

CONSTITUTION

of

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

of Kansas City, MO

Adopted by the membership on November 20, 2011.

PREAMBLE:

In May of 2006, God united a body of believers to organize a church with one driving question: “What does the Bible say?” In October 2006, members signed the charter of the Summit Springs Baptist Church in Lee’s Summit, MO.

The name Grace Bible Church was adopted in October 2009. In searching the Scriptures to understand a New Testament church, we have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to conform more closely to God’s plan for His church.

Therefore, we, the members of Grace Bible Church set forth this Constitution consisting of the doctrinal statement, covenant, and guidelines for practice, under the authority of God’s Word.

ARTICLE I: NAME, ORGANIZATION AND MISSION

Section 1: Name

The name of this church is Grace Bible Church of Kansas City, MO.

Section 2: Organization

- A. Grace Bible Church is an independent, autonomous, local Church, and shall voluntarily cooperate or associate with other churches and ministries as it may choose, remaining free from the authority or control of any denomination or association.
- B. Grace Bible Church is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Missouri, Chapter 355, with the Articles of Incorporation filed with the Secretary of State of Missouri on April 28, 2006.
- C. The registered corporate office shall be the church office, and the registered agent for the corporation shall be the teaching pastor, unless a different person is designated by the church elders.
- D. Pursuant to our statement of faith regarding the church, this church shall be organized and operated as a New Testament church, comprised of baptized believers, joined voluntarily in a covenant relationship. The church shall organize and assemble for worship, prayer, instruction, evangelism and observance of the two ordinances instituted by Christ, baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Section 3: Mission Statement

For the glory of God and in obedience to the Great Commission, Grace Bible Church exists to accomplish God's purpose in the Church through Jesus Christ the Cornerstone, by corporate worship, biblical preaching and loving fellowship.

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1: The Bible

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and are given by inspiration of God revealing His sufficient, certain, and authoritative rule for all matters of faith and obedience.

Section 2: Triune God

We believe that the one true God exists eternally in the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each having distinct personal attributes but being equal in divine essence and glory.

Section 3: God the Father

We believe that God the Father is the Almighty Sovereign who works all things according to His purpose, saving all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Section 4: God the Son, Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son who took on human nature by the virgin birth to live a sinless life, to die an atoning death, and to rise from the dead to obtain redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life for all who believe.

Section 5: God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Triune God effectually regenerates sinners, permanently indwells and equips believers, and seeks to fill, empower and control each believer for godliness, service and witness.

Section 6: Creation

We believe that God created all things from nothing for His own glory, and He best revealed His image in the creation of man and woman.

Section 7: Providence

We believe that God orders and directs all things so that all natural events and human actions are according to His purpose and for His glory.

Section 8: Fall

We believe that Adam was created in the image of God without sin, that he fell into sin by disobeying God's command, and that, as the representative head, he brought all people into a state of death, ruin, and judgment.

Section 9: Election

We believe that before the foundation of the world, God unconditionally chose some wrath-deserving sinners for everlasting life by His mercy in Christ.

Section 10: Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is the irresistible call of God that graciously gives spiritual life to the dead sinner, thus enlightening the mind to the gospel and enabling repentance and faith.

Section 11: Repentance

We believe that repentance is a gift of God's grace whereby the Spirit convicts of sin and enables the sinner who was dead in trespasses and sins to choose freely to turn from the evil and ruin of their sin in godly sorrow, in order to live in righteousness.

Section 12: Faith

We believe that faith is the gift of God's grace whereby the repentant sinner abandons all self-reliance and works of self-righteousness, and trusts solely and completely in the substitutionary work of Christ's righteous life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection.

Section 13: Justification

We believe that justification is the legal act whereby He declares unjust sinners to be just based on their faith in the perfect work of Christ.

Section 14: Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the promised work of God to conform the believer into the righteous character of Christ by the enabling power of the Spirit.

Section 15: Perseverance

We believe that perseverance is the promise of God to preserve to eternal life those He has called to faith in Christ, so that a true believer will never totally or finally fall away from the faith.

Section 16: The Church

We believe that the church is composed of all believers, gathered in local assemblies for worship, led by elders, served by deacons, and commissioned to live and proclaim the gospel for the glory of God.

Section 17: Baptism

We believe that baptism serves as a believer's public declaration of his faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior for the forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ.

Section 18: Lord's Supper/Communion

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a time of remembrance when believers confess their faith in the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death, their unity with other believers in Christ, and their willingness to separate from the world.

Section 19: New Covenant in Christ

We believe that the New Covenant made through the redemptive work of Christ is the full realization of the Old Testament types, prophecies and promises regarding forgiveness of sins, righteousness that pleases God, and everlasting peace and fellowship with God as His people.

Section 20: Last Days

We believe that the last days will culminate with the return of Christ to conquer all earthly powers, the resurrection of all men for the righteous judgment by Christ, and the commencement of eternal wrath for unbelievers and eternal joy for those who believe in Jesus the Lord.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH COVENANT

Having been saved by God's grace and baptized in obedience to Christ Jesus' command, we, the members of Grace Bible Church, do wholeheartedly and joyfully enter into the following covenant:

- to gather faithfully with one another for corporate worship and fellowship;
- to love one another continually; to encourage and build up one another by the use of edifying words;
- to discern, develop and deploy our spiritual gift(s);
- to honor and respect those in spiritual leadership within our assembly;
- to help sustain the overall ministry of the church through regular, willing and cheerful giving;
- to offer Christian liberty to one another in matters of non-essential importance;
- to reconcile differences with one another swiftly, meekly and humbly;
- and to attempt to restore one another when one is ensnared by sin.

We further pledge to strive for biblical knowledge and personal growth in our relationship to Christ and to pursue obedience regarding biblical family roles:

- as parents, bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;
- as husbands, loving our wives as Christ loved the Church;
- as wives, in submitting willingly and lovingly to the headship of our husbands;
- and as children, both obeying and honoring our parents.

We also pledge to live exemplary, Christ-like lives in our public behavior, demeanor, associations, and financial dealings, mindful of our status as "salt" and "light" in this world; and finally to carry out our Lord's great commission by evangelizing and disciple-making within our sphere of

influence. We covenant to do all of these things with the power and grace of God, and for His glory.

If at any time we find ourselves in disagreement with this Covenant, accompanying Statements of Faith, or governing documents, we will remove ourselves from this assembly in the spirit of love and for the sake of unity.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Definition of Membership

- A. **Corporate membership:** In accordance with Missouri law for non-profit corporations (Section 355.181), the corporation shall have no corporate members. Any action, which would otherwise require approval by a majority of members, shall require the approval of the elders as governed by this constitution.
- B. **Church Membership:** Nothing contained in Section 1, A of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of the Church to refer to persons associated with the church as 'members' even though such persons are not corporate members. Membership in this document refers to a biblical identification with this local church in a spirit of unity as described in the membership covenant.

Section 2: Qualification

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of regeneration, having been baptized following salvation, and affirming the faith and commitments of this Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, may be received into membership upon approval of the elders.

Section 3: Admission

- A. Membership candidates shall meet with the elders regarding the qualifications.
- B. Upon satisfaction of the qualifications, the elders shall announce the candidate to the church one month prior to acceptance.
- C. Any member who believes a candidate is unqualified for membership should express such concern to the elders.
- D. A final approval of the elders will receive candidates into membership.

Section 4: Termination

Membership at Grace Bible Church shall be terminated by:

- A. A member's death.
- B. A member's request to withdraw from the church fellowship. Resignations from membership are possible only by members in good standing who are not under any disciplinary action.

- C. A member's absence for six consecutive months.

Note: Exceptions may be considered for extenuating circumstances (i.e. college students, those hospitalized or bedridden, in military service, etc.).

- D. A member's refusal to repent in the process of church discipline (see Art. IV, Section 5).

Section 5: Church Discipline

- A. The purpose of church discipline is to affect the repentance, restoration and return of the erring Christian to a Biblical standard of conduct and doctrine, to deter sin in other believers, to maintain the purity of the church and its corporate witness, and to glorify God by reflecting His holy character; therefore, Grace Bible Church will lovingly and biblically confront any professing believer (member or regular attendee) who is in sin or error.
- B. A member who is guilty of conduct in violation of the Word of God, our statement of faith, or the church covenant, as determined by the elders, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the church according to the instructions in Matthew 18:15-20.
 - 1. A Confidential Meeting – "go alone" (v. 15). First seek private correction and reconciliation with the sinning brother.
 - 2. A Cooperative Meeting – "one or two more" (v. 16). If the first step fails, take witnesses, preferably spiritual leadership, to strengthen the effect of the admonition and to firmly establish the record, should the matter be brought before the congregation.
 - 3. A Congregational Meeting – "tell it unto the church" (v. 17a). If the second step efforts have been exhausted and the situation is not resolved, seek reconciliation and restoration through the whole church body. This step brings the matter to the attention of the elders, who have the authority to determine if the process of discipline has been properly followed. At their discretion, the elders may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and make the matter known to the church in any service in order that the church may collectively call the erring member to repentance.
 - 4. A Concluding Meeting – "but if he neglect to hear the church" (v. 17b). If a professing brother refuses to repent, he shall be dismissed from the church by the decision of the elders and treated as an unbeliever outside of the fellowship of the body. The congregation shall be notified of this decision in any church meeting.
- C. Every member of this church explicitly consents to submit to this process of church discipline. Any action on the part of the person(s) involved as to intentionally impair or make impossible the fulfilling of Matthew 18:15-18, or failure to meet with the elders or those seeking to confront shall not prevent a decision and/or recommendation according to the information received. All members agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of dismissal or because of public statements to the church in the process of church discipline. The church shall have the authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation in order for the church to continue the biblical responsibility of discipline.

ARTICLE V: ELDERS

Section 1: Office of Elder

- A. The office of elder is one of two biblical church offices along with the office of deacon.
- B. Elders are also called pastors or bishops in the NT.
- C. The office of elder is designed to be a role of spiritual authority, oversight and shepherding with a priority of prayer and Word-centered ministry. Acts 6:4
- D. The elders should be comprised of men who meet the biblical qualifications.

Section 2: Qualifications of Elders

- A. An elder must be qualified according to Scripture, including the specific qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. An elder shall affirm the Statement of Faith and meet all requirements of membership.

Section 3: Selection of Elders

- A. The elders will recognize the gifts of a candidate and examine his character and doctrine.
- B. The candidate shall be recommended to the church by the elders at least one month before affirmation. Any member who believes a candidate is unqualified for the office should express such concern to the elders.
- C. Upon recommendation by the elders, the candidate shall be approved by a three-fourths approval vote of the members.
- D. Each elder shall hold office as long as he is faithful to his calling and has the confidence of his fellow elders and the congregation.

Section 4: Responsibilities of Elders

- A. To provide pastoral care and spiritual leadership to the church while performing any constitutional duties of oversight.
- B. To shepherd fellow elders with humility and accountability.
- C. To interview, instruct, and approve prospective members.
- D. To exercise church discipline.
- E. To examine and recommend candidates for elder, deacon, or other church positions.
- F. To supervise and evaluate staff members.

- G. To hire or dismiss non-elder staff employees.
- H. To present an itemized budget to the congregation for approval.
- I. To elect a chairman for elders' meetings.
- J. To moderate members' meetings.
- K. To serve as Ex-officio members of all committees.
- L. To oversee the work of the deacons, appointed coordinators and committees.
- M. For the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws in the State of Missouri, the elders shall choose three elders to bear the title of the Trustees of the corporation. According to the corporate definitions, these trustees serve as the legal representatives of the church when necessary, regarding the legal and business affairs of the church, and shall take actions or perform functions as directed by the church in the constitution or by specific motion.
- N. Also for the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws in the State of Missouri, the elders shall choose certain elders to wear the corporate titles of President, Vice-President and Secretary.
- O. Regarding Section 4, Paragraphs M and N, if there are less than 3 elders, the elders will select a deacon (or deacons) to fill the remaining corporate roles as officers and trustees of the corporation.
- P. The elder serving as secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of elders' meetings and any regular or special member's meetings and for the maintenance of the church membership record.
- Q. Other leadership and servant positions deemed necessary by the elders will be appointed by the same (i.e. Finance Committee, Head Usher, Christian Education Director, Missions Committee, Nursery Coordinator, Secretary, etc).

Section 5: Dismissal of Elders

- A. The dismissal process should follow the instruction of Matthew 18:15-17 and Timothy 5:17-21. 1
- B. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express this concern to the elders.
- C. Upon the recommendation of the elders, an elder may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at any regular or special meeting of the church.
- D. If a staff elder is removed by the church, he shall immediately cease from performing pulpit, pastoral, and administrative duties. The elders shall recommend the terms of severance, if any, subject to church approval.

ARTICLE VI: TEACHING PASTOR

Section 1: Role

- A. The teaching pastor shall be an elder, subject to the elder's qualification, duties, and dismissal according to Article V.
- B. He should be recognized as gifted and called to a full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.
- C. As an elder, he shall be an Ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 2: Selection of the Teaching Pastor

- A. The selection of the teaching pastor shall follow the same process for selecting other elders as described in Article V.
- B. In the event that a new teaching pastor is to be called, the elders shall appoint, with representation from the elders and deacons, a pastoral search committee that shall work with the elders in seeking a new teaching pastor. The elders shall bring any recommendation to the church membership.
- C. In addition, special attention should be given to the evaluation of his teaching gifts, allowing for hearing and evaluation.
- D. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at any one time.
- E. A three-fourths vote is required to approve the candidate.
- F. If called from outside the church body, a vote to call a teaching pastor also affirms his membership and that of his wife if he is married.
- G. The elders shall be responsible to make arrangements for persons to preach at all services of the church and to perform pastoral duties during the interim.

ARTICLE VII: DEACONS

Section 1: Office of Deacon

- A. The office of deacon is one of the two biblical church offices, along with the office of elder/pastor/bishop.
- B. Deacons are godly servants of the church body.

Section 2: Qualifications of Deacons:

- A. A deacon should meet the qualifications of godly character as set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and Timothy 3:8-13. 1
- B. A deacon shall affirm the Statement of Faith and meet all requirements of membership.

Section 3: Selection of Deacons:

- A. As needs arise, the elders shall seek out qualified men willing to serve the church with their gifts.
- B. The deacon nominee will be presented to the church two weeks before the congregational vote of approval. Any member who believes a candidate is unqualified for the office should express the concern to the elders.
- C. The deacon will be affirmed to a one-year term by a simple majority vote.

Section 4: Responsibilities:

- A. Deacons shall serve, assist, and cooperate with the elders in the work of the church to allow them to focus on spiritual priorities of the pastoral office.
- B. Under the general oversight of the elders, the deacons shall care for the temporal, physical needs of the church.
- C. The deacons shall administer the benevolence fund under the guidelines of the Finance Committee and the authority of the elders.

Section 5: Dismissal of the Deacon

- A. If the elders determine a deacon to be unfit to serve in the office of deacon, they shall recommend to the congregation that he be removed from office.
- B. The recommendation to remove a deacon is affirmed with a simple majority vote of the members.

ARTICLE VIII: FINANCES

Section 1: The Budget

- A. The church budget, presented by the elders, shall be approved by the membership at any member's meeting before the fiscal year begins.
- B. An annual meeting will address the yearly financial reports. Financial reports are available through the treasurer.

Section 2: The Budget Process

- A. A Finance Committee shall be appointed by the elders to compile the annual church budget. The Finance Committee shall consist of one or more elders, one or more deacons, and qualified members from the congregation.
- B. The committee shall discuss staff salaries and recommendations in the absence of any paid staff member.
- C. The Finance Committee will recommend a budget to the elders. With the approval of the elders the final budget proposal is recommended to the members for approval.
- D. Congregational approval shall be required for:
 - 1. Any non-budgeted, one-time purchase over \$1500;
 - 2. Any single line item overage over \$1500;
 - 3. Any total budget overage over 2% of the annual budget.

Section 3: Financial Support

- A. The church's primary means of support will be through free-will offerings. All secondary fund-raisers shall be approved by the Finance Committee.
- B. Special offerings, in addition to regular Sunday offerings may be collected during any service with the approval of the elders.
- C. All designated gifts shall be used for the purpose for which they were originally designated, subject to the review and approval of the Finance Committee.
- D. Non-budgeted income (including designated gifts) shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee, and any decisions made about accepting, rejecting or using such gifts shall be reported clearly to the church.
- E. As long as the church finances are managed by an independent certified public accountant, the Finance Committee shall organize an internal audit of funds or policies annually.
- F. Should the church manage the finances internally, an annual, external audit shall be required.

Section 4: Corporate Office of Treasurer. The Treasurer shall meet all the qualifications of a deacon and shall be nominated by the elders and approved by the congregation for a term of one year. The Treasurer shall be responsible to oversee the following duties:

- A. Keeping an accurate record of receipts and disbursements.
- B. Providing financial statements.
- C. Providing annual contribution records to all givers.

ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1: Worship Services

- A. The church shall conduct meetings that are deemed necessary and desirable for public worship, prayer, evangelism, revival, missions, and the general work of the gospel.
- B. Regular worship services of the church shall be held on Sunday.

Section 2: Members' Meetings

- A. Business of the church may be transacted at any regular or special church service or members' meeting according to proper notice.
- B. Notification of any members' meeting shall be made at least two weeks prior to the meeting in any regular service of the church.
- C. A members' meeting may be called at the written request of 20% of the membership. This written request must be submitted to the elders, who shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of the receipt of the request.
- D. A simple majority of eligible voting members present shall determine all motions and other business before the body unless otherwise stated in the constitution.
- E. For the following decisions, a three-fourths majority vote is required from a quorum of 50% of the voting members.
 - 1. Approval of elders
 - 2. Purchase or sale of church real estate
 - 3. Indebtedness
- F. Absentee ballots will be accepted with the understanding that the absentee ballots must be signed by the voter and the names of absentee voters must be announced at the congregational vote.
- G. The agenda and order of meetings shall be determined by the elders.
- H. Any church member 16 years of age or older and not under any disciplinary consideration is eligible to vote in members' meetings.

ARTICLE X: TAX EXEMPT STATUS

Sections 1: Purpose Statement

Grace Bible Church is organized as a church for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that also qualify as Section 501(c)(3) exempt organizations. All funds, whether income or principal, and whether acquired by gift or contribution or otherwise, shall be devoted to said purposes.

Section 2: No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of any private individual or organization, or to anyone not qualifying as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended, nor to any Trustee or officer of the corporation, excepting solely such reasonable compensation that the corporation shall pay for services actually rendered to the corporation, or allowed by the corporation as a reasonable allowance for authorized expenditures incurred on behalf of the corporation;

Section 3: No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall constitute the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, or any initiative or referendum before the public, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including by publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office; and

Section 4: Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now enacted or hereafter amended.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

At the recommendation of the elders, this constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the members present at any regular or special members' meeting of the church, provided that the announcement and publication of the amendment be made at least one month prior to the members' meeting.

ARTICLE XII: DISSOLUTION

Sections 1: Grace Bible Church may be dissolved at the recommendation of the elders and by a majority vote of the remaining members.

Section 2: Upon dissolution of the corporation and after all debts and expenses of the corporation have been paid, the officers of the Corporation should distribute the remaining assets of the corporation to another church of like faith and practice, or to another Christian ministry which qualifies as a charitable organization under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which has been determined by the elders and approved by a majority of remaining members.