

CONSTITUTION OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be Grace Baptist Church of Laramie, Wyoming, which was incorporated on the seventh day of January, 1952.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of Grace Baptist Church shall be to worship, honor, and glorify God by bringing our lives into harmony with Him and with one another, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, through fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism.

ARTICLE III STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in one living and true God who is self-existent, eternal, and infinite, who has revealed himself a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the same in essence though distinct in personality. (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:21,22; Matt. 11:25; Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; Acts 5:3,4; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:8,9; I Peter 1:2; Jude 20,21)

We believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:21,22; Jer. 10:10; John 1:1-13; Rom. 9:5)

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, sinless in His life, making atonement for the sins of the world by His blood and death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His high priestly intercession for His own, and His personal, visible return to the world according to His promise. (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:35; Isa. 53:5; Eph. 1:7; John 1:12)

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from God to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and comfort those who believe in Jesus Christ. (John 3:5,6; John 16:8; Acts 2:33; Acts 4:31; I Pet. 1:2; I Cor. 2:11)

We believe that the Bible is God's Word, that it was written by men divinely and uniquely inspired, that it is absolutely trustworthy, and has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (II Tim. 3:16,17; II Pet. 1:20; Luke 24:44; John 5:39; Rom. 15:4)

We believe that all men by nature and by choice are sinners, but that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (Gen. 1:27,31; 2:16,17; 3:1-6; Rom. 5:19; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:19; John 3:16)

We believe therefore, that those who accept Christ as Lord and Savior shall rejoice forever in God's presence, and those who refuse to accept Christ as Lord and Savior shall be forever separated from God. (Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:11-15; I John 2:28; Luke 16:22-31; Heb. 2:2-4)

We believe that baptism is a believer's symbolic identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. (Rom. 6:3-7; Col. 2:9-12)

We believe that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper symbolically reminds the believer of Christ's physical sacrifice and the need for our personal acceptance of that fact. The Lord commanded believers to remember Him in this fashion until He comes again. (I Cor. 11:23-29; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:19,20; I Cor. 10:16)

Therefore, we will strive to apply Biblical principles to ourselves in order to bring glory to Jesus Christ and point others to Him. Our lives are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity emulating the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:11-16; I John 1:6-7; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:15-21; II Pet. 1:5-8; I Pet. 4:7-10; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:17; I Cor. 10:31)

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

- a) Any person professing a personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and agreeing with the statement of faith of Grace Baptist Church will be considered for membership.
- b) Prospective members must meet with at least two members of the board of elders to profess their salvation and new life in Christ and to affirm their full agreement with Grace Baptist Church's statement of faith.
- c) Prospective members are received into membership of Grace Baptist Church of Laramie when the elders introduce them to the congregation at a church worship service or at a business meeting. The membership will affirm new members by extending them the right hand of fellowship.

SECTION 2 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- a) A member can terminate membership by resignation or by joining another church.
- b) Any member who indicates a lack of interest in the ministry of the church for a period of at least one year may have his or her membership terminated by the unanimous agreement of the board of elders.
- c) Any member who develops and holds irreconcilable differences with the doctrinal positions (statement of faith) of the constitution of Grace Baptist Church should quietly withdraw from membership.
- d) Scripture admonishes believers to be reconciled should one sin against another. Elders shall act for the purpose of restoring estranged members to an attitude of cooperation, prayer, and love under the direction of the Holy Spirit, (Matt. 18:15-17; Matt. 5:23-24; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 12:15) In the event a member refuses to respond to efforts of reconciliation and restoration he or she may have his or her membership terminated by the board of elders (Titus 3:10-11).

ARTICLE V CHURCH GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1 ELDERS

1) The Nature of the Office

- a) Christ has placed elders in the church to superintend the growth and harmony of the local body of Christ. Their task is to instruct, guide, and serve participants of the body of Christ so that each person might perform his or her ministry to the church and the world to his or her greatest potential. The requirements for the office are found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.
- b) Elders are to seek constantly to glorify Christ by making decisions based upon Biblical principles.
- c) Elders are to lead by sound teaching and example (I Pet. 5:2-3). Eldership is a position of humble servitude.
- d) All decisions by the elders shall be unanimous (I Cor. 1:10).

2) Selection and Election of Elders

The pastor, elders, and other members may recommend names of various men who are active members of the church to be considered for the office of elder. The current elders shall interview each man who is recommended and consider his qualifications. For a man to be considered by the congregation for recognition as an elder, he must have the unanimous approval of the current elders. Each year, approximately one month before the annual meeting, the names of the men being considered as potential elders shall be presented to the congregation. If any member feels there is a reason that a potential elder is not qualified, he or she should let one of the current elders know. Based on their investigation of any raised concerns, the elders may withdraw their recommendation of a man for the office of elder. At the annual business meeting, those receiving affirmative votes by three-fourths majority of those voting plus the unanimous support of all current elders shall be recognized as elders. Each elder shall serve a term of two years with an unlimited number of terms possible.

3) Number of Elders

There should be a minimum of four elders in addition to the pastor on a current board.

4) Duties and Responsibilities of Elders

a) The elders shall be spiritual overseers of the local church. They shall be disciplined by the pastor and function as spiritual advisors to the people, performing any duty involving disciplining and caring for the local church.

b) The elders shall have spiritual oversight of all members and program areas of the local church and of relationships with other churches and organizations outside of the church.

c) The elders shall have supervision over all legal and fiscal affairs of the church.

d) The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be supervised by the elders.

e) At least two elders will meet with individuals wishing to become members of the church. At a church worship service or at a business meeting, the elders will welcome as new members any individuals who profess their salvation and new life in Christ and affirm their full agreement with Grace Baptist Church's statement of faith.

f) The elders shall appoint the financial officers and program leaders in all program areas.

g) The elders shall be responsible for all matters of church discipline.

h) The elders shall be responsible for the duties and responsibilities of the pastor in his absence.

i) The elders shall be responsible for the employment and the terms of employment of non-pastoral staff.

5) Resignation of an Elder

An elder may resign for Biblical or personal reasons or be removed from office on Biblical grounds by a unanimous agreement of the other elders.

6) Special Elections

a) In the event the elder board drops below four elected members, the current elder board shall call for recommendations of men to at least fill the number of vacancies that would bring the board back up to four members plus the pastor. The board will follow the selection and election procedures in paragraph 2) above, except that the election will be at a special meeting held within 90 days of the board losing one or more of its elected elders.

b) In the event that at least four elders are not seated after the elections at an annual meeting or that the board is not brought up to four elected members at a special election meeting, the voting members in attendance must decide how to proceed by an affirmative majority vote. Under these conditions, the voting members present at either of these meetings may also vote to have less than four elected elders on the board for up to one year. That year, longer-term solutions should be sought, including possible amendments to the constitution.

SECTION 2 PASTOR

1) The Nature of the Office

a) The pastor shall be the leader and coordinator of all spiritual activities of the church. The thrust of his prayers, visitation, teaching, and preaching of the Word of God shall be to edify the saints and evangelize the lost. He shall be a man of true Christian experience and established character. He shall qualify for his office according to the standard of I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

b) The pastor is a member of the elder board.

c) The pastor is worthy of full support as he spends full time doing the ministry (I Timothy 5:17-19).

d) The pastor shall become a member of the church upon his installation as a pastor.

2) Duties and Responsibilities of the Pastor

a) The pastor shall be responsible for all public and regular services of the church.

b) The pastor is a teaching elder and is responsible for training church leaders to do the ministry.

c) The pastor shall administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

d) The pastor shall be an ex-officio advisor in all program areas.

e) The pastor shall supervise and direct the work of the pastoral staff.

f) The pastor shall be responsible to the board of elders.

3) Selection of the Pastor

a) The board of elders shall function as a ministerial committee both in contacting possible candidates and in making recommendations to the church.

b) The pastor shall be unanimously selected by the elder board and confirmed by the members of the church at a business meeting, and such confirmation shall be a three-fourths majority of those voting.

4) Dismissal/Resignation of the Pastor

The pastor shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: the elders reserve the right to dismiss the pastor upon one month's written notice of its intention or the pastor must give one month's written notice if he intends to resign, unless waived by mutual consent.

5) Pastoral Staff

a) The elder board may employ associate pastors and/or ministers as needed. They shall compose the pastoral staff.

b) Associate pastors shall qualify for their office according to the standards of I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. The associate pastors and ministers shall be in full accord with the statement of faith and shall become church members as soon after joining the staff as practical.

c) The selection, terms of employment, and termination of associate pastors shall be in the same manner as the pastor.

d) The selection of ministers shall be a responsibility of the elder board.

SECTION 3 PROGRAM LEADERS

a) The board of elders shall exercise spiritual oversight of the church activities through program leaders. Program leaders may implement the church programs in the following leadership areas, unless combined or expanded by the elder board: (1) Christian education, (2) Missions/outreach, (3) Worship, (4) Building maintenance and operation, (5) Fellowship, and (6) Business/finance.

b) Program leaders shall be members of the church and shall be appointed by the elder board. Program leaders may, if needed, recruit and appoint individuals to help them in their leadership area. Terms for both the program leaders and their supporting helpers are not fixed, but a period of one year is recommended with unlimited reappointments possible. An elder may serve as a program leader or help support a program leader.

c) The responsibilities within each program area will be defined by the elder board and recorded in the minutes of an elder board meeting. Changes in responsibilities and(or) functions within a particular program area will be coordinated between the program leader and the elder board and any changes will be recorded in the elder board's minutes.

SECTION 4 FINANCIAL OFFICERS

The financial officers shall be Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary. They shall be members of Grace Baptist Church and be appointed annually by the elders. Their specific duties are outlined in the Policy and Procedures Manual. Their records shall be audited annually.

SECTION 5 BUSINESS MEETINGS

a) Business of the church may be carried on, when necessary, at any stated meeting of the congregation.

b) The annual business meeting shall be held for the purpose of affirming elders and reviewing the church program.

c) There will be an annual financial meeting to adopt the budget for the next fiscal year.

d) To call a pastor, select elders, adopt the budget, incur indebtedness, or amend the constitution, a quorum shall consist of 12 members or ten percent of the voting membership, whichever is the larger.

SECTION 6 VOTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

a) Call of a pastor. A pastor shall be called on the basis of a unanimous recommendation of the elders and a three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting.

b) Selection of elders. An elder shall be selected on the basis of a unanimous recommendation of the elders and a three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting.

c) Adoption of budget. A budget shall be adopted as a whole on the basis of a unanimous recommendation of the elders and a three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting.

d) Indebtedness. The church shall not incur indebtedness without unanimous recommendation of the elders and a three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting.

e) Disposition of property. See ARTICLE VI.

f) Amendments. Pursuant to the provisions of Article VIII, the constitution may be amended at the annual meeting or at any announced business meeting by a three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting.

**ARTICLE VI
DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

In the event of the dissolution of Grace Baptist Church, after providing for the debts and obligations thereof, its assets shall not benefit any private person, but rather it is recommended that various missions and missionaries currently supported by the church be considered as recipients of these properties as decided by majority vote.

**ARTICLE VII
POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

A policy and procedures manual, with specific provisions, shall be established and maintained by the elder board to implement the spirit and intent of the constitution.

**ARTICLE VIII
AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

a) Any member of the church may submit to the elder board, in writing, a proposed amendment to the constitution. The elder board will distribute written copies of any proposed amendments, which it considers worthy of consideration, to the congregation at least one month prior to the annual meeting or to any announced business meeting. The posting of the proposed amendments shall be announced from the pulpit at all worship services three weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendments are to be voted on.

b) At any announced business meeting, any member may move to consider a proposed amendment that was not deemed worthy of consideration by the elder board. If a motion to consider an amendment receives affirmative votes from a majority of those voting, the elder board shall treat the amendment as being worthy of consideration and shall present it to the congregation pursuant to the procedures in this article of the constitution.

Note: Portions of this constitution, which was originally adopted June 5, 1988, were amended on April 18, 1993, February 27, 1994, and March 24, 1996.