20; Phil. 3:20)

We believe that, on departing from the earth, He was accepted of His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished. (Heb. 1:3)

We believe that He became head over all things to the church which is His body, and in this ministry He ceases not to intercede and advocate for the saved. (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:1)

## **2.06 Salvation Only Through Christ**

We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are sons of God. We believe, also, that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our place; and that no repentance, no feeling, no faith, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church, nor all the churches that have existed since the days of the Apostles, can add in the very least degree to the value of the blood, or to the merit of the finished work wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper deity with perfect and sinless humanity. (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 64:6; Matt. 26:28; John 3:5; Rom. 5:6-9; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 6:15; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 3:4-9; Titus 3:5; James 2:18; I Peter 1:18-19, 23)

We believe that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ and that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way, in itself, a separate and independent condition of salvation; nor are any other acts, such as confession, baptism, prayer or faithful service, to be added to believing as a condition of salvation. (John 1:12; 3:16; 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 12:16-17; 3:22, 26; 4:5; 10:4; Gal. 3:22)

We believe that, while God is sovereign in the salvation of an individual, and that God is the source and author of salvation, the offer of salvation, by faith is extended in earnest to all people without distinction, going forth with the sincere promise that whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall certainly be saved. (Matt. 11:25-27; John 3:16; 6:44; Eph 2:8-9; Rom. 10:11, 13)

## **2.07 The Extent of Salvation**

We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises that faith in Christ which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out spiritual

death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new; being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ, and is, therefore, in no way required by God to seek a so-called "second blessing," or a "second work of grace." (John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom 5:1; I Cor. 3:21-23; Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; I John 4:17; 5:11-12)

## **2.08 Sanctification**

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart unto God, is three-fold: It is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace," and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe, also, that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him." (John 17:17; II Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 5:25-27; I Thes. 5:23; Heb. 10:10; 14; 12:10)

## **2.09 Eternal Security**

We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the grounds of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will when they persistently sin chasten them and correct them in infinite love: but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son. (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 1:24)

## **2.10 Assurance**

We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior; and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in his written Word, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience. (Luke 10:20; 22:32; II Cor. 5:1; 6-8; II Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; I John 5:13)

## **2.11 The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise, dwells in every believer, and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body, and that He, as the Indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We believe that He never takes His departure from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ; seeking to occupy believers with Himself and not with themselves nor with their experiences. We believe that His abode in the world in this special sense will cease when Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the church age. (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; I Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; II Thes. 2:7)

We believe that, in this age, certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit, and that it is the duty of every Christian to understand them and to be adjusted to them in his own life and experience. These ministries are: The restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world respecting sin, righteousness, and judgment; the regenerating of all believers; the indwelling and anointing of all who are saved; thereby sealing them unto the day of redemption; the baptizing into the one body of Christ of all who are saved; and the continued filling for power; teaching, and service of those among the saved who are yielded to Him and who are subjects to His will. (John 3:6; 16:7-11; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30 5:18; II Thes. 2:7; I John 2:20-27)

## **2.12 The Church, a Unity of Believers**

We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the church which is the body and bride of Christ, which began at Pentecost and is completely distinct from Israel. Its members are constituted as such regardless of membership or non-membership in the organized churches on the earth. We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ's, whether Jews or Gentiles, and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian differences, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently. (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-15)

## **2.13 The Sacraments or Ordinances**

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only sacraments and ordinances of the church and that they are a Scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; I Cor. 11:26)

We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ at the close of his last Passover supper as a perpetual remembrance of His passion and death on the cross, by which sacrifice of Himself he has made the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. In this sacrament no sacrifice of any kind is offered for sin, but the one perfect offering of Christ as a sufficient sacrifice us set forth and commemorated by appropriate symbols. These symbols are bread and the fruit of the vine which are figuratively called the body of Christ. We believe that in this sacrament, since the communicants have visibly set before them symbols of the Savior's

passion, they should not approach the Holy Communion without due self-examination, reverence, humility, and gratitude. (Luke 22:19-20; Heb. 7:23, 24, 27; I Cor. 11:23-26)

We believe that baptism is commanded by God, and that all believers should make public profession of their faith through baptism. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 16:32-33; Titus 3:4-5)

## **2.14 The Christian's Walk**

We believe that we are called with an holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord. (Rom. 6:11-13; 8:2,4,12-13; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 2: 1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 1:4-7; 3:5-9)

## **2.15 The Christian's Service**

We believe that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit, and each is called to his own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. In the apostolic church there were certain gifted men-apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers-who were appointed by God for the perfecting of the saints unto their work of the ministry. We believe also that today some men are especially called of God to be evangelists, pastor and teachers, and that it is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God. (Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11)

We believe that, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, reward are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service for his Lord, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself. (I Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; II Cor. 5:10)

## **2.16 The Great Commission**

We believe that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved that they are sent forth by Him into the world even as He was sent forth of His father into the world. We believe that, after they are saved, they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors, and witnesses and that their primary purpose in life should be to make Christ known to the whole world. (Matt 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:18-20; I Peter 1:17; 2:11)

## **2.17 The Second Coming of Christ**

We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent return of Jesus Christ to the earth. His coming is both a blessed hope and a time of judgment. (Rev. 19:11-16; John 14:1-3; Titus 2:13)

We believe that the Lord's coming is a blessed hope and comfort to all believers, and that at His coming all who have believed in Christ, whether alive or dead, shall be translated and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:50-58)

We believe that at His coming also there will be an unprecedented time of the outpouring of God's wrath on the unbelieving world. This will be a seven-year period of great tribulation. (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24; Rev. 6:1-19)

We believe that the time of final judgment on the earth will be climaxed by the personal return of Jesus Christ in great power and glory with the armies of heaven, will come as a righteous judge to execute judgment on the peoples of the world. (Matt. 25:31-46; I Tim. 4:1; II Thes. 1:8-10; Rev. 19:11-16)

## **2.18 The Millennial Kingdom**

We believe that at the return of Jesus Christ He will establish His Kingdom on this earth for one thousand years. This will be a world-wide Kingdom of righteousness and peace, over which He shall rule personally as King. (II Sam. 7:12-16; Is.11:1-10; Rev. 20:1-3)

We believe that this Kingdom is the fulfillment of the promises made to the descendants of Abraham, and that Israel as a nation will be restored to the land, and God's purpose of bringing blessings to all peoples and of being glorified through the nation will be accomplished. (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 30:1-10; Rom. 11:1, 26)

We believe that the saved of all ages will be raised to a glorified body and have a part in the glorious reign of Jesus Christ. (Dan. 12:1-2; John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:50-58)

We believe that near the end of this one-thousand year period, Satan will be released from bondage and lead one final revolt against Jesus Christ. At this time Satan will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire forever, and the Kingdom will be given to the Father and the eternal state will begin. (I Cor. 15:23-28; Rev. 20:7-10)

## **2.19 The Eternal State**

We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remains in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon, soul and body reunited, shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but the spirit and souls of the unbelieving remaining after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited, shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. (Luke 16:19-26; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; II Thes. 1:7-9; Jude 1:6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

## **2.20 Changing the Doctrinal Statement**

This doctrinal statement may be changed only by a three-fourths vote of the congregation at a regularly convened meeting, only upon recommendation by three-fourths vote of the

Board of Elders and only after notice of the proposed change has been announced and posted at least six months prior tot such congregational meeting.

### ARTICLE 3 – GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

The Government of this church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in the duly elected Board of Elders, whose majority vote of the voting members present at any duly convened meeting shall be final. This church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as it’s only Head, and receives the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, church order, and discipline, and is subject to no other ecclesiastical body.

### ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP

#### **4.01 Receiving Members**

Prospective members may present themselves for membership in the church upon profession of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be interviewed by a Pastor or an Elder. All applicants for membership shall make a verbal statement of their faith in Christ and their agreement with the doctrinal statement and of their purpose with God’s help to live a holy life, and shall sign the Covenant of Membership. Every applicant for membership must have received or be willing to receive the ordinance of water baptism. Those who have been baptized as believers prior to their uniting with the church shall not be required to be rebaptized. If recommended by the interviewing Pastor or Elder, they may be voted into church membership by the Board of Elders.

#### **4.02 Dismissal and Withdrawal of Membership**

Members may be removed from the church roll, for lack of involvement in the church or for manifesting an unrepentant lifestyle which brings continual reproach and dishonor to the name of Christ and to the church, by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Elders present at a duly convened meeting. Dismissal shall not be made without prayerful consideration and personal contact when possible (when personal contact is not possible, concern and intent shall be expressed by a letter) by the minister or an elder. After personal contact is made, member will be given four Sundays to respond and express their desire. A lack of response shall be interpreted as an expressed desire to have their name removed from the roll. Once an individual’s name is removed from the roll they must follow the normal procedure of joining the church if they desire to become active again.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to annually review the membership roll, and remove the names of any individuals, in accordance with the above procedure, that the Board of Elders feels no longer adheres to the spirit of the membership covenant.

In the event that a member is unable to fulfill the responsibilities of the membership covenant, yet wishes to remain united with the body, that person may be classified by the Board of Elders as an inactive member. Inactive members may not vote or hold office in the church until restored to regular membership status by action of the Board of Elders.

## ARTICLE 5 – THE OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be the minister, the Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees. The Board of Elders may appoint individuals, committees, or boards for specific tasks which serve under the guidance of the Board of Elders.

## ARTICLE 6 – THE MINISTER

### **6.01 The Call of the Minister**

The call of the minister (and any associate or assistant ministers as determined necessary) is given by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Elders presents at a duly convened meeting. It is the duty of the Board of Elders to ascertain the will of the congregation, in the best way possible making a call. The call of the minister shall be for an indefinite period of time. The minister shall be a member of the church and thus subject to this constitution.

### **6.02 The Qualifications for the Minister**

The qualifications for the minister (and associate or assistant minister) shall be those that are clearly set forth in Scripture (I Tim. 2:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) and any others (such as educational requirements, marital status, etc.) that shall be determined by the Board of Elders.

### **6.03 The Responsibilities of the Minister**

It shall be the duty of the minister to preach the Word, administer the ordinances, take and have charge of all services, watch over the spiritual interests of the church by praying for the church and members regularly and visiting the sick and shut-ins and to give spiritual direction and guidance to the church in all of its programs and activities. The minister shall be an ex-officio member of each and every board and each and every committee.

### **6.04 The Dismissal of the Minister**

If, because of unfaithful or unfitness upon the part of a minister, or any other reason, the Board of Elders deem it necessary for the good of the church and the work of Christ to rescind his call as minister of the church, any minister (or associate or assistant minister) may be dismissed by the Board of Elders upon a two-thirds vote of a duly convened meeting. It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to notify the minister (or associate or assistant) of the concern and intent of the Board of Elders, and at least a two-month time period needs to expire between the notification and any vote by the Board of Elders to dismiss the minister. It shall also be the duty of the Board of Elders to ascertain the will of the congregation, in the best way possible, before making such a vote.

## ARTICLE 7 – THE BOARD OF ELDERS

### **7.01 The Qualifications of an Elder**

The qualifications of an elder shall be those that are clearly set forth in Scripture (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), including the following essential characteristics:

- a. He must desire spiritual oversight and demonstrate that desire by his relationship to the body of Christ and must be willing to accept the defined responsibilities of Elder.
- b. He must give evidence of spiritual maturity.
- c. He must possess the spiritual gift of leading and the ability to teach.  
He must also be a man who has been a member of the church for at least one year at the time of the installation.

## **7.02 The size and Term of the Board of Elders**

The size of the Board of Elders shall be determined by the need of the church and the availability of qualified men to serve. A minimum of three elders shall be required at all times. Elders shall be elected by the congregation to a three year term on a rotating basis so that the term of one third of the board expires each year. Elders shall be required to wait one year at the expiration of their term before they may be elected again. In the event that the minimum board size of three can not be maintained, an Elder may be allowed to serve one additional consecutive term by majority vote of the Board of Elders.

## **7.03 The Elections of Elders**

The procedure for the election of Elders shall be as follows:

1. Nomination- The Board of Elders shall be responsible for identifying those men in the congregation that possess the God given qualities of an Elder. upon two-thirds approval from the Board of Elders, the nominee designate will be approached by the minister or representative from the board and asked if he is willing to be placed on the ballot.

Any member of the congregation may suggest a man for nomination to the Board of Elders. The board shall receive suggestions from the congregation six weeks prior to the congregational meeting for a three week period.

It will be the responsibility of the board to review the suggestion. If agreed upon by two-thirds affirmative vote of the elders, nominee designate will be notified and asked if he is willing to be placed on the ballot.

If the board does not concur with the suggestion, a representative from the board will inform the individual who made the suggestion. If there is still a desire to have the individuals name placed in nomination, it may be done so by securing a petition of the members of Grace Bible Church. A petition consisting of 20% (1/5) of the total active membership as determined by the Board of Elders in January of that year shall be required. The petition must be presented to the session prior to the congregational meeting. If such petition is presented, the name shall be submitted in nomination.

2. Election- The ballot of all available nominees shall be presented to the congregation no less than two weeks prior to the annual meeting (or special meeting in the case of a vacancy filled) in order that the congregation may prayerfully consider the nominees.

In order to be elected, each man must receive a simple majority affirmative vote of the voting members present at an appropriately called congregational meeting.

#### **7.04 The Ordination and Installation of Elder**

Any individual elected to the office of elder for the first time shall be ordained to the ministry of elder at a service appropriate for the occasion.

The election of elders shall take place at the annual congregational meeting and those elected shall be installed within one month of that meeting.

#### **7.05 The Responsibilities of the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders shall have and exercise the oversight and management of all business and affairs of this church, of whatever kind or character. This role shall be exercised, as much as possible, in accordance with the will of the congregation. However, as leadership is entrusted to the Board of Elders, they are not bound by the congregation, but only by the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

#### **7.06 Vacancies on the Board of Elders**

Any Vacancies on the Board of Elders, whether caused by death, resignation, or dismissal, shall be filled as determined by the Board of Elders. The Board may wish to wait until the next regular election of elders, at which time an individual may be elected to fill the remaining years in the term of the vacant position. If the Board wishes to fill the vacancy before a regular election, the same procedure must be followed as for regular election, and an individual will be elected to serve the remaining years of the position vacated.

#### **7.07 The Dismissal of an Elder**

If, because of unfaithfulness, of unfitness upon the part of an Elder, or any other reason, the Board of Elders deem it necessary for the good of the church and the work of Christ to rescind his election to the office of Elder, any Elder may be dismissed by the Board of Elders upon a two-thirds vote of a duly convened meeting. It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to notify such Elder of the concern and intent of the Board and at least a two-month time period shall need to expire between the notification and any vote by the Elders to dismiss the Elder.

If any member or members of the congregation feels an Elder to be unqualified for office, that concern shall be made known to the Board, who shall then prayerfully consider the matter and take any action as is deemed necessary.

## **7.08 The Meetings of the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders shall meet regularly once a month at such time and place as is determined acceptable by the Board. A majority of the constituted size of the Board of Elders need to be present to constitute a quorum.

A special meeting of the Board of Elders may be called at any time by any two Elders then serving on the Board, or by the minister. A regular quorum is needed to constitute a duly convened special meeting.

## **7.09 Moderator of the Board of Elders**

The Moderator of the Board of Elders shall be the Minister. As Moderator, he shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote, at which time he shall have the option to vote or not vote.

In the absence of the Minister, the Board shall appoint a moderator pro-tem who shall reside as moderator until the Minister of the church hall resume or assume such responsibilities.

## **7.10 Clerk of the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders shall appoint a Stated Clerk, who shall keep and preserve all minutes, documents, and papers deemed necessary by the Board of Elders. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to record all actions of the Board of Elders, and such records shall serve as the official record of transactions of the Board. The Clerk shall hold his office for one year. However, there are no restrictions on holding the office for successive terms, as approved by the Board.

### ARTICLE 8 - THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Elders shall serve as the Trustees of the church, unless the Board shall appoint a separate Board of Trustees. It shall be the duty of the Trustees merely to hold title to the properties of the church. The Trustees are to act only on direction from the Board of Elders, and any action by the Trustees without the authority of the Board of Elders would be null and void.

### ARTICLE 9 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

## **9.01 The Call of a Congregational Meeting**

A congregational meeting shall be called by the Board of Elders. They shall give adequate notice of at least two consecutive Sunday morning worship services, and shall state adequately the purpose for which the meeting is called. The meeting may be held in connection with a regular service of the church, or may be held at some other designated time. The notice for such meeting may be by an announcement or in writing and distributed through the mail. A congregational meeting may be called for the purpose of presenting information to congregation, discussion of various issues to discern the will of the congregation, or to vote on matters subject to the vote of the congregation.

Members of the congregation may call a congregational meeting by presenting a petition to the Board of Elders consisting of one-fourth of the membership at the time of the meeting and stating the purpose for such meetings.

### **9.02 A Quorum for Congregational Meetings**

A quorum for a congregational meeting shall consist of one-fourth of the membership of the church at the time of the meeting.

### **9.03 Annual Congregational Meeting**

There shall be an annual congregational meeting in the month of January of each year. This meeting shall be for the purpose of reviewing the activities of the church (spiritual, material, and fiscal) for the past year. It shall also be for the purpose of previewing the goals, plans, and budget for the coming year.

#### ARTICLE 10 – ORDINATION

When it happens that God calls a man (or men) to enter the Christian ministry, and such man (or men) expresses his desire to be ordained into the ministry, the Board of Elders may designate an ordination council comprised of the Minister, members of the Board of elders, and any other men they may choose to invite to participate in the ordination. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. If it is the unanimous opinion of the ordaining council that the candidate has the suitable gifts and qualifications for the ministry, he shall be commissioned by such council to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

#### ARTICLE 11 – MISSIONS

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to direct the church in involvement in World Missions. The determining of which Missions to support, and the amount of support, shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

#### ARTICLE 12 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

If it does not infringe on the doctrinal principles of this church, as determined by the Board of Elders, this constitution may be changed at any congregational meeting, provided that notice of proposed change has been announced and posted at least two weeks before said meeting, and further provided that the proposed change has been approved by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Elders present at a duly convened meeting. The doctrinal statement, however, may be changed only as provided in Article 2.





