

Preamble

We, the members of Grace Community Baptist Church of Astoria, Oregon, purpose to be organized as closely as possible to the New Testament pattern of church life. As such, we recognize the Bible as our authority, guide, and true constitution. This constitution and bylaws, as written here, are not intended in any way to replace or add to the Word of God (Rev. 22:18,19). It is conceived for the following purposes:

- To state those fundamental and essential doctrines of the Christian faith that we believe ought never to be compromised;
- To define the nature of the church as a covenant community;
- To state our purpose and vision, mission and values as a church;
- To state the qualifications, privileges, and responsibilities of membership and leadership in this body;
- To facilitate orderliness, understanding, communication, and unity in the exercise of church ministries.

For these reasons this constitution and bylaws is intended to be an implementation of scripturally based principles, embracing the whole counsel of God's Word.

The Covenant of the Members of Grace Community Baptist Church

Grace Community Baptist Church, as a part of the body of Christ, acknowledges our God-ordained covenantal relationships as a local fellowship of believers. Holding in common our doctrine, polity, and philosophy of ministry, we agree to a covenant relationship expressed in dependence upon, responsibility for, and accountability to our Area Association and throughout the Northwest. Therefore, we commit ourselves to one another:

- In *dependency*, acknowledging that through this body and its members the Lord will meet our needs as we walk by faith, and He will provide opportunity for service and worship;
- In *responsibility* devoting our gifts and abilities to the building up of His body and its members as He will nurture it and cause it to grow;
- In *accountability* submitting ourselves with this body and its members to the authority;
 - Of Christ as the head of this church,
 - Of the Scriptures as our sole guide for faith and practice,
 - Of the elders of this body, and
 - Of this congregation as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

In acknowledgment of this covenant, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we agree to this church's Doctrinal Statement and submit ourselves to this church's standard for character and conduct.

Our Doctrinal Statement

The Word of God

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak.

The Trinity

We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, imminent return from heaven.

Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost and empowering the believer for godly living and service.

Man

We believe God created man, male and female, in the image of God and free from sin. We further believe man is a sinner by nature and choice and is therefore spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, and was purchased by Christ on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, works, or rituals. We further believe salvation results in righteous living, good works, and proper social concern.

The Church

We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head. We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have been baptized upon credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for worship, for instruction, for evangelism and for

service. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. We also believe in the interdependence of local churches and the mutual submission of believers to each other in love.

Separation of Church and State

We believe that each local church is self-governing in function, and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. We further believe that every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life, and that each should be free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

Christian Conduct

We believe that the supreme task of every believer is to glorify God in his life; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions: and that he should seek to realize for himself the full stature of maturity in Christ.

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen. 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term, "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen. 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.)

Last Things

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and lost, the eternal existence of all men either in heaven or hell, in divine judgments, rewards, and punishments.

(For a complete explanation of our doctrine, please see the Full statement of faith.)

Conclusion:

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, polity, and discipline, the Elders of Grace Community Baptist Church are the final interpretative authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Constitution

Article 1. Name

The name of this organization, a corporation, shall be Bible Baptist Church, doing business as Grace Community Baptist Church, in Astoria, Oregon.

Article 2. Purpose

The goal of this church shall be to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and encourage their service to Him by:

- Offering regular worship to the Triune God;
- Promoting the preaching and teaching of the Word of God for the maturing of the saints;
- Seeking the spiritual growth and wellbeing of its members by providing true Christian fellowship, by developing the gifts of its members, by providing opportunity for meaningful service to Christ, and by encouraging compassion for one another;
- Seeking the salvation of the lost by equipping members to share the gospel and participate in local and world-wide biblical missions; and
- Seeking to multiply leaders by identifying potential leaders, by assisting in the training of aspiring leaders, and by providing opportunities for emerging leaders to lead.

The goal is expressed through our vision, mission, and values as stated in the Bylaws.

This church shall maintain affiliation, through a covenant relationship, with the organization currently known as Northwest Conservative Baptist Association. In addition, it will seek to cooperate with other churches of like faith and practice for the purpose of helping people come to Jesus Christ, follow Jesus Christ, and serve Jesus Christ.

Article 3. Officers

The Scriptural officers of this church are the elders. The Scriptures shall determine their qualifications and the Bylaws shall determine their election, term, and succession. This church may affirm other officers as deemed necessary and advisable as defined in the Bylaws.

Article 4. Authority and Government

In authority and government:

- This church is a self governing body, autonomous from all other church bodies. This Church, as a part of a covenant community of Northwest Conservative Baptist churches, and in cooperation with other churches of like faith will cooperate for the purpose of facilitating its mission. This church will not cooperate or give financial support to any church or group whose doctrinal position or practice would compromise this church's doctrinal statement or mission.
- The form of government for this church shall be "elder led, congregationally affirmed." We understand this to mean that the membership elects the elders. The elders have biblically granted authority, responsibility, and accountability. The church, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, affirms the leadership of the elders. There are decisions in which the membership contributes in helping the elders find and discern the mind of Christ.

Article 5. Meetings

Meetings for worship, fellowship, business, and special purposes shall be held as set forth in the Bylaws.

Article 6. Dissolution of this Church

In the event of the dissolution of this church, the property of this church will be distributed to the organization currently known as Northwest Conservative Baptist Association, a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt, nonprofit Conservative Baptist agency. If at the time of dissolution, this agency is no longer in existence, the elders shall redirect the assets to one or more 501 (c) (3) tax exempt, nonprofit organizations sharing common doctrinal beliefs and goals.

Bylaws

Article 1: Purpose

Our Vision

Our vision for Grace Community Baptist Church is given to us in the scriptures and we understand it as having three essential aspects: *Great Confession, Great Commandment, Great Commission = GC3.*

Great Confession: we will profess the truth that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:13-20)

Great Commandment: We will love the Lord and those around us (Matthew 24:34-40)

Great Commission: We will make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)

Our Mission

We are here to glorify God and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Article 2: Membership

1. Qualifications

Membership is available to those who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, have been water baptized subsequent to salvation, agree to abide by the provisions of this constitution as interpreted and administered by the Board of Elders, have attended a new member's orientation class and/or elder interview, have completed any required membership application materials and have been approved for membership by the Board of Elders.

2. Individual Duties

Members are expected to live a holy and faithful Christian life before God. Furthermore, each member shall function within the church by regular attendance at services, consistent

financial support, fervent prayer backing, investment of time using spiritual gifts for the work of ministry, submission to church leadership (including discipline, if needed), and the formation of godly relationships for the purpose of loving one another.

3. Corporate Responsibilities

The corporate church membership shall be responsible for:

- a. Ratifying by vote the selection or removal of a Senior Pastor who shall be presented to the church by the Board of Elders. A 75% vote of the **membership** present at a regular or special business meeting is required for ratification of the proposal.
- b. Electing members to the Board of Elders.
- c. Approving the annual budget.
- d. Approving all constitutional changes.

4. Voting Privileges

All members, eighteen years or older, may vote on any issue requiring a congregational vote.

5. Communications with the Board of Elders

All matters that a member desires to come to the official attention of the Board of Elders shall be in writing and shall be signed and dated. The Board of Elders will respond to the member in writing and or in person.

6. Termination of Membership

Membership will be terminated by:

- a. Death
- b. Written request of the member to the Board of Elders for membership termination.
- c. Letter of transfer to another church fellowship at the request of the member to the Board of Elders. Such a letter shall be granted only to a member in good standing. Such standing will be determined by the Board of Elders
- d. A prolonged absence of six months. In such a situation, the elders shall make a diligent effort to contact the absent member for explanation. On this basis, it shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to decide:
 - (a) Maintain membership privileges.
 - (b) Extend associate membership privileges.
 - (c) Revoke membership privileges.

The purpose of this provision is to avoid an “inflated” membership role full of inactive names and to encourage members to enjoy the blessings of membership as well as fulfill the responsibilities of membership.

- e. Dismissal for the holding of heretical doctrines, or an immoral lifestyle inconsistent with Biblical teaching, or the constant and deliberate disrupting of the peace and unity of the church. Following the pattern of Matthew 18:15-17 and in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, such a dismissal shall be overseen by the Board of Elders.

7. Associate Membership

Associate membership is available to those who wish to maintain membership at Grace Community Baptist Church, but are unable to fulfill normal membership requirements due to extenuating circumstances. Associate member status is conferred upon an individual through the Board of Elders. Associate members shall not have voting privileges, nor shall they be counted as “members” in statistical reports. Associate members may have their status “upgraded” to membership status by the Board of Elders provided they can meet membership requirements. This is a special category designed for missionaries, students away at school, shut-ins, etc., and is not intended as a “catch all” category for non-attendees. Those desiring associate membership status must submit a dated and signed written request to the Board of Elders.

Article 3: Board of Elders

Oversight for the administration, spiritual health, and discipline of the church shall be prayerfully considered and applied by the Board of Elders. The following directions apply to the oversight of the Board of Elders:

1. Nomination and Election of Elders

- a. The members are to nominate men for the office of elder according to the qualification of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. All nominations are to be in writing and submitted to the Board of Elders.
- b. The Board of Elders will conduct a careful and confidential interview with all nominees. This will include a review of the duties of the office and the qualifications required to hold the office.
- c. If a nominee is desirous of fulfilling the office and the Board of Elders concurs that said nominee is both capable and qualified, the nominee may then be presented to the church as a fit candidate.
- d. A “Yes-No” ballot shall be taken by the **membership** on each candidate individually. No man shall compete with nor run against another. A positive vote of 75% of the voting **membership** present at a congregational meeting is required for election.

2. Terms of office

Elders shall serve for three-year terms. Upon the initial acceptance of this constitution and bylaws, the elders shall decide among themselves which one-third shall serve for one year, which one-third will serve for two years, and which one-third shall serve for three years until a normal rotation is established. Elders may be elected to one additional term should they so desire. One year leave is mandatory after the second full term.

3. Vacancies of Office

Vacancies on the Board of Elders may be filled by appointment by the Board of Elders within thirty days of vacancy. Appointees will serve only until the annual election whereupon the membership may elect a new elder to serve the remainder of the unexpired term

4. Number of Elders

The number of elders may be determined by the number of biblically qualified men available to serve, congregational size, and the amount of ministries requiring oversight. The exact number shall be determined by the Board annually.

5. Removal of Elders

Any elder may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

6. Elder Board Meetings

The Board of Elders shall meet a minimum of once a month. They shall discuss business matters, pray, encourage one another, and discuss ministry strategy. They may meet more often as needed.

7. Officers of the Board of Elders

- a. Chairman: The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be elected annually by the members of the Board of Elders from amongst themselves. It shall be the Chairman's responsibility to lead the meetings, and to provide a written agenda for each elder at the meetings.
- b. Vice-Chairman: The Chairman shall appoint a Vice-Chairman to serve in his absence.
- c. Secretary: The Chairman shall appoint a Secretary to keep detailed minutes of official proceedings. These minutes shall include all board meetings. The Secretary shall also post monthly a general report to the congregations. This shall be posted on the bulletin board.

8. Responsibilities of the Elders

a. Generally:

- (1) Serve as examples of godliness, 1 Peter 5:3
- (2) Administer church affairs well, 1 Timothy 5:17a.
- (3) Shepherd (pastor) the flock, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2
- (4) Equip the saints for ministry, Ephesians 4:11-13
- (5) Be able to teach, 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17b
- (6) Pray for the ministries of the church, Acts 6:4.

b. Specifically:

- (1) Church Administration. The Board of Elders is responsible for the overall direction and program of Grace Community Baptist Church and its related ministries.
- (2) Church Ministry Teams. The Board of Elders will annually form ministry teams covering various areas of church life. Each ministry team is to be made up of Church members and or faithful attenders (unless otherwise specified), with an elder providing oversight. Depending upon the number of elders serving at any given time, it may be necessary for one elder to chair two or more ministry teams, just as it may become necessary for two or more elders to co-chair one ministry team. Ministry team members shall be selected from among the congregation by the elder providing oversight of that area of ministry and shall be subject to Board approval. Any member or faithful attender of the church with a desire to serve on a particular ministry team should contact the elder providing oversight of that ministry team.
- (3) Church Discipline. After the pattern of Matthew 18:15-17, all disciplinary action within the fellowship shall be overseen by the Board of Elders
 - (a) Recommended recall of an elder, following the pattern of 1 Timothy 5:19-20.
 - (b) Attempted restoration of a member involved in sin, following the pattern of Galatians 6:1
 - (c) Following the pattern of Matthew 18:15-17, elders may have the dismissal of a member who refuses to turn from a lifestyle of sin. Any member so dismissed may be returned to the membership roll upon confession of and repentance from the sin(s) which brought about the dismissal. The goal of all church discipline is restoration.
- (4) Church Goals. Acting in its leadership capacity, the Board of Elders shall formulate a set of ministry goals for Grace Community Baptist Church to pursue each year.

These goals will be presented as a challenge to the congregation at the annual business meeting.

- (5) Church Ministry Evaluation. Each year the Board of Elders shall evaluate all church ministries in relation to their effectiveness and harmony with the Mission Statement of Grace Community Baptist Church.
- (6) Church Pastoral Needs. The Board of Elders shall serve as the Pastoral Search Committee for all pastoral staff and may appoint more members to that committee as needed. Additionally, the elders are responsible for the general well being of church ministry staff.
- (7) Church Membership. Responsibility for all matters and decisions pertaining to church membership in this body will rest solely with the Board of Elders. This includes the maintenance of accurate membership records which are to be reviewed each year by the elders and reported to the church at the annual business meeting.

9. Decisions of Leadership

- a. Individually: Each elder shall be responsible for decisions made in ministries within his sphere of oversight. An elder may always appeal to the Board for help in a decision and the Board retains the authority to overturn an individual elder's decision.
- b. Corporately: A quorum of 60% of the elders shall be necessary to conduct an Elder Board meeting. Ideally, the elders are to strive for unanimity in the decision making process. This will require, on the part of all elders, a listening ear, a tender heart, a flexible spirit, and a Biblical mindset. In times of indecision or disagreement, the elders are to strive for unity, and pray and seek God for more wisdom. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached on a matter, a majority vote of 60% of the elders present at a meeting will be necessary to approve an item of business.

10. Licensure and Ordination

- a. Licensure: The elders will recommend for licensing according to the terms of the State of Oregon any male member, who in their judgment fulfills the requirement of an elder and is being called of God to the pastoral ministry. The elders shall present a candidate for licensing to the congregation at any business meeting.
- b. Ordination: The elders shall evaluate and recommend men who possess the scriptural qualifications and training necessary for ordination to the Gospel ministry. They shall instate the process leading to ordination following the CB Northwest Ordination Guidelines.

Article 4: Congregational Meetings

1. An annual meeting shall be held in June for the presentation of the previous year's annual reports and the next year's ministry goals by the Board of Elders. The annual meeting shall also include the election of leadership, a moderator, a church clerk, and a financial secretary. The moderator, church clerk and financial secretary are elected for one-year terms. Budget approval will also occur in June either separately, or in combination with the Annual meeting.
2. Additional congregational meetings will occur biannually for committee and budget reports. Meetings may be called from time to time by the Board of Elders for special items of business or informational purposes.
3. All business meetings shall be publicly announced at least two weeks in advance except in time of emergency as determined by the Board of Elders. The agenda for every congregational meeting shall be published at that time as well. Only published agenda items will be discussed at a business meeting except in times of extreme need as determined by the Board of Elders.
4. The membership present at a congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business with no less than 10 members present.
5. All congregational decisions require a majority vote of those **members** present unless otherwise specified.

Article 5: Church Year

The church fiscal year shall run from June 1 to May 31. The budget approved in the last quarter of the year shall begin the first of June.

Article 6: Ministry Teams

Each year the following ministry teams will function to meet the needs of the church family. As God grants growth and new directions of ministry to the life of Grace Community Baptist Church, new ministry teams may be added, subtracted, or differently defined.

1. Home and Foreign Missions

Responsibility: The Missions Team shall endeavor to keep the congregation aware of missions events and needs, shall encourage missions as a vocation, and shall maintain contact with those missions and missionaries being supported by the church. This team shall also be responsible for outreach ministries as a part of home missions.

Personnel: The chairing elder shall form a Missions Team from missions-minded

individuals expressing a desire to serve. This team shall pick the social ministry team.

2. Christian Education and Discipleship

Responsibility: The Christian Education and Discipleship Team shall be responsible for the effective running of the nursery ministry, Sunday School, children's ministries, youth ministries (junior high-college), and the church library.

Personnel: The elder leading this ministry shall recruit and give oversight to the staff of all Christian Education and Discipleship ministries within the church.

3. Deacons and Deaconesses

Responsibility: These ministry teams will assist the pastoral staff with church ordinances (baptism and communion) and will respond to the needs of the church family during such times as funerals, illness, family crisis, etc. These ministry teams will also be given oversight to all church finances (including the formation of a rough draft annual budget to be finalized by the Board of Elders prior to submission to the congregation for approval), business needs and maintenance matters.

Personnel: The elder overseeing these ministry teams will recruit individuals meeting the Biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

4. Worship

Responsibility: This ministry team will plan and execute the regularly scheduled worship services of Grace Community Baptist Church as well as special worship events that may occur.

Personnel: This ministry team will work under the direct supervision of the Senior Pastor. The worship team leader shall recruit, as well as lead, vocalists, musicians, sound technicians, and other support personnel.

Article 7. Vocational Church Staff

1. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall:

- Be the primary (though not exclusive) pulpit teacher of the congregation.
- Qualify as and serve as an elder of the church.
- Give executive leadership to all pastoral staff. This includes the hiring and termination of pastoral staff with approval from the Board of Elders.

- Have access to all ministry teams in an advisory capacity.
- Be directly accountable to the Board of Elders.

2. Pastoral Staff

Additional pastoral staff will:

- Be directly accountable to the Senior Pastor
- Will function in ministry leadership over specifically defined areas as outlined in a job description

3. Support Staff

Individuals serving in support staff roles will:

- Have specifically defined areas of ministry responsibilities
- Be directly responsible to the Senior Pastor unless otherwise stated in the job description.

Article 8: Constitutional Amendments and Review

All Constitutional amendments shall require a 75% vote of the membership present at a regular or special business meeting. Furthermore, the constitution and bylaws must be evaluated annually by the Board of Elders for any needed improvements or changes. All proposed constitutional amendments shall be recommended by the Board of Elders.

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