

# **Constitution of the Grace Conservative Baptist Church**

## **ARTICLE I – NAME, PURPOSE, GOVERNMENT, CHURCH COVENANT, AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

### **SECTION 1 - NAME**

The name of this corporation is the Grace Conservative Baptist Church of Lemoore, California.

### **SECTION 2 - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the conversion of sinners, the edification of the saints, and the propagation, in every way, of Christianity throughout the world.

### **SECTION 3 - GOVERNMENT**

The government of the church is vested in the body of believers who compose it and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the value of mutual counsel and cooperation among Conservative Baptist Churches, and to that end may maintain fellowship with the Venture Church Network of Northern California & Nevada.

### **SECTION 4 - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Spirit of God, I have received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. I have, according to the Scriptures (John 1:12) been born again through the Holy Spirit, and have publicly confessed my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:8-9) and have been baptized by immersion (Romans 6:3-5). I enter into covenant with its members as one body in Christ (1 Cor. 12:12) and shall endeavor, with the aid of my Savior (Phil. 2:12):

1. Fulfill the purpose of this local church and attend worship services, Sunday school and other pertinent classes made available. (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24,25)

2. Demonstrate the love of Christ to one another (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 4:7) including being thoughtful of and courteous to one another, slow to take offense and quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness. (Eph. 4:29-32; James 1:19)

3. Be accountable to others for my growth in Christ (Prov. 27:17) and be an encouragement to others to grow in Christ. (Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25)

4. Pray with and for one another in the local church and for all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, thereby sharing our burdens, sorrows and joys. (Rom. 12:15; Eph. 6:18) Engage regularly in personal Bible reading and prayer, and establish family devotions. (Ps 1:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:17)

5. Be faithful in the use of my spiritual gifts to minister in at least one ministry in our fellowship. (Phil. 4:3; 1 Pt 4:10)

6. Contribute, as the Lord enables, regularly, cheerfully, and sacrificially to the financial support of the church, the relief of the needy and the evangelization of all people. (1 Cor. 16:2; 9:3-18; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:6-8)

7. Bring up my children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Deut. 6:6,7; Eph. 6:4)

8. Endeavor by example, by word and by prayer to win others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) and to separate myself from worldliness and unchristian practices (Titus 2:12).

9. Be in submission to the spiritual leadership of the church and their authority to conduct church discipline. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Matt. 18:15-20).

10. Seek to resolve personal disputes with other believers through Christian mediation according to the principles of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11.

11. Prevent the spread of gossip and slander by addressing all grievances, criticisms and complaints to the Elders. (Matt. 18:15-17, James 3:5-12)

## **SECTION 5 – CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

Our statement of faith expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. As such, this local church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained or licensed ministers of the gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the elders, subject to the direction of the church. No minister or employee of the church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

## **ARTICLE II -DOCTRINAL TEACHING POSITION**

The Bible, as God's inspired and inerrant Word, is the final authority in faith and life. Based on this Word, we believe in one God, existing eternally in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary and is true God and true man. Man was created in God's Image, but sinned, incurring spiritual death, which has passed upon all the race. We believe that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures and that all who trust Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His present ministry in heaven for us. The personal, visible, pretribulation, premillennial return of Christ is our "blessed hope." We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

## **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 - QUALIFICATIONS**

Any person giving testimony of having received Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and who has been obedient to Christ in submitting to baptism by immersion, and who is in agreement with the faith and practice of this church, may be admitted to membership upon recommendation of the elders.

### **SECTION 2 - ADMISSION OF MEMBERS**

Any qualified person may become a member of this church by submitting an application to the elders, and meeting with the elders, to ensure that qualifications are met. The elders will then endorse or reject the membership request.

### **SECTION 3 - MEMBERS**

The membership of this church shall be those who have been admitted to membership and are regular in attendance of church services. They shall be expected to support the church with their time, talents and finances, unless hindered by illness or other unavoidable circumstances.

### **SECTION 4 - DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

Members who have been inactive for one year and (1) who have not expressed an interest in becoming active again, or (2) whom the Elders have not been able to contact, shall be removed from the church membership rolls ("dismissed") by decision of the Elders. Members may also be dismissed from this church (1) by letter of transfer to a church of like faith and practice; (2) by removal from the membership roll upon notification that a member has united with another church; (3) by exclusion upon evidence of gross misconduct or flagrant violation of the church covenant; (4) by personal request to be dropped from the church membership roll.

### **SECTION 5 - DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS**

Discipline of members will result in exclusion if found guilty of charges made. Exclusion shall occur only after the proper steps (including an opportunity to appear before the Elders) have been taken in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Cor. 5:11, to secure reconciliation and forgiveness. If reconciliation cannot be obtained, then the matter shall be brought before the members of the church. A majority vote of members present at a meeting called for this purpose shall result in exclusion.

### **SECTION 6 - VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

Members eligible to vote in business meetings of this church shall be active members who are eighteen years or older.

## **ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1 - NUMBER AND ELECTION**

1. The senior Pastor shall be an ordained Baptist or Venture Church Network minister of the gospel. His qualifications shall be in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He shall be called by a vote of three-fourths of the qualified voting members present at a special meeting of the membership called for this purpose. He shall serve for an indeterminate term. The Pastoral

relationship shall be dissolved by either resignation or by vote of the membership at a special meeting called for this purpose. A majority vote of the qualified active members attending shall be required. A 30-day notice by the Pastor is required for resignation and a 30-day notice is required by the church for termination. All matters of discipline concerning the Pastor shall be handled in accordance with Article III, Section 5 of this constitution.

2. Associates and assistants to the senior Pastor may be called by recommendation of the Elders and a majority vote of the qualified voting members present at a special meeting of the membership called for this purpose. Staff relationships may be dissolved by resignation or by a majority vote of the qualified voting members at a special meeting called for this purpose. Staff members wishing to resign must provide a 30-day notice. The church must provide a 30-day notice of termination of a staff member. All matters of discipline concerning the Pastor shall be handled in accordance with Article III, Section 5 of this constitution.

3. The Elders shall consist of at least three qualified and elected men for the first 100 members. They shall serve under the spiritual leadership of the senior Pastor, who shall advise and make recommendations for their consideration (see Article V, Section 3). One additional Elder shall be added for every 50 members over the original 100 members. They shall be at least 21 years of age, hold active full membership in good standing and meet the qualifications for Elder as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The elected Elders shall serve for a five-year term. An Elder may continue to serve additional 5-year terms without a waiting period.

The Elders shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman and a secretary from among their number. They shall serve for a period of one year, or until their respective successors are elected and assume office.

4. The Deacons shall consist of men who are at least 21 years of age, hold active full membership in good standing and meet the qualifications for deacon as stated in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.

Any Elder or Deacon may be dismissed by a majority vote of the qualified members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose.

5. The Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting of the membership and each shall serve for one fiscal year or until his elected successor assumes office.

## **SECTION 2- REMOVAL OF OFFICERS**

This shall be in accordance with Article III, Section 5 of this constitution.

## **ARTICLE V - DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1 - SENIOR PASTOR**

As spiritual leader of the church, he shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, visit and counsel with the members of the congregation. He shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of any board or committee of the church. His presence shall not be compulsory at the meetings but he shall be notified, in advance, of any meeting of a board or committee.

### **SECTION 2 – ASSOCIATES OR ASSISTANTS TO THE PASTOR**

The Senior Pastor, with the advice and consent of the Elders, shall be responsible for the administration of the church ministerial staff in order to accomplish the operational and ministerial goals of the church. The Senior Pastor shall recommend to the Elders additions to the staff, changes in program, or methods of operation which may be necessary to fulfill the ministry of the church.

### **SECTION 3 – ELDERS**

1. The Elders shall serve in council and confer with the senior Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual affairs of the church. Elders shall serve as shepherds of the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4) and be involved in teaching, prayer, and spiritual leadership of the church. The Elders shall also serve as “trustees” of the church corporation. They shall be responsible to oversee all property belonging to the church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep. They may enter into contract or authorize any agreement, with approval of the church, necessary for proper management of the church. A three-fourths vote of the qualified voting members present at a special called business meeting shall be necessary to authorize the Elders to enter into contracts for the sale of or purchase of property. The Elders shall be responsible to the church which is the final authority as expressed in Article I of this constitution. The Elders shall submit a complete report of its stewardship to the membership at each annual meeting. The Elders may carry out its work through standing committees, special committees, and Deacons. Elders shall have the right to call an executive session during any scheduled meeting of the Elders. Executive session is defined as a meeting of the Elders with the topic of discussion being confidential in nature with information that could be sensitive, injurious, or potentially embarrassing to those people discussed, if commonly known. Additional responsibilities of the Elders are outlined in Article VI of this constitution.
2. The Chairman of the Elders shall act as President of the Corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the Elders and shall act as Church Moderator at meetings of the church. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall have the authority to appoint any Elder to preside.

### **SECTION 4 -DEACONS**

Deacons shall serve in council and confer with the senior Pastor in all matters pertaining to the temporal affairs of the church. The Deacons shall serve the church by taking on specific responsibilities and oversight of areas as assigned by the Elders to allow the latter to give attention “to prayer and the ministry of the Word.” (Acts 6:4) Additional responsibilities of the Deacons are outlined in Article VI of this constitution.

## **SECTION 5 - OTHER OFFICERS**

All other officers shall perform such duties of their respective offices as outlined in this constitution. They shall be subject to the authority of the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE VI - STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION**

Members of Standing Committees are to be selected from the membership by the Elders. Terms for all committee members shall be for one year. The committees shall elect a secretary who shall keep minutes of each meeting. A copy of the minutes shall be given to the Pastor within a week following the particular meeting of the committee. The committee shall establish annual goals and meet as needed to accomplish these goals and to conduct the business of the church.

### **SECTION 2 - DESCRIPTION AND DUTIES**

**A. FINANCE COMMITTEE.** It shall exercise supervision over the finances of the church. The Elders may also permit any committee, board, or authorized organization of the church to receive, disburse, or have custody of the funds pertaining to its own activities. Such permission may be revoked by the Elders at any time. The Finance Committee shall examine and recommend action by the Elders on any non-budgeted expenditures. They shall also be responsible for preparing the annual budget and to present the budget to the Elders no later than the regular December Elders' meeting. This committee shall arrange for the annual audit of the church financial records.

**B. NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** It shall consist of two Elders and three representatives from the membership at large. They shall be nominated by the Elders and voted on by the church at the annual business meeting. The Committee shall serve for the calendar year. They shall follow this procedure:

1. Two weeks before the annual meeting a listing of the offices and committee vacancies shall be included in a Sunday bulletin. Suggestions for persons to fill these vacancies should be made in writing and given to a member of the Nominating Committee by the following Sunday.
2. No person shall be placed in nomination by the committee until the scriptural and job qualifications have been reviewed with the potential nominee. A willingness to serve shall be assured by the nominee.
3. A final listing of the persons being placed in nomination shall be included in the bulletin on the Sunday previous to the annual meeting. This will constitute the slate of nominees to be voted on at the annual meetings and no additional names can be added at the annual meeting.

**C. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES.** They shall perform such duties as the Elders may direct. Committees shall serve for a period of one year or until succeeding committees have been established. Monthly reports of all Standing Committees and the Pastoral Staff shall be submitted to the Elders at their regular meetings. Minutes of meetings may serve as a proper report.

## **ARTICLE VII - SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1 -PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE**

When the senior Pastor's relationship has been dissolved, the Elders shall direct the selection of a Pastoral Search Committee. This committee shall consist of the chairman of the Elders, one other Elder elected by the Elders and five members at large selected by the elders. It shall be the responsibility of the Pastoral Search Committee to interview and recommend a candidate to the church. Procedures outlined in the most recent Venture Church Network publication are recommended.

### **SECTION 2 - OTHER SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Other special committees may be appointed by the Elders to carry out any duties necessary to the church function and ministry.

## **ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH PROPERTY**

### **SECTION 1 - PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS**

No real property shall be purchased, received as a gift, or otherwise acquired, nor shall such property be sold, assigned or hypothecated unless such action is first approved by the membership. Such approval shall be by a three-fourths vote of eligible members at a special meeting called for this purpose.

### **SECTION 2 - PROPERTY TITLE**

The title of all real property of this church shall be in the name of the corporation and no member shall have any individual property rights in the assets of the corporation.

### **SECTION 3 - DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION**

In the event that the corporation is dissolved, the properties shall be sold and all proceeds above liabilities shall be divided among the organizations and missionary agencies receiving support from the church. No part of the assets shall be distributed to the benefit of any private person. The distribution of assets shall be in the same proportion as the support schedule current at the time of dissolution.

## **ARTICLE IX – ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE CHURCH**

The church regards as integral parts of itself all organizations within the church formed for the purpose of carrying out any of the church activities. All such organizations shall be under the direction and supervision of the Pastor and Elders. Such organizations shall be formed and exist only by recommendation of the Elders and approval of the membership. Officers of all such organizations shall be members of the church.

## **ARTICLE X - MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1 - ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The annual meeting of the membership shall be held not later than February 15. The exact time and place shall be determined each year by the Elders and announced from the pulpit at each

worship service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be the election of officers, approval of the annual budget, the submitting of reports; and the transaction of any other business of which notice has been given in the manner required for a special meeting. Matters not so specified may be brought up for discussion and referred to the Elders for further study. No nominations from the floor will be received at the annual meeting. No voting by proxy will be allowed. All qualified members (Article III, Section 9) shall have equal rights to vote in any meeting of the membership.

## **SECTION 2 - SPECIAL MEETINGS**

A special meeting of the membership may be called at any time by the Pastor or Elders. A meeting must be called by the Elders upon written request of twenty-five qualified voting members for the first one hundred members. After the membership is over one hundred, twenty-five percent of the active members may ask for a special meeting. Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in this constitution or required by law, notice of any special meeting shall be given by announcement from the pulpit at each worship service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meeting, or by ten days written notice to the membership. No matters may be acted upon at any special meeting unless such matters are specified in the notice, but matters not so specified may be brought up for discussion and referred to the Elders for further study and action.

## **SECTION 3 - QUORUM**

Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in this constitution, 25 percent of members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum for a church business meeting. For all other meetings a majority of the committee or board will be a quorum.

## **ARTICLE XI - FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall be: January 1 to December 31st of each year.

## **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended or rescinded by a two-thirds majority vote at any meeting of the membership provided that due notice is given that such action is to be introduced at such meeting. For the purpose of the Article, due notice shall consist of either 30 days written notice or announcement from the pulpit at each regular worship service on three Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. Coincident with the announcement from the pulpit or the 30 days written notice, a notice specifying the particulars of the proposed amendment(s) or modification(s) shall be prominently posted in the church.

THIS CONSTITUTION ADOPTED AND ENACTED BY VOTE OF THE CHURCH ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1980. THIS CONSTITUTION WAS REVISED BY VOTE OF THE CHURCH ON FEBRUARY 11, 2007; FEBRUARY 14, 2010; MARCH 10, 2013; FEBRUARY 10, 2019; JUNE 26, 2022; AND FEBRUARY 15, 2026.