

Grace Baptist Church

# Statement of Faith, Covenant, & Constitution

02/01/2026



## ***Contents***

<b>Article 1 NAME AND PURPOSE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 1.01 – Name</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 1.02 – Purpose</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Article 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Section 2.01 – Statement of Faith</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Article I: Of the Scriptures</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Article IV: Of the Holy Spirit</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Article V: Of Creation</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Article VI: Of the Devil, or Satan</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Article VIII: Of the Atonement for Sin</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Article IX: Of Justification</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Article X: Of the Freeness of Salvation</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Article XI: Of Grace in Regeneration</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Article XII: Of Repentance and Faith</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Article XIII: Of God’s Grace in Election</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Article XIV: Of Sanctification</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Article XV: Of the Perseverance of the Saints</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Article XVI: Of the Righteous and the Wicked</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Article XVII: Of a Gospel Church</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Article XVIII: Of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Article XIX: Of the Mission of a Gospel Church</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Article XX: Of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Article XXI: Of Human Sexuality</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Article XXII: Of Family Relationships</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Article XXIII: Of Civil Government</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Article XXIV: Of the Return of Christ</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Section 2.02 – Authority of Statement of Faith</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Section 2.03 – Covenant</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Article 3 FELLOWSHIP</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 3.01 – Independent, Autonomous Church</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 3.02 – Support of Causes</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Article 4 MEMBERSHIP</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Section 4.01 – Qualifications for Membership</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Section 4.02 – Process of Membership</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Section 4.03 – Expectations of Members</b> .....	<b>16</b>

Section 4.04 – Dismissal of Members .....	17
Section 4.05 – Discipline of Members .....	17
Article 5 ORDINANCES .....	18
Section 5.01 – Baptism .....	18
Section 5.02 – The Lord’s Supper .....	18
Section 5.03 – Ordinances Are Not A Means of Grace.....	19
Article 6 OFFICERS .....	19
Section 6.01 – General Information.....	19
Section 6.02 – Pastor/Elder.....	19
Section 6.03 – Deacons .....	19
Section 6.04 – Trustees .....	20
Section 6.05 – Clerk.....	20
Section 6.06 – Treasurer.....	20
Section 6.07 – Sunday School Superintendent.....	20
Section 6.08 – Standards.....	20
Article 7 BUSINESS MEETINGS .....	20
Section 7.01 – Schedule and Format.....	20
Article 8 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES.....	21
Section 8.01 – Purpose .....	21
Section 8.02 – Church Participation .....	21
Section 8.03 – Staff Membership.....	21
Section 8.04 – Agreement with Statement of Faith .....	21
Section 8.05 – Unity .....	21
Section 8.06 – Teaching.....	21
Article 9 LICENSING AND ORDINATION .....	21
Section 9.01 – Qualification and Selection for Preacher Licensing.....	21
Section 9.02 – Qualification and Selection for Pastor/Elder Ordination .....	21
Section 9.03 – Revocation of Ordination.....	22
Article 10 INDEMNIFICATION .....	22
Section 10.01 – Actions Subject to Indemnification.....	22
Section 10.02 – Timing of Indemnification .....	22
Section 10.03 – Extent of Indemnification .....	22
Section 10.04 – Insurance .....	23
Article 11 SUPPORT .....	23
Article 12 BINDING ARBITRATION.....	23
Section 12.01 – Purpose for Arbitration .....	23

<b>Section 12.02 - Submission to Arbitration .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 12.03 - Notice of Arbitration .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 12.04 - Limitations on Arbitration Decisions .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 12.05 - Arbitration Procedures.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Article 13 CHURCH STATUS AS AN EXEMPT ORGANIZATION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 13.01 - Inurement of Income .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 13.02 - Political Participation .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Article 14 DISSOLUTION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 14.01 - Assignment of Assets .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Article 15 AMENDMENTS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>ADOPTION .....</b>	<b>25</b>

Constitution of the  
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH  
of St. Charles, Missouri

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the plenary and verbally inspired word of God, we have covenanted together as a body of baptized believers and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order.

## **Article 1 NAME AND PURPOSE**

### **Section 1.01 – Name**

The name of this organization shall be Grace Baptist Church. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Missouri.

### **Section 1.02 – Purpose**

Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a Baptist Church in accordance with the Word of God, the articles of Faith, the covenant and constitution of this local church; promoting the worship of our God, edifying believers, teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and biblical disciplines, seeking to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing other Baptist churches, defending the faith, and maintaining a good testimony for Christ in our community by godliness and good works. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law).

## **Article 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT**

### **Section 2.01 – Statement of Faith**

#### **Article I: Of the Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired.<sup>1</sup> It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its content, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.<sup>2</sup>

1. By “Holy Bible” we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which as originally written not only contains and conveys the Word of God but is the very Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

2. By “inspired” we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally perfect and free from error, as no other writings have ever been, or ever will be.<sup>4</sup>

3. By “complete and final” we mean that the Bible is sufficient and authoritative, containing everything people need to know in order to please God and be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> The Bible does not need to be supplemented by worldly philosophy or any other possible revelation in order to accomplish the purposes for which God established it—the salvation and sanctification of His people.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *2 Timothy 3:16*

<sup>2</sup> *Psalm 119:89, 160; 1 Peter 1:23-25; John 12:48; Romans 2:12-16*

<sup>3</sup> *Proverbs 30:5-6; Acts 1:16; 28:25*

<sup>4</sup> *2 Peter 1:19-21; Psalm 19:7-11*

<sup>5</sup> *2 Timothy 3:17; John 17:17; Psalm 119:130; 1 Peter 2:1-2*

<sup>6</sup> *Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 1:3-5*

#### **Article II: Of the True God**

There is one, and only one, living and true God.<sup>7</sup> He is an infinite, omniscient spirit, the eternal, omnipotent creator and supreme ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love.<sup>8</sup> In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 45:5; Jeremiah 10:10; Romans 3:30; James 2:19*

<sup>8</sup> *Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 90:2; 96:1-13; 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; 42:5, 8; 44:24; 45:18; John 4:24; Romans 11:33, 36; Ephesians 4:6*

<sup>9</sup> *Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 15:26; 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:5-6*

### **Article III: Of the Son of God,**

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, is truly and eternally God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance with the Godhead and equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, co-creator of the universe, and the one who upholds and governs all things He has made.<sup>10</sup> When the fullness of time was complete, He took upon Himself human nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it, yet without sin.<sup>11</sup> Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or ever will be born of woman.<sup>12</sup> He is fully human and fully divine, being both the Son of God, and God the Son.<sup>13</sup>

Being fully human and fully God, Jesus was made sin and a curse for us, enduring grievous sorrows and painful sufferings, was crucified, and died.<sup>14</sup> On the third day, He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, with which He also ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father making intercession for the saints, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 1:3*

<sup>11</sup> *1 Corinthians 15:47; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 John 5:20; 2 John 7*

<sup>12</sup> *Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35*

<sup>13</sup> *Psalms 2:7; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Colossians 2:9*

<sup>14</sup> *Isaiah 53:3-5; Matthew 26:37-38; 27:46; Luke 22:44; Acts 2:22-36; 2 Corinthians 5:21*

<sup>15</sup> *John 20:25-27; Acts 1:9-11; 10:42; 13:37; Romans 8:34; 14:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 9:24*

### **Article IV: Of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Holy Trinity, is truly and eternally God, equal with the Father and the Son, and of the one substance with the Godhead.<sup>16</sup> He was active in creation.<sup>17</sup> He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.<sup>18</sup> He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony.<sup>19</sup> He is the agent of regeneration.<sup>20</sup> He seals,<sup>21</sup> indwells,<sup>22</sup> guides,<sup>23</sup> teaches,<sup>24</sup> validates,<sup>25</sup> sanctifies,<sup>26</sup> and helps the believer.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Matthew 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Hebrews 9:14*

<sup>17</sup> *Genesis 1:1-3*

<sup>18</sup> *John 16:8-11*

<sup>19</sup> *John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32*

<sup>20</sup> *John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5-6*

<sup>21</sup> *Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30*

<sup>22</sup> *Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 4:6*

<sup>23</sup> *John 16:13; Romans 8:14*

<sup>24</sup> *1 Corinthians 2:13*

<sup>25</sup> *Romans 8:16*

<sup>26</sup> *2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2*

<sup>27</sup> *Romans 8:26-27; Galatians 5:16-18*

## **Article V: Of Creation**

The universe, and everything in it, was created by the word of God and was all very good.<sup>28</sup> God made all animal and vegetable life and established that they should bring forth only “after their kind.”<sup>29</sup> Man was created in God’s own image and after His own likeness.<sup>30</sup> Man’s creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through indeterminate periods of time from lower to higher forms.<sup>31</sup> Death and corruption had no part in God’s creation before Adam and Eve sinned.<sup>32</sup> The Genesis account of creation is a historical account of God’s creation of the universe in six 24-hour days.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Genesis 1:31; Psalm 33:4, 9; Nehemiah 9:6; Jeremiah 10:12; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:24; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:3*

<sup>29</sup> *Genesis 1:11, 24; Revelation 10:6*

<sup>30</sup> *Genesis 1:26-27; 2:21-23; 9:6; James 3:9*

<sup>31</sup> *Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 43:7; John 1:3; Acts 17:26; Colossians 1:16-17*

<sup>32</sup> *Genesis 1:29-31; 3:17-19; Romans 6:23; 8:19-22*

<sup>33</sup> *Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 148:3-5; Isaiah 45:12, 18; Revelation 4:11*

## **Article VI: Of the Devil, or Satan**

Satan was an angelic being created by God.<sup>34</sup> He was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors, but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels.<sup>35</sup> He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world.<sup>36</sup> He is man’s great tempter,<sup>37</sup> the enemy of God and His Christ,<sup>38</sup> the accuser of the saints,<sup>39</sup> the author of all false religions,<sup>40</sup> and the father of lies.<sup>41</sup> He is destined to final defeat at the hands of God’s own Son,<sup>42</sup> and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire, a place prepared for him and his angels.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Nehemiah 9:6*

<sup>35</sup> *Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:9*

<sup>36</sup> *John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19*

<sup>37</sup> *Matthew 4:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Peter 5:8*

<sup>38</sup> *Matthew 13:39; Luke 22:3-4; 1 John 3:8*

<sup>39</sup> *Revelation 12:10*

<sup>40</sup> *Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15*

<sup>41</sup> *John 8:44*

<sup>42</sup> *2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; Revelation 19:11, 16, 20*

<sup>43</sup> *Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10*

## **Article VII: Of the Fall of Man**

Man was created in innocence and under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, all mankind are now sinners by individual choice and, until regenerated, are dead in sin, being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God and positively inclined to evil.<sup>45</sup> All mankind are therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Genesis 3:1-6, 24*

<sup>45</sup> *Romans 3:10-23; 5:12, 19; 8:6-9; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Titus 3:3-5*

<sup>46</sup> *Psalm 51:4; Lamentations 3:39; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:18-32; 3:19; 6:23; Galatians 3:22; James 2:10*

## **Article VIII: Of the Atonement for Sin**

The salvation of sinners is wholly of grace.<sup>47</sup> Sinners are saved through the mediatorial work of the Son of God,<sup>48</sup> who by appointment of the Father,<sup>49</sup> freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins.<sup>50</sup> His atonement was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord taking the wrath of God and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.<sup>51</sup> Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection.<sup>52</sup> He is in every way qualified as the suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Ephesians 2:8*

<sup>48</sup> *Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6*

<sup>49</sup> *John 3:16; 10:18; Acts 2:23; 1 John 4:10*

<sup>50</sup> *Isaiah 53:4-7; John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14-15; 9:25-28*

<sup>51</sup> *Isaiah 53:10-11; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18*

<sup>52</sup> *Matthew 11:28-30, 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 8; 2:15-16; 4:15; 5:2; 12:2; James 5:11*

<sup>53</sup> *Isaiah 53:12; 1 Corinthians 15:20; Hebrews 7:25; 9:12-15; 1 John 2:2*

## **Article IX: Of Justification**

Justification is the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to those who believe in Him.<sup>54</sup> Justification includes the pardon of sin, the imputation of His perfect righteousness, and the promise of eternal life.<sup>55</sup> It is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood.<sup>56</sup> It brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Psalms 32:1-2; 103:10-12; Acts 13:39*

<sup>55</sup> *Genesis 15:6; Isaiah 53:11; Acts 10:43; 26:18; Romans 5:1, 9; 8:1, 30; 1 Corinthians 6:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:13-14; Titus 3:5-7*

<sup>56</sup> *Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; 3:19-26, 28; 4:1-8; 5:19; Galatians 2:16; 3:11, 24; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 10:38*

<sup>57</sup> *2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:14-18; Colossians 1:21; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Peter 1:3-4*

## **Article X: Of the Freeness of Salvation**

Salvation is made free to all by the gospel.<sup>58</sup> It is the immediate duty of all to accept it by an eager, repentant, and obedient faith.<sup>59</sup> Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel.<sup>60</sup> His rejection results in his just condemnation.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 11:28; Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-24; 5:15-17; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; Revelation 22:17*

<sup>59</sup> *Isaiah 55:6-7; John 3:15-16; 6:29, 37; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; Romans 10:13*

<sup>60</sup> *John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:3-4; Ephesians 4:17-21; 1 Timothy 1:15*

<sup>61</sup> *John 3:18, 36; 5:40*

## **Article XI: Of Grace in Regeneration**

In order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again.<sup>62</sup> Regeneration makes one a new creation in Christ Jesus instantaneously.<sup>63</sup> In regeneration the one dead in trespasses and sin is made spiritually alive and receives eternal life, the free gift of God.<sup>64</sup> Regeneration is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Scripture.<sup>65</sup> It secures our voluntary obedience to the gospel. Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *John 3:3, 6-7*

<sup>63</sup> *2 Corinthians 5:17*

<sup>64</sup> *Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:4*

<sup>65</sup> *John 1:12-13; 3:8; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:23-25*

<sup>66</sup> *Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; 1 John 3:9-10; 5:1*

## **Article XII: Of Repentance and Faith**

Repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces,<sup>67</sup> wrought in our souls by the Spirit of God.<sup>68</sup> Thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy,<sup>69</sup> at the same time trusting the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; 20:21*

<sup>68</sup> *John 6:63; 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 2 Corinthians 3:5-6; Titus 3:5-6*

<sup>69</sup> *Psalms 51:1-4, 7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13*

<sup>70</sup> *Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9-11*

## **Article XIII: Of God's Grace in Election**

Election is the gracious, eternal purpose of God according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners, while being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man.<sup>71</sup> It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable.<sup>72</sup> It utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy.<sup>73</sup> Election encourages the proclamation of the gospel with the greatest confidence, and its effects are evident in all who truly believe the gospel.<sup>74</sup> It is the foundation of Christian assurance, and to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *John 15:16; Romans 8:28-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; 2:10; James 1:17-18; 1 Peter 1:1-2*

<sup>72</sup> *Exodus 33:18-19; Luke 18:7; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:23-24*

<sup>73</sup> *Romans 11:5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10; 2:12; 1 Peter 2:9; 5:10; 2 Peter 1:10-11*

<sup>74</sup> *John 10:16; Romans 4:16; 1 Corinthians 9:22; 2 Timothy 2:10*

<sup>75</sup> *John 6:37-40; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Philippians 3:12; Hebrews 6:11; 2 Peter 1:10*

#### **Article XIV: Of Sanctification**

Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness.<sup>76</sup> The progressive work is begun in regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means—self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, the local church, and especially, the Word of God.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *Proverbs 4:18; Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 1:9-11; 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23*

<sup>77</sup> *Matthew 26:41; Luke 9:23; Romans 8:5; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; 13:5; Galatians 5:17; Ephesians 4:11-17; Philippians 3:12-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 6:1; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-8*

#### **Article XV: Of the Perseverance of the Saints**

All saints persevere unto the end, and only these are real believers.<sup>78</sup> Their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors.<sup>79</sup> A special providence watches over their welfare,<sup>80</sup> and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *John 8:31-32; Romans 8:29-34; Ephesians 1:11-14; Colossians 1:21-23*

<sup>79</sup> *Matthew 13:19-21; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 3:12-14; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 1 John 2:19; 3:10; 5:1-5*

<sup>80</sup> *Psalm 121:3; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 1:14; Jude 24*

<sup>81</sup> *Jeremiah 32:40; John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; Romans 6:1-11, 22; 8:35-39; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Peter 1:5*

#### **Article XVI: Of the Righteous and the Wicked**

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked.<sup>82</sup> Only and all those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem.<sup>83</sup> All who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse. This distinction holds among men both in and after death.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *Genesis 18:23; Psalm 1:6; Malachi 3:18*

<sup>83</sup> *Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:17; 6:16-18, 22-23; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; 5:19*

<sup>84</sup> *Psalm 10:4; Proverbs 10:24; 11:31; 14:32; Ecclesiastes 3:17; Matthew 7:13-14; 25:31-46; Luke 16:25; John 3:36; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Galatians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:17-18*

## **Article XVII: Of a Gospel Church**

A gospel church is a congregation of baptized believers who gather regularly to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, willingly associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,<sup>85</sup> observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws,<sup>86</sup> and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.<sup>87</sup> Its only Scriptural officers are elders or pastors and deacons whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Scriptures.<sup>88</sup> A gospel church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. On all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of a gospel church is final, and the head of the church is Christ.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Timothy 3:15*

<sup>86</sup> *Ephesians 1:22-23*

<sup>87</sup> *Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-11; Ephesians 4:11*

<sup>88</sup> *Acts 6:5-6; 14:23; 15:23; 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9*

<sup>89</sup> *1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:1-3; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1: 22-23; 5:23-24; 1 Peter 5:1-4*

## **Article XVIII: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, with the authority of a gospel church.<sup>90</sup> Baptism shows a solemn and beautiful emblem of our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior and the effect of our faith in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life.<sup>91</sup> Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relationship and participation in the Lord's Supper.<sup>92</sup> In the Lord's Supper, the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine, are to commemorate and proclaim together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *Matthew 3:6, 16; 28:19; John 3:23; Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; 19:1-5*

<sup>91</sup> *Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12*

<sup>92</sup> *Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41*

<sup>93</sup> *Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28*

## **Article XIX: Of the Mission of a Gospel Church**

The true mission of a gospel church is found in the Great Commission: to make individual disciples of Jesus Christ, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe all He has commanded.<sup>94</sup> The commission to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable, and it was given to the churches.<sup>95</sup> The cheerful and generous offerings of His people are God's method of financing His mission of spreading the gospel to all nations, caring for the church, and supporting the ministry.<sup>96</sup> These offerings are to be given to the Lord through a gospel church to be distributed as directed by the leadership of the Holy Spirit as the need arises.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *Matthew 28:18-20*

<sup>95</sup> *John 20:21; Romans 10:13-15*

<sup>96</sup> *1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:5-8; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:14-18; 1 Peter 4:10*

<sup>97</sup> *Acts 4:34-35, 37*

## **Article XX: Of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**

Scriptural marriage is the joining of one natural-born man and one natural-born woman for life. No other union is ordained by God as a marriage.<sup>98</sup>

Although God hates divorce, it is permitted in some cases, including cases of sexual immorality or desertion by an unbeliever.<sup>99</sup> In such cases, remarriage is also permitted after the divorce.<sup>100</sup> However, reconciliation is always the goal in marital problems.<sup>101</sup>

Every Scriptural marriage, regardless of how the marriage began, ought to be held in honor as a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> *Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23*

<sup>99</sup> *Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15*

<sup>100</sup> *1 Corinthians 7:15*

<sup>101</sup> *Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 3:1-7*

<sup>102</sup> *Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4*

## **Article XXI: Of Human Sexuality**

God established sex to be enjoyed only within the context of a Scriptural marriage.<sup>103</sup> Any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, pornography, and any other sexual transgressions are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex.<sup>104</sup> God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by any means, including surgery, pharmaceuticals, and appearance.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> *Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5*

<sup>104</sup> *Genesis 19:5-13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:13; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 13:4*

<sup>105</sup> *Genesis 1:27, 31; Deuteronomy 22:5; Matthew 19:4-6*

## **Article XXII: Of Family Relationships**

God ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. God created men and women equal in their essential dignity and human personhood, but with different and complementary spiritual roles in the home.<sup>106</sup> The husband is responsible to love his wife through Christlike servant leadership.<sup>107</sup> The wife is responsible to respect her husband through Christlike biblical submission.<sup>108</sup>

Children are a blessing from the Lord.<sup>109</sup> Parents are responsible to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord through instruction, example, and appropriate discipline in accordance with the Word of God.<sup>110</sup> Children are responsible to honor and obey their parents in the Lord.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 128:2-4; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 11-12; Galatians 3:28; Titus 2:4-5*

<sup>107</sup> *Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7*

<sup>108</sup> *Ephesians 5:22-24, 33; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6*

<sup>109</sup> *Psalm 127:3-5*

<sup>110</sup> *Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:19; Psalm 78:4; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21*

<sup>111</sup> *Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Proverbs 6:20; 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20*

### **Article XXIII: Of Civil Government**

Civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society.<sup>112</sup> Magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>113</sup> who is the righteous Judge and King of kings.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Matthew 22:21; Acts 23:5; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14, 17*

<sup>113</sup> *Daniel 3:17-18; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29*

<sup>114</sup> *Psalm 72:11; 110:5-6; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 10:28; John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Philippians 2:10-11; James 4:12; 1 Peter 4:5; Revelation 19:16*

### **Article XXIV: Of the Return of Christ**

The Day of the Lord is approaching.<sup>115</sup> In the end, Christ will return from heaven physically and visibly.<sup>116</sup> He will raise the dead from the grave and gather them along with the living for final judgement.<sup>117</sup> A solemn separation will then take place: the wicked will be adjudged to endless conscious punishment, and the righteous to endless joy.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> *Matthew 24:42-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 16:15*

<sup>116</sup> *Mark 13:26; Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7*

<sup>117</sup> *Daniel 12:1-2; Mark 13:27; John 5:25-29; Acts 10:42; 24:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:12-13*

<sup>118</sup> *Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-56; Revelation 20:15; 21:3-8*

### **Section 2.02 – Authority of Statement of Faith**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. Grace Baptist Church holds that the Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible. All teachings in the Church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith. Furthermore, each member shall abide by the Statement of Faith and seek to sustain it for the sake of Christian unity.

## **Section 2.03 – Covenant**

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

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to obey His revealed Word; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and personal devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ; to be zealous in our efforts to propagate the Gospel of Christ, our Savior; and to give Him preeminence in all things.

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

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **Article 3 FELLOWSHIP**

### **Section 3.01 – Independent, Autonomous Church**

This Church shall be an independent, autonomous church subject only to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church. It shall cooperate and fellowship with other churches in matters of mutual interest when and if it be possible to do so without compromising its position or violating the spirit of this constitution. In no case shall such cooperation and fellowship jeopardize the freedom, independence, autonomy, doctrines or property holdings of this Church.

### **Section 3.02 – Support of Causes**

This Church shall support whatever missionary, charitable, cultural, or educational cause that it may consider worthy, provided their doctrinal positions and practices are in harmony with the spirit of this constitution.

## **Article 4 MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 4.01 – Qualifications for Membership**

The membership of this Church shall consist of those persons who have met the following criteria:

- (A)** Have confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This confession is evidenced by renouncing sin in one’s life and desiring to live according to biblical commands.
- (B)** Have been scripturally baptized by immersion.
- (C)** Have received pastoral recommendation after completing the new member familiarization process. After a candidate receives pastoral/elder recommendation, membership will be granted upon a majority vote of the members present at any Church service or meeting, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
  1. By baptism (immersion) at this local Church following a profession of faith as a believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
  2. By a letter of transfer from another Bible-believing Church of like faith and practice;
  3. By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion in another Bible-believing Church which holds a like understanding and mode of baptism;
  4. By restoration, after repentance of the sin which led to removal is made publicly before the church membership.

### **Section 4.02 – Process of Membership**

The membership process allows for familiarization of the Church to potential candidates and sets expectations of members. It allows the pastors/elders to better minister to potential candidates.

This process consists of four steps:

- (A)** Successfully completing a pre-membership class with lessons approved by the pastors/elders. The candidate will study the Statement of Faith, Covenant, Constitution, general church practices, and expectations of members.
- (B)** Completing an Application for Membership form.
- (C)** Pastoral/Elder Interview to ensure candidates affirm the gospel, commit to the Covenant, and agree to abide by and sustain the Statement of Faith and Constitution.
- (D)** Pastoral/Elder Recommendation. After the interview, the pastors/elders may decide to reject the candidate for membership, recommend the candidate for membership or decide further discussion is wise before recommending, or rejecting the candidate.

### **Section 4.03 – Expectations of Members**

Membership in a local Church as expressed in the New Testament is deeply significant:

- (A)** The duties of members are set forth in general terms in the Church Statement of Faith.
- (B)** Members are expected to be growing in the likeness of Christ in thought, attitude, speech, and action.
- (C)** Members are expected to practice New Testament “one another” commands within the church, exhibiting a preference for others’ needs over one’s own (*Rom. 15:7; Col 3:16; Eph. 4:2; Rom. 12:10; I Cor. 12:25; Eph. 4:32; James 5:16; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 5:21*).
- (D)** Members are expected to regularly attend the services of the Church for the purposes of worship, fellowship and the edification of one another.
- (E)** Members are expected to abide by and sustain the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Constitution of the Church.

## Section 4.04 – Dismissal of Members

Members shall be dismissed by one of four ways:

**(A)** By Physical Death.

**(B)** By Transfer of Letter.

Any member in good standing may be granted a letter of transfer to any Bible-believing Church. Upon request the letter shall be sent to the Church the member wishes to join.

**(C)** By Church Vote Due to Failure to Observe Membership Expectations.

When a member habitually fails to observe the expectations of membership, they are no longer demonstrating their confession of faith in Christ to the other members. The pastors/elders and Church as a whole are no longer able to affirm their salvation.

The pastors/elders will attempt to connect with these members and determine if extenuating or mitigating circumstances exist. They also make a recommendation to the Church to remove them from membership.

Membership will be removed upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting when one of the following criteria is met:

1. Member has relocated and has not joined or has not notified the Church of joining another Church.
2. Member has ceased to attend the services according to their former habit.
3. Member has begun to attend services at another Church in area but has not joined that Church after a reasonable time.
4. Member has consistently demonstrated failure to observe the expectations of members that do not rise to the level of Church Discipline.

After removal, the individual is free to attend the services of the Church. Because they are not under Church Discipline they are free to reapply for membership following the proscribed membership process.

**(D)** By Termination of Membership by Church Vote Due to Church Discipline.

A Church must cut off from its fellowship and visible membership any person who teaches or insists on holding false or heretical doctrine, who blatantly and impenitently conducts themselves in manner inconsistent with a Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing unity and peace of the Church (*Matt. 18:15ff; Rom. 16:17-20; I Cor. 5:1ff; Titus 3:10-11*). The procedure to be followed for church discipline are set forth in Section 4.05.

## Section 4.05 – Discipline of Members

**(A)** Purpose for Church Discipline.

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (*I Cor. 5:6*), to edify believers by deterring sin (*I Tim. 5:20*), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (*Gal. 6:1*).

**(B)** Principles of Church Discipline.

1. Informal Discipline (*Matt. 18:15-16*). It is the duty of every member to call each other to a biblical standard of conduct. We identify this as informal discipline and is part of everyday life for members of the Church. This is essential to the life and health of the Church.
2. Formal Discipline (*Matt. 18:17*). When a member insists on persisting in their error after the encouragement and admonition of other church members, it is necessary to begin formal discipline. This process involves the entire Church and if not successful, removing the erring member from membership.
3. Timing of Discipline Process. The Bible is clear that members are to seek to resolve offences quickly. It is also understood that the discipline process outlined in Matthew 18 does not dictate a fixed time frame for the process but that the Church is to use wisdom when moving forward with Formal Discipline.

4. Oversight of Discipline Process. The pastors/elders shall have sole charge in determining when to move to formal discipline.

**(C) Process of Church Discipline.**

Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another (*1 John 3:16; John 13:34, 35*). If at any step reconciliation and repentance occurs prior to removal, the issue is considered resolved and the member remains in good standing.

1. Step One, Informal. When a member becomes knowledgeable of an offense of the magnitude to hinder spiritual growth and testimony, they are to go alone to the offending party only after self-examination (*Matt. 7:3*), always in a spirit of humility and with a goal of restoration (*Matt. 18:15-18; Gal. 6:1*). As specified in our covenant, each member is to endeavor to make reconciliation quickly (*Matt. 5:23-25a; Eph. 4:29-32*).
2. Step Two, Informal. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is brought in to hear and establish the facts (*Matt. 18:16*) and to encourage reconciliation.
3. Step Three, Formal. If reconciliation is not reached, the pastors/elders hear the matter. They may recommend a season of prayer and/or specific Bible study to the parties involved or choose to tell it to the Church immediately.
4. Step Four, Formal. If the matter remains unresolved, and in the judgment of the pastors/elders sufficient opportunity to repent has been made available, they must tell the Church of the member's unrepentance. The Church votes and affirms the following:
  - a) Church members are to engage in a prayerful effort on behalf of the erring member.
  - b) Church members are to engage the erring member and encourage repentance and restoration.
  - c) The membership agrees the offending member is removed after a specific time interval if the erring member remains unrepentant.
  - d) The length of time prior to removal is determined beforehand by the pastors/elders and told to the Church prior to vote.
5. Removal from Membership. If still unresolved after the predetermined time, the member is considered removed from the Church and all rights and privileges of membership are revoked. The Bible indicates we are to treat the removed member as an unbeliever (*Matt. 18:17*). The removed member is welcome to attend services as any unbeliever and the members are encouraged to interact with them, not as a Christian brother in fellowship, but rather as one who needs to be evangelized. The entire Church body should recognize a responsibility to "say the same thing" in loving effort to restore the offending one (*Rom. 15:5-6*) and to maintain the Church's testimony and harmony.

## **Article 5 ORDINANCES**

This Church recognizes only two Church ordinances; that of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **Section 5.01 – Baptism**

Baptism shall be administered only to those who have professed faith in Christ, and understands the purpose of biblical baptism.

Per Article (XIV) "Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper" in the Statement of Faith, Baptism by immersion is a prerequisite to membership at Grace Baptist Church and one of the qualifications required for membership in Article 4.01.

### **Section 5.02 – The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is to be administered properly in the Church. The elements shall be unleavened bread and grape juice. Baptized believers should examine themselves carefully and deal biblically with known sin prior to partaking so as not to partake unworthily and bring themselves under the discipline of the Lord (*1 Cor. 11:17, 34*).

### **Section 5.03 – Ordinances Are Not A Means of Grace**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper make a public proclamation that believers have renounced their former life of living for sin and self, are set apart as sacred, and are dedicated to a life of obedient and sacrificial service to the Lord Jesus Christ. This Church rejects and protests the unscriptural belief that these ordinances are a means of grace. We recognize them only and simply for what they are – the divinely appointed emblems and memorials of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Article 6 OFFICERS**

### **Section 6.01 – General Information**

The elected officers of this Church shall be the pastors, deacons, trustees, clerk and treasurer. All officers, teachers, song leaders, etc. shall be members of the Church.

The annual nominating committee shall be composed of the active deacons and trustees and shall be called by the pastors.

### **Section 6.02 – Pastor/Elder**

- (A)** A candidate for the office of pastor/elder shall be carefully examined by the current pastor(s)/elder(s) and deacons as to his salvation, doctrine, Christian conduct, call to the ministry, and Scriptural qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9). He shall be required to state his acceptance of, and adherence to, the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Constitution of the Church.
- (B)** A call to a pastor shall be extended at the meeting of the Church called for the purpose and announced from the pulpit for two services immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A three-fourths majority of the present and voting shall be necessary for the call.
- (C)** The vote shall be by ballot.
- (D)** The call extended to a pastor shall be indefinite.
- (E)** The pastor is responsible for and in charge of the pulpit and various services of the Church. In view of his giving account before the Lord he shall direct the entire ministry of the Church. He shall administer the ordinances and perform the usual duties of a Baptist minister.
- (F)** The pastor shall moderate the business sessions of the Church.
- (G)** The pastor shall be an ex-office member of all committees and shall have voting privileges.
- (H)** All salaried personnel of the Church shall be appointed by the pastor. Salaries shall be set by action of the deacons and trustees.

### **Section 6.03 – Deacons**

- (A)** The Church shall elect from its membership men to serve as deacons. The qualifications for deacon shall be such as are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament (*1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6*). A deacon shall hold office for a period of two years. He may continue in office on approval by the Church.
- (B)** It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Church, to exercise watch care over the Church membership and to supervise the preparation and distribution of the Lord's Supper. They shall constitute the pulpit committee in the event of the vacancy of the office of pastor.

### **Section 6.04 – Trustees**

The Church shall elect men to serve as trustees of the Church. Trustees shall be elected for a three-year term. No debt shall be incurred by the trustees except by vote of the Church, and no real estate shall be sold without approval of the Church.

### **Section 6.05 – Clerk**

The Church shall elect a clerk at each annual business meeting for a period of one year. It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a correct record of the proceedings of the Church, to take charge of the records, to keep a registration of the church membership, and to dispatch all letters and correspondence authorized.

### **Section 6.06 – Treasurer**

The Church shall elect a treasurer at each annual business meeting. His/Her term of office shall be one year. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to record accurately all funds and expenses of the Church. He/She shall collect and disburse funds of the Church and give a report of the same. The office secretary, may at the direction of the pastor, make direct disbursements and payment and shall make a current weekly report of all finances in writing.

### **Section 6.07 – Sunday School Superintendent**

- (A) The pastor shall appoint a Sunday School Superintendent at each annual business meeting. His term of office shall be one year.
- (B) The Superintendent shall work under the direction of the pastor. He shall have the oversight of the Sunday School and all of its departments. He shall appoint an assistant superintendent and a secretary to assist him. All Sunday School teachers shall be appointed by the superintendent and approved by the pastors and deacons.

### **Section 6.08 – Standards**

In order to promote and hold a high spiritual standard of our Church, it shall be the duty of all officers and committeemen to attend the spiritual services of the Church. They shall maintain Christian conduct above reproach in their daily lives. If any shall fail to attend services for reasons other than sickness or providential hindrance, his office shall be considered vacant after six weeks of such delinquencies.

## **Article 7 BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **Section 7.01 – Schedule and Format**

- (A) The annual business meeting will be held in February of each year.
- (B) Regular business meetings with the pastors/elders, deacons and trustees shall be called as necessary by the pastors. Special church business meetings may be called at any time by the pastors.
- (C) No secret business meetings are valid. No business meeting held outside the regularly designated meeting place of the Church shall be valid.
- (D) Voting members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business in the annual or special business meetings.
- (E) The Church is a democratic organization, meaning that a majority vote shall constitute or be the will of the whole Church, except as limited in this constitution. No member below the age of eighteen years is eligible to vote in business meetings.

## **Article 8 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES**

### **Section 8.01 – Purpose**

The Church believes that the home and Church are responsible before God for providing Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this Church shall establish and maintain an educational program for the purpose of leading souls to Christ, and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the Church shall engage in educational ministries in keeping with the following dictates.

### **Section 8.02 – Church Participation**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the Church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the Church; however, the pastors/elders may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interest of the Church.

### **Section 8.03 – Staff Membership**

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this Church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

### **Section 8.04 – Agreement with Statement of Faith**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the Church. The Church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the Statement of Faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

### **Section 8.05 – Unity**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the Church.

### **Section 8.06 – Teaching**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God and the Statement of Faith. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

## **Article 9 LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

### **Section 9.01 – Qualification and Selection for Preacher Licensing**

Any man who is a member, and in the judgment of the Church, gives evidence of spiritual growth and personal discipline in the study of God's Word, resulting in the evidenced practice of sound doctrine, a display of piety, zeal, aptness to preach and who believes he is called of God to the work of the ministry may, by vote of the Church Body, be licensed by the Church Body to preach the Gospel.

### **Section 9.02 – Qualification and Selection for Pastor/Elder Ordination**

If, in the judgment of the Church Body, a man possesses the spiritual qualification for ordination, a Council consisting of ordained pastors/elders and deacons of the Church Body and/or from

neighboring churches of like faith and practice, may be called. Following appropriate examination, the vote of said Council shall be unanimous for ordination. If, in the course of the examination, an objection is expressed, the examination may be suspended or postponed indefinitely, pending an investigation and/or evaluation of the merits of the objection, and the propriety of ordination further referred to the called Council. Based on the unanimous vote of the Council, the Council will then recommend to the Church Body that the ordination be certified.

### **Section 9.03 – Revocation of Ordination**

In the event of a confirmed departure from the faith or doctrines (or in the case of unrepentant sinful conduct where the first two steps of Matthew 18:15-20 have been unsuccessfully undertaken) by an ordained minister of the Church, a Council of ordained pastors and/or deacons from the Church Body and/or from neighboring churches of like faith and practice may, by a majority vote of the Church Body, be convened for the purpose of examination. Based on that examination, the Council will then recommend to the Church Body that the ordination be either certified or revoked.

## **Article 10 INDEMNIFICATION**

### **Section 10.01 – Actions Subject to Indemnification**

The Church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the Church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor/elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. This determination of good-faith intent shall be made (a) by a majority vote of the pastors/elders and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the Church.

### **Section 10.02 – Timing of Indemnification**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article may be paid by the Church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the deacons and trustees in the specific case, so long as the pastor/elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent agrees to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the Church.

### **Section 10.03 – Extent of Indemnification**

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the Church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official

capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor/elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

#### **Section 10.04 – Insurance**

The Church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor/elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the Church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

### **Article 11 SUPPORT**

The expenses of the Church, including the staff salaries and all expenses of the various ministries of the Church shall be raised by free-will tithes and offerings of God's people. This Church will not condone or permit the raising of funds in any other manner. This article is not to be interpreted that the Church will not accept outside donations (donations not in exchange for goods and services) nor would prohibit it from borrowing finances as the occasion presents itself, but speaks against the solicitation of funds in exchange for goods and services (selling of goods, bazaars, suppers, etc.), to raise funds.

### **Article 12 BINDING ARBITRATION**

#### **Section 12.01 – Purpose for Arbitration**

We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (*1 Cor. 6:1-8*). We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. This in no way eliminates the responsibility of civil government to perform their necessary duties of keeping the peace and judging criminal activity.

#### **Section 12.02 – Submission to Arbitration**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this Church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

#### **Section 12.03 – Notice of Arbitration**

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to this Covenant & Constitution or any other Church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians and in accord with Matthew 18:15-17. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled

by arbitration as described in Section 12.01 above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 12.04 below.

#### **Section 12.04 – Limitations on Arbitration Decisions**

- (A) Should any dispute involve matters of Church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for Church discipline as outlined under Section 4.05 were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any Church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article 6 were followed.

#### **Section 12.05 – Arbitration Procedures**

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the pastors/elders and the deacons who were not and are not parties to the conflict.

### **Article 13 CHURCH STATUS AS AN EXEMPT ORGANIZATION**

#### **Section 13.01 - Inurement of Income**

No part of the assets or property of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, or other private persons except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to provide assistance to needy individuals from the Church's benevolence fund.

#### **Section 13.02 - Political Participation**

This Church will not as a substantial part of its activities attempt to influence legislation, or participate to any extent in a political campaign for or against any candidate for public office.

### **Article 14 DISSOLUTION**

#### **Section 14.01 - Assignment of Assets**

In the event that this Church should ever dissolve, its assets after all legal obligations have been met shall become the property of Baptist Bible Fellowship International Missions Office, Springfield, Missouri

### **Article 15 AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended, altered, or revised at any business meeting by the three-fourths vote of the members present and voting, provided such proposed changes shall have been made available to Church members in writing at least two weeks preceding the business meeting. The special meeting shall be announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

## **ADOPTION**

This Statement of Faith, Covenant, & Constitution was adopted by a three-quarters majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Church in which a quorum was present.

Statement of Faith, Covenant, & Constitution supersedes any other Statement of Faith, Covenant, & Constitution of Grace Baptist Church.

02/01/2026

Date

*Esther Smith*

Church Clerk