

# THE CONSTITUTION OF GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

3625 South 19th Avenue • Bozeman, Montana 59718

Elder Approved at May 16, 2017

## ARTICLE I \* NAME

The name of this church shall be "GRACE BIBLE CHURCH" (here after referred to as the Church). The Church was organized on October 17, 1945, and incorporated in the State of Montana, November 3, 1945. The place where the principal business of said Corporation is to be transacted and its offices kept shall be in the County of Gallatin, State of Montana.

## ARTICLE II \* PURPOSE

The purpose of this Corporation shall be to carry on, conduct, and maintain a church and religious organization for public worship under the aforesaid name; to promote, inculcate, and practice the principles of Christianity; to promote the growth and expedience of the work of the Church through missions and education; to edify and elevate the moral and spiritual condition of its members and such others as may come under its influence by the dissemination of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the worship of Almighty God; to take and hold by purchase, gift, devise, or bequest, personal property and real estate, and to use, mortgage, and dispose thereof for the purpose for which the Corporation is organized; and to perform all other things authorized by law necessary or incidental to the purpose herein above set forth.

## ARTICLE III \* DOCTRINE and BYLAWS

The Doctrinal Statement of Grace Bible Church is as follows:

**Section 1. The Bible.** We believe the total Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all 66 books, are verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are the only infallible rule for faith and life.

- A. Total: The total Scriptures are full and equally inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. Verbally: This refers to the fact that the Bible, even its very words, is true and without error in the original writings. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word is inspired (Matthew 5:17-18; Proverbs 30:5-6).
- C. Inspired (inspiration): Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture without excluding their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feelings, or any other human factor. God's own complete and coherent message to men was recorded in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings, and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God, Himself, had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out of God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (2 Peter 1:20-21). Inspiration does not suppress intellectual ability and talents (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Samuel 23:2).
- D. Inerrant: Inerrant means that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).
- E. Infallible: The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man and because they are inspired and inerrant they become our final authority. However, be careful to note what the Bible indicates as not being authoritative, such as Satan's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- F. Authoritative: We believe the Bible, in part and in whole, is authoritative for the believer. The authority of the Bible is both inherent in the Bible and rightfully bestowed on it as a believer comes to understand it. (Matthew 28:18-20; Titus 2:15)
- G. Sufficient: The Bible is complete and sufficient for all that can be and is known concerning God and His relations with mankind (Ephesians 3:3ff). All things in the Bible may not be fully understood at this time, but all that is necessary for man to know of God's purposes and plans is included in the Biblical documents (Proverbs 25:2; Matthew 4:4).
- H. Grace Bible Church approaches the Scriptures from a Dispensational point of view, rejecting all variants including Ultra-Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology.

**Section 2. The Trinity.** We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- A. One God: There is but one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah. 45:5; Mark 12:29-32).
- B. Eternally existing: Three persons who are distinct in subsistence but the same in substance.
  - 1. Distinct in subsistence: The words or thoughts of man can never fully define the doctrine of the Trinity. However, the Bible clearly describes the Trinity as being three separate distinct persons, co-equal, eternally existing (2 Corinthians 13:13-14; Matthew 28:19).
  - 2. Same in substance: Three persons of the Godhead partake of the same divine nature.
- C. The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7).
- D. The Son is recognized as God (John 1:1; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20; Philippians 2:6).
- E. The Holy Spirit is also identified as God (Acts 5:3-4).

**Section 3. Jesus Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, true man and true God.

- A. Jesus Christ: He is God-man. Two natures (deity-humanity) in one person. The relationship is such that there is no dividing of person and no confounding of two natures (John 1:1 and 14).
- B. Conceived of the Holy Spirit: This was a divine act of God (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-28).
- C. Born of the virgin Mary: The Son of God was born of a woman who was a virgin (Matthew 1:13-16; Isaiah 7:14).

**Section 4. Mankind.** We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, bringing upon himself and his race both physical death and spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and thus are sinners in thought, word, and deed.

- A. Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:7). Genesis 1:26-27 declares that God made and created man (mankind) in His image, not some part of man, such as the soul, but man as a unit. Furthermore, it states that God created mankind from the beginning male and female. This is further confirmed by Jesus' words in Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6.
- B. Separation from God. When man, of his own free will, chose to disobey God, he sinned (the breaking of God's law). Sin separates us from God. As a sinner, man incurs not only physical death, but also spiritual death (Romans 6:23, 3:10-23; Galatians 3:22).

**Section 5. The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

- A. Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son (John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19).
- B. Convicts: This purpose of the Holy Spirit is seen in Christ's words in John 16:7-11. He also restrains Satan until God's purpose is fulfilled (2 Thessalonians. 2:7).
- C. Life: The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth (John 3:5-7). At the moment of conversion, a believer is regenerated, indwelt, sealed, and baptized into the Body of Believers (1 Corinthians 12:13). After conversion, the Holy Spirit is the strength and guide of the believer's life (Ephesians 1:13; John 16:13; Romans 8:26-27). The believer is commanded to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. This yielding to the control of God in our lives is the fullness for power and guidance (Ephesians 5:18).
- D. Empowers: He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:4). To be filled with the Holy Spirit is the Biblical prescription for power in serving Christ (Ephesians 5:18).
- E. We believe the New Testament church was established on Jesus as the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets as the foundation. These offices have ceased, along with their accompanying signs of miracles and speaking in tongues (other known languages). The church, through the leadership of the offices that remain (evangelist, pastor/teacher (i.e., elder), and deacon), now builds on that foundation by means of the finished and sufficient Scriptures. (Ephesians 2:20-22; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12; 1 Corinthians 14:18,37; Ephesians 4:11-13)

**Section 6. The Atoning Work of Jesus Christ.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.

- A. Representative: This means that Jesus Christ represented all the sins of the world. He who knew no sin, was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-21). Adam was the representative of man in the fall. Christ is the representative of a saving sacrifice (1 Corinthians 15:22). Therefore, if Christ represents all, His sacrifice will cover all (John 3:16).
- B. Substitutionary: This is called the "vicarious" suffering in that He died in our place. Christ did not die for His sin (Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 John 3:5), but He died for sins of others (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:8).
- C. All: The gift of salvation provided by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is for all men. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13; 1 John 2:2).
- D. Justified: Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of the sinner's belief in Jesus Christ. Man receives a new standing (Romans 5:1).
- E. We believe the atoning work of Christ on the cross conquered all sin and death. Therefore, His atonement purchased the effectual salvation of the elect and the right to judge those who do not believe. All will be raised to life, and Jesus Himself will determine the final destiny of all mankind. (1 John 2:2; Colossians 1:19-20; 2 Peter 2:1; Matthew 25:31-46)

**Section 7. The Resurrection, Ascension and Intercessory Work of Christ.** We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and His present life there for believers as a High Priest and Advocate.

- A. Resurrection: We believe that after three days and three nights Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 24:23-40). This doctrine is essential to salvation (Romans 10:9-10).

- B. Ascension: After His resurrection and forty-day ministry, Jesus ascended up into heaven (Acts 1:1-11; 1 Peter 3:22).
- C. High Priest and Advocate: This means that whereas before we could not enter the presence of God, now through Jesus Christ, who as our High Priest represents us before God, we are able to enter God's presence. As an advocate, He pleads our innocence before God based upon the payment of His own shed blood (John 14:18; Hebrews 4:14, 5:1-10, 7:25, 13:5).

**Section 8. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.** We believe that at any moment the rapture of the saved may occur, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven and catch away His church to meet Him in the air. We also believe in the personal, bodily, and pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom upon the earth.

- A. Any moment: There were many signs given to the nation Israel which would precede Christ's coming to earth to set up His millennial kingdom (The Revelation). However, there were no signs given to the church. The church was to live believing Christ could return immediately (at any moment) to take them into His presence (John 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The believer is told to be watching for Christ Himself, and not just for signs. The signs given for Israel are shadows that indicate the nearness of the Light, Christ Himself, returning for us (1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation. 3:3).
- B. The rapture of the saved: The word rapture means "catching up" (1 Thessalonians. 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).
- C. Personal: Jesus, Himself, will appear, not a spirit, not a gust of wind, but Jesus Christ Himself. "This same Jesus," (Acts 1:11).
- D. Pre-millennial: This means that Jesus Christ will come before the Millennium. The Millennium is a period of 1,000 years in which Christ will set up an earthly kingdom. (This point cannot be covered in a few verses, but Revelation 20:1-10 will help illustrate.)

**Section 9. Salvation in Christ Alone.** We believe that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

- A. By grace through faith: (Hebrews 11:1) Paul, in his book to the Galatians, states that faith is the only criterion of Salvation; works are ruled out. Therefore, a man is saved by grace through faith alone and is kept not by his works, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:5, 8 and 9).
- B. Born again: It is essential to salvation (John 3:7). It is a "new birth," born of the Word of God and the Spirit of God (John 3:5). This brings spiritual life as birth of the flesh brings physical life. "Must" because first birth only takes us to death. Spiritual birth gives us eternal life, the life of God.
- C. Children: We become the Sons of God because of what Christ has done for us (1 John 3:1-2).
- D. Heirs of eternal life: We are saved for eternity. We cannot fall from grace because our salvation does not depend on works. We are kept through the eternal grace of God (Titus 3:7, Romans 8:14-39; John 10:27-30). The believer is eternally secure in Christ. (1 John 5:13).

**Section 10. Resurrection of the Dead.** We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost in hell.

- A. Bodily Resurrection: Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed (this is before the Tribulation) (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58). After the Millennium and the final battle of Gog and Magog, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment. Those not found written in the

Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.

- B. Everlasting conscious suffering: Luke 16:23-31 explains this.
- C. Heaven: We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Hebrews 11:10-16).
- D. Hell: An actual place; Hades (abode of the unseen dead) is where unsaved men go now. After the final judgment they will be cast into hell (Gehenna) or the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15; Matthew 13:36-43).

**Section 11. Ordinances.** Grace Bible Church believes strongly that the local church is the means through which the Universal Organism (the Body of Jesus Christ, the universal church) so beautifully portrayed by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians, is made visible and functional among men, and that the local fellowship of believers is God's chief agency in the world today. The following ordinances are observed by Grace Bible Church:

- A. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of the death of Christ on behalf of those who are believers (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). It is a time of meditation, as believers remember the Lord's death. It is a time of proclamation, as believers proclaim the Lord's death. It is a time of examination, as believers ponder the Lord's death. It is a time of celebration, as believers rejoice in the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:23-28).
- B. Baptism. The purpose of baptism as seen in the New Testament can be summed up in two words - public identification. In the New Testament whenever someone turned to Christ from his sin, that individual made that decision public by being baptized. Baptism is also a public identification with the people of God. When an individual identifies himself with Jesus Christ, he is also identifying himself with Christ's people. Those who have received the saving grace of God should make that decision a public declaration by being baptized. Baptism is an important act of obedience as seen in the New Testament. In fact, after the day of Pentecost there is not one record of an unbaptized believer found anywhere in the New Testament. This significance of baptism is best symbolized through the immersion of the participant in water (Romans 6:3-6).

**Section 12. Marriage and Sexuality.** We believe that according to the Bible, marriage is the uniting of one man\* and one woman\* (\*as genetically defined) in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman, within the love and bonds of marriage. (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:21-33, 1. Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). Accordingly, based upon the Bible, we believe the following biblical standards are applicable to all men and women but particularly to Christians:

- A. Any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).
- B. Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, cohabitation (regardless of the age of the individuals involved), any attempt to change one's gender in disagreement with one's genetically defined gender, is sinful and offensive to God (Leviticus 18-20; Romans 1).

We do believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 8). And we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes, or speech directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture. (1 Peter 2:13-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

## **Section 13. Creation and Flood**

A. We believe that the eternal God created and made the universe in six literal days (Genesis 1, Exodus 20:8-11, 31:17; Colossians 1:16), with God personally creating and making the existing universe with all its basic systems and kinds of organisms in those six literal days of the creation week. As a result, we reject allegorical interpretations of the creation account and any interpretation indicating God used evolution as His mechanism to create.

B. We believe that God sent a global flood initiated by cataclysmic events (Genesis 7:11-12, 8:1-3) that resulted in devastation and loss of life on the earth as it then existed. The flood also produced geological changes on the earth (Psalm 104:6-8) that still testify of God's eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:18-20). Scripture warns that the flood will be forgotten in the last days, and thus the world is not expecting the coming judgment by fire (2 Peter 3:4-13)

## **ARTICLE IV \* MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Member Categories.** Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of regeneration, accepting the views of faith, committed to honoring the doctrinal statement in the Constitution, regularly attending the services of the Church (Hebrews 10:25), and attempting to live a lifestyle in accord with Scripture may be received into membership through the procedures defined by the Elders. Membership is defined as:

- A. Active Members. Active Members consist of individuals who have been accepted into membership, continue to meet the requirements of membership (given above), and are 18 years of age or older. Active Members are expected to support the ministry of the Church with their prayers and gifts as God has prospered them, and actively engage in the work of the Church. They are expected to exercise their spiritual gifts humbly, prayerfully, and faithfully, for the glory of Christ. Active Members are also expected to attend all congregational meetings, and have full voting privileges at those meetings. If unable to attend, Active Members are expected to submit an absentee ballot. Active Members shall notify the Church office of any changes of address. Active Members can also consist of members serving on the mission field.
- B. Non-Attending Members (Shut-ins). Non-Attending Members consist of those who for reason of physical limitations are unable to attend worship services, but retain full membership status.
- C. Former Members. Former Members consist of those who have qualified for Removal of Membership. See Section 2.

**Section 2. Removal of Membership.** Individuals shall be removed from membership when one of the following criteria is met:

- A. When members permanently move away from the community or are unable to attend for a consecutive time frame of seven months or longer. (An exception applies to those with physical limitations. See Section 1.B.) Ideally a conversation between an elder and the departing member is to precede any official changes in membership status.
- B. When members chose, for whatever reason, to no longer attend and have absented themselves from the regular services of the Church. Ideally a conversation between an elder and the departing member is to precede any official changes in membership status.
- C. When members are not in accord with the faith and order of the Church, membership shall cease. All discipline shall be done according to Scripture of which Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 shall be the guide. (The elders retain the right to practice church discipline on members and regularly attending non-members as the process of church restoration described in Matthew 18:15-20 applies to any "brother".)
- D. Death.

**Section 3. Membership List.** A list shall be maintained in the Church office of all members in the categories of active, non-attending, and former.

## ARTICLE V \* GOVERNANCE

**Section 1. Authority.** This Church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its only head and receives the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, Church order, and discipline, and is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body. This Church shall remain free and independent and shall not join itself to any other denomination or synod. It shall remain its own highest authority. Under the Lordship of Christ and the direction of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, responsibility for oversight of all Church activities is placed on various leaders whose descriptions follow. To hold a leadership position in this Church, a person must be a member in good standing for at least one year, and be seeking to live up to the Scriptural standards of irreproachable character as laid down in such passages as 1 Timothy 3:1-17 and Titus 1. In addition, he must take the position voluntarily and willingly with a promise to fulfill to the best of his ability, by the grace of God, the duties and privileges of his position.

**Section 2. Elders.** The Elders shall consist of staff Elders (pastors) and those men recognized for their ministry in the Church and for their irreproachable character, meeting the requirements for an Elder or Overseer as laid out in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1). Article VIII defines the selection, resignation and dismissal process for Elders. Grace Bible Church understands the language of 1 Timothy 3 (e.g., “if any man”, “he desires”, “the husband of one wife”, “he must manage his household” etc. ), 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (“they (women) are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves”), 1 Timothy 2 (“I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man”) to mean that Elders are required to be men and not women. This is consistent with our Lord appointing only male apostles (Matthew 10; Mark 3; Luke 5) as well as the practice of the historic, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Church. There shall be a strong effort made to have at least as many lay Elders as staff Elders.

- A. Duties. The Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual oversight of all ministries and activities of the Church. For example: they shall cooperate with the Pastors in making decisions in regard to all matters of pulpit supply and discipline. They shall act as counselors and personal workers to those who need spiritual guidance, including pastoral and support staff if necessary. They shall pray for one another, the Deacons, and the congregation. They shall be a model of humble servant-hood to the congregation. They shall visit Church families, especially the sick and destitute. They shall be alert to those needing help, whether spiritual or temporal, in the congregation. They shall be actively involved in being and making disciples. The Elders shall have the oversight of the mission program of the Church. The Elders have the prerogative to be the sole authority in discipline and other spiritually sensitive matters. Each and every Active Member of Grace Bible Church, including each individual Elder, is to be submitted to the spiritual authority vested in the Elders. Even so, the Elders shall exercise their collective spiritual authority with much prayer and humility, continually looking for direction from the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Elders shall be available to assist in the administration of the ordinances outlined in ARTICLE III, Section 11. Elders also have the responsibility of maintaining the Membership List as outlined in ARTICLE IV, Section 3. The business administration of this Church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in and the responsibility of the Elders. They shall have the power to conduct, manage, and control the business of the Corporation, and to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Montana, and the Constitution of the Church, and to perform any and all functions necessary to carry out the purposes of the Corporation.
- B. Terms. Elders shall serve for three-year terms. A strong effort will be made to assure that no more than one-third (1/3) of the Elders will be up for affirmation in any given year by assigning one or two-year terms as appropriate.

**Section 3. Deacons.** The Deacons shall consist of the Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and at least four (4) other men recognized for their ministry in the Church and for their irreproachable character, meeting the requirements for a Deacon as laid out in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12).

- A. Duties. The Deacons shall be responsible to minister in areas assigned by the Elders, including the oversight of the properties, the finances, and other matters of administration. Where this ministry overlaps with the spiritual issues of the Church, the Deacons may seek the input of the Elders. The

Deacons are accountable to the Elders. Deacons shall be available to assist in the administration of the ordinances outlined in ARTICLE III, Section 11. The Deacons shall see that the treasurer's books and other important financial records are audited appropriately.

- B. Terms. Deacons shall serve for three-year terms. A strong effort will be made to assure that no more than one third (1/3) of the Deacons will be up for affirmation in any given year by assigning one or two-year terms as appropriate.

**Section 4. Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have oversight of the accurate record keeping of all receipts and disbursements, issue checks upon order of the Deacons, and perform such other duties as may be required by the Elders. He shall assist the Deacons in preparation of the annual budget of the Church. Additionally, he shall oversee the preparation of monthly and annual reports of receipts and disbursements for presentation to the Elders and Deacons and the congregation respectively. The Treasurer shall serve for a three-year term.

**Section 5. Financial Secretary.** The Financial Secretary shall receive, record, and deposit contributions in the name of the Church. An accurate record shall be kept of all receipts for the various funds and regular reports given at the Deacon meetings of the Church. The Deacons shall assist the Financial Secretary in counting the monies received in the Church offerings. The Financial Secretary shall oversee the record keeping of individual contributions for those who desire such records for Income Tax purposes and oversee the issuing of proper receipts for such contributions. The Financial Secretary shall serve for a three-year term.

**Section 6. Clerk.** It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to keep an exact record of all business at meetings of the congregation and the Deacons, and shall oversee the distribution of those minutes prior to the next meeting. He shall have charge of all the legal records of the Church and perform all other duties pertaining to this office. He shall be considered the Attorney-In-Fact. The Clerk shall serve for a three-year term.

**Section 7. Business Administration.** The Corporate officers of the Church shall be: President - the Chairman of the Deacons; Vice-President - the Vice-Chairman of the Deacons; the Treasurer – the Church Treasurer; and the Secretary - the Church Clerk.

**Section 8. Corporate Seal.** The seal of the corporation shall consist of a disc upon the outer edge of which shall be the words "GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, BOZEMAN, MONTANA" and in the center, the words "CORPORATE SEAL."

## **ARTICLE VI \* SENIOR PASTOR AND PASTORAL STAFF**

**Section 1. Senior Pastor.** The Senior Pastor shall preach and teach the Word of God as directed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:2), and shall meet the qualifications of an Elder and the Senior Pastor job description. He shall also visit, counsel, and carry on all the activities and duties proper to his position as set forth in the Scriptures and his job description. The Senior Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall be accountable to, and submit to the spiritual authority of the Elders. He shall also be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Church; however, he may not be able to attend all meetings. He shall oversee the pastoral staff and coordinate their ministries. It is expected that the Senior Pastor, along with his wife, shall make application for Church membership.

**Section 2. Pastoral Staff.** If the Elders determine the need, the Church may employ additional pastoral staff. Additional pastoral staff shall meet the qualifications of an Elder and their respective job description. After a thorough evaluation of the needs of the Church and the gifts of the man called, the Elders shall provide a written description of authority, duties, and responsibilities. He shall oversee and coordinate the ministries under his specialization, and shall attend staff meetings called by the Senior Pastor. He shall be an Elder and it is expected that he, along with his wife, shall make application for Church membership.

## **ARTICLE VII \* MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings.**

- A. The Church shall meet regularly for public worship each Lord's Day morning and evening throughout the year, unless changed by mutual agreement of the Elders.



- B. The Church shall meet for regular weeknight prayer and Bible study on an evening or evenings designated by the Elders.
- C. The annual congregational meeting shall be held in January.

### **Section 2. Special Meetings.**

- A. Special devotional, missionary, or evangelistic meetings may be held throughout the year as shall be determined by the Elders.
- B. Special congregational meetings may be held at any time. Such meetings may be called by the Elders, provided that the time and place shall first be announced by letter and in regular services at least ten (10) days prior to said meeting.

**Section 3. Affirmation Voting.** Affirmation voting is conducted among the Active Members to affirm candidates for the positions of Elders, Deacons, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Clerk. Affirmation voting among the Active Members is also used to affirm the annual budget and amendments to this constitution at the annual congregational meeting.

- A. Absentee ballots will be issued through the Church office and approved by the Elders. Such ballots shall be in hand at the time of the voting.

## **ARTICLE VIII \* SELECTIONS, RESIGNATIONS, DISMISSALS**

**Section 1. Senior Pastor.** The Senior Pastor shall continue in office until his ministry is terminated by death, resignation, or removal. Selection and dismissal of the Senior Pastor shall be as follows:

- A. Senior Pastor Selection. Upon the death, resignation, or removal of the Senior Pastor, the Church shall, without unnecessary delay, endeavor to secure a successor. The Elders shall appoint a committee of at least five (5) members of the congregation to investigate and recommend a single candidate to fill the position of Senior Pastor. Their search and recommendation shall consider the qualifications set forth in Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Upon receiving a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Elders voting, he will be asked to visit the Church and speak before the congregation. During the visit, the Elders shall meet with him and examine his candidacy. The elders shall then determine whether the candidate is acceptable with congregational input. A representative from the Elders shall present a report to the congregation summarizing their findings regarding the candidate. If accepted, such call shall be for an indefinite period of time.
- B. Senior Pastor Dismissal. Should a grievance exist against the Senior Pastor, a special meeting of the Elders may be called. Upon the recommendation of the Elders, the relationship shall be dissolved.

**Section 2. Pastoral Staff.** Pastoral Staff shall continue in position until their ministries are terminated by death, resignation, or removal, or until the financial resources to sustain their position are no longer available. The process for selection and dismissal shall be as determined by the elder board.

**Section 3. Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Clerk.** The lay leadership of the Church, comprising the Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Clerk, shall continue in their position until their ministries are terminated by death, resignation, dismissal, or expiration of term. The process for selection and dismissal for the Church lay leadership are as follows:

- A. Lay Leadership Selection. A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Elders and consist of at least two (2) Elders, two (2) Deacons, and the Senior Pastor. The Nominating Committee shall receive nominations for lay leadership positions from any Active Member, and with prayerful diligence, shall review each man in regard to their qualification and willingness to serve. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible to provide to the Elders each December a list of qualified, willing candidates. Upon acceptance of the slate of candidates by the Elders, the list of

candidates shall be presented to the active membership for an affirmation vote at the annual congregational meeting.

- B. Active Members are asked to submit a scriptural basis to substantiate any “no” vote that is cast. The Senior Pastor will follow up on all “no” votes; if there does exist a scriptural basis precluding the candidate from serving, that candidate will not be received into the lay leadership of the Church. The Nominating Committee shall also be responsible to provide candidates for the position of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Elders and Deacons. They shall review each candidate in regard to their qualifications and willingness to serve. They shall submit to the Elders and Deacons (prior to their first meeting of the year) a candidate for each position to be affirmed by the Elders and Deacons respectively.
- C. Lay Leadership Resignation. Any lay leader may resign by filing a written resignation with the Chairman of the Elders. A leave of absence may also be granted, when requested, for personal reasons.
- D. Lay Leadership Dismissal. After an appropriate hearing to assess any charges brought forward concerning a lay leader of the Church, the Elders by affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3), may suspend or terminate the leadership position of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Clerk, or any member of the Elders or Deacons.

## **ARTICLE IX \* CHURCH FINANCES**

**Section 1. Corporate Definition.** This Corporation is religious, charitable, and educational in character and is a non-profit organization.

**Section 2. Income from Giving.** Its necessary expenses shall be met through voluntary gifts and contributions from individuals interested in the promotion of the purposes of the Corporation. The Church accepts the Bible as final authority in all matters of Church finance. This includes systematic giving of tithes and offerings with each one giving as he purposes in his heart. No undue pressure is to be put upon members in the matter of giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

**Section 3. Income from Property.** All earnings from the use of any of the corporate property shall be available for the religious, missionary, educational, and benevolent purposes of the Corporation.

**Section 4. Compensation.** The lay leadership of the Church shall receive no compensation for performance of their stated duties. Pastors and administrative staff shall receive such reasonable compensation as the Elders may determine.

**Section 5. Property.** The building and all other properties shall be at all times subject to the Elders for services and meetings pertaining to the work of Grace Bible Church or for use of groups requesting them, as permission is granted for use by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE X \* AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**Section 1. Amendments.** This Constitution may be repealed or amended or a new Constitution may be affirmed at the annual meeting of the members or at a special meeting called for that purpose, providing that a copy of any proposed changes or amendments of the Constitution shall be made available to all Active Members not less than ten (10) days before the date of such special meeting.

**Section 2. Additional Policies.** Items of governance not covered in the Constitution shall be contained in the Bylaws and Policies of Grace Bible Church. The Elders shall be able to enact additions and changes to the Bylaws and Policies.