Constitution
For
Grace Bible Church

Adopted in
Christian Unity

January 2023

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PREAMBLE

This Constitution serves to preserve the principles of our faith, to govern this local body, and to guarantee the liberties of each church member and the freedom of action in relation to other churches of like faith and order in a Christ-like manner. Following a Biblical New Testament pattern for the early church, we desire to be an elder-led, deacon-served, and congregation-affirmed body of believers.

ARTICLE I: DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This document declares our Biblical understanding of doctrinal beliefs, form of church government, organizational structure, and purposes. If we are to glorify God and accomplish His purposes, each member will be in agreement with this Constitution to promote unity *(1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3, 13)*.

No document is a higher authority than the Bible. The church is a living and growing body subject ultimately to the authority of Jesus Christ alone as the Bible declares *(Eph. 1:22; 4:12-16)*.

ARTICLE II: NAME – Amended August 31, 2025 by congregational vote

This assembly shall be known as Grace Bible Church (formerly Yellowstone Baptist Church). The legal entity is established only as it pertains to the laws of a Wyoming nonprofit religious organization. The Scriptures are the sole guide to church operation and belief. Should rules or laws be enacted by any government that prohibits us from following the Scripture, then we will obey God rather than man. Scripture supersedes man's law *(Acts 5:29)*.

ARTICLE III: MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our mission, goals and objectives set forth the philosophy of this church and directs us in what we ought to be doing. Anything which does not contribute to this philosophy should then be either corrected, rejected or alleviated from the activities of the church.

A. Our Mission

The supreme mission of the church, and of every individual believer, is to glorify God and to serve Him forever *(Eph. 3:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 4:11)*.

B. Our Goals

Our goals are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry along with their spiritual maturity in the Lord *(Eph. 4:12-16; Col. 1:28-29)* and evangelize the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ *(Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 1:14-16; 1 Thess. 1:8; Acts 1:8)*.

C. Our Objectives

1. Internal Objectives and Functions

a. Teaching: (instruction in the Word of God) To stand for the fundamental truths of Scripture, to equip the saints for service, and for the building up of the body of Christ for unity, knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity, measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ, and to protect against the deceitful schemes of Satan *(Eph. 4:12-16)*.

b. Fellowship: To encourage and provide meaningful relationships among believers (expressions of sharing and caring for, and loving one another, warning, stimulating, and encouraging one another to love and good deeds *(Heb. 10:24-25; 13:1-2; Acts 2:42-47)*.

c. Worship: To provide the means for expressing meaningful worship in prayer, songs of praise, adoration, admonishment, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper *(Heb. 13:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42)*.

d. Ministry: To provide the means for developing and exercising spiritual gifts for the edification of the body and the evangelization of the lost *(Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11)*.

2. External Objectives and Functions

a. Outreach: To present the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never trusted in Him as Savior, and to encourage them to do so *(Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:2-10)*.

b. Holy Behavior: To live holy lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation acting as salt/light in the world *(Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:11-15; Col. 4:5)*.

c. Showing Mercy: To do good to all men whenever there is the opportunity and the means to do so within biblical principles and precepts *(Gal. 6:10; Lk. 10:29-37)*.

ARTICLE IV: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT (full Doctrinal Statement under separate cover)

Since the Word of God is absolutely essential to true spirituality, fellowship, spiritual sustenance, effectiveness in service and ministry, faith and doctrinal accuracy, our most important function is consistent teaching and study of the Word of God *(1 Tim. 4:6-7; 2 Tim. 2:15)*.

The study of the Bible is a necessary channel for fellowship with God and for effective ministry to one another and to the world. It will not therefore, be bypassed or made secondary in the interest of social concerns, actions, or activities, but must be so promoted that the Word, and the teaching of the Word, becomes the pulse and heartbeat behind all church and non-church related activities or concerns *(Ps. 119:1; 138:2; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26: 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-3)*.

This body shall function as an evangelical Baptist church, committed to the fundamental, historic truths recorded in God's inerrant revelation—the Holy Scriptures.

We recognize there are different beliefs in regards to secondary doctrines such as eschatology (end times). Any differences from the church's doctrinal position must be clearly presented to the elders and prayerfully considered. Elders are to protect the congregation from false teaching and reserve the right and responsibility to determine whether a difference could be damaging or serve to provide edification.

ARTICLE V: GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The local church is composed of one body with many members who are in relationship with Jesus Christ, but the body also has "joints of supply," units of control, and unity, i.e., church leaders *(Eph. 4:16)*. This together is participation under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ with leadership direction, submission and authority in a two-directional manner.

First, the local government is invested in the body of believers under the headship of Jesus Christ *(Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:21; Col. 1:18; 2:19).*

Second, spiritual leadership is authorized by Scripture, in elders/pastors, who lead the church spiritually and to whom the congregation are to submit under the headship of Christ. These men have the authority and responsibility to delegate to individuals, committees, or other boards (such as deacons) authority and responsibility to carry out the business or ministry of the church in spiritual and physical (material) matters *(Acts 20:28; 15:6; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17)*.

In using its delegated authority to make decisions, the elders are to be guided by Scripture, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and by input from the congregation *(Acts 20:32; 6:2-5; 11:22; 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19).*

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH SERVANTS

A. PASTORS/ELDERS

1. The pastor is a man ordained by God and serves as one of the church elders *(1 Tim. 3:1-7).*

2. Role: The pastor plays a critical role in the growth, maturity, spirituality and effectiveness of the church. He is responsible for the quality and content of the teaching and counseling within the flock *(Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 4:6-16)*.

   We recognize the Lord has given spiritual gifts to all believers and therefore do not expect the pastor to provide all the teaching, evangelism and counseling, etc., in the body *(Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11)*. Rather he is to equip the saints "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" *(Eph. 4:11-12)*.

3. Qualifications - Pastors/elders are men whose lives are characterized by the qualities set forth in *1 Tim. 3:1-7* and *Tit. 1:6-9*. These qualities are categorized as:

   a. Desire the office of elder and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the flock.

   b. Be able to teach and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.

   c. Be lovers of God and men who take God and His Word seriously.

   d. Be the husband of one wife. A man must be an example and testimony of Christ and His Bride. While the sin of divorce can be forgiven by Christ and a person used in all areas of ministry including in preaching, the man called to be a pastor to lead the flock must be above reproach and cannot have been divorced and remarried.

   e. Be able to manage their household in a biblical manner.

   f. Be able to spiritually manage their interpersonal relationships.

   g. Be men seeking to be controlled by Christ and His Word rather than worldly desires.

   h. Be in agreement and supportive of Constitution and Doctrinal Statement (**Article IV**).

i. When possible, the elders and deacons shall serve as the trustees to fulfil the purposes of a nonprofit religious organization in Wyoming.

4. Authority

All ministries are under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ as Head and Ruler and worked out through the leadership and the congregation. The elders and deacons will be the primary decision-making bodies in the church. In a Biblical context, elders are tasked with all spiritual matters while deacons are to be servants tasked with practical matters such as building care and physical care of the flock. The role of trustees is solely for legal documents.

It is critical the elders and deacons make decisions based on carefully assembled facts, scriptural insight, individual and corporate leading by the Holy Spirit, and input from the body *(Acts 6:5; 15:6, 22; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)*.

The elders and deacons are not required to enact or require a vote on all recommendations. In order to maintain harmony and transparency, all recommendations brought up through proper channels will be addressed by the elders. The leadership will determine the outcome of what to do with the recommendation. To prevent division and strife, sole decisions are to be avoided by the pastor unless within his responsibilities such as in the area of counseling.

Veto authority rests with the pastor and the majority of the servant leaders. In the event there are no elders apart from the pastor, he will govern in cooperation and relying on input from the deacons and all active members of the congregation.

Since the Lord Jesus dwells in each member of the church, and leads and directs as to needs, desires, and responsibilities of each local assembly, it is important and necessary for the elders and deacons to seek input, information and guidance from the body, especially on practical matters of church life. In major decisions, the congregation will vote to show unity toward the direction in question and to show a sense of God's leading.

The elders and deacons will not move forward with a decision unless the majority of the body is unified on the matter. Unless otherwise indicated, church business will pass with a simple majority vote. The following illustrates areas where a two-thirds majority vote is required:

a. Making major financial decisions (i.e., annual budgets, staff salaries, purchases exceeding $500 beyond budgeted expenditures). Only the church leadership team can authorize any expenditure up to $500 without additional church approval.

b. Adding or removing paid staff members, or changes in salary of staff persons.

c. Adding to or removing elders/deacons.

5. Duties - Because of Christian testimony to be promoted in the church, any elder must first and foremost exercise a personal spiritual walk which promotes self-examination, maintain a servant-like quality in life, serve with gentleness and humility, and joyfully undertake the following duties:

a. Guard, pray for, counsel, encourage the flock, minister the Word, and lead in humility.

b. Cooperate with the elders as they provide the pastor counsel and assist with the oversight and spiritual direction of the church.

c. Aid in finding and developing gifted teachers of the Word *(2 Tim. 2:2)*.

d. Warn and discipline as outlined in Scripture on Church Discipline.

e. Provide to the appointment and guidance of deacons as needed.

f. Provide spiritual oversight in financial matters. Pay out monies as directed by church.

g. Seek the Lord's will to interpret this Constitution in the light of Scripture.

h. Make decisions as church situations dictate, directly or through committees or persons as necessary. Elders will strive to maintain open communication with the flock, both to discern needs, concerns and viewpoints, and to communicate information and decisions through the bulletin, announcements, congregational meetings/discussions, votes, and one-on-one personal contact *(Acts 6:1-5; 11:22; 15:1, 6, 22; 16:2)*.

6. Appointment (General Principles)

Elders and deacons are not appointed by men, but by God, and confirmed by the congregation *(Acts 1:26; 6:5; 20:28)*. The task of the congregation is to seek and discover God's direction and leading in the appointment and confirmation of an elder or deacon. Someone who has not shown himself to be a faithful servant in the congregation is not fit for any church office *(Matt. 20:26)*. To confirm an appointment, a two-thirds vote of the congregation is required. The elders, in consultation with or in response to the request of body members, shall seek to discern the nature of the need and to follow God's leading in deciding if the need justifies a new appointment. Upon a decision that a need exists, the church will prayerfully seek God's direction in choosing the right man.

It is our purpose to base the selection process on an orderly, proper sequence of events that facilitates the recognition of God's appointment of men to this ministry. The church should be on the alert for individuals whose lives characterize the qualifications laid out in Scripture.

Only qualified men will be appointed to the office of pastor or elder. If no qualified men are available, or are unwilling to serve though otherwise qualified, no confirmation will be made. The church will wait on the Lord to provide qualified men.

The Scriptures speak of two types of servants in a church: elders who labor in Word and doctrine *(Eph. 4:11-16)*, and deacons *(1 Tim. 5:17-18)*. The following procedures outline the steps to confirm or remove elders:

a. The term of elders, excluding the pastor, shall be three years. The term may be renewed with the support of the pastor with a two-thirds affirmation vote of the congregation. Elders are appointed to a term of three years consistent with their desire and ability to serve in this capacity. Removal of elders from office shall be affected by personal resignation or by disciplinary actions.

b. Voluntary Resignation - An elder (with the exception of the pastor) may step down at any time. The individual should prayerfully reflect on their decision and seek counsel from the pastor and the other elders before making a final decision.

c. Involuntary Dismissal - Involuntary dismissal of any elder will be a disciplinary action in accordance with *1 Tim. 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1* and *Matt. 18:15-18*, or may be effective if the elder is no longer conscientiously in agreement with the Constitution.

B. DEACONS

1. Qualifications - Must desire to be a servant, able to serve, meet all the qualifications of Scripture set forth in *Acts 6:3* and *1 Tim. 3:8-12*, and who are conscientiously in agreement with our Constitution.

2. Duties - In *Acts 6:1-4*, men were appointed to help with the physical needs and to relieve the elders of the Jerusalem church so they would have more time to focus on prayer and ministry of the Word. Their specific duties will be designated by the elders according to the need of the church and a deacon's particular gifts, capacities and talents.

3. Appointment

Deacons shall serve two-year terms. This may be renewed 1) with the support of the elders, 2) a two-thirds vote of the congregation, 3) as long as qualified and willing to continue in service, and 4) as long as a need exists. *1 Tim. 3:8-12* teaches potential deacons are to be tested over time to evaluate a person's commitment to the Lord and their qualifications, their doctrinal understanding, and their willingness to serve the local body. The church and the elders should be alert for those men who demonstrate the qualifications of a deacon. *(Acts 6:1-6)*.

As needed, deacons will be appointed. Only qualified and willing men will be appointed. If no qualified individuals are available, or if those qualified are unable or unwilling to serve, no appointment will be made. The church shall wait on the Lord to provide a qualified person. The following outlines the procedure in selecting deacons:

a. The elders shall decide if the need for an additional deacon exists and shall notify the congregation of the need and ask them to recommend qualified individuals. The elders will review the names submitted along with any additional men believed to be qualified.

b. Each name submitted will be prayerfully considered and reviewed according to their qualifications, gifts, the need, and the individual's willingness to serve.

c. The elders will then present the qualified candidate(s) to the congregation for a period of two weeks. At a regular business meeting, a vote will be taken by active members. The candidate must receive a favorable vote of at least 75%.

d. While the Bible speaks of women serving, they were appointed for the purpose of being a servant to the women and children in the assembly. In accord with the God-given pattern for Biblical headship, women will not be placed in any role where they would be considered a spiritual leader to or over the congregation.

e. A person may not be put forward to being in any servant or leadership position unless in agreement with the Church's Constitution and willing to be in submission to this local assembly. They must also have been faithfully and actively serving for a minimum of six months.

4. Removal of Deacons

a. Voluntary - A deacon may voluntarily step down from his position at any time they so choose. The deacon should prayerfully reflect on their decision and seek counsel from the pastor and elders before making a final decision.

b. Involuntary Dismissal - This shall be in accord with church discipline. If the situation necessitates dismissal from office, the elders may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If they refuse, the elders may remove them from office, but only after the principles for church discipline have been prayerfully followed *(Matt. 18:15-18)*.

C. ADDITIONAL CHURCH SERVANTS - All positions require 75% of church vote for election.

1. Moderator: The pastor shall serve as moderator unless absent, in which case, the elders will elect a moderator to preside over business meetings.

2. Administrative Assistant (formerly church clerk): An administrative assistant will be elected to serve a two-year term and may be re-elected. Responsibilities are as follows:

a. Take minutes at meetings and keep a file of required notices or meetings and suitable records of all official actions which will be maintained on church property.

b. Keep a record of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death, and baptisms.

3. Treasurer: Elected to serve a two-year term and may be re-elected. Treasurer responsibilities are as follows:

a. Maintain an accurate record of church finances.

b. Seek the guidance of the finance committee on all items of questions and irregularity.

c. Provide itemized financial reports as requested by deacons with the counsel of the elders.

d. Oversee activities of the budget staff.

e. Books, records and account documentation kept by the treasurer are considered property of the church. An auditing committee, or church approved public accountant, will audit treasure reports and records as the elders and deacons deem necessary.

f. Pay out monies as directed by the elders and deacons.

g. Perform check and balance of daily operation of the church budget with the elders.

h. Due to checks and balances, a treasurer cannot also hold the position of trustee.

i. In order to avoid any impropriety, all financial and/or fiduciary matters should be directed through the deacons as one of their offices of responsibility. This can then be elevated to the elders for further discussion should the need arise in an advisory capacity.

4. Budget Staff / Counters: Responsibilities of the budget staff / counters are as follows:

   a. Minimum of two active, unrelated church members appointed by the deacons.

   b. Count, balance, and record contributions on deposit slips and envelopes, and deposit money in bank if treasurer is unavailable.

5. Trustees: Elected to serve as legal officers to a two-year term and may be re-elected. Trustees may be elders, deacons, or chosen from the congregation. Trustees must be active members involved in regular services. If called to transact business, they will appoint a chairman and a secretary. Trustees do not constitute church leadership, nor can they make decisions on their own. With church approval only, trustees will have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, rent, convey, encumber or transfer any church property, or other legal documents related to the church. One week's notice is required prior to voting on legal matters.

   Trustees take care of all current legal papers, documents, maps, and blueprints. Trustees are also the custodians of all property, both real and personal. Trustees will inventory all church property as requested or as needed. Loans of any church property shall be under the direct supervision of the elders and deacons and shall not be permitted without their consent.

6. Vacancies or Removal of those serving in each office previously listed under **C. Additional Church Servants** and under **Article VIII: Church Committees**

   a. Assumption of Duties: The duties and responsibilities assigned to any vacant or unfilled church officer, leadership or staff position shall be performed by the elders or deacons until such time as the vacant office or staff position is filled.

   b. Any church servant may voluntarily step down any time they choose. The individual should prayerfully reflect on their decision and seek counsel from the pastor and elders before making a final decision.

   c. Involuntary Dismissal will be in accord with church discipline. If the matter necessitates dismissal, the elders may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If they refuse, the elders will remove them from office, but only after the principles for church discipline have been prayerfully followed *(Matt. 18:15-18)*.

   d. Faithful attendance is required for all who serve in any elected church capacity. They must also be conscientiously in agreement with the Constitution.

ARTICLE VII: CALLING & FUNCTION OF PASTORS/ELDERS

A. Calling of a Pastor

1. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, a pastoral search committee will be selected of spiritually mature members. This committee will seek, through God's guidance, a pastor who will

support the work of glorifying Jesus Christ in every aspect of this assembly. There must be a minimum of three men. An elder and a deacon will also serve on the pastoral search committee (one will serve as Chairman). Members may nominate other candidates who are actively involved. Selection will be by written ballot and the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall comprise the balance of the search committee.

2. In the absence of elders, this committee will arrange pulpit supply. If an interim is called, he must subscribe to our Constitution, and qualify as listed in **ARTICLE VI: CHURCH SERVANTS, A. PASTORS/ELDERS, Section 3 - Qualifications.**

3. After prayerful consideration of a person's qualifications and beliefs, the committee will only recommend one candidate at a time for consideration. During this process, the committee may request additional information from the candidate for presentation to the church.

4. The church will extend an opportunity for the candidate to acknowledge any continued interest. If there is still interest, the candidate will be invited to preach. A minimum of two Sundays is to be expected by any candidate during which time they will teach and preach.

5. During the time the candidate is before the church, all members will be given the opportunity to listen and to ask questions pertaining to the man's life, his family, and his ministry.

6. If a candidate is married, that candidate will not be considered if their wife is not present and not openly supportive of her husband's ministry.

7. No candidate will be considered if any member living in their home is not willing to be an active part of all services and ministries of Grace Bible Church.

8. Candidates will disqualify themselves if they do not agree to the above requirements.

9. Once the candidate has left, the church will take the appropriate time to give prayerful consideration. Any and all concerns or thoughts from members will be assessed by the pastoral search committee. If there is agreement, the recommendation of the pastoral committee will constitute nomination.

10. Once the nomination has taken place, a one week's public notice will be given for a special business meeting to take place following the next Sunday morning service.

11. The vote to call a pastor is by secret written ballot. A yes vote of 75% of the active members present at a special business meeting (18 years and above) shall be necessary to extend a pastoral call to the candidate. Active members unable to attend the special meeting due to work or illness may submit a sealed absentee vote to an elder or deacon prior to the meeting.

B. Function of a Pastor -- The pastor's function under leadership of the Holy Spirit and together with the elders will include the following:

1. Lead the church in evangelization and have general supervision of all church programs.

2. Exercise godly servant leadership of all pulpit and teaching ministries.

3. Preach the word, teach, counsel and share spiritual oversight of the church.

4. Lead or appoint men in the administration of the ordinances.

5. Serve as ex-officio member of all committees.

6. Counsel members or recommend Biblical counseling to members

7. Encourage members to fill active roles within the church

8. In financial matters, he may recommend missions support and special needs situations.

C. Resignation/Dismissal of a Pastor

1. Resignation: The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church, unless by special vote, the active membership deem it appropriate to accept his resignation with immediate effect.

2. Dismissal: The church may declare the office of pastor vacant if he is found in violation of the Constitution. This will take place at a special meeting called with one week's notice and announced from the pulpit. The meeting may be called by a majority of the elders or by written petition signed by not less than 50% of active church members.

   The members shall designate the dismissal moderator from the elders or deacons for this meeting. A majority vote of 75% of the active members (18 years and older) in attendance shall be necessary to declare the office vacant, but there must be a quorum of at least 50% of the total active members for a meeting to take place.

3. Once voted vacant, termination will be immediate. With the exception of gross misconduct by the pastor, the church will compensate the pastor with one month's salary, to be paid in no more than thirty days.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH COMMITTEES

The elders and deacons will form committees to assist in the planning and direction of the church. The committees will be, but not limited to: A) Nominating committee and B) Finance committee as outlined below.

Each committee will elect a chairman and conduct business under the supervision of the elders and deacons. They will meet as needed and prepare reports for business meetings. Recommendations from each committee will be presented to the elders and deacons for consideration and is instituted and designed for the purpose of communication and direction to aid the elders and deacons.

Additional committees may be recommended as necessary and added by the procedure in these by-laws. The number of members to be elected to serve on each committee and their terms shall be determined by vote of the church. Committee members must be active church members, recommended by the elders and confirmed by the church, unless otherwise specified in these by-laws. No two family members may serve on the same committee at one time. Further, faithful attendance is required for all who serve on a committee. They must be in agreement with the Constitution.

A. The elders and/or deacons shall serve as the nominating committee for church servants and/or staff at regular business meetings. The nominating committee coordinates the staffing of all volunteer positions, unless otherwise specified herein. Persons considered must be active church members and approved by the nominating committee before being approached for recruitment. The committee shall present for election those willing to serve at a regular business meeting as needed.

B. The Finance Committee consists of three to five members to include one elder, one deacon and the church treasurer and perform the following duties:

1. Advise and recommend an overall stewardship plan in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using principles of financial management and biblical stewardship and recommend a church budget.

2. Formalizes a method of counting offerings and documents individual giving.

3. Works with the treasurer preparing required reports, regarding the financial affairs of the church, and assists with presenting the reports to the church.

4. Expenditures over $500.00 will be approved at business meetings. The finance committee will submit a budget for approval. Membership involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes through grace giving and freewill offerings.

5. A system of accounting will provide for the handling of all funds. The church fiscal year will run concurrently with the calendar year.

ARTICLE IX: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. General

Members shall have professed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, be at least 18 years of age (to vote), and been Scripturally baptized by immersion. The Lord adds to His church those who desire to serve Him, *(1 Cor. 12:14-31; Eph. 4:11-12)* and the following practice is for those led of the Lord to join in fellowship with us:

1. The applicant(s) will share their testimony to the elders, and be in agreement with the Constitution.

2. If the applicant has a testimony of salvation and been Scripturally baptized, they will be presented to the congregation at a regular service. The Articles of Commitment will be read and agreed to by the new members and the congregation and welcomed into membership.

B. Termination of Membership

1. Believing the purity of the local assembly is of great importance, *(1 Cor. 5; Acts 5:1-11)* we have established a Scriptural disciplinary procedure with restoration always being the goal of Christian discipleship. (See **ARTICLE X: CHURCH DISCIPLINE)**

2. Any member absent from church services for 3 (three) consecutive months will be moved to non-voting status subject to evaluation by the elders unless absence is involuntary (illness,

travel, work, etc). No person who is not regularly, faithfully attending and supporting the ministries of this church will be permitted to hold positions in the church. Reinstatement is pursuant to becoming active again in the services and ministries.

The sole criteria of remaining active is not based on attendance once every 3 months, but will be based on active participation and willingness to support the leadership and fulfill the Articles of Commitment required of each active member.

3. Death

4. Membership Roll

   a. Members may be removed by transferring of membership to another local church of like faith and practice, by church discipline, death, or non-involvement. Members requesting membership be transferred to a church of like faith and practice will require the new church to contact us for a letter of recommendation.

   b. Members on non-voting status are disqualified from voting at any business meetings until privileges are reinstated by the elders. Members who continue to absent themselves or who refuse to fulfill the Articles of Commitment, for another three months will be removed from the membership roll.

C. Congregational Meetings

1. All voting in this church is designed to show God's leading on an issue. While the goal is full unity, unless specifically indicated in the Constitution, a simple majority vote in favor of an issue shall signify to the church leadership God's favorable leading in the church's decision.

2. Any active member (18 years or older) may vote in person at any business meeting. If sick, an absentee vote is permitted (for special matters allowed in the Constitution). An absentee vote is valid if the person writes down the issue being voted on, their vote, and their signature. Absentee votes must be submitted in a sealed envelope prior to the date of the meeting.

3. The means of voting will normally be by verbal assent, but at times, as in the selection of church officers, the vote will take place by written ballot. The elders will announce the form of voting to be used when the meeting of the vote is announced.

ARTICLE X: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The responsibility and necessity of church discipline is Biblical and vital to church purity. In church discipline, the following matters must be carefully understood and applied.

A. The Pattern and Basis for Discipline

The discipline of the church is first patterned after the fact that the Lord Himself disciplines His children *(Heb. 12:6)* and, as a father delegates part of the discipline of the children to the wife, so the Lord has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself.

Discipline is further based on the holy character of God *(1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11)*. The pattern of God's holiness, His desire for the church to be holy, set apart unto Him, is an important reason for the necessity of church discipline. The church is therefore to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks *(I Cor. 5:6-8)*. Failure to discipline in church evidences a lack of awareness of the holiness of God.

Church discipline must be patterned and based on the command of Scripture which gives us the biblical directives on the how, when and where of church discipline. Again, a failure to exercise this responsibility demonstrates a lack of obedience and belief in the authority of the Bible *(1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1)*.

A final basis for the necessity of church discipline is the testimony of the church in the world. The world observes the behavior and life of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world it loses its credibility and authenticity *(1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4)*.

B. The Purposes of Church Discipline

1. Concern for the glory of God and the testimony of the church.

2. The restoration and building up of the sinning believer.

3. The winning of a soul to Christ (if only a professing Christian).

4. The purity of the local body and its protection from moral and doctrinally impure influences, knowing a little leaven can leaven the entire lump *(1 Cor. 5:6-7)*. Such goals automatically govern the spirit in which all disciplinary action is to be given. Thus:

    a. It must be done in the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, looking to yourself lest you too be tempted *(Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-25)*.

    b. Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love *(1 Thess. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2)*. This admonishing, etc., is not restricted to the leaders but may be done by any member *(1 Thess. 5:14)*.

    c. If no response in repentance and obedience, members are to withhold close fellowship until there is obedience *(2 Thess. 3:6, 14)*. This shows the offender their action is an affront to the holiness of God and has created disunity in the body. The goal is restoration and the person still counted as a brother *(2 Thess. 3:14-15)*.

    d. If the person persists after admonition and withdrawal of intimate fellowship, the final step is separation from the fellowship *(Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:17)*, accompanied by public rebuke before all *(1 Tim. 5:20)*.

        Examples of church discipline in Scripture: 1) The Corinthian believers were to gather to take action against the offending brother *(1 Cor. 2:6),* 2) The churches in Rome and Thessalonica were to take action against the unruly and schismatic *(2 Thess. 3:6-15; Rom. 16:17)*.

    e. Discipline includes a readiness to forgive. Those who practice discipline must be eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love to the sinning person *(2 Cor. 2:6-8)*.

C. The Practice of Church Discipline

1. When it is to be Practiced - There are five categories which warrant church discipline:

   a. Difficulties between members *(Matt. 18:15-17)*.

   b. Divisiveness: Causing divisions in the church *(Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:9-11)*.

   c. Disorderly conduct: Conduct outside the commands of Scripture *(2 Thess. 3:6-15)*.

   d. Sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5: incest, immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, and swindling *(1 Cor. 5:1, 11)*.

   e. False teaching: Erroneous teaching and views which concern the fundamentals of the faith, not lesser differences of interpretation *(1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18*; also implied in *Rev. 2:14-16; Phil. 3:2-3, 15-19; Rom. 16:17-18)*.

   The key concerns are: (a) the holy character of God, (b) the testimony of the church, (c) the effect on the unity and purity of the church, and (d) the edification and restoration of the person.

2. How it is to be Practiced - Scriptural procedure is clear and specific steps are as follows:

   a. Recognize the offense. Caution—one must be sure it is an offense which calls for discipline. Again, the Word is our criterion.

   b. Seek private correction and reconciliation with the offender *(Matt. 18:15)* when the problem involves two believers. The offended or the one recognizing the offense is to go privately and try to rectify the problem. If this fails, he takes witnesses so that if brought before the church it can be proven or established *(Matt. 18:16-17)*.

   c. Seek reconciliation through the elders if the problem involves an offense against the body, or is a threat to its unity. Initial action following *Galatians 6:1* should be taken by the spiritual leaders of the church rather than by just one person. *"You who are spiritual"* in *Galatians 6:1* is plural meaning literally, *"you, the spiritual ones…"*

      These initial contacts provide opportunity for loving admonition, correction and forgiveness. On the other hand, if these first steps are not heeded, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and gives occasion for serious rebuke *(2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Titus 2:15; 3:10)*.

   d. Seek reconciliation through the whole body. If further action is necessary, it is to be taken before the whole church *(Matt. 18:17)*. This action would consist of a minimum of loss of voting privileges, but may result in more severe action. Any action taken is presented as a Biblical solution against the offender and will be acknowledged to the congregation by the elders during the service where the Lord's Table is being observed.

   This is the action of the Lord carrying out discipline through the action of the body through the elders or the spiritually mature (*1 Cor. 5:4 "in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are*

assembled…with the power of our Lord Jesus…"). Heavenly authority is seen in disciplinary action in *Matt. 18:18-19*).

ARTICLE XI: FINANCES

Believers are to give financially in commitment to the Lord *(2 Cor. 8:1-6)*. The congregation will be informed of needs by the weekly bulletin, announcements from the pulpit, or other means as necessary.

The purpose is not to pressure anyone into giving, but rather to provide avenues for giving as the Lord provides. Each believer is to give according to their ability with a cheerful heart (*2 Cor. 9:7*). In grace giving, believers give graciously and willingly with cheerfulness and commitment to the Lord for His provisions *(2 Cor. 8:12-15; 9:7)*, recognizing we are only stewards of what God already owns. Because giving is done unto the Lord, it is critical the church handle the finances given with care and wisdom for the glory of the Lord and for the testimony of the church *(2 Cor. 8:20-21).* Therefore:

A. All paid staff shall be paid a salary commensurate to their duties and abilities *(1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6-7; 1 Cor. 9:6-11).* At the closest Business Meeting to the anniversary of ministry employment, a special committee will examine the salaries of paid staff and be led with the guidance of the elders and deacons. The committee will consist of at least one elder, one deacon, and the treasurer. All recommendations will be presented for vote as outlined in this document and recorded.

B. All gifts given as a designated gift will be used as designated if in accord with biblical principles. If any special gifts are given with the directions to use in whatever area, the elders will make a recommendation on how to use the gift. The elders, with congregational affirmation, reserve the right not to forward any designated gifts to groups or organizations not in line with our Constitution. Funds will be distributed by congregational vote at a business meeting.

C. Depending on the amount of money, the leaders may make a decision, or the congregation will vote on financial decisions if over the amount stipulated by the Constitution.

D. An individual willing to serve as treasurer shall be presented to the congregation for a confirmation vote of at least 75%. The treasurer will keep all necessary books, write checks to pay bills as directed, prepare financial statements, and any other duties as prescribed by the Constitution.

E. The church has the privilege and responsibility to financially support those serving (missionaries, etc. *[Phil. 4:14-17; 2 Cor. 8:1-5]*). The elders will recommend which ministries are to be considered.

ARTICLE XII: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Suggestions from the members can be a healthy avenue by which the leadership minister to the church. When handled scripturally, this type of communication edifies the body, helps preserve and promote unity in the congregation, and brings glory to God.

Any member who harbors a disagreement about policies or procedures of the church should prayerfully and privately approach the elders. This may be done through informal consultation with the elders by a signed letter, or a meeting with the elders at the member's request. These steps should be taken prior to public discussion so as to help the leadership minister to the body more effectively and to avoid discord and disunity in the church *(Prov. 13:3; 16:27-28; 17:4).* The elders will address any complaint and seek

to resolve problems in a Biblical manner *(Prov. 16:21-24)*. If these policies are not followed, causing factions and strife, church discipline will be necessary to deal with the offending member *(Tit. 2:10-11)*.

ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended/replaced when the need is recognized by the elders who will make provisional modification and select a timeframe for the proposed change. The change and date for the congregational meeting will be communicated in written form and read from the pulpit. A majority vote will determine acceptance of the change. If accepted, the change will become effective immediately.

ARTICLE XIV: BIBLICAL STATEMENTS

No giving of finances or other type of support will ever be provided to organizations not in agreement with our Constitution, or the Statements noted in Items A, B, and C below that we support as Biblical in scope and in line with our Constitution:

A. 1987 Danvers Statement on Biblical Sexuality
B. 2017 Nashville Statement on Human Sexuality and Gender Roles
C. 2018 Dallas Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel

ARTICLE XV: DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY

In the event of dissolution, all assets and property of the organization shall, after payment of all necessary expenses thereof, be distributed to Bible-believing, doctrinally sound organizations that qualify as nonprofit religious organizations. No property will ever be given or signed over to an individual. No monies or property will ever be given or signed over to a group, denomination, or organization that does not align with our Constitution. A decision to dissolve / disband and distribute assets / funds / property must be approved by two-thirds of the remaining active membership.