

CONSTITUTION  
OF  
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH  
900 WEST NORTHERN AVE.  
TAYLORVILLE, IL 62568

Revised:  
January 16, 2011  
Reprinted  
2011

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH**

Grace Baptist Church was formed on March 15, 1984. Beginning as a group of believers in a Wednesday evening Bible Study, it was decided to formulate Grace Baptist Church in the Taylorville, Illinois area.

In June of 1984, Pastor Larry P. Cook was called as Grace Baptist Church's first pastor. The church met in several locations before purchasing the building at 118 E. Market St. in December of 1984. The first organized Sunday School was begun in July, 1984, with an Adult Auditorium Class, a Teen Class, two Junior Classes, a Primary Class, a Beginner Class, and a Tiny Tot Class, plus a Nursery.

The first Deacon Board was comprised of Dr. H.F. Haines, Garry Younker, Andy Estes, and Charlie Shanks.

We appreciate all the many hours of work and travel of Dr. Gordon Edgington, Director of the Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois, in helping us establish this new work here in Taylorville. Our prayer is that this church will be a lighthouse for the Gospel in the area of Central Illinois.

In July of 1987, Grace Baptist Church called Pastor Philip M. Neumann to the church's second pastor. Pastor Neumann retired in 2013, after 26 years of faithful service.

In October, of 2013, Pastor Gerald W. McPhillips assumed the role of Senior Pastor.

## THE ORIGINAL CHARTER MEMBER LIST

Kirk Johnson	Megan VanHooser
Shelia Johnson	Shauntay VanHooser
John W. Briggs	Andrew B. Estes
Jenna Briggs	June Estes
H.F. Haines	Kim Johnston
Delmarie Haines	Raymond Tucker
Dorothy Phelps	Mildred Tucker
Charles Shanks	Earl R. Vangeison
Garnetta Shanks	Doris VanGeison
Gary Klinger	Rev. Larry Cook
Kay Klinger	Toni H. Cook
Billy E. Johnston	Tammy E. Cook
Norma J. Johnston	Karen M. Cook
Jeffrey R. Johnston	Julianne Shanks
James E. Shanks	Patrick D. Shanks
Cynthia M. Shanks	Hollie D. Shanks
Susan M. Miller	Matthew Briggs
Erie Miller	Amanda Briggs
Larry Spires	Jane H. Long
Darcy Spires	Glenn A. Black
Wayne E. Slagel	Shelly Black
Shirley J. Slagel	Leslie A. Shanks
Regina Shanks	Garry Younker
Randy Shanks	Sharon Younker
LeRoy Sanders	Angela Younker
Roberta Sanders	Garry Younker
Aaron Copeland	Amber Johnson
Sandy Copeland	Nicole Johnson
Madeline Lebeter	Paula Haines
Naomi Wilson	Donald Klinger
Reta Pritchett	Ruby L. Saul
Jack Pritchett	Charles H. Saul
Neal Lebeter	Benita Spires
Carolyn Lebeter	Phillip Miller
Jennifer Lebeter	Rhonda Copeland
Charles J. VanHooser	Kim Copeland
Patricia L. VanHooser	

\*These names are listed in the order they appear on the charter.

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## *Article I – Name*

The name of this church shall be the  
Grace Baptist Church of Taylorville, Illinois

## *Article II – Purpose*

The purpose of this organization as an Independent Fundamental, Soul-Winning, Autonomous, Sovereign, Local Baptist Church shall be the preaching and teaching of the Word of God; the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament; the spiritual improvement of its members; and, the evangelization of the lost in its local and larger areas, and the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world.

## *Article III – Church Beliefs*

### **SECTION 1 – BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES**

Though their roots go back to apostolic times, Baptists, like their spiritual forebears, since the time of the Reformation, have been known specifically as “evangelical separatists.” While many denominations differ in beliefs, the Baptists were not only different than most of those called “Protestants” but substantially so. They were labeled rightly “Separatists” because they would not compromise the Word of God and felt that if the Bible was to be the only rule of faith and practice of churches, it should be just that. Therefore, they would not compromise essential beliefs and Scriptural commands out of expediency, and they would not align organizationally with others who did. So came the label – “Separatists.”

As the Baptist denomination (not an organization but independent churches of like faith and practice) came into prominence, it was evident that in several primary areas of belief and practice, Baptists differed from other evangelicals. While some evangelicals might have held to several of the Baptist “Distinctives” and others even held to a good number, yet in total, no other group of evangelical believers held to all of them.

Because Baptists never had an unchangeable creed, nor an “official” Statement of Faith, it was likewise true that there was never a denominational or “official” statement of what constituted their distinctives. Consequently, in listing Baptist distinctives and principles, there must needs be an acknowledgement that the list is arbitrary and relative as far as any finality is concerned. Baptist theologians and historians give varied listings as to these principles. It would seem from a careful acquaintance with Baptist history, that a composite listing culled from many authorities would point up to seven (7) distinctives which have characterized most Baptists down through the centuries. The seven (7) are:

1. The Bible as the sole authority and rule for Christian faith and practice.
2. The necessity of a regenerated (born again) church membership.
3. The autonomy and independence of the local church.
4. The priesthood of the believers.
5. Soul Liberty.
6. Two Ordinances
  - a. Immersion of believers for baptism as a requirement for church membership.
  - b. The Lord's Supper.
7. Separation of the Church and State

The advent of Modernism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought gross doctrinal heresy and progressively spread its infection in most protestant denominations, including Baptist associations. Since many Baptists, who went off into the Modernistic heresy, still called themselves "Baptists," it became necessary in a new, specific manner to reaffirm the historic Baptist position relative to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, the true deity of Christ, and the necessity of a vicarious atonement by Christ for salvation for only those who personally trust in the atonement.

Thus, our church today as a New Testament Independent Baptist Church, affirms these seven (7) distinctives as listed above, which, we believe before both God and man place us in the right position Biblically as the Word of God orders for a church.

## **SECTION 2 – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

### A. Of the Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God, completely inerrant in the original writings, and absolutely authoritative and infallible. (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:21; Proverbs 30:5, 6). As to the extent of inspiration we believe in the plenary verbal inspiration. (Exodus 4:12; I Corinthians 2:13; Galatians 3:16).

### B. Of the True God

We believe there is One, and only One, Living and True God, infinite, holy, just, all-powerful, everywhere present, knowing all things; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, co-equal, and co-eternal. (Deuteronomy 6:4; I John 4:24; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30).

### C. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created innocent in the image of God, but by voluntary transgression fell in Adam, thus becoming sinful in his nature, a sinner by choice and by decree, spiritually dead, totally depraved, subject to physical death and everlasting punishment in Hell, and is not totally unable to save himself from his lost condition. (Genesis 1:27; 3:6-24; Romans 5:12; Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:19).

### D. Of Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit; born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. (Matthew 1:18, 21; John 1:14, 18; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 2:16, 17).

### E. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for the sins of the world by His death (Hebrews 2:9; I John 2:2; I Timothy 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; II Peter 2:1), and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through faith (Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 8:1; 10:9-13) in Christ Jesus. We believe that sinners are saved wholly of grace, and consequently, justified apart from works; that in order to be saved, they must trust completely in Jesus Christ as Savior, and be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 15:1-3; I Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5; Titus 3:5; John 3:5).

### F. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is an act and a process by which, according to the will of God, we are set apart unto God and made partakers of His holiness; that it is positional and practical and instantaneous, in that it is begun in regeneration and progressive, in that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence of and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer, the Comforter, as the believer uses the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer. (I Corinthians 1:2; 3:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; Proverbs 4:18; I Peter 1:15, 16; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 7:1).

### G. Of the Resurrection and Second Coming

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension to the Right Hand of God, in His continual intercessory ministry on our behalf, and in His personal, literal, bodily return from Heaven, first as the pre-tribulational rapture in the air to receive His church; and, second, at the end of the tribulation, to execute "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel: and to set up an earthly millennial kingdom (One thousand year

reign). (Matthew 28:1-7; Acts 1:9-11; I Corinthians 15:4-7, 13, 20; Romans 8:34; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; II Thessalonians 1:7, 8; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:6).

#### H. Of the Local New Testament Church

1. We believe a properly constituted local church is a democratic assembly of regenerated (born again) believers, who have been immersed on profession of faith, who have determined to observe standards of conduct worthy of the holy faith they profess, having voluntarily united for the worship of God, praise, prayer, testimony, through the ministry of the Word of God, discipline, and the furtherance of the Gospel throughout the world. (I Corinthians 1:1-3; 14:12; Acts 2:41,42; Matthew 28:19,20; Ephesians 4:7; Philippians 1:27).

2. We believe the local New Testament church is a visible church, derived from the Scripture using the word, "Ecclesia." Ecclesia has three meanings in the New Testament.

a) The "Ecclesia" of a self-governing Greek state - Acts 19:39, translated assembly.

b) The Old Testament "Ecclesia" or convocation of National Israel - Acts 7:38 - a better word might be congregation.

c) Third usage of "Ecclesia" is visible organized body of believers. We believe that since the word universal is not used in the Scripture, it is wrong to teach a universal church. We believe that the local church is God's only revealed institution for this day and age.

#### I. Of the Ordinances of the Local Church

We believe that Christ instituted two (2) ordinances to be observed until He returns - Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism, as a symbol of regeneration or new birth and identification with Christ, is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It symbolizes the regenerative cleansing of the believer by the Holy Spirit, and the believer's participation in the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-38; 2:41,42; Romans 6:4-6; Colossians 2:12). The Lord's Supper is a memorial symbolizing the Savior's crucified body and His blood shed for the remission of sins. It is to be observed by true believers, only, who are conscious of and in fellowship with their Lord. (I Corinthians 11:20; 10:16; 11:22-32; John 6:35; Luke 22:14, 19-20).



### J. Of the Lost and the Saved

We believe in the eternal security and the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the Eternal judgment and everlasting punishment of those who die unsaved. However, any person claiming to be saved who willfully persists and delights in that which he knows to be sin has no Scriptural right to think himself eternally secure. (John 8:31; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 24,25).

### K. Of Evangelization of the World

We believe that Christians have been commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ to carry the Gospel to all nations and to all of the people of the earth. In the light of this Great Commission and the fact that the lost are doomed to everlasting punishment, it is the absolute duty of every Christian to devote himself and all that he possesses to the supreme work of carrying the Gospel to every person living in his generation. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; II Corinthians 5:13-15; I Timothy 6:8; Romans 1:14,15; I Corinthians 6:19,20).

## **SECTION 3 - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love.

To strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality.

To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine, and to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin.

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions, to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment and to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger.

To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, from every questionable practice or indulgence, and all appearance of evil.

To be set for the defense of the gospel and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and in distress.

To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and practice, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### **SECTION 4 - ADDITIONAL DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS**

##### A. Of Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. (Genesis 1,2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3).

##### B. Of Human Sexuality

1. We believe that God commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

3. In keeping with our beliefs regarding human sexuality as expressed in this statement of faith and in keeping with our purpose as expressed in Article II, we have the following practical policies:

- a. All people are welcome to attend our regular worship services.
- b. Those who attend may not display behavior that is indicative of the sinful behaviors listed in (B) (1) of this section in church services, at church functions, and on the church grounds.
- c. Church representatives are not to display overt disrespect for those who are involved in the sinful behaviors listed in (B) (1) of this section.
- d. The pastor of the church will preach consistently against all forms of sinful behavior as listed in (B) (1) of this section, as well as other sinful behaviors.

#### C. Of Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

#### D. Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (I Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

### **SECTION 5 - SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S AND CHURCH OFFICER'S COVENANT**

The position of Teacher or Officer in our church represents a place of leadership and as such, places a sacred trust upon those Christians who have accepted such a call. To them is entrusted a serious matter, for which they will be accountable before God, as they share in the program and the ministry of the church to thereby glorify God, edify the saints, and be a means to the end of leading the unsaved to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believing this to be true, I resolve to maintain a proper relationship to the church, as a born-again baptized member of the church, in good standing as defined by the Church Covenant, Constitution, and By-laws, and that I shall endeavor to demonstrate this by:

**My relationship to God:** I shall earnestly and prayerfully seek the will of God for my life by regular and constant study and searching of His Word and by communion with Him in personal devotions and prayer.

**My relationship to the world:** I shall examine myself and search my heart in order to live a separated life unto God from all questionable worldly habits, friends, amusements and organizations; abstaining from all appearances of evil, and doing all that I do in word or deed to the glory of God and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, thus edifying myself and strengthening my weaker brethren.

**My relationship to my teaching responsibility** (by example or exhortation): I will endeavor to spend at least two (2) hours in preparation of my lesson for my teaching responsibility. Should emergency or sickness arise that will keep me from teaching my class, I will realize it is my responsibility to notify my immediate superior by Friday, if at all possible. I will seek to make at least one call a year on each of the homes of my pupils, as well as, constantly following up on any who are absentees to determine the cause. I will faithfully pray for my pupils; seek the spiritual growth of those who are Christians, and the winning to Christ of those who are unsaved.

**My relationship to my church:** I will attend regularly, unless providentially hindered, the stated services of the church, as well as, such other meetings which involve me because of my position; support the ministry of this church systematically and proportionately with my substance as outlined in God's appointed plan of financing His work and it is my personal privilege and responsibility; to seek to maintain a proper attitude toward the program of the church, the brethren, the Sunday School Superintendent, and the Pastor, realizing that only as I am in proper fellowship with them can I effectually fulfill responsibility as a leader in this church.

(It is intended that this statement is to be retained by each recipient and used as a guide and standard from time to time. Any serious willful variation from the provisions of this agreement should be cause for definite concern as to our place of service in the ministry of the church.)

## **SECTION 6 - AFFIRMATION**

All church officers, as listed in Article VI, including the Pastor, as well as, the Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Ladies Fellowship, Clubs, or Teachers of any other function of the church, shall annually after election or appointment, sign the Church Covenant, Doctrinal Statement, and Workers' Covenant.

## *ARTICLE IV - ASSOCIATION*

A New Testament Church, cannot, strictly speaking, "join" or "affiliate" (in the sense of surrendering any of its complete autonomy), with any organization outside of itself except on the grounds of fellowship. The absolute independency of a local church must be kept inviolate. This local Baptist (New Testament) Church is completely autonomous and independent and may at any time, re-determine its fellowship with any larger church organization. This fellowship is not to be a constitutional provision. The Pastor may appoint "messengers" to represent our church at any meeting of those organizations with which we are in fellowship, or the Church, if it chooses, may at its discretion, so appoint.

## *ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP*

### **SECTION 1 - THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Membership Committee shall consist of the Pastor and Deacons.

### **SECTION 2 - RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

a. Qualifications for Membership:

Persons confessing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their all-sufficient Savior, giving evidence of a regenerated life, having testified to this fact before one or more of the Deacons and Pastor, and accepting the Articles of Faith and Practice, the provisions of the government and Covenant of this church can present themselves as candidates for church membership, submitting to believer's baptism (if they have not been baptized since they believed).

b. Candidates are accepted for membership by three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present at any regular meeting of the church, after being recommended for membership by the Pastor and Deacons.

c. No person shall be received into our membership while holding membership in another church.

d. Junior Membership - Junior Membership shall consist of persons who meet the regular requirements for church membership, but who are less than 18 years of age. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, Junior Membership is automatically terminated and Junior Members who wish to apply for full membership may do so according to the regular membership procedure.

e. Ways of becoming a Member:

1. By Baptism - the candidate shall relate his Christian experience and his desire for baptism and church membership to the Pastor and one or more of the Deacons, who will question the applicant as to his doctrinal beliefs. This committee being satisfied, they shall recommend to the church that such a person be baptized by immersion, and received into the membership of the church. If the church votes to receive him, his membership shall go into effect as soon as he has been baptized.

2. By Experience - Persons who desire to unite with this church on the basis of former Christian experience, may upon interview by the Pastor and one or more of the Deacons, as to his Christian experience and baptism by immersion, assurance of salvation, and doctrinal beliefs, after having accepted the conditions of membership and upon recommendation of this committee, may be received into church membership.

3. By Restoration - Persons who have been suspended may, upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, be restored to membership, after an expression of renewal of interest and a confession of error where necessary. Restoration of membership does not restore such a person to any office or teaching position he may have held at the time of his suspension or dismissal. One whose name has been erased from the roll must be voted in as a new member.

### **SECTION 3 - TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

Members, not under the disciplining process of Section 6, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

### **SECTION 4 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

a. The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause shown to the Pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member, at the discretion of the Pastor.

b. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.

c. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the Pastor.

## **SECTION 5 - PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

This congregation functions, not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the Pastor as the under shepherd with the counsel of the Board of Deacons. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The Pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The Board of Deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the Pastor as requested by him.

The membership of the church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

## **SECTION 6 - DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**

a. The Pastor and Deacons shall constitute the Discipline Committee of the Church.

b. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.

c. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, either a deacon or the Pastor, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

d. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections b and c have been taken, the Discipline Committee, as the church representatives, biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the Discipline Committee, the Committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.

e. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections b, c, and d, have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of

the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.

## *ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS*

### **SECTION 1 - GENERAL**

- a. The officers of this church shall be: Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. Other offices and positions may be created from time to time as deemed necessary. Women of this church may only hold the offices and positions of Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Teacher, Pianist, Organist, and other positions as approved by Pastor and Deacons.
- b. No person shall hold more than **two** (2) offices at one time.
- c. Any person holding office and/or positions and being excluded from church membership, automatically is removed from all church offices and/or positions, including those of all church organizations.
- d. No person may be elected to a church office without being a member for one year.
- e. In case of flagrant neglect of office or of recognized incompatibility with associates, any officer of the church can be suspended from office by the action of the Pastor and three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the Deacons.

This action shall then be considered by the church at a properly called business meeting, and if the action is sustained by a majority vote of the members present and voting, the office shall be declared vacant and a successor appointed by the Pastor and Deacons.

### **SECTION 2 - THE PASTOR**

#### a. The Pastor

##### 1. His office as seen in Scripture: "That man called Pastor."

a) Given by the Holy Spirit to the churches.

b) Pastor has various areas of responsibility as shown by the Greek words referring to man and the office:

(1) Presbyteres or Elder (I Timothy 5:7 - The president of a deliberate assembly in the conducting of its business.)



(2) Episcopos or Bishop - Superintendent or overseer of a working force (Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:28 - His oversight is that of a shepherd.

(3) Poimen (to pasture the sheep, a shepherd of the flock, I Peter 2:28; 5:2,4), as such:

(aa) To protect the flock against false teachers from without.

(bb) To guard carefully against schismatics from within the flock.

(cc) To keep watch both day and night like a shepherd.

(4) Kerux, a preacher to a congregation. (I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11; I Peter 2:5)

(5) Didaskales - A teacher of the church. (Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:28; Romans 2:20).

c) "The People and their Pastor"

(1) To know and respect him.

(2) To follow his leadership.

b. The duties of the Pastor shall be those generally associated with his office, including preaching at the stated services of the church, administrating the ordinances of the church, caring for the spiritual welfare of the church members, and maintaining a general oversight of the work of the church. He shall arrange for the supply of the pulpit in his absence from the church and for members of the deacons to preside at those services. He shall arrange for all evangelistic and similar special meetings of the church.

c. The Pastor shall be ex-officio member of all offices and committees of the church, and shall chair these sessions or designate a substitute. He shall vote at these sessions only in case of ties and then only at his option. He shall act as moderator of all business meetings of the church except of one dealing with the termination of the pastorate. He shall call for business meetings of the church or any of its officers or committees whenever he deems necessary, provided such meetings do

not conflict with provisions of this Constitution.

d. The Pastor shall maintain a church activities calendar, and all organizations shall clear with the Pastor the calendar dates for their activities, so as to avoid confusion and duplication. These organizations shall also obtain approval from the Pastor before inviting any speaker from outside the church (Acts 20:29,30).

e. The Pastor shall serve for an unlimited term of service, unless other arrangements are made at the time the call is given and accepted. The Pastor shall give the church a notice in writing not to exceed 60 days and not less than 30 days of his intention to discontinue as Pastor.

f. The question of terminating the Pastoral relationship may be brought before the church by a majority vote of the Deacons. A two (2) week notice shall be given for a called church business meeting. At this meeting a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the voting members present shall be necessary for terminating the pastorate. Voting shall be by ballot. If pastorate is terminated, the Pastor shall receive eight weeks salary only. If a Pastor is proven guilty of heresy or immorality, he shall be dismissed immediately and is not entitled to any further salary or benefits beyond the time of dismissal.

g. Whenever the Pastoral office becomes vacant, the Deacons shall act as a Pulpit Committee. The Pulpit Committee shall seek by careful investigation to locate a Baptist minister of the Gospel whom they feel shall adequately fill the particular needs of this church and who is in full sympathy with the church's present affiliations and doctrinal stand. They shall endeavor to hear him first as a pulpit supply, before inviting him as a candidate. When he (the prospective candidate), has agreed to the Doctrinal Statement and Practices of the Constitution, and the Pulpit Committee has agreed to invite him as a candidate, he shall then be announced at least one week prior to his coming. He shall preach at least two (2) times in the regular Sunday Services, and shall be interviewed by the Pulpit Committee on the same weekend he comes to candidate. After the candidate has preached, the church will vote on him at least one week after the Sunday he candidated. A meeting will be called for the purpose of voting on this candidate during the regular Sunday Services a week after hearing the candidate. Voting shall be by ballot, and a three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting members present shall be necessary for an affirmative decision. It is understood definitely that the so called "lineup" method of candidating for the Pastorate of this church is not to be used. No more than one candidate shall be under consideration at any given time. Once a candidate is rejected, he shall not be reconsidered. When a Pastor accepts a call, he and his wife shall, by affirming both the

Church Doctrinal Statement and Covenant, be received as members of the church, and this be made public at the first A.M. service he and his family are in residence.

h. The Pastor is entitled to a vacation of at least two (2) weeks each year, with an additional 14 days at the discretion of the Deacons, such as to conventions, a series of meetings in another church, or in other Christian Service.

### **SECTION 3 - DEACONS**

a. The term "Deacon," means "servant" to the church, for the Lord. The term also means "helper" -helper to the Pastor in the church in doing the work of the Lord. Therefore, the Deacons shall serve the church by helping the Pastor in the general work of the church. This is the only other Scriptural office in the church besides that of Pastor; therefore, it carries great responsibility.

b. The term of the office of Deacon shall be for three (3) years. So that the office will not be vacated the same year, the first slate of Deacons shall be as follows: Two elected for a two-year term; two elected for a one-year term; and one elected for a three-year term. The Deacons shall be elected according to the procedure given under the Nominating Committee.

c. A Deacon may serve as many subsequent terms as the church elects him. A person must be at least twenty-four (24) years of age to hold this office. In the case of a vacancy, a deacon will be elected to finish the vacated office of the unexpired term in compliance to the regular procedure of this Constitution.

d. There shall be five (5) Deacons for the first one hundred (100) members. At the discretion of the Pastor and the Deacons, one (1) additional deacon may be added for each additional fifty (50) members.

e. Those holding the office of Deacon shall be exemplary in their Christian life and fulfill the qualifications found in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-3. It shall be understood that this shall exclude any divorced person or one married to a divorced person; one who uses tobacco, intoxicating drink, profane language, plays "court" cards, attends dances or movie theaters, or is the member of a secret order. He must be one who is "temperate in all things," exercises self control, and as such being a consistent testimony to the world and to fellow church members.

f. Should occasion arise that the Nominating Committee does NOT feel

that there are qualified persons available to fill the allowable number of Deacons, they may so indicate to the church, submitting only such nominations as they feel are qualified. It shall then be necessary for a two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting to over-ride the Nominating Committee in this matter.

g. The duties of the Deacons shall be generally as follows:

1. They shall, with the Pastor, examine all candidates for church membership and shall recommend to the church only those receiving their unanimous vote.

2. Whenever the Pastorate becomes vacant, the Deacons shall have charge of all services of the church and they shall arrange for the pulpit supply and they shall act as Pulpit Committee as set forth in Article VI - Section 2 - paragraph g of this Constitution.

3. They shall serve the Lord's Supper as the Pastor directs.

4. They shall assist in the Baptismal Services of the church.

5. They shall recommend the licensing and the ordination of ministers of and by this church.

6. They shall cooperate with the calling ministry in the home.

7. They shall minister to the poor and needy members of the church.

8. They shall minister to those who are seeking Christ as Savior.

9. They shall encourage a program of stewardship in giving, stressing tithing, as the Scriptural responsibility of every member.

10. They shall serve as the Missionary Committee of the church. The Missionary Committee shall try to promote and engage in a Missionary Conference once a year.

11. They shall assist the Pastor in all matters of discipline of members.

h. The Deacons shall meet upon call of the Pastor and may, at their discretion, set regular meetings. In the first meeting after the annual election, they shall elect one of their number to serve as Chairman of

the Deacons.

He shall assist the Pastor in the following ways: Convening the Deacons; instruction of the Communion Service procedure; special plans during the illness of the Pastor or other emergencies. When the Pastorate is vacant, he shall act as chairman until the new Pastor takes up his work.

i. The Deacons shall act as Trustees of the Church property; whereas,

1. They shall hold in trust all property of the church, and shall be responsible for the repair, upkeep, and maintenance, and management of the same. They shall not sell or encumber the real estate or other property of the church unless authorized to do so by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the voting members present at a church business meeting of which two weeks notice shall be given. They shall be completely subject to the will of the church in any decision concerning church property.

2. They shall have the power, in cases of emergencies, to make all necessary repairs, purchase necessary articles, and provide for in the church budget up to the amount of \$1,000.00 without official action of the church.

3. They shall employ and supervise work of the church custodian, if and when needed.

j. As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the Pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the Church Clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the Church Treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as vice president of the corporation.

#### **SECTION 4 - CHURCH CLERK**

The church clerk shall keep a correct and permanent record of all the business meetings of the church, sign all letters of dismissal, take charge of all church records, and maintain a register of members, in which shall be noted such changes as may occur. The clerk shall make copies of all church records and give a copy to the Pastor and secretary of the Deacons within a two week period following the transaction. The clerk shall enter upon the records of the church current events, thus making the records a continuous story of the history of the church. The clerk shall be elected annually.

#### **SECTION 5 - CHURCH TREASURER**

a. The church treasurer shall receive, safeguard, disburse, and be responsible for the funds of the church, and shall keep an accurate

account of the same. He shall be custodian for all of the funds of the church and shall keep a detailed record of the individual contributions through church envelopes or otherwise identified. The term of the office shall be for one year. He may serve as many subsequent years as the church elects him. In case of his absence, the assistant treasurer shall be instructed by him as to the fulfillment of the necessary duties during that time.

b. The treasurer shall render a written report each month and at each quarterly business meeting, and a summary report at the Annual Business Meeting of the church. He shall also furnish annual statements to those who contribute through the envelope system or similar channels, and also at any other time, give an individual contributor, a statement of his account either in summary or a particular detail according to the request.

c. All church checks shall require the signature of the church treasurer or assistant treasurer **AND** one deacon.

#### **SECTION 6 - ASSISTANT TREASURER**

The church shall elect an assistant treasurer who shall assist the Treasurer in the carrying out of the Treasurer's duties.

#### **SECTION 7 - SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

a. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons, and shall have general control and supervision of Sunday School in conjunction with and under the advice of the Pastor. He shall give a report at the Annual Business Meeting of the church, including attendance records.

b. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be one who is exemplary in his Christian life, and he shall fulfill the spiritual qualifications as listed for Deacons in this same Article, Section 3, paragraph e. The term of office shall be for one year, appointed by Pastor and Deacons.

#### **SECTION 8 - ASSISTANT SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall, at the request of the Superintendent, assist in the performance of the duties of the superintendent. He shall be appointed for one year and have spiritual qualifications identical with the office of superintendent. His appointment shall be made by the Pastor and the Deacons upon the superintendent's request.

#### **SECTION 9 - USHERS**

a. There shall be three (3) regular ushers, and more if necessary, and they shall be appointed by the Pastor and the Deacons. One shall be

designated as Head Usher. He shall have supervision of both regular and substitute ushers and shall see that there are always individuals performing those duties at the Sunday Services and at any special evening services of the church. He shall work closely with the Pastor in order that the details of the service might run as smoothly as possible.

b. It shall be the duty of the ushers to have charge of the seating of the congregation at the Sunday Services and any special evening services of the church. They shall be responsible to see that there is no disorder during the services and that the sanctuary is comfortable. An important duty of the ushers shall be welcoming and registering of strangers and visitors, and helping them to feel at home in our midst by striving to make them acquainted with members of the congregation.

c. There shall be appointed, by the Pastor and Deacons, as many substitute ushers as deemed necessary.

d. Youth may be used in evening services as approved by the Pastor and the Deacons.

#### **SECTION 10 - SONG LEADER**

The song leader shall be appointed by the Pastor, after counseling with the Deacons. He shall lead the congregational singing and strive to promote the spiritual fervor of the church. In case of absence, he shall notify the Pastor. The Pastor will be in charge of arranging special music.

#### **SECTION 11 - PIANIST AND ORGANIST**

The pianist and organist shall be appointed by the Pastor, after counseling with the Deacons, and shall strive to be present at all services, and shall cooperate in every way possible with the song leader and Pastor. In cases of absence, they shall contact the Pastor.

### *ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES*

#### **SECTION 1 – NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

a. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Pastor, two Deacons, and two qualified members selected from the floor of the church during the October quarterly business meeting.

b. In case of any vacancies occurring during the year, the Pastor and Deacons shall make appointments for said vacancies for the remainder of that term.

c. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to interview those

persons to be nominated for any office and position of leadership in the church. Nominations from the body of the church may be placed on a list that shall be posted one month prior to the annual election of officers. All nominees shall be questioned as to their doctrinal beliefs, faithfulness, cooperation, and personal separation. The names of such nominees shall be posted two (2) weeks before the annual election of officers. No nominations shall be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

## **SECTION 2 - FINANCE COMMITTEE**

a. The Finance Committee shall consist of the Pastor, the Deacons, and the Church Treasurer, and shall be chaired by the Pastor.

b. The duties of the Finance Committee shall be to devise means to raise necessary funds to carry on the work of the church, and to prepare a budget for current expenses for the ensuing year to be presented at the Annual Business Meeting of the church for the consideration and approval of the church. Should expenses during the financial year for any item exceed in an unusual amount budgetary estimates, the committee shall first seek authorization for the additional amount at a church business session.

c. The Finance Committee shall designate two (2) qualified members to audit the books of the Church Treasurer preceding the annual Business Meeting of the church and the audit shall date from the last previous audit. The transfer of accounts and funds when a new treasurer assumes office shall be attended by an audit.

## **SECTION 3 - PULPIT COMMITTEE**

This committee shall consist of the Deacons of the church and shall function as set forth in Article VI, Section 2, Paragraph g, of this Constitution.

# *ARTICLE VIII - FINANCES*

## **SECTION 1 - FISCAL YEAR**

The Fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end on the following December 31.

## **SECTION 2 - FINANCIAL POLICY**

a. The church accepts the Bible method of finance as final authority in all matters of faith and practice. In matters of church finance, therefore, the rule is, "Upon the first day of the week" (regularly and systematically), "as God has prospered him," (proportionately), "prove



me now herewith," (administrator is God), and "as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give," (each member deciding in the light of the Word of God and the leadership of the Spirit of God, his responsibility). See Malachi 3:8-10; I Corinthians 16:2 and II Corinthians 9:6-15.

b. The financial needs of the church and its auxiliary organizations shall be met by voluntary contributions of members and friends. Any possible exception to this rule shall only be with the permission of the Pastor and Deacons. At the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons, freewill offerings in church services may be taken when it is deemed advisable.

c. From time to time, the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

### **SECTION 3 - SOLICITATION**

No individuals can solicit funds within the church premises for any outside organization without permission of the Pastor, and this consideration is to be given only under very exceptional circumstances.

## *ARTICLE IX - AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS*

### **SECTION 1 - SUNDAY SCHOOL**

a. This organization shall be considered as the church studying the Bible. It shall be under the general supervision and control of the church.

b. All Sunday School teachers and officers shall be those who have subscribed to the covenant and standards for the Sunday School as authorized by the church.

c. The Vacation Bible School shall be sponsored by the Sunday School under the direction of the Pastor or person or persons whom he delegates authority. All Vacation Bible School Teachers shall be church members.

## **SECTION 2 - OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

There shall be such other organizations as the most efficient operations of our church shall indicate, but none shall be started without the consent of the Pastor and Deacons. These organizations shall be self-governing but finally subject to the control of the church through its Constitution and voted church policy, and they must conform to the spirit, policy, and teaching of the church. The church regards, as integral parts of itself, all organizations formed within it. All such organizations are subject to the supervision of the Pastor and Deacons.

## **SECTION 3 - PERSONNEL**

All officers of the auxiliary organizations and all regular teachers in the Sunday School must be members of the church and in good and regular standing as determined by the Pastor and Deacons.

# *ARTICLE X - BUSINESS MEETINGS*

## **SECTION 1 - ANNUAL MEETING**

There shall be an Annual Business Meeting of the church within the month of January. At this meeting, reports shall be received from all auxiliary organizations of the church, the annual report of the church treasurer, and any other special reports available and of concern to the whole church. These reports shall be presented in written form to the Church Clerk to file. The Finance Committee shall present annually a budget for current expenses and building obligations, for consideration and approval at this meeting.

## **SECTION 2 - ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

There shall be an Annual Election of Officers of the church within the month of December. The Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of officers for the ensuing year and an election held.

## **SECTION 3 - QUARTERLY MEETINGS**

There shall be quarterly business meetings held during the second week of each of the months of April, July, and October. In case of extenuating circumstances, the church may modify these dates. There shall be a quarterly report by the Church Treasurer and consideration of any type of church business.

## **SECTION 4 - SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

- a. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons, provided that public notice is given of the same on the Lord's Day preceding, except that those for calling or dismissing a Pastor shall be given public announcements for two preceding Sundays. However, routine business may be done, when

necessary, at any slated meeting of the church without regard to the above requirements. In case the Pastoral office is vacant, business meetings will be at the call of the Deacons, with the Chairman of the Deacons as moderator in accordance with Article VI, Section 3, paragraph h, in this Constitution.

b. The church may be called to business session on any Wednesday or Sunday meeting to hear the report of Deacons of those desiring membership in the church and to take action regarding this.

### **SECTION 5 - ORDER OF MEETINGS**

a. In the conduct of business, rules contained in **Robert's Rules of Orders** shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions, a majority vote shall establish the rule.

b. The voting members present shall constitute a quorum.

c. The Pastor shall have the authority to rise to a point of order at any time that anything conflicts with the Scriptural injunction that what we do and say should bring honor and glory to the Lord.

### **SECTION 6 - VOTING QUALIFICATIONS**

All persons voting in any business session must be 18 years of age or older and a member of the church.

## *ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS*

### **SECTION 1**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present at any regularly called business meeting, with the Pastor present, provided that notice has been given in writing of the intended change, 7 days in advance, and the proposed change posted in the church or circulated to the membership.

### **SECTION 2**

No Amendments shall be made to Article III, Sections 2 or 3.

### **SECTION 3**

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed to the church in the following manner:

a. By recommendation of the Deacons having a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote from them.

b. Any member may submit in writing, to the Deacons, a proposed constitutional amendment. The Deacons, shall in turn,

decide whether or not to submit the proposed amendment to the church for its consideration and, if submitted, whether or not to recommend its adoption.

c. The Church Clerk shall record all amendments in a section of the church record book.

## *ARTICLE XII - CANCELLATION*

### **SECTION 1**

This Constitution as adopted on this 27th day of January, 1993, supersedes and cancels all other constitutions and amendments thereto, and shall be effective upon adoption.

## *ARTICLE XIII - INTERNAL REVENUE REQUIREMENTS*

### **SECTION 1 - DISSOLUTION**

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, director, officer, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations of like faith and practice as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

### **SECTION 2 - POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise (attempting to influence legislation), and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

### **SECTION 3 - NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

The Grace Baptist Church does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin. Born again, baptized believers of any race, color, national or ethnic origin will receive all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally afforded or made available to any of its members.