

Grace Community Baptist Church of Elgin Constitution

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church is Grace Community Baptist Church of Elgin.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is guided in all its affairs by the Word of God as recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. (1 Corinthians 3:11, Colossians 1:15-19)

The purpose of this Church shall be to glorify God. It shall glorify God by fulfilling its God-given mission stated in Scripture. (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-48, Ephesians 4:11-16)

The mission of this Church shall be to see all peoples become whole-hearted followers of Jesus Christ by reaching unbelievers with the gospel of Christ, gathering worshipers into the body of Christ and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:7-8)

The priorities of ministry of this Church shall be evident in a devotion to a common faith, a common life, a common worship and a common witness. (Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 2:42)

ARTICLE III - AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. (2 Tim.

3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psalms 119:11; Rom. 3:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39; Prov. 30:5-6; John 17:17; Rev. 22:18-19; Rom. 3:4; Rom. 2:12; John 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 4:3-4; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47-48; Phil. 3:16; Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3:5; Eph. 6:17; Psalms 119:59-60; Phil. 1:9-11)

II. Of The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is **JEHOVAH**, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (John 4:24; Psalms 147:5; 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10; Exodus 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8; Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7; John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5)

III. Of The Fall Of Man

We believe that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse. (Gen. 1:27, 31; Eccles. 7:29; Acts 16:26; Gen. 2:16; Gen. 3:6-24; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:19; John 3:6; Psalms 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7; Isa. 53:6; Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:9-18; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:18, 32; 2:1-16; Gal. 3:10; Matt. 20:15; Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 3:22)

IV. Of The Way Of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is **wholly of grace**; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior. (Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11; John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24; Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:9, 14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 42:21; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 3:21; Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15; Heb. 1:8, 3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:18; 7:26; Psalms 89:19; Psalms 14).

V. Of Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is **Justification**; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity. (John 1:16; Eph. 3:8; Acts 13:39; Isa. 3:11-12; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 5:9; Zech. 13:1; Matt. 9:6; Acts 10:43; Rom. 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 4:4-5; 5:21; 6:28; Phil. 3:7-9; Rom. 5:19; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 1 John 2:12; Rom. 5:1-3, 11; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8).

VI. Of The Freeness Of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation. (Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Luke 14:17; Rom. 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17; John 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46; John 3:19; Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:8).

VII. Of Grace In Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be **regenerated, or born again**; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life. (John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27; 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7; John 3:8; 1:13; James 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11; Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18).

VIII. Of Repentance And Faith

We believe that **Repentance and Faith** are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior. (Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:1; John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31; Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; 2 Cor. 7:11; Rom. 10:12-13; Psalms 51; Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 4:14; Psalm 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim. 1:12).

IX. Of God's Purpose Of Grace (Election)

We believe that **Election** is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence. (2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos. 12:9; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14; Exod. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36; 1 Cor. 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:4-10; Rom. 8:28-30; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29; 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11).

X. Of Sanctification

We believe that **Sanctification** is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially, the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer. (1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4; Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16; John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18; 4:30).

XI. Of The Perseverance Of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as **endure unto the end**; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18; 1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9; Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Psalms 121:3; 91:11-12; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb. 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4).

XII. Of The Harmony Of The Law And The Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church. (Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; 4:15; Rom. 7:12, 7, 14, 22; Gal. 3:21; Psalm 119; Rom. 8:7-8; Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44; Rom. 8:2, 4; 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:28).

XIII. Of A Gospel Church

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a **congregation of baptized believers**, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. (1 Cor. 1:1-13; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Cor. 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 5:12-13; 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:6; 2 Cor. 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; 15:12; 1 John 4:21; John 14:21; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; all the Epistles; Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 12:14; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1).

XIV. Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper

We believe that **Christian Baptism** is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a **newness of life**; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination. (Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8; Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:27-28; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts and Epistles; 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71).

XV. Of The Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by the regular observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God. On this day, God's people gather for worship and encourage one another in the faith. (Mark 2:28; Col. 2:16-17; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

XVI. Of The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. It 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.

The **husband and wife** are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

XVII. Of Civil Government

We believe that **Civil Government** is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. (Rom. 13:1-7; Deut. 16:18; 1 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:23; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-8; Acts 5:29; Matt. 10:28; Dan. 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Psa. 72:11; Psa. 2; Rom. 14:9-13).

XVIII. Of The Righteous And The Wicked

We believe that there is a **radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked**; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death. (Mal. 3:18; Prov. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16; Rom. 1:17; 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Prov. 11:31; 1 Pet. 4:17-18; 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Psa. 10:4; Isa 55:6-7; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Prov. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; 9:23-26; John 12:25-26; Eccl. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14; 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; 13:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18;

5:1-11; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-59; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:40; 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:49, 37-43; 24:30-31; 25:31-33; Matt. 25:35-41; Rev. 22:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:32; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17).

XIX. Of The World To Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

By-Laws

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1: General Statement

The purpose of Church government is to protect the gospel and ensure spiritual maturity both individually and corporately as a New Testament Church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Section 2: Church Authority

Jesus Christ is the Head - Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Jesus Christ has revealed His will for us, as the Church, through His Word, the Bible (Ephesians 5:23).

Section 3: Church Polity

The Government is vested in the body of members who compose the Church as further defined in this Constitution. The Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but is associated with Churches for purposes of fellowship, consultation and cooperation. This and any other voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the rights of this Church.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

Section 1: Summary

The biblical offices in the Church are **elders** (shepherds, pastors, overseers) and **deacons** (Acts 20:17-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

Section 2: Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than two men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

The elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and I Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding the flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, according to the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. After an elder, other than the preaching pastor or staff elder(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he will be eligible to continue to serve, or, at his discretion, may take a year-long sabbatical. After the sabbatical, he will then be eligible for reappointment to the role of elder. This sabbatical option may be taken after the expiration of any three-year term following the initial two three-year terms.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by an affirmation of the congregation at the recommendation of the elder board.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and oversee nominations of all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and teams, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, and mobilize the church for world missions.

The elders are to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of preaching pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment,

supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders shall present to the church an itemized budget. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders shall hold stated and special meetings and shall also appoint one of their numbers to serve as moderator of all church business meetings. For the purposes of conforming to the corporation laws of the State of Texas, the elders shall elect one of their numbers to serve as the president and one to serve as the secretary of the corporation.

Section 3: Deacons

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The Church shall recognize, according to the constitutional provisions on elections, members who are giving of themselves in service to the Church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

ARTICLE VI - STAFF

Section 1: Preaching Pastor

The Preaching Pastor will be recruited and hired by the elders with a **75 percent approval of the voting membership**. His salary and benefits will be established and reviewed by the elder body.

Section 2: Church Staff (other than Preaching Pastor)

The elder body will recruit, hire, and manage all Church staff. Their salaries and benefits are to be established and reviewed by the elders. The hiring and termination of Church staff is at the discretion of the elders within the constraints of the approved budget.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders determination, they may rely on an interview with the prospective member and on such other inquiries as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2: Admission of Members

To be admitted into membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and affirmed by the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3: Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's Word. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend and participate in all members' meetings, to vote on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

A member on written demand stating the purpose of the demand is entitled to examine and copy and for a proper purpose, the books and records of Grace Community Baptist Church of Elgin.

Section 4: Watchcare

Students and others temporarily living in the Elgin area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of recommendation from the home church should be provided. The duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that:

- When absent from the Elgin area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services.
- While they will be encouraged to participate in member meetings and other church ministry, they are not eligible to stand for any office or to vote. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Watchcare membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Elgin area.

Section 5: On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5). The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; I Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22).

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25).

For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5:6-7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2).

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10); and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; I Peter 2:12).

Section 6: Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership:

- After his or her death, or after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church.
- Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders, by an affirmative vote of at least **two-thirds of the members** present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church may also grant letters of transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS

Section 1: Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

- Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process.
- Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders.
- All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members.
- The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Selection of Officers

Elections of officers shall be held at a regular business meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church membership meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving congregational affirmation at the recommendation of the elders for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a congregational affirmation at the recommendation of the elders; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Business Meetings

A regular business meeting of the church members shall be held once per quarter, at a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder appointed by the elders shall serve as moderator of all meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes, on issues other than those that require a congregational affirmation based on elder recommendations shall be tallied based on the number votes cast by members present.

Notwithstanding the budget stipulations of Article V, Section 2, routine expenditures may continue at the previously approved level, and new, non-budgeted expenditures may be authorized as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

A special business meeting may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request of at least **ten percent (10%) of the members**, submitted to the elders. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Section 3: Rules Governing Business Meetings

Meetings of the Church shall be conducted in an orderly fashion. Freedom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

ARTICLE X - COOPERATION

We believe that local Churches can promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a local, state or national convention, exists and functions by the will of the Churches. Cooperation in a convention is voluntary and may be terminated at any time.

ARTICLE XI - FINANCES

Section 1: Summary

The elders will prepare a budget to present to the congregation before the fiscal year ends. In the budget the elders will detail the proposed estimate of the expenditures for the coming year. When the budget is affirmed by the congregation, it shall be considered the basis for all Church expenditures.

Section 2: Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting, with the exception of Article III regarding the Affirmation of Faith which may only be amended by a recommendation of the Elders to the Church. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time affirmative vote of the **majority of those members present** at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least **ten percent (10%) of the membership** of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.

Constitution & Bylaws Amendments:

1. **Amended on April 24, 2016** as follows: Added XVI. Of The Family to the Constitution.
2. **Amended on September 9, 2016** as follows: Changed the name of the non-profit corporation from Covenant Life Fellowship of Elgin to Grace Community Baptist Church of Elgin.
3. **Amended on October 24, 2021** as follows: Removed specifics about entities with which the church cooperates in order to practically allow for the language about being able to terminate at any time to be feasible.
4. **Amended on October 23, 2022** as follows: Made the formerly mandatory sabbatical for non-staff elders optional at the discretion of any non-staff elder who has served two consecutive 3-year terms.