

# GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

## Constitution and Bylaws

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### PREAMBLE

We, the members of Grace Bible Church in Dallas, Texas, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves. The articles of this Constitution shall serve as the bylaws of the organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church is Grace Bible Church.

### ARTICLE II: DOCTRINE and PRACTICES

#### SECTION 1. Statement of Doctrine.

- (1) The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the verbally inspired Word of God, authoritative, inerrant, infallible and God breathed (*2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21; Matt. 5:18*).
- (2) The Godhead. We believe in one Triune God, existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal in being, identical in essence, equal in power and glory and having the same attributes and perfections (*Deut. 6:4; 2 Cor. 13:14*).
- (3) The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God, and is totally unable to regain its former position (*Gen. 1:26; 3:1-24; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Eph. 2:12*).
- (4) The Person and Work of Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe that He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that our redemption and salvation is guaranteed to us by His literal physical resurrection from the dead (*John 1:1, 14, 18; Luke 1:35; Rom. 3:24-26; 4:25*). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God, where as His people's High Priest He fulfills the ministry of intercession and advocacy (*Heb. 1:3; 12:2; 3:1; 7:23-25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1, 2*).
- (5) The Personality of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He also in the present age regenerates believers in Christ, baptizes them into the church, the body of Christ, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon each one, and fills those yielded to Him (*John 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; John 3:8; 1 Cor. 12:13; John 14:16; Eph. 4:30; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 5:18*).
- (6) Salvation. We believe that salvation is a gift of God in grace and is received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins (*Eph. 2:8-9; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7*).
- (7) The Eternal Security of the Believer. We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever (*Rom. 8:1, 29, 30, 38-39; John 10:27-30*).
- (8) The Church. We believe that the Church, the body and bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations (*Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13*).
- (9) The Second Coming of Christ. We believe in the personal imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own, the Church, and His subsequent premillennial return to earth to set up His kingdom (*1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 20:6*).

- (10) The Eternal State. We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious 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 separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (*Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15*).
- (11) The Responsibility of Believers. We believe that all believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior, and that separation from worldly pleasures and practices is commanded of God (*Rom. 12:1,2; Gal. 5:16, 25; 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1*). We believe that it is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the gospel to all the world (*Acts 1:8*). We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the Lord in prayer and to support it with their means as the Lord has prospered them (*1 Cor. 16:2*).
- (12) Church Ordinances. We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by all believers until His return (*Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26*).
- (13) Marriage. We believe that marriage is established by God as an exclusive covenantal union of man and woman. (*Gen 2:23-24; Matt 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; Eph 5:31*).

## SECTION 2. Statement of the Practices of this Body.

- (1) Tongues. We do not practice the gift of tongues as we believe it no longer meets the description nor fulfills the purposes of that gift in the Scriptures.
- (2) Healing. We believe God sovereignly chooses to heal, but we do not practice individual powers of healing. We consider it a privilege and a part of the ministry of this church body to pray for the sick.
- (3) Dedication of Children. Children may be dedicated to the Lord when desired by their parents. The dedication of children shall not be considered an ordinance.
- (4) Wedding Ceremonies. We recognize and conduct only wedding ceremonies for marriages in accordance with Article II, Section 1 (13) of the Statement of Doctrine. Our facilities may be used for wedding ceremonies only for marriages in accordance with Article II, Section 1 (13) of the Statement of Doctrine.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

### SECTION 1. Qualification for Membership.

Persons desiring to unite with this church by confession of a personal faith in Christ as Savior shall be examined by at least two Elders as to their Christian experience and basis of salvation, and shall be required to assent to the Constitution and Bylaws of the church.

### SECTION 2. Receiving Members.

As many as have been duly examined and have assented to the Constitution and Bylaws of the church, shall be received into the membership of the church by a vote of the Board of Elders at such time as may be determined by them.

### SECTION 3. Associate Membership.

Applicants who desire to retain their membership in another evangelical church outside the city may be admitted into the membership of this church in the same manner as is prescribed above. Such members shall possess the same rights and privileges as regular members.

SECTION 4. Dismissal of Members.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to periodically examine the membership of the church, and any member who shall have been absent from the services of the church for a period of three months without giving satisfactory reasons for such absence may be removed from the membership of the church at the discretion of the Board of Elders. In addition, any member may be removed from the membership of this church by a vote of the Board of Elders after due examination by them.

SECTION 5. Membership Covenant.

*I, therefore, promise, in dependence upon the grace of God who helps our infirmities, to attend as diligently as possible upon the public worship of God, to sanctify the Lord's day, to be faithful in private worship, and to strive in all things to honor my Lord and Savior by a walk and manner of life becoming the gospel of Christ.*

*And do hereby pledge sincerely and unreservedly to devote myself to the Lord to be His forever.*

*And, furthermore, I do promise to submit to the leadership and discipline of the Board of Elders in matters of faith and practice, to support and sustain the honor and worship of God in this church, to contribute to its support, and the work it may at any time undertake, according as the Lord has given to me and enables me to do so.*

*And, to preserve the good name of this church by a consistent walk as the Lord shall give me grace that no reproach shall be brought upon the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

**ARTICLE IV: GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in the body of believers who compose it. The two-thirds vote of eligible members present at congregational meetings shall be final except as hereinafter otherwise provided.

**ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES**

SECTION 1. Officers.

The officers of the church shall consist of the Elders on the Board of Elders and the Deacons on the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 2. Duties of the Officers and Trustees.

- (1) It shall be the duty of the Elders to care for the church and its spiritual condition, to guard the purity of doctrine and life of the church, and to discipline the church in accordance with the Word of God. The Senior Pastor shall be an elder and, therefore a full member of the Board of Elders. The Elders shall assist the Senior Pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper, act for the church in the reception and dismissal of members, and examine all persons seeking membership in the church. It shall be the duty of the Elders to assist the Senior Pastor in counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick, and in supplying the pulpit of the church in the absence of the Senior Pastor. It shall also be the duty of the Elders to oversee the operation of all ministries of the church.
- (2) It shall be the duty of the Deacons to carry out such duties as are delegated to them by the Board of Elders including the care and maintenance of the physical properties and the management of the finances of the church. They shall also be responsible for such temporal duties as ushering at church services, the collection of offerings and the provision of every material thing necessary for proper worship. The Board of Deacons shall operate under the direction of the Board of Elders. This is not to be regarded, however, as meaning that the office of Deacon is inferior to that of Elder. Each office is just as important as the other. The offices simply operate in different spheres. The subordination is necessary for successful operation.
- (3) It shall be the role of the Trustees to hold title to the real property of the church and to execute on behalf of the church any documents affecting or encumbering the title or evidencing indebtedness secured by the real property of the church when authorized by the Board of Elders. The execution of any documents by the Trustees shall be sufficient for all purposes when executed by at least two but not all of the Trustees.

**SECTION 3. Election and Removal of Officers and Trustees.**

- (1) Elders, except for the Senior Pastor, shall be elected from the nominees at the annual meeting of the congregation for a term of four years on a rotating basis so that the terms of a majority of the standing Elders will not expire in any one year. An Elder shall be a man who is above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money, who manages his household well, controls his children with dignity, and not a new convert. He shall be above reproach both within and outside the church. The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of five (5) elders and a maximum of nine (9) elders not including the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall meet the qualifications of an Elder and by his election as Senior Pastor shall serve as an Elder during his entire term as Senior Pastor.
- (2) Deacons shall be elected from the nominees at the annual meeting of the congregation for a term of three years on a rotating basis so that the terms of approximately one-third of the standing Deacons expire each year. A Deacon shall be a man of dignity, not addicted to wine or fond of sordid gain, not a new convert, the husband of one wife, and a good manager of his children and household. He shall be above reproach both within and outside the church.
- (3) Trustees shall be filled in a manner similar to that of Elders and Deacons with the following exceptions: (a) Their terms shall be for five years; (b) There shall be no rotation; (c) There shall be a minimum of two Trustees at all times. Trustees may be re-elected upon expiration of their term of office.
- (4) Elders, Deacons and Trustees shall be nominated by the Board of Elders at least thirty days before the annual meeting. Recommendations may be made by letter to the Board of Elders by any member no later than thirty-one days before the meeting. Thereafter no recommendations may be made, in view of the fact that prayerful consideration could not be given them. All persons nominated for election by the Board of Elders to serve as officers, must be members of the church and continue to be members during their term of office or position.
- (5) Any Elder, Deacon or Trustee may be removed from office for conduct contrary to the Word of God at any congregational meeting called for that purpose. Furthermore, if an Elder or Deacon shall absent himself from three consecutive regular meetings of his respective Board without reasonable excuse, he shall be deemed to have resigned his position and a vacancy shall exist.
- (6) Should the office of Elder or Deacon or the position of Trustee become vacant before the expiration of his term, his successor may either be appointed by the Board of Elders from non-standing officers or Trustees that have previously served in the same office or position or be elected by the congregation at a special called congregational meeting to fill the unexpired term. No Elder or Deacon shall be elected to either Board who has just completed a full term in the same office. At least one year must elapse before a retiring Elder or Deacon may be re-elected to the same office.

**ARTICLE VI: *STAFF***

**SECTION 1. Staff.**

The staff of the church shall consist of the Senior Pastor, the Treasurer and such Associate Pastor(s) or other positions, if any, as determined by the Board of Elders.

**SECTION 2. Responsibilities of the Staff.**

- (1) It shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to have general oversight of the spiritual life of the church with the Board of Elders, to preach the Word in the regular services of the church, and to administer the ordinances. He shall be an ex-officio member of all other boards and committees, and shall have full voice with the other members of the official boards of the church. The Senior Pastor shall report to the Board of Elders.
- (2) The responsibilities of Associate Pastors and staff positions other than the Treasurer shall be assigned by and they shall report to the Senior Pastor.
- (3) It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer, under the supervision of the Board of Deacons, to handle the funds of the church and to keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the church. Unless necessity dictates otherwise, the Treasurer should be a member of the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 3. Election, Appointment and Removal of Staff.

- (1) The Senior Pastor shall be recommended to the church by the Board of Elders. He shall be elected in a regularly convened congregational meeting by a two-thirds vote of the eligible membership present. The election shall be for an indefinite period of time. The termination of the Senior Pastor's service may be affected at any time by the same order of procedure as prescribed for his election.
- (2) Associate Pastors shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and serve at their discretion. Unless necessity dictates otherwise, Associate Pastors shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor.
- (3) The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons and serve at their discretion.
- (4) Appointments of all other staff positions shall be by the Senior Pastor with their service at his discretion.

**ARTICLE VII: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

SECTION 1. Annual Meeting and Fiscal Year.

The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held between November 15<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> on a date to be determined by the Board of Elders and announced to the congregation in the manner prescribed for congregational meetings. The fiscal year of the church shall be determined by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 2. Quorum.

A Quorum for the transaction of business in all congregational meetings shall consist of the members present who are in good and regular standing and who have attained the age of eighteen years. A favorable vote of two-thirds of those present shall prevail on any issue that comes before such meeting except as hereinafter otherwise provided.

SECTION 3. Transaction of Business and Special Meetings.

- (1) Any annual or special meetings of the congregation may be constituted a meeting for the transaction of business, providing announcement of said meeting be given from the pulpit on two Sundays preceding said meeting.
- (2) Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by the Board of Elders, or upon written request to the Board of Elders by at least ten percent of the members who are eligible to vote at that meeting
- (3) In all congregational meetings, the Chairman of the Board of Elders shall preside, and in his absence a substitute may be appointed by the Board of Elders from that board. In the transaction of business in all congregational meetings, Robert's Rules of Order may be used at the discretion of the Chairman.

SECTION 4. Indebtedness.

The Board of Deacons on behalf of the church may commit to indebtedness except that any indebtedness on real property or any other long term financing requires a vote of approval by the Board of Elders followed by a vote of approval by the congregation.

**ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at a duly announced meeting of the congregation, providing the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in written form or letter sent to members and announced from the pulpit for a period of two consecutive Sundays preceding said meeting. A Quorum and vote to amend the Constitution and Bylaws shall be the same as in ARTICLE VII, SECTION 2 except that any amendment of the doctrinal statement as set forth in ARTICLE II shall require a three-fourths vote of eligible members present at a congregational meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX: *ORDINANCES***

### **SECTION 1. Christian Baptism.**

Christian Baptism is strongly advised for membership in the church, it being fully understood that the ordinance is not necessary for salvation. Baptism shall be administered with the approval of the Senior Pastor and recorded in the minutes of the Board of Elders. The mode of baptism, being a testimony to a spiritual reality, shall be by sprinkling or immersion at the candidate's option.

### **SECTION 2. The Lord's Supper.**

The Lord's Supper shall be administered as frequently as the Elders shall order. Unless unusual circumstances arise, it shall be observed at least once every month.

## **ARTICLE X: *ORDINATION***

Spirit-filled men may be called out from among us to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. An ordination council shall be composed of the Board of Elders and such other men as are appointed by the Elders to the council. The ordination 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. The applicant shall be eligible for ordination upon a two-thirds vote of the ordination council that the applicant has the suitable gifts for the ministry. Thereafter, such men may be ordained and given a commission to preach and administer the ordinances by a vote of the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE XI: *MISSIONARIES***

It is expected that the church will undertake financial support of missionaries and missionary organizations, as the Lord leads. All decisions and arrangements regarding recognition and financial support of missionaries and missionary organizations by the church, including approval, modification or termination of such recognition or support, shall be within the discretion of and determined by the Board of Elders of the church; provided that no missionary or missionary organization shall be recognized or supported by the church unless that missionary or missionary organization shall subscribe to the Statement of Doctrine. The Board of Elders will notify the congregation as missionaries and missionary organizations are added to or deleted from the missionaries and missionary organizations recognized and supported by the church and whenever such recognition is modified or terminated.

## **ARTICLE XII: *ELDER AND DEACON BOARD PROCEDURE***

### **SECTION 1. Quorum.**

A quorum for the meetings of the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons shall consist of two-thirds of the standing members thereof. Regular business may be discussed absent a quorum but consideration of and action upon any resolution shall require a quorum.

### **SECTION 2. Resolutions.**

Approval of any resolution that comes before either the Board of Elders or the Board of Deacons shall require a vote of two-thirds of the Board members present to prevail.

### **SECTION 3. Other Procedure.**

The Board of Elders shall elect a Chairman of the Board of Elders who shall preside at the Board meetings and shall also designate one Elder to serve as Secretary to the Board of Elders. Both the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons may adopt other procedural rules to facilitate the conduct of their meetings and to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them by this Constitution and Bylaws.

### **SECTION 4. Meetings by Remote Communications Technology**

Meetings of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons may be held by means of a remote electronic communications system, including videoconferencing technology or the Internet if (1) each person entitled to participate in the meeting consents to the meeting being held by means of that system and (2) the system provides access to the meeting in a manner or using a method by which each person participating in the meeting can communicate concurrently with each other