

# **Constitution of Grace Baptist Church**

## ***The Preamble***

Resting our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as inerrant, inspired Word of the living God both verbally and in every part, we have affiliated ourselves with one another as a body of immersed believers, and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order. We enter into a fellowship which asks all of its members to engage in the ministry of maintaining its unique and significant testimony against the apostasy, worldliness and indifference and to seek by every means possible to assist it in its positive preaching of the Bible as the Word of God and in seeking to win the lost to Christ.

## ***Article I – Name***

The name of the Church shall be Grace Baptist Church. Grace Baptist Church has been formed pursuant to Article Seven of the New York Religious Corporations Law. The offices and place of worship of the Church shall be located at 17 Oneida River Road, Pennellville, NY, or at any such other location as the Trustees and Membership may from time to time determine.

## ***Article II – Purpose***

Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a church in accordance with the Word of God, the Statement of Belief, the Covenant and the Constitution of this local church, promoting the worship of our God, edifying believers, teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and Biblical discipline, seeking to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing other churches, defending the faith and maintaining a good testimony for Christ in our community by godliness and good works.

## ***Article III – Associations***

This church shall be an independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other Biblical groups on a voluntary basis. There shall be no cooperation with any group that permits the presence of apostates or apostasy.

This church shall fellowship with associations as long as these groups are characterized by Biblical convictions and vigorous opposition to apostasy and compromise. If these groups forsake their present Biblical position, this church shall take appropriate action to withdraw from their fellowship.

## ***Article IV – Statement of Belief***

### **1.) The Scriptures**

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as originally written were God-breathed, both verbally and in every part. We believe God, Who is Truth, communicated through Spirit-controlled men so that the Scriptures are without error and therefore authoritative in all they teach and in all matters they touch. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for man and constitutes the only infallible guide for faith and life. Matthew 5:18; 15:4, 5, 6; Mark 12:36; John 10:34, 35; Acts 1:16; Romans 3:1-4; Galatians 3:16; Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23; Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18, 19.

## **2.) The Trinity**

We believe there is one, and only one, true and living God; that there is indivisible unity in the Godhead, yet existing in three separate persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – equal in every divine perfection, of the same essence and executing distinct, but harmonious, offices in the great work of both creation and redemption. Matthew 28:19, 3:16, 17; John 6:27; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 1:9-14; 2 Corinthians 12, 14; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 1:8.

## **3.) God the Father**

We believe God, the Father, is a spirit infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all of His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe, Giver of all life in sovereign authority over all His created beings, the Keeper over the nation Israel and the Father and Disciplinarian of His chosen in Jesus Christ. Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 46:9; Romans 9:6, 11:33.

## **4.) The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary as no other man was ever nor can be born of a woman. He is very God of very God, being “God manifest in the flesh.” He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and in His death made a full and vicarious atonement for the elect, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner’s place. He rose bodily from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, interceding and preparing a place for us. He shall appear in the air to rapture His saints, and after seven years, shall come again with the saints to set up the throne of David and establish His millennial kingdom. Matthew 1:18-25, 28:26; John 1:1; 14:3, 20:27; Acts 15:16; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8; Hebrews 7:25, 8:6, 12:2; 1 Peter 2:22, 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 3:21

## **5.) The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity. He is equal with the Father and the Son and is of the same nature. His relation to the unbelieving world is that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. He is the agent of the new birth, and His work among believers includes His sealing, indwelling, guiding and teaching them the ways of righteousness. We believe there is a distinction between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and His ministry in the New Testament. There is a new and unique work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Body of Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit endues believers with service gifts. We believe the Bible disavows the authenticity of the sign gifts such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing for today. John 7:39, 14:16, 17, 26; Acts 1:5; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-13, 28-31; 13:8-12; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:7-11; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 22:18, 19

## **6.) Creation**

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of the Trinity without any evolutionary process. Genesis 1 and 2; Psalm 33:9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:2

## **7.) Man**

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created by a direct act of God and not from any previously existing form of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. By voluntary transgression man fell from his sinless state, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature and by choice, utterly devoid of the holiness required by God’s law, positively inclined to evil, incapable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God apart from the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal judgment and everlasting existence separated from God without defense or excuse. Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23

## 8.) **Salvation**

We believe the new birth is a new creation in Christ; that it is instantaneous and not a process; wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruit of repentance, saving faith, and newness of life. We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations and inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit of God. We believe the justification of the sinner before a holy God is grounded solely upon His sovereign grace, through faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and is entirely apart from any meritorious works whatsoever. We believe that sanctification is that work whereby the believing sinner is set apart by God from sin and unto Himself, and that it will not be wholly finished until the coming of Christ and His saints, and the rapture of the church. We believe that all those who are truly saved will actively persevere unto the end, their perseverance being the mark of the genuineness of their salvation; that they are furthermore kept by the power of God through faith and salvation. We believe that adoption is an act of God by which He places believers in the position in His family as adult sons, and thus "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ". We believe that election is the sovereign eternal purpose of God whereby, according to His sovereign eternal purpose, He chose to save certain undeserving sinners and to pass by all others to their just condemnation, and to send his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to die to purchase the salvation of all those who are the objects of His sovereign, saving, electing grace. Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; John 1:11, 12; 3:3-6, 16; 6:44, 65; 10:28, 29; Acts 13:39; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 7:9, 10; Ephesians 1:3-4; 2:8-10; 1 Timothy 1:15; 2:5, 6; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:18-23; 2 Peter 1:4; 2:1; 1 John 2:2

## 9) **The Church**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church of Jesus Christ began at Pentecost and will be completed at the Rapture. It must be considered in two aspects: the local church and the "church which is His body".

The local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by a 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. Its scriptural officers are pastors, sometimes called bishops or elders, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. This definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives;

- a. Sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice;
- b. Autonomy of the local church;
- c. Believers' baptism by immersion before church membership;
- d. Two officers, pastor (elder, bishop) and deacon;
- e. Two symbolic ordinances, baptism and the Lord's table;
- f. Individual priesthood of the believer and soul liberty;
- g. Separation of church and state

The "church which is His body" is the entire company of believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, regardless of denominational affiliation and present position in heaven or on earth. Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4, 41, 42; 10:44, 45; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Titus 1; Hebrews 12:23

## 10.) **Baptism and Communion**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his identification with the crucified, buried, risen Savior, thus illustrating the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to membership and privileges in a local church. We believe that communion is the commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded by solemn self-examination and confession of known sin. Observance of communion is for baptized believers only. The ordinances of baptism and communion must be observed under the authority of the local church. Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

## 11.) Coming Events

- a. **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, in the everlasting happiness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. Genesis 18:23; Proverbs 14:21; Malachi 3:18; John 8:21; Matthew 25:34-41; Romans 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19
- b. **The Rapture of the Church**  
We believe in the "Blessed Hope", the personal, imminent pretribulational and premillennial appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His redeemed ones of the church. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1,2; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2
- c. **The Judgment Seat of Christ**  
We believe that every saved person of the Church Age will appear before the "Judgment Seat" to be judged by the Lord in regard to his service and receive rewards according to his works. Matthew 6:2; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10
- d. **The Millennial Kingdom**  
We believe that Christ will return to earth after the tribulation with His saints to establish the Millennial Kingdom which literally will be on the earth and will be ruled by Christ from the throne of David. Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29,30; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12; Revelation 20:1-6,12-14
- e. **The Eternal State**  
We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire. The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and new body are reunited to be forever glorified with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers after death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with the spirit, soul and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28,29; 2 Corinthians 5:8,10; Philippians 1:23

## 12.) Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after completion of the Church, she will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 11:1-32; Ezekiel 37

## 13.) Angels

We believe in the personal existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Those angels who kept their first estate minister for them who are the heirs of salvation. There were among the hosts those who fell with Satan, the angels who kept not their first estate, who are presently functioning in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, to be resisted by the believers through the armor provided by God. Isaiah 6; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 6:11,12; Hebrews 2; 14; Revelation 12:9

## **14.) Personal Separation**

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from the world, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness and loving-kindness. We further believe that any achievement in these characteristics will be evidenced by sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things in the world, but rather flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil and refrain from questionable practices which destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother and fail to glorify God. Proverbs 15:33; Romans 14:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 8:9-13; 10:23,33; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:32; 5:1,2,7,10,15-20; Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 5:5,6

## **15.) Ecclesiastical Separation**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the believer should be separated from apostasy as exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations which include radicals, liberals and those who sanction theological compromise. This doctrine is based upon God's eternal principle of division between truth and error and His specific command to be separated from the unbelievers and disobedient brethren. This truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, compassion, and yet with conviction, to create the proper condition and atmosphere for the main objective, i.e. the salvation of the lost through the gospel of God. We believe ecumenical evangelism which involves apostates violates the principles taught in God's Word. Matthew 10:34-49; 18:15; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 11:4; Galatians 1:8,9; 1 Timothy 6:3-6; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 3:10,11; 2 John 9-11

## **16.) The Lord's Day**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is to be set aside unto the Lord for worship, fellowship with others of like faith, instruction in the Word of God, and rest from the cares of the world as a testimony both public and private. It is a day of rejoicing in the resurrection of our Lord by giving of our time and resources to further our evangelistic outreach. Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2; Hebrews 10:25

## **17.) Marriage and the Home**

We believe that the home was the first institution God provided for man, and that marriage is a sacred relationship and honorable for all. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Marriage is used as an emblem of the union of Christ and His Church. Those who have experienced divorce cannot hold the office of pastor or deacon as commanded by Scripture. A divorced person or a person married to a divorced person is encouraged to serve the Lord and has many opportunities to serve the Lord in the various ministries of this church according to the dictates of his conscience and consideration of the church. Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:9; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 5:21, 23; Hebrews 12:4

## **18.) Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; those in authority 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 coming King of kings and Lord of lords. Acts 5:29; Romans 3:1-17; 13:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-18; Revelation 19:16

## **Article V - Rules of Order**

### **Section 1 .. Membership**

Reception: Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving evidence of a change of heart from sin toward God, and declaring themselves in accord with the principles, practices and doctrines of this church, may become a candidate for membership.

Candidates may qualify for membership in one of four ways:

- 1.) Baptism by single immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- 2.) Experience: a testimony to the fact that he or she is born again, has been Scripturally baptized (by immersion) following his or her salvation, and is living a life which is consistent with the Statement of Belief of this church.
- 3.) By letter from an acceptable church of like faith and order.
- 4.) Restoration upon recommendation of the deacons, after the excluded person has given acceptable evidence of honest repentance and made full confession of wrong doing (for believers under church discipline).

All persons desiring to unite with this church will meet with the pastor and deacons and will give testimony of conversion and Christian experience, and affirm acceptance of and adherence to the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order and Covenant of this church.

Approved candidates for membership will be presented to the membership of the church by the pastor and deacons with an appropriate recommendation for reception. Candidates may be presented at any regular stated service of the church and each will be given opportunity to share his testimony before the congregation. Unbaptized candidates may not be received into membership until after baptism. Candidates will be accepted by unanimous vote of members present and voting. Any negative vote will be given consideration by the pastor and deacons. If the reason given is found to be sufficient as to warrant, membership will be withheld; if not, the matter will again be presented to the church and the person(s) will be received into membership by a three fourths majority vote of members present and voting. The right hand of fellowship will be extended to the accepted candidate(s) on the Sunday following completion of membership requirements or any Sunday thereafter.

#### **Service Membership**

We realize that there may arise an occasion when an individual, having membership in a church of like faith and practice, finds it impractical to transfer membership (such as temporary residency or employment), yet desires opportunity for service. Such cases will be reviewed by the pastor and deacons and appropriate recommendations brought before the church body for ratification in accordance with normal membership requirements. These individuals will have all the privileges of membership, except for the right to vote or hold elected office, while retaining membership in their home church.

#### **Responsibilities**

Members should attend regularly the services of the church unless providentially hindered and contribute cheerfully, as God prospers, to the financial support of the church and the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Members should honor those in authority in the church, pray for them, submit to their leadership as the Scriptures command and assist them with wholehearted cooperation.

Every member should cultivate his own Christian life and character so that the unity of the brethren might be preserved and a good testimony might be obtained before those who are without. Members should practice the Church Covenant.

Members should volunteer to serve, as invited and directed by the church leadership, in the program of the church. This service should be with priority and wholehearted in effort.

#### Membership Classes

The church will conduct regularly, according to need, classes for new members. These will be taught by the pastor or some other competent teacher. The classes will include instruction on such matters as the Bible, worship, prayer, ordinances, giving, personal conduct, witnessing, missions, church music, marriage and the home, church order, distinctives and our church affiliations.

#### Termination

Termination of membership may transpire in one of the following ways:

- 1.) By death in which case no church action is required.
- 2.) By request when a member not under church discipline submits a written request, and upon majority vote of the members present and voting, will be dropped from the membership
- 3.) By letter of transfer when any member except a member under church discipline, upon written request from a church of like faith and practice, and upon majority vote of members present and voting, will be dropped from the membership and granted a letter of full fellowship sent to the receiving church by the pastor and/or deacons.
- 4.) By discipline when the pastor and deacons having taken action against any member of the church whose words or actions become an offense to the church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct and violate the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order or Church Covenant. The pastor and deacons shall first seek to secure restoration, and if unsuccessful to recommend to the church his or her prompt dismissal from the church by majority vote.

In cases involving a problem of morals or issues which would seriously disturb the peace of the church, the recommendations of the pastor and deacons will be approved by vote of the church. Failing to approve the recommendation, the church must hear the case for themselves, preferably without detail. Any member may appeal his case to the church and be heard in his own defense if the church agrees by three fourths majority vote to hear the case. Matthew 18: 15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:10

## Section 2 - Officers

#### Elected Officers and Appointed Positions

The elected officers of the church will be the pastor and deacons. Other positions such as treasurer, financial secretary, superintendent of education, youth director, trustee, and any other positions necessary for the fulfillment of the purpose of this church will be appointed by the pastor and deacons. Any qualified member may be an officer or hold an appointed position.

#### Qualifications

Elected officers and persons holding appointed positions of this church shall be at least 21 years of age. Moral conduct should be beyond approach and free of carnal indulgences. They should be spiritually mature, of unquestionable Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ

and to the spiritual welfare of the church. They should be faithful in attendance, participating in regular special meetings, as well as, business sessions of the church.

No elected officer shall hold more than one appointed position. A person who is not an elected officer may hold no more than two appointed positions.

#### Retention of Records

The records of all officers and persons holding appointed positions are considered church property and are to be maintained in good order.

#### Dismissal of Persons holding Appointed Positions

Any person holding an appointed position who is unwilling or unable to perform the duties of the position should resign. Any person holding an appointed position who does not subscribe to the Statement of Belief, Covenant and Rules of Order of this church will be subject to removal from said position by the pastor and deacons in accordance with church policy.

### **Section 3 – Pastor**

#### Qualifications

Candidates for Pastor shall meet the qualifications set forth in Article 5, Section 2 Qualifications in addition to any other qualifications set forth below. The deacons of the church will serve as the Pulpit Committee. As often as it may become necessary to call a pastor, the Committee will without unnecessary delay investigate and invite to the church a minister of good report who accepts the doctrinal stand and practices of the church. If he has served in other churches, his ministry there should be explored. If after hearing him the Pulpit Committee desires to consider him as a candidate for the pastorate, he will be invited to come and preach. His candidacy is to be announced to the church prior to his coming.

The candidate, before he is called, will be required to state his acceptance of and adherence to the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order and Covenant of this church to the Pulpit Committee. Any differences which he holds concerning these documents should be submitted to the Committee in writing. He must also state in writing any differences which he holds relating to groups and associations with which this church is in fellowship.

#### Call and Termination

The candidate for the pastorate will be extended a call at a special meeting of the church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting will be given on two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

The pastor will be called for an indeterminate term. He will be chosen by a three fourths majority vote of the qualified church members present and voting. To avoid confusion, only one candidate for the pastorate will be considered at one time.

The pastor will give the church not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days notice of his intention to discontinue as pastor. The church will give the pastor not less than thirty days notice of dismissal. Dismissal of the pastor will be by vote of the church at a special meeting called for that purpose which will have been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A majority vote of the qualified church members present and voting will be required for dismissal. If it is not deemed wise by the church for the pastor to continue his duties, he may be released immediately with two months pay, except in the case of immorality when he would be dismissed immediately without pay.



## Responsibilities

The pastor is to be considered the chief administrator of the church and is to have spiritual oversight with a servant's attitude toward this church which practices congregational government. He is to preach the Gospel, feed the flock and equip the membership for the work of the ministry; he is to have in his charge the stated services of public worship; he will administer the ordinances; and he is to perform the usual duties of a minister.

The pastor will moderate all business meetings of the church and diaconate or in his absence he may appoint a member of the diaconate to moderate. When the pastor is unavailable to appoint a moderator the Chairman of the diaconate will moderate or appoint a moderator from the diaconate.

The pastor will be a member of all committees of the church with the right of choice to attend all meetings. He is to have access to all books or records except personal giving records.

The pastor will secure speakers and programs for the church in cooperation with the deacons.

## Compensation

The pastor's compensation will be reviewed by the deacons annually and a recommendation submitted as a part of the church budget prior to the Annual Church Business Meeting.

## Vacation

The pastor is to have an annual vacation; the time and extent to be agreed upon by the pastor and deacons.

## Absence

Absence from the services of the church will be by mutual consent of the pastor and deacons. The pastor will be expected to attend, when expedient, at the church's expense, the conferences and fellowships with which the church is affiliated.

## **Section 4 - Deacons**

### Diaconate

The number of deacons shall consist of as many men as the church may deem necessary. It will never exceed the number of "Spirit-filled" men available who meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 as set forth in Article 5, Section 2 Qualifications.

### Election and Termination

The church voting membership will elect the deacons from the ballot submitted by the Nominating Committee at the Annual Meeting. They will serve terms of three years arranged to end alternately.

A deacon may be dismissed from office (Article V, Section 2, Paragraph 4) by vote of the church at a special meeting called for that purpose which will have been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A majority vote of the qualified members present and voting shall be required for dismissal.

## Responsibilities

The deacon's responsibility is service: service to God, to the congregation, and to the pastor. They are to serve under the pastor seeking to relieve the pastor of any and all administrative details that they are assigned. The deacons will assist the pastor in the administration of the ministries and activities of the church as outlined in the succeeding paragraphs of Sections 4, 5, and 6.

The deacons will assist the pastor in administering the ordinances of baptism and communion.

## Meetings

The deacons shall convene on an established, monthly basis to transact an agenda which reflects the overall responsibilities entrusted to them. This regular meeting time will be established by the pastor and deacons. Additional meetings may be called by the pastor or chairman of the deacons.

The pastor will preside at all meetings unless he chooses to appoint a deacon to preside. The secretary will keep a faithful record of any important work, acts of transactions performed by the deacons. The secretary will incorporate with this record the minutes of all church business meetings, thus compiling a complete, orderly church record. The deacons will make a full report of their activities to the church at each Annual Meeting or as requested by the church.

The pastor and deacons may from time to time establish written policies in order to carry out and effectuate the purposes of the Church and this Constitution. Prior to implementation, any such policy will be presented to the membership for a vote of approval at the next scheduled quarterly business meeting.

## Committee Chairmen

The deacons will serve, insofar as possible, as chairmen of all appointed committees, thus providing representation for every area of the church's ministry in the meetings of the deacons in order that decisions can be made in these sessions which will safeguard the total philosophy of the church and its programs. The pastor, in cooperation with the deacons, will appoint the committee chairmen, seeking to assign an area in accordance with spiritual gifts.

## Trustees

The deacons will serve as trustees of this church, representing this corporation as its agent. The deacons will, at their first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the church, appoint a chairman, secretary and treasurer as the corporate officers of the church. Due consideration will be given to the spiritual gifts of the men appointed, seeking the counsel of the pastor.

The trustees will not have authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner church property to exceed \$500 in value, nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debts to exceed above amount, except as the church will order by a corporate act.

The trustees are to be responsible for preparing and submitting a proposed annual budget to the church. This proposed budget will be made available to the congregation in January and be voted upon by the membership at the Annual Meeting. The deacons and staff will be responsible for operating the church within the approved budget. They may, if desirable, present revised budgets at any time throughout the year. The authorization of any expense over \$500 not included in the approved budget will require church action unless a catastrophe warrants immediate action, ie. flooding, roof caving, etc.

## Treasurer

The treasurer of the church will be appointed annually by the deacons from the diaconate. He will cooperate with the financial secretary in counting and recording all moneys received by the church. A weekly record of income and disbursements, specifying distribution into various funds, will be maintained with a copy to be received by the pastor. The treasurer will perform his duties in accordance with the financial policies of the church (Article V, Section 8), sound accounting principles and any written instructions from the deacons or Auditing Committee.

All financial transactions are to be kept in permanent records. Written quarterly and annual reports will be submitted to the church.

The treasurer will deposit all church receipts in the bank, including moneys received from within the church or from other individuals, with receipts from all sources being recorded on the weekly reports and books of record. All disbursements of funds will be by check signed by the treasurer or other authorized officer in his absence.

The chairman of the deacons or secretary of the church will assume the responsibilities of the treasurer in his absence, except that he may not simultaneously perform the duties of financial secretary.

The treasurer will also oversee the properties of the church. This includes the cleaning and maintaining of church properties, opening and preparing buildings and rooms for meetings, controlling room temperatures and lights, securing buildings and moveable properties after services and supervising all personnel involved in these duties.

## Financial Secretary

The financial secretary will be appointed annually by the pastor and deacons following the Annual Meeting of the church.

He will assist the treasurer in counting and recording all moneys received by the church. He is to keep an accurate record of all giving through the individual envelope system, cooperating with the treasurer in guarding the records of individual giving as a sacred trust. A report of annual church contributions for each participant will be provided in January of each year.

The chairman of the deacons or secretary will assume the responsibilities of the financial secretary in his absence, except that he may not simultaneously perform the duties of the treasurer.

## Church Clerk (Secretary)

The secretary of the church will have the responsibilities of church clerk. An assistant may be appointed by the pastor to assist in the recording and preparation of minutes of church business meetings.

The secretary will keep a record of all church business meetings and meetings of deacons. He will keep a record of receptions and termination of membership, including baptisms. He will be responsible for notification of other churches relative to church membership. He may not release the membership roll of this church to any group or individual for other than official church business.

The secretary will provide the treasurer with a transcript of the minutes of each church business meeting or deacon's meeting in which authority is granted for the disbursement or transfer of funds.

He will make a full written report of all official church actions at the Annual Meeting of the church. This report is to include a current membership roster and the names of members received or terminated the preceding year.

#### Optional Areas of Responsibility

As the Lord provides qualified members, the pastor and deacon may appoint any of the following areas of responsibility that are needed to enhance and fulfill the purpose and mission of this church, subject to approval by the church body: Christian Education Director, Outreach and Missions Director, Service Director, Music Director, and other positions that are needed to enhance and fulfill the purpose and mission of this church, and assist the pastor may be established.

#### Compensated Staff

Every effort will be made to provide qualified personnel for the ministries of the church through voluntary staff from the working membership. When it is deemed necessary to fill a compensated position (such as pastoral assistants or secretaries), the pastor and deacons will recommend such positions and salaries to the membership. The membership shall approve such positions and salaries by a 2/3 majority vote at a special business meeting called for that purpose which shall have been read from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays immediately preceding such meeting. After Membership approval, said positions will be filled at the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons.

Compensated persons, will become, if not already, members of the Church. They will be under the direct supervision of the pastor. The pastor and deacons will prepare a written job description for each position.

Compensated persons may be dismissed at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.

### **Section 5 - Nomination and Election of Deacons**

#### Nominating Committee

The pastor and deacons will appoint the Nominating Committee which will consist of two deacons and two additional members of the church. It will be the duty of this committee to submit the ballot for the election of deacons to the church at the Annual Meeting and any subsequent times during the year when a vacancy may occur. The committee will; therefore, remain functional for the entire year until a new committee is appointed.

#### Nominations

The Nominating Committee will be publicly announced to the membership six weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. The membership will be encouraged to submit in writing potential nominees for the office of deacon. Any names submitted less than two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting will not be considered.

Each potential candidate for deacon will be personally interviewed by the Nominating Committee as to his (1) assent to be a candidate, (2) affirmation of the Church Covenant, Statement of Belief. and Rules of Order and (3) acceptance of the qualifications for church officer as denoted in Article V, Section 2, Paragraph 2. No paid employee nor supported missionary of the church is to be nominated. A printed ballot will be submitted with two names for each vacancy when candidates are available and eligible.

#### Election

All members, except restricted members, at least (18) eighteen years of age, will be eligible to vote for candidates. Names appearing on the ballot will be the only names considered. There will be no nominations from the floor. Election will be by secret ballot and the highest plurality vote of members present and voting. The moderator will appoint tellers to distribute and tally the ballots.

## Section 6 - Committees

### Qualifications and Regulations

The pastor and deacons will appoint all committees not specified in the Rules of Order following the Annual Meeting. Committee members will be members of the church who are willing to faithfully fulfill the duties assigned by the Church Rules of Order and the pastor and deacons. Committees will have the authority to effectuate the established policies of the church but will not establish new policies. They are, however, to be encouraged to make recommendations to the pastor and deacons. Further, members of the congregation are to be encouraged to propose meaningful suggestions to the pastor, deacons, and committee members.

### Candidate and Pulpit Committee

The deacons and two members appointed by the Deacons will constitute the Candidate and Pulpit Committee when a pastoral vacancy occurs. This committee is to function in accordance with Article V, Section 3, Paragraphs 1 and 2.

The pastor will schedule speakers during his tenure, in his absence, or for special services, in cooperation with the deacons. In the event of pastoral vacancy, the deacons will schedule speakers who agree with the church's convictions.

### Membership Committee

The deacons will constitute the Membership Committee and are to be charged with the responsibilities of Article V, Section 1 - Membership. These duties will include the membership classes; the ordinances, and church discipline.

The pastor and deacons may select a portion of the diaconate to serve as the Membership Committee when, at the discretion of the pastor and deacons, there is a sufficient number of deacons to warrant such action. The secretary of the church will always be a member of the committee.

### Auditing Committee

Two members will be appointed annually by the pastor and deacons to audit the financial records and procedures of the church. A written report of audit is to be submitted to the membership at the Annual Meeting. The Auditing Committee will be encouraged to submit written recommendations to the deacons for improving financial procedures.

The church may vote to authorize the audit by a professional auditing firm rather than by the Committee.

### Other Committees and Subcommittees

Other committees may be established and appointed by the pastor and deacons when deemed necessary by them. Job descriptions from the pastor and deacons will outline their duties and guidelines. This will include temporary committees such as a Building Committee in the event of a building program authorized by the church.

Subcommittees may be appointed by committees to assist them in their duties. These appointments will be made subject to the approval of the pastor and deacons. The subcommittee is to function under the supervision of the appointing committee.

## **Section 7 - Organizations**

### Formation

There may be subsidiary organizations formed as necessary to carry out the church's goals of discipleship ministries. Organizations must be approved by the church. Each organization will function under the supervision of the pastor and deacons. All activities are to promote the policies and practices of the church. Contributions to missionaries and organizations must be through the church treasury in accordance with established church support policies.

### Personnel and Curriculum

All personnel of organizations must be members of the church. Selections of personnel and curriculum will be made or approved by the pastor and deacons.

## **Section 8 - Financial Regulations**

### Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin January 1 and end December 31.

### Monetary Principles

There is a Scriptural plan by which the work of the Lord is to be funded (Acts 20:35; Matthew 6: 19-21). Conformity to this plan is a part of believer obedience as he gives to Christ, having first given his own self to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5; Hebrews 7:8). This plan calls for regular, universal (all members), corporate, proportional, and spiritual giving (1 Corinthians 16:2).

All members of the church are expected to voluntarily contribute regular financial support to the church and to the advancement of the projects it sponsors through a corporately designated budget. We believe that income should be faithfully and cheerfully given (2 Corinthians 9:6, 7), and that giving beyond the tithe is encouraged, for all we have belongs to the Lord (1 Chronicles 29: 14, 16; Malachi 3: 10; Acts 4:32-35).

No moneys are to be raised for the support of the church and its various activities by any but the Biblical plan of tithes, offerings, gifts and sacrificial love considerations for the Lord's work.

The church treasurer and financial secretary are entrusted with the responsibilities of caring for the church treasury in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Article V, Section 4, Paragraphs 6,7, and 8. The church will function with a single treasury with all funds being disbursed by check from the treasury. Designation will be through the Annual Church Budget by corporate act of the church at the Annual Meeting and other subsequent corporate acts.

Undesignated gifts to the church treasury of regular systematic giving is encouraged as the Scriptural plan. Designated giving sacrificially beyond the tithe to corporately agreed projects is also encouraged. Designated gifts to missions, organizations and individuals other than those supported by the church will be handled at the discretion of the deacons.

Numbered offering envelopes will be provided to encourage systematic, anonymous giving and accurate accounting. A statement of contributions will be given each January to each donor by the financial secretary.

#### Authorization

No financial obligation is to be placed upon the church either as a mortgage, note or outstanding bill or in any other form unless the money is on hand to meet the same except as allowances have been made in Article V, Section 4, Paragraph 6.

#### Legal Documents

Any note, bond, stock certificate, mortgage, deed, lease agreement, evidence of indebtedness, contract or other instrument of writing or any assignment or endorsement thereof, executed or entered into between this church and corporation and any other persons, co-partnership, association or corporation, when signed by the chairman of the deacons and secretary of the church, will be held to have been properly executed for all purposes, for and in behalf of this church and corporation.

### **Section 9 - Missions**

This church shall give zealous efforts to promoting evangelistic missions, duplicating our convictions worldwide through prayer, support, missionary conferences, speakers and other emphases, encouraging all to be willing to go as well as send.

#### Support Policies

It shall be the policy of this church to support only missionaries and mission agencies engaged principally in evangelization and the establishment of New Testament Baptist churches; schools, hospitals, orphanages, relief and similar ministries must be kept subordinate to the primary objectives. The missionaries and agencies shall be Baptist in name and known to be in hearty agreement with our doctrine and practices.

#### Supported Missionaries

Only missionaries applying in writing for support by the church will be considered. The candidate must appear in person before the pastor and deacons for testimony and questioning, declaring affirmation of the Church Statement of Belief and Rules of Order. Upon approval, the missionary will be presented to the church as a candidate for support. The church will hear the missionary's testimony and of the field of ministry. A three fourths majority vote by secret ballot of membership present and voting at any properly called business meeting of the church will be required to add the missionary to the support budget.

The amount of support and date when support is to begin will be included in the support recommendation by the pastor and deacons. The church will maintain a policy of seeking to concentrate support to fewer missionaries in order to know and assist them better.

Special efforts are to be made to assist the missionary to the field and to faithfully communicate with the missionary while on the field. All missionary support will be reviewed and approved annually in concurrence with the preparation of the Annual Budget. The support of a missionary may be discontinued, upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons, by a majority vote by secret ballot of members present and voting at a properly called business meeting of the church.

### **Section 10 - Meetings of the Church**

#### Use of Church Facilities and Name

Use of the church buildings other than for church sponsored activities will be by consent of the pastor and deacons. No secret societies, nor groups who cooperate with or are members of any apostate organization will be permitted use of church facilities.

All gatherings off the church property held in the name of the church shall be subject to the approval of the pastor and deacons.

#### Meetings of Public Worship

Public worship services shall be held regularly on Sunday, the Lord's Day. These services will normally be congregational in format with music that has spiritual goals and the preaching of the Word of God. Any special program must be approved by the pastor and deacons. All preachers must confess clearly the fundamentals of the faith.

There shall be a meeting for prayer and praise at least once each week unless extreme circumstances prohibit. Other church organizational events must not interfere with the stated services of the church, including special meetings.

#### Ordinances

Those professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, evidencing true conversion and sufficiently instructed to testify of true understanding of the ordinance, upon authorization by the church, shall be baptized by single immersion in water in accordance with the Scriptural teaching. Immersion shall be a prerequisite to, and not apart from, church membership (Matthew 28: 19; Acts 2:38,41; Acts 8:26-29).

Communion shall be served to the assembled church at least quarterly, normally on the first Lord's Day, at the discretion of the pastor and deacons. None who are His will be barred, except in certain cases when a member of the church is under discipline (1 Corinthians 5: 11, 12). The pastor will explain the meaning of this ordinance and that it should be preceded by baptism, self-examination and confession of known sin (1 Corinthians 11). In addition, the Church Covenant is to be read periodically at the discretion of the pastor. Unleavened bread and grape juice shall be used.

#### Business Meetings

The Annual Meeting of the church will be held the last or next to last week of January with the specific date and time set at the discretion of the pastor and deacons with public notice to be given for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the election of deacons, Annual Church Budget, annual reports of the treasurer, secretary and other areas of ministry as requested, as well as any other proper business.

Quarterly Business Meetings will be held in April, July, and October with the specific date and time set at the discretion of the pastor and deacons with public notice to be given for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the treasurer's quarterly report and any other proper business.

Special Business Meetings may be called at any time, providing public notice be given of the same on the Sunday preceding; except that notice on two Sundays immediately preceding shall be required for a meeting to call or terminate the pastor, elect or terminate deacons, hire or terminate church staff, consider church affiliation or other corporate business dealings with the properties or financial position of the church.

Special Business Meetings may be called by the pastor, chairman of the deacons, or ten heads of families who are members of the church requesting such of the chairman of the deacons or secretary of the corporation, providing the specific object, or objects, are clearly stated in the notice and no other business shall be transacted in such a meeting.



Receiving or terminating members and the selection of messengers may be transacted when necessary at any stated meeting of the church without previous notice.

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. Only members eighteen years of age and above shall be eligible to vote.

The ordinary rules of deliberative assemblies will be observed in the transaction of business as set forth in Roberts Rules of Order Revised, by Henry M. Roberts, but are not to take precedent over any Rules of Order established by the church.

## **Section 11 - Messengers**

Voting messengers, when expedient, in addition to the pastor will be elected prior to each association or fellowship meeting by the church to serve as voting messengers at any association or fellowship meetings in which the church is a participant.

## **Section 12 - Dissolution**

This church shall have the right to own, buy or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officers, when authorized by vote of the church.

No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individual assets, holding or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

In the event of dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other nonprofit religious organizations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Belief adopted by this church.

## **Section 13 - Additions or Deletions**

This constitution may be amended, altered or revised at any Annual Meeting by a three fourths majority of the qualified members present and voting, providing such proposed changes have been submitted in writing not later than the October meeting preceding.

## **Section 14 - Constitutional Interpretation**

When questions arise with regard to the interpretation of this Constitution, the decision of the pastor and deacons will be considered as the final authority in all matters of Baptist polity not covered in these Rules of Order. "The New Directory for Baptist Churches" (unrevised), by Edward T. Hiscox will be the guide.

## **Grace Baptist Church Policies**

### **Policy I Marriage:**

The Church will sanction marriages only for its membership. A Pastor or the Deacons in the absence of a Pastor will be responsible to approve any marriages under the auspices of the Church. A Pastor or Member able to perform marriages may choose to do so at his own discretion outside the auspices of the Church.

### **Policy II Dismissal of Persons Holding Appointed Positions:**

In the event that the Pastor and Deacons deem it necessary to dismiss a person holding an appointed position, said person shall receive a written notice 2 weeks prior to dismissal and shall have an opportunity to meet with the Pastor and Deacons regarding the dismissal.

### **Policy III Conflict of Interest**

A Pastor, Deacon, Officer, Appointee or compensated Person with a personal or financial interest in a contract or other transaction presented to the Church for consideration authorization, approval, or ratification, shall make a prompt and full disclosure of his interest to the Church prior to its acting on such contract or transaction. Such disclosure shall include any relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction, which might reasonably be construed to be adverse to the Church's interests.

The Pastor and Deacons to which such disclosures are made shall thereupon determine, by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the membership entitled to vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. If a conflict is deemed to exist, such person shall not vote on, nor use his personal influence on, nor participate in (other than to present factual information or respond to questions) the discussions or deliberations with respect to such contract or transaction. Such person may be counted in determining whether a quorum is present, but may not be counted when the church takes action on the transaction. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disclosure made, the vote thereon, the abstention from voting and participation, and whether a quorum was present.

### **Policy IV INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE**

#### ***Indemnification***

The Church shall advance necessary funds or indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the corporation) by reason of the fact that he is or was a Pastor, Deacon, Officer, Appointee, or Compensated Person, or is or was serving at the request of the Church as an elder or officer of another Church, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action or proceeding, and so long as such identified party had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgement, order, settlement, conviction or upon plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

### ***Advancement of Funds***

The Church shall advance funds or indemnify any person who was or is party to, or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action or suit by, or in the right of the corporation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he is or was an elder or officer of the corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Church, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expense (including attorneys fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation. No such indemnification against expenses shall be made, however, in respect of any claim issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duty to the corporation unless and only to the extent that the Supreme Court of the county in which the registered office of the corporation is located or the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnification for such expenses which the Supreme Court or such other court shall deem proper.

### ***When Indemnification shall be Provided***

Indemnification shall be made by the Church when ordered by the court or upon a determination by the church that it is proper. Such determination shall be made by the membership at a special business meeting convened to vote on the matter and shall be announced from the pulpit for two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting. The vote shall be by a quorum consisting of those who were not parties to such action, suit or proceeding, or if such quorum is not attainable, by independent legal council in a written opinion.

Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding shall be paid by the Church in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking, by or on the behalf of the person who may be entitled to indemnification under those Sections, to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is not entitled to be indemnified by the Church.

The indemnification provided in this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be affiliated with the church and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such a person.

Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the power or obligation of the Church to indemnify any person in accordance with New York Law.

The Church shall also indemnify any person against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him in enforcing any right to indemnification under this Article or under New York Law.

### ***Reliance***

Any person who shall serve as a Pastor, Deacon, Officer, Appointee, Compensated person, or agent of the corporation or who shall serve at the request of the corporation, as an Elder, officer, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, shall be deemed to do so with knowledge of and in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided in this Article and New York Law.

## ***Insurance***

The Church shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a Pastor, Deacon, Officer, Appointee, Compensated Person, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability.

### **AMENDING OF ITEM 2 OF THE TERMINATION PORTION OF SECTION 1**

2) By resignation: when a member notifies the church, either in writing or verbally, of membership resignation; membership terminates upon notification and the congregation will be so informed at the next quarterly business meeting. Anyone resigning membership while under church discipline is ineligible to be granted a letter of full fellowship.

### **TO BE ADDED AS ITEMS 5 AND 6 OF THE TERMINATION PORTION OF SECTION 1**

5) By inactivity: when a member in good standing has not attended services for at least 12 months, the pastors and/or deacons will seek to determine the reason for nonattendance. If the reason is acceptable (e.g. illness, injury, hospitalization, nursing home stay, military service, etc.) and the member desires to remain a member, no action will be taken. A member who is unable to be contacted following 12 months of lack of attendance will be removed from membership upon majority vote.

6) By relocation: when a member in good standing has moved, such member will be given 12 months to inform the church of membership status. Failure to provide status within 12 months will result in removal from membership upon majority vote.