

Statement of Faith

Constitution
and
Bylaws

Grace Church*

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** Grace Evangelical Church, Inc. dba Grace Church*

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STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is verbally inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and that it is the supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe there is only one Living and True God eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man, and as such He lived a perfect sinless life.
4. We believe that man was created in the image and after the likeness of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature which is enmity against God, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed.
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood and righteousness.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest, Advocate, and the only Mediator between God and man.
7. We believe in the personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom upon the earth to reign in righteousness and justice.
8. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith, and that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God, and that the Holy Spirit indwells all believers.
9. We believe there are two sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which are divinely enjoined upon all Christians. Without merit in themselves, they provide an expression of faith regarding the believer's identification and fellowship with Christ.
10. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.
11. We believe the church is the body of Christ. Its mission is to make the Gospel known to every person and to teach to those who become disciples all things which Jesus commanded so that they may adequately serve Him.

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS
Grace Church

PREAMBLE

Desiring to have a Biblically-based ministry carefully following the New Testament pattern for a church, and being persuaded that the maturing of the saints is defined in Scripture as basic to the evangelization of the world as taught in Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; II Timothy 2:2; 3:16-17, Grace Church is a non-denominational, Bible-centered church. Grace Church shall remain non-denominational.

ARTICLE I – NAME / ADDRESS

The name of this organization is "Grace Evangelical Church, Inc.", dba "Grace Church". All references to "Grace Church" in this document refer to the entity "Grace Evangelical Church, Inc." The address of the registered office of the corporation is 164 Flat Creek Trail, Fayetteville, GA. 30214

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of our existence as a body shall be the assembling of ourselves together for the public worship of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for the maturing of believers toward the likeness of Christ; for the work of ministry; and for the making of disciples both locally and throughout the world in accordance with the Great Commission.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualification of Membership

Membership in this church shall be by confession of a personal faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, being examined by the Elders as to the basis of salvation and Christian experience, and assent to the Statement of Faith.

Section 2. Reception into Membership

Following the approval outlined by the elders, as many as have duly been examined by the Elders and have assented to the qualifications for membership, under Article III, Section 1, shall be received into the fellowship of the church by the Elders.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Members who no longer support Grace Church with their attendance, involvement, and giving shall be contacted by the Elders or their delegates and notified of their removal from membership at Grace Church.

Section 4. Associate Membership

Those who desire to retain their membership in another church outside the region (e.g., missionary) may be admitted as an associate member of Grace Church in the same manner prescribed in Article III and shall have full rights and privileges of a full member.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Members

Individual Responsibilities

1. Participate in the vision and mission of Grace Church to see Christ's Kingdom on earth flourish.
2. Pursue and practice a way of life that is distinctive as a follower of Jesus.
3. Financially support the ministry of Grace Church with faithfulness and generosity.

Community (Corporate) Responsibilities

1. Approve the annual operating budget.
2. Approve the appointment of the Lead Pastor.
3. Approve changes to the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Seat of Authority

Jesus Christ is the only and absolute head and ruler of the church (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). It is the responsibility of every believing member of a local church to seek to know Christ and His will as the Holy Spirit shall show and in agreement with the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Under the headship of Jesus Christ and the direction of the Holy Spirit, this church shall be governed on earth by Elders selected and empowered in accordance with Section 2 of this Article IV.

Section 2. The Elders

Responsibilities of an Elder

The governing body of the church shall be the Elders, also known as the Board of Directors in the Church's Articles of Incorporation. The Elders shall have the responsibility and authority to act on behalf of Grace Church and actions consistent with the provisions of this Constitution shall constitute the actions of Grace Church in all matters of civil law (including but not limited to, the reception and dismissal of members, examinations of candidates for membership, and the exercise of church discipline).

The philosophy and practice of leadership by the Elders will be built upon a commitment to unselfishly serve the needs and best interests of Grace Church patterned after the leadership style modeled by Jesus Christ (Mark 10:42-45) and outlined in the New Testament (I Peter 5: 1-4). It shall be the Elders' responsibility, individually and collectively:

1. To oversee the vision, direction, and spiritual health of this local community of believers:
I Thess. 5:12; I Timothy 3:5, 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Peter 5:2
2. To oversee pastoral care for this local community of believers (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). This pastoral care will include shepherding the church family in:
 - a. Spiritual and relational matters: Acts 20:28-31; I Thess. 5:12-14; Hebrews 13:7; I Peter 5:2-3
 - b. Material and financial matters: Acts 11:29-30, 20:35
 - c. Biblical and theological matters: Acts 20:27; I Timothy 3:3, 5:17; Titus 1:9
3. To oversee Biblical instruction to this local community of believers: Acts 20:27; I Timothy 3:2, 5:17; Titus 1:9

The decisions of the Elders or officers cannot result in something that conflicts with the nonprofit's integrity or mission. This includes financial transactions that benefit an elder.

Elder Meetings, Qualifications, Appointment, Length of Service and Removal

The Elders shall consist of no less than five (5) elders, with the exact number determined from time to time by vote of the Elders; provided that, if for any reason, no more than three (3) persons qualified to serve as elders are willing and able to serve as elders at any given time, the Elders may function with as few as three (3) for a period not to exceed six (6) months. The majority of the Elders will consist of elders who are not paid staff members of Grace Church. The Elders shall elect a Presiding Elder from among its number to provide leadership to the Elders and to preside over all meetings of the Elders, but the Lead Pastor shall not be eligible to serve as Presiding Elder. A treasurer and secretary shall also be elected from among its number.

Meetings

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held monthly at such times and places within or without the State of Georgia as the Elders shall designate.

Special Meetings

Special meetings may be held at the call of the presiding elder or by any two members of the Elders providing that

not less than two days' notice of the time and purpose of the meeting is given to each member.

Quorum

At all meetings of the Elders, the presence of a majority of the authorized number of elders, but not less than three elders, shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A majority of the elders present, physically or electronically, at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall serve as the decision of the Elders, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Elders present may adjourn the meeting until a quorum be had. Meetings and decisions of the Elders shall not take place in any form (in person or digital) that prevents any elder's perspective from being expressed and counted.

Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Elders or of any committee thereof may be taken without a meeting if, prior to such actions, either hand-written or digital consent is obtained, setting forth the actions so taken, approved by all members of the Elders or of such committee, as the case may be, and such consent is filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Elders or committee.

Qualifications & Appointments

Those appointed as elders shall satisfy the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1: 5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4. Elders, except for the Lead Pastor, shall be appointed by the Elders (cf. Acts 14:23) according to the following procedure:

1. The Elder will prayerfully and carefully scan the congregation for men to be prospective elders based upon maturity in the following areas:
 - a. A mature disciple clearly characterized by the qualities specified:
I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4
 - b. Proven faithfulness in all previous responsibilities in ministry:
I Corinthians 4:1-2
 - c. A member of Grace Church who is committed, without reservation, to Grace Church as a local body, its people, doctrinal statement, vision, and philosophy of ministry.
 - d. Demonstration of spiritual leadership ability:
Romans 12:5- 6a,8; I Thessalonians 5:12-13
 - e. Agent of unity within the body and demonstrating the capacity to work harmoniously with others in a team environment:
John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-3; James 3:13-17
2. Prospective elders will be approached by the Elders to determine interest and availability.
3. The Elders will spend time building relationships with the prospective elder(s) to assist in the assessment and evaluation process. This assessment and evaluation process shall include a formal interview with the Elders.
4. Those being considered as prospective elders will be publicly announced to the church family at least 30 days before a final decision is made. During this 30-day period the church family will be invited to respond to any member of the Elders concerning the prospective elder's appointment. Any member of the congregation who believes that a prospective elder does not qualify according to the qualifications set forth above should take the following steps (see Matthew 18:15-17).
 - a. First, consult with the prospective elder and see if the matter can be resolved.
 - b. Second, if the matter cannot be resolved and the prospective elder has not withdrawn his name from consideration, the concerned member must take one or two others with him (including at least one current member of the Elders) and consult again with the prospective elder.
 - c. Third, if the matter still cannot be resolved and the prospective elder has not withdrawn his name from consideration, it must be brought to the Elders. At this meeting both the concerned member and the prospective elder will be heard. The Elders will then determine whether to withdraw the prospective elder's name from consideration.

5. At the end of this period the Elders will meet to review concerns from the church family and make a final decision regarding the appointment. A majority vote of the Elders is needed to appoint the prospective elder.

Length of Service

Newly appointed elders will then be announced to the congregation. Elders shall serve for an initial period of three (3) years. After each three (3) year period, and with the support and approval of the Elders, an elder will be given the opportunity to assess and renew his commitment to continue serving as an elder for another three (3) year term. An elder appointment may be extended beyond six years by majority approval of the Elders.

Removal

Recognizing the importance and need for Biblical accountability, the Elders acknowledge and affirm the value of accountability on three levels:

1. To Jesus Christ (I Peter 5:4; Hebrews 13:17).
2. To the Elders. If, because of unfaithfulness or unfitness, the Elders determine it necessary to rescind an elder's appointment to serve as an elder, removal may be accomplished by two-thirds (2/3's) approval by the Elders. The Elders shall make a thorough and prayerful investigation of every such case before acting on dismissal.
3. To the Grace Church family. The Elders, individually and collectively, will remain receptive and responsible to the interests, input, questions, and concerns of this church family.

Section 3. The Lead Pastor

The selection of the Lead Pastor shall be accomplished by a two-thirds (2/3's) vote of the Elders. The Elder's decision to call the Lead Pastor must be confirmed at a specially called meeting of the congregation (Article V, Section 2. Special Congregational Meeting). Confirmation will be by secret ballot with a two-thirds (2/3's) majority vote needed for confirmation. The Lead Pastor will serve as an elder and Chief Executive Officer, fulfill all requirements established in the Lead Pastor position description, and cooperate with and work under the authority, philosophy, and vision of the Elders in providing leadership for Grace Church. The Lead Pastor will be a standing member of the Elders. Dismissal of the Lead Pastor will be accomplished by a two-thirds (2/3's) vote of the Elders.

Section 4. Volunteer Ministry Leaders

Volunteer Ministry Leaders serve the Grace Church family by providing needed attention and leadership to the various needs which arise in the life of the church family. Volunteer Ministry Leaders model the servanthood pattern as described in the New Testament. The Elders delegate the selection, development, and supervision of Ministry Team Leaders to the Staff Team under all boundaries established by the Elders and based upon the following requirements:

1. A member of Grace Church.
2. Model godly character and spiritual maturity.
3. Demonstrate desire, giftedness, ability, and vision for a particular area of ministry.
4. Skill in working with people.

Section 5. Church Staff

Grace Church may employ appropriate staff persons in accordance with current position descriptions as presented to the Elders by the Staff Leadership Team. The Staff Leadership Team is appointed by the Lead Pastor. Elders will require in writing the qualifications and position description before any staff additions are made. The Elders delegate to the Staff Leadership Team the day-to-day supervisory authority over employees (i.e., create position descriptions, assign responsibilities, develop staff, evaluate performance, manage the church staff, and hire and dismiss) but retain the right to approve all additions or dismissals. All additions and dismissals shall be made consistent with the procedures outlined in the Staff Personnel Handbook.

Section 6. Missions

Grace Church is committed to promoting and supporting missions outside the church beginning with our neighborhoods, workplace, local community and extending around the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:6-8). Our commitment includes generous financial investment in e.g., missionaries and strategic organizational partners.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1. Congregational Meetings

Any regular or called meeting of the congregation may be constituted as a meeting for the transaction of business, providing announcement of said meeting be given from the platform on a Sunday one (1) week prior to the called meeting, with notice of said meeting presented to the church body (printed or electronic). However, if said meeting is for the purpose of approving the Lead Pastor, the announcement must be presented (in printed or electronic form) and be announced from the platform for a period of two (2) consecutive Sundays preceding said meeting.

Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by the Elders or upon the written request of ten (10) percent of the members who are eligible to vote. In all congregational meetings, the Presiding Elder or the Elder's designee will chair and moderate the meeting.

Section 2. Quorum for Congregational Meetings

A Quorum for the transaction of business in all congregational meetings shall consist of twenty (20) percent of the resident members of the church who are eligible to vote. All congregational votes pass on a simple majority unless otherwise specified. Members who are in the active membership, in good standing, and have attained the age of eighteen (18) years shall be eligible to vote at any of the called meetings. The Elders may make provision for electronic voting to supplement in-person voting if membership is verified.

Section 3. The Clerk

The Presiding Elder shall appoint the secretary of the corporation to serve as church clerk for the purpose of recording minutes at any called meeting of the Elders or Grace Church. Recorded minutes shall be turned over to the Presiding Elder to become a part of official church record. It shall be the responsibility of the Presiding Elder to keep a proper record of all meetings of the Elders and church family and supervise the custody of all papers and documents of the church.

Section 4. Parliamentary Rules

In the transaction of business in all congregational meetings, Robert's Rules of Order as amended shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI - ORDINANCES

We believe that two ordinances have been given to the church. One is baptism of believers in Christ and the second is the observance of the Lord's Table. Neither of these have any redemptive merit; they are done in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism is an identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that Romans 6 teaches that not only have we united with Him in death and resurrection, but our old self is to be crucified, "that we should no longer be slaves to sin." This teaches victory over sin and not sinless perfection. We believe New Testament baptism fulfills all the meanings of Old Testament baptism. It shall be administered only to those who give evidence of having been born again by faith in Jesus Christ. Grace Church shall accept as valid and perform any regular forms of believers' water baptism.

The Lord's Table is given to remember the Lord's death and should be regularly observed until He comes again. The elements, bread, and wine, speak of His body and blood but are not changed in any way. He says, "do this in remembrance of me." It shall be open to all self-examined believers regardless of church affiliation.

ARTICLE VII - ORDINATION

The church shall have the authority to ordain qualified persons to the gospel ministry consistent with the ordination policy approved by the Elders. Such people shall make application for ordination to the Elders. If the Elders approve the application, they shall call an ordination council to examine the candidate regarding the person's Christian experience, call to the ministry, education, character, and doctrinal belief. The candidate shall

be publicly ordained to the Christian ministry upon the recommendation of this council.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

These procedures grow out of the conviction, drawn from the Word of God, that the exercise of discipline in the lives of its members is a responsibility given to the local church by God. Many passages make it clear that such discipline is a normal function of the local church (cf. Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-5; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 5:14; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 3:10; I Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 12:4-12).

The motive and purpose behind church discipline is a loving concern and commitment to reconcile and restore a fellow believer struggling with sin that has the potential to become disruptive to the Grace Church family. As a result, the process will be conducted with gentleness, love and respect for the individual involved.

The process of church discipline shall be carried out according to the policy outlined by the Elders in a patient and gentle manner with the goal of restoring a fellow believer to a healthy relationship with God and others involved in the sin.

ARTICLE IX - CHURCH PROPERTY

Because the church is a Georgia Nonprofit Corporation having perpetual duration and capable of holding title to property in its corporate name, all property belonging to the church shall be held in the corporate name, Grace Evangelical Church, dba Grace Church, instead of the names of any corporate officers.

ARTICLE X - CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1. Accounting Procedures and Accountability

The Treasurer shall have general oversight of the church finances and any staff member to whom everyday financial management is designated. The Treasurer ensures generally accepted accounting principles are in use. The Treasurer will work with any staff to whom financial management is delegated. The Treasurer or designate is to submit a monthly report to the Elders, including current financial reports. Additionally, the Treasurer or designate shall provide financial updates to the church family at the request of the Elders and maintain the accounts of the church as directed by the Elders. As requested by the Elders, the Treasurer will submit the financial books and records of the church for auditing as directed by the financial policy established by the Elders. When directed by the Elders, the Treasurer or designate shall turn over to them all monies, documents and papers belonging to the church. The Treasurer and any designate who are approved and authorized by the Elders shall undergo background checks, the cost of which will be paid by the church.

Section 2. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall be determined by the Treasurer with the approval of the Elders.

Section 3. Budget

The Treasurer, working with staff delegate, shall oversee the process of preparing a budget draft and submit the final budget draft to the Elders for approval for the coming fiscal year. Once approved by the Elders, the proposed budget will be presented to the congregation for approval at a called meeting of the congregation.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

If it does not infringe upon the doctrinal principles of this church, the constitution may be changed or altered providing the proposed alteration has been announced from the platform for a period of two (2) consecutive Sundays and presented to membership in printed or electronic form preceding said meeting. Amendments must be passed by two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting.