

# Grace Community Church, Gardnerville Constitution

## ARTICLE I: NAME AND INCORPORATION

The name of this church shall be Grace Community Church, Gardnerville. It was incorporated under the laws of the state of Nevada on 7-10-96, No. C1481496.

## ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF FAITH

- 1. THE WORD OF GOD.** We believe that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the complete and revealed Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original writings. We believe that it is wholly sufficient as Divine revelation, and it alone has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (Psalm 12:6; 19:7-11; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21; Heb. 1:1-3).
- 2. THE TRINITY.** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These Three, being one in essence, are co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existing, and perform distinct but harmonious functions in creation, redemption, and providence (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 13:14).
- 3. GOD THE FATHER.** We believe in God, The Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, justice, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He is unchangeable in His being, all glorious in His nature, and absolutely sovereign over creation, providence, and redemption. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Jn. 4:23-24; Isa. 6:1-6; Psa. 115:3; 145:5; I John 4:16).
- 4. JESUS CHRIST.** We believe in Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (John 1:1-14; Acts 1:11; Phil. 2:5-11; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 1:1-10; 4:14).
- 5. THE HOLY SPIRIT.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to apply the benefits of Christ's work to the elect in regeneration and sanctification. We believe that every believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit and indwelt at salvation. The Holy Spirit sovereignly bestows a spiritual gift(s), helps, teaches, and guides every believer (John 3:3-7; 16:8-14; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:9; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 5:18).
- 6. SALVATION.** We believe that all men are sinners in Adam, by nature and by choice and are therefore dead in sin and under condemnation. We believe that God in His free and sovereign grace saves sinners as He wills. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. True believers will persevere in faith and good works unto the end. This good news of salvation is freely offered to all and requires faith in Christ, which is enabled by the Holy Spirit, making those who are ordained to eternal life willing and able to believe. (Acts 13:48; Romans 3:10-18, 23; 6:23; Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 22:17).
- 7. THE CHURCH.** We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head, composed of people who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the local church, whose membership consists of a company of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, associated for worship, Bible study, prayer, the ordinances, fellowship, and the evangelism of a lost world. We believe in the autonomy and independence of the local church, although cooperation with other churches,

associations, or organizations may prove beneficial. However, cooperation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:1-15; 1 Cor. 16:1).

8. **CHRISTIAN CONDUCT.** We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and that he should seek the well-being of his fellowman; that his conduct should be one of pursuing blamelessness before the world; that he should seek to be a faithful steward of his possessions; that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. We disavow a legalistic approach to the Christian life and believe in the liberty of conscience (1 Cor. 10:31; Romans 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-13; Rom. 14:1-15:6).
9. **THE ORDINANCES.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the church to be observed until the return of Christ: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. By baptism a believer publicly declares his forgiveness of sin, union with Christ, and new life in Christ. Baptism is only for those who profess faith in Christ. In the Lord's Supper, the believer is dramatically reminded of the sacrifice of Christ for our sin. The Lord's Supper is communion with God in Christ, as the believer spiritually feeds on Christ by faith, and communion with the body of Christ. We believe that these two ordinances are not means for salvation but are visible signs of an invisible faith. (Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16, 17; 11:23,24).
10. **LAST THINGS.** We believe in the personal and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ to earth. His coming will be visible, for the consummation of His eternal Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the endless suffering of the wicked, and the eternal blessedness of the believer. (Matthew 24:1-51, 25:41; John 14:1-3, I Corinthians 15; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Rev. 20:11-15).
11. **CREEDS AND CONFESSION.** Grace Community Church adheres to the ecumenical creeds of the historic Christian Church: The Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and The Definition of Chalcedon. We also adopt the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith as our confessional standard; in which we are in substantial agreement. We recognize that only the Bible is infallible, however, these historic creeds and this reformed confession provide a clear basis for our doctrinal standard and unity.

### **ARTICLE III: CHURCH COVENANT**

As a local assembly of Christ's Church, we recognize that we are in covenant relationship with God and with one another. This covenant is a solemn commitment to God and to one another with solemn responsibilities.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, covenant with God and the members of Grace Community Church, that by God's grace, as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and a member of this church,

1. I will seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of my Lord and Savior through personal Bible reading, private prayer, family worship and sharing my faith (2 Pet. 3:18; Psa. 1:1-3; Phil. 4:6; Josh. 24:14; Matt. 28:18-20).
2. I will honor the Lord's Day through attendance of corporate worship and will be regularly involved in the ministries of this Church, such as the Lord's Supper, prayer meeting and Bible study (Ex. 20:8; Isa. 58:13-14; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:24; Heb. 10:25).
3. I will give of my finances regularly, generously, and sacrificially for the support of this ministry (Prov. 3:9-10; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9).
4. I will use my gifts and talents for the sake of Christ and the service of His people within this local body (1 Cor. 12).
5. I will submit to and support the leadership of the Elders, unless it is clearly contrary to what is

specified in God's Word. I will direct all questions of doctrine and practice to the Elders. (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17).

6. I will be subject to biblical church discipline under the direction of the Elders as defined by the New Testament and the Church By-Laws, Article 1, Sections 2 and 3. (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15).
7. I will promote and protect the unity of this body by preventing the spread of gossip and slander, addressing all grievances, criticisms and complaints to the Board of Elders and Deacons. (Eph. 4:1-6, 29-32; 1 Cor. 12:12, 14, 27; Prov. 4:24; 6:12; 10:18-21; 11:11-13; 17:9; 20:19).
8. I will honor the Lord who bought me and uphold His bride's reputation by upholding the high standards of Christian godliness and maintaining a good testimony with the world (Eph. 4:1; 5:1-2; Phil. 2:14-16).
9. I will support the Elders, Deacons, and members of this body through personal and corporate prayer and fellowship, realizing that I am an integral part of this body (Eph. 6:18-20; Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

I have read and understood this covenant and the church's constitution and by-laws. I affirm these statements and I wholly and voluntarily submit myself to them.

#### **ARTICLE IV: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this church is to bring honor and glory to our glorious and majestic God; thus, our objectives are:

1. The Worship of God: This objective stands at the top of our priorities and motivates all other objectives (Isa. 43:7, 21; Psa. 95:6-7).
2. The Nurture of the Saints: Edification through teaching, preaching, equipping, and small group encouragement redounds to the glory of God (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:28; 2:6-7; 3:17; Heb. 3:12-14; 10:23-25).
3. Outreach to the Lost: Evangelism must always mark our existence, for evangelism is 1) commanded of us in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and 2) brings glory to God (Psa. 86:8-10; Rom. 15:7-12).

#### **ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

1. Member. The church shall accept as members only those persons giving evidence of their regeneration (Article II, Section 6 and 7) by a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion. All officers, Elders and Deacons must be church members.
2. Associate Member. In the case of mission work or church planting endeavors, or other short-term absences, such as college, military deployment, or extended work assignments, associate membership status (see By-Laws Article I, Section 2) is given to those who seek accountability and association with this church. They shall be non-voting.

#### **ARTICLE VI: CORPORATE OFFICERS**

The corporate officers are: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. They shall be elected by the Elders from among the Elders and Deacons per Article 4 of the Church By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church shall be Elder led. The Elders shall recommend to the congregation and the congregation shall act and decide upon decisions regarding admissions and dismissal of members, calling or dismissal of full-time, vocational pastors, adoption of the yearly budget, buying or selling of real property, erection of buildings, issuance of debt or any large encumbrance of funds. The Elders shall have the authority to act on behalf of the congregation in all other matters.

In order to maintain financial integrity, paid pastoral staff are not involved in the determination of salaries, raises, bonuses, or any other financial consideration that relates directly to them.

## **ARTICLE VIII: ELDERS**

The Elders are responsible for shepherding in the watch-care of the church family. There shall be no minimum number of Elders, but only as many as meet the qualifications mentioned in this Article, Section 1. The existing Elders shall elect new Elders and the congregation shall ratify their appointment which shall be perpetual, except in the case of doctrinal aberration, moral turpitude, or inept performance of duties. Sabbaticals of 6 or 12 months will be provided for the Elders upon discussion and approval of the Elders. Appointment and ratification shall take place at the annual business meeting or as needs arise.

### **1. Qualifications of an Elder:**

He must be: above reproach (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 2:7); husband of one wife, i.e., faithful and monogamous (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6); temperate (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8); prudent, i.e. balanced in judgment (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8); respectable (I Timothy 3:2); hospitable (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8); able to teach (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9); not given to wine, i.e. addicted (I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7); not pugnacious, but gentle (I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7); uncontentious (I Timothy 3:3); free from the love of money (I Timothy 3:4,5; Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2); one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with dignity (I Timothy 3:4,5; Titus 1:7); not a new believer (I Timothy 3:6); having a good reputation outside the church (I Timothy 3:7); not self-willed (Titus 1:7); not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7); loving what is good (Titus 1:8; I Peter 5:20); just (Titus 1:8); devout (Titus 1:8); and faithful to the Word of God (Titus 1:9). He shall be a member of this church.

### **1. Duties of the Elders shall be:**

- a. to be the spiritual leaders of the church (John 21:15-17; I Peter 5:1-5).
- b. to manage and direct the ministry of the church in all spiritual and financial matters.
- c. to meet regularly together for prayer and Bible study as Elders for mutual edification and growth.
- d. to guard the church from false doctrine and divisiveness.
- e. to investigate, oversee and execute matters of church discipline according to Article 1, Section 2 of the Church By-Laws.
- f. to guide and counsel the congregation into the will of God in life situations, including moral, doctrinal, and practical matters.
- g. to establish priorities, policies, plans and courses of action for implementing the stated objectives and voted decisions of the church.
- h. to approve and submit information and other items as necessary to the congregation for a vote at the annual meeting.
- i. to review the active and inactive status of each member, dismissing the inactive member according to Article I, Section 3 of the By-Laws.
- j. to visit and care for the members of the church and others who regularly participate in worship services.
- k. to consider and act on all reports, programs, and requests submitted by committees, organizations and support staff.
- l. to assist in the administration of the ordinances, and the instruction of persons concerning membership.

- m. to examine applicants for membership.
- n. to care for the physical and spiritual needs of the Elders and other staff (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13).
- o. to evaluate each other as the Elders concerning productivity, spirituality, and walk with the Lord, performing any self-discipline necessary according to Matthew 18:15-20; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; I Timothy 5:19,20; Titus 3:10,11.
- p. to visit and minister to the sick (James 5:14).
- q. to submit to the Elders and the church as long as and in so far as the oversight is in accordance with the explicit or implicit principles of the Word of God (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

#### **ARTICLE IX: BUSINESS MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the fall of each year (generally September/October) at which time the ratification of officers, Elders, and the transaction of such business as concerns the church for the year shall take place. A specific business meeting may be called at any time with the agreement of a majority of the Elders. A congregational meeting must be called when a petition representing 30% of the active membership has requested a business meeting on a specific issue. It is required that any special business meeting be announced at a minimum of two (2) regular church services prior to said meeting.

At any Business Meeting of the church, a quorum will consist of fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of the voting membership. Members voting by proxy shall be considered present for the purpose of determining a quorum. In all matters other than amendment to the church constitution or bylaws, congregational business of the church shall be approved by a fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) affirmative vote of the membership.

Whether an absentee vote is permitted on specific issues is the elders' discretion. If an in-person vote is required, it will be announced at least two (2) weeks before the stated meeting.

#### **ARTICLE X: STATUS**

This church shall be free and autonomous. However, recognizing the biblical pattern of interdependency, we may choose to affiliate with other churches or association of churches which are like minded.

#### **ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

An amendment to this constitution may be made at any Business Meeting of the church at which a quorum (50% +1) is present. The proposed amendment must be presented in written form and discussed at the business meeting. Amendments will be made available to members at least three (3) weeks prior to the time of adoption. The intention to consider an amendment must be announced at two Sunday morning services prior to the business meeting at which it is to be considered. Amendments to this constitution must be approved by a seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote by the membership. Members may vote by proxy provided they have received a copy of the proposed amendments in the manner provided herein.

#### **ARTICLE XII: PROVISIONS FOR BY-LAWS**

A document known as the By-Laws supplements this constitution. A revision to the By-Laws may be voted upon at any business meeting if it has been made available in written form at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting, provided there is a quorum (50% +1) of members present. A seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote by the membership is necessary for any revision of the By-Laws. Members may vote by proxy provided they have received a copy of the proposed amendments in the manner provided herein.

### **ARTICLE XIII: PROPERTY RIGHTS**

If a division should occur in this church (may God prevent this) the name and all the property are to be retained by those adhering to this constitution and to the Statement of Faith provided herein, and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. If the church and its incorporation is dissolved, the property and all assets shall accrue to a church planted by this church or other church so designated by the remaining corporate offices prior to desolation, for the purpose of furthering the Gospel. No rights or any financial compensation will accrue to any individual member.

### **ARTICLE XIV: CHURCH POLICIES**

In striving to be a Biblical church, Grace Community Church will occasionally have to take a position on an issue which directly relates to the church's doctrinal and/or operational standards. When such an instance arises, the Elders will discuss and study the issue at hand. Since doctrinal purity is a responsibility of the Elders, they have the authority to add to Article XIV, whenever they believe it necessary, but only regarding the above-mentioned issues.

- a. Grace Community Church adopts the Danvers Statement as its official policy regarding the subject of the role of men and women in the church and home. A copy of the Danvers Statement may be secured by asking one of the Elders.
- b. Grace Community Church adopts the Elders position paper concerning divorce and remarriage. A copy of this paper may be secured by asking the Church Administrator.
- c. Grace Community Church adopts the position paper regarding “Church Leadership and Divorce: What is a “Husband of One Wife” in 1 Tim. 3:2?” A copy of this paper may be secured by asking the Church Administrator.