



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

And Bylaws
OF

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Adopted by the membership on October 2, 2012.
Revised by the membership on April 28, 2019

PREAMBLE:

We, the members of Grace Community Church of Jackson, Mississippi have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to God's will; therefore, we voluntarily submit ourselves to the following articles:

ARTICLE I: Name

The legal name of our church is Grace Community Church of Jackson, Mississippi, commonly referred to as "Grace Community Church."

ARTICLE II: Foundation, Purpose, and Mission

The foundation of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), He is all to us (Colossians 3:11), and we can do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5). We exist as a church to worship and glorify God. Therefore, we will endeavor to love God with all of our hearts, love our neighbors as ourselves, (Matthew 22:37-39) and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

ARTICLE III: Articles of Faith

Our infallible rule for guidance in all our affairs is the Word of God (Psalm 119:89). Our church has defined our doctrinal beliefs in a document entitled "GCC Statement of Faith." We accept this document not as an infallible rule of faith, but as an assistance to us in doctrinal definition; so that the members of our church may have a concise body of theology with Scriptural proofs.

ARTICLE IV: Church Membership

Any person who credibly professes repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21) shall be eligible for membership – provided they are willing to submit to this church’s doctrine and leadership. Admission to membership of this church shall be according to the following guidelines:

1. Any person desiring to become a member of this church must be interviewed by an elder of this church in order to determine the credibility of their profession of faith and the status of their baptism.
2. Upon the completion of a membership interview, each candidate will be required to attend a series of membership classes.
3. Upon satisfactory completion of the above requirements, the elders will recommend candidates to the congregation for membership.
4. Official membership will not begin until the congregation votes to receive the candidate into the local church.

A member will lose their membership upon being released (in good standing) to seek membership in another local church. A member who errs in essential doctrines, or who engages in conduct that violates Scripture, shall be subject to church discipline, including excommunication according to Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.

During the process of church discipline, it may be necessary to disclose the nature of a member’s sin to the congregation pursuant to Biblical mandates. The members of this church submit to the church’s authority in disciplinary matters and agree that the final decision of the congregation is binding upon them and that there shall be no appeal to any court or other forum.

ARTICLE V: Congregational Voting

The Lord has ordained pastoral leadership within His churches, but it is both Biblical and desirable that the congregation of this church take part in expressing themselves through common consent. The following situations will require congregational voting: the adding and removal of members; the selection and removal of church officers (Acts 6:3-5; 14:23); the approval of a yearly budget; the formal joining or withdrawal from an association of churches; and any changes to the “GCC Statement of Faith”, “GCC Membership Covenant”, or this constitution.

Upon the recommendation of the elder(s), all congregational decisions (unless stated otherwise in this Constitution) shall be made by two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at the time of voting. In all circumstances, congregational voting must include the elders of the church (present or represented) with a quorum of at least forty percent (40%) of the entire membership present. Proxy voting for those unable to attend the meeting shall be allowed among family members and other situations deemed appropriate by the elders.

ARTICLE VI: Church Officers

Jesus Christ alone is Head of the church (Colossians 1:18). As Head, He governs His church through officers whom He appoints and who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and qualifications needed to accomplish their work. Officers in the church are of two kinds: elders (also called overseers and pastors) and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Elders

These men are called overseers because they have oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17). They are called pastor-teachers because they have been given to the church for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry by way of shepherding and teaching the flock (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:28).

Plurality: Although it is true that a new congregation may actually be without an elder (Acts 16:40) or may only have a single individual qualified to be recognized as an elder, the Scriptures indicate that normally there should be a plurality of elders in the local church (Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1; James 5:14). These elders are equal in authority as it relates to leading the local church, though they may function in their office differently, according to their giftings (1 Timothy 5:17).

Qualifications: The qualifications for a man chosen to fill the office of elder are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Scriptures reveal that an elder's godly character, his soundness of doctrine, and his ability to teach are of supreme importance. Any man called to the eldership must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with the "GCC Statement of Faith". Should he at any time move from his doctrinal positions, he is under obligation to make these doctrinal differences known to the other elder(s) and/or the church collectively. In the event of irreconcilable differences, he will be required to step down from his office.

Recognition: The normal New Testament practice is for the congregation to look first among its own members for elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13); however, the Lord may present the opportunity for the church to acquire elders from outside the congregation.

Election and Ordination: The existing elder(s) shall vote on all elder candidates – with an eighty percent (80%) majority required before presenting candidates to the congregation. The name of an elder candidate shall be presented to the congregation at least 4 weeks prior to a congregational vote. A congregational vote with an 80% majority will be required prior to the elder candidate officially holding the office. The Holy Spirit equips and places elders in the church (Acts 20:28). Therefore, the church shall not arbitrarily establish either the number of elders or their length of service.

Removal: In the event that an elder disqualifies himself in any manner, any unaffected elder(s) may call for a congregational vote to remove the affected elder. If all the elders currently serving are affected, the removal vote may be initiated by two (preferably three) or more members of the congregation (1 Timothy 1:19). An 80% majority congregational vote shall be required for the removal of elders.

Deacons

The ministry of mercy is the responsibility of all members of our congregation (James 1:27); however, this is a special responsibility of the deacons (Acts 6:2-3). The deacons shall be diligently looking for opportunities to do good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). The deacons shall organize themselves however the elder(s) determine to best achieve the mission of the church.

Qualifications: The qualifications for a man chosen to fill the office of deacon are set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. While abilities and skills are helpful characteristics for those holding this office, the Scriptures reveal that the candidate's spiritual qualifications are of supreme importance.

Election: Acts 6:1-7 shows an example of how deacons were chosen. The elder(s) of the church will present deacon candidates to the congregation, prior to an official congregational vote into office. A congregational vote with an 80% majority will be required prior to the deacon candidate officially holding the office.

ARTICLE VII: Finance

We are submitted to Jesus Christ through the word of God in all areas of life, including the corporate finances of the church. This church affirms its belief that God is our ready provider for all that He has determined for us to undertake (Philippians 4:19; James 1:17; Psalm 81:10). Our aim is to honor Christ in the way money is corporately collected, saved, and spent. Matters of corporate finance at Grace Community Church are directed by the elders of the church and affirmed by the congregation through an annual budget.

Though all debts are not viewed as sin in the Scriptures (Romans 13:7), taking on debt that is unable to be paid is wicked (Psalm 37:21). This church is not to take any debt upon itself without a congregational vote with an 80% majority.

ARTICLE VIII: Revisions, Additions and Amendments to Constitution/Bylaws

Revisions, additions, or amendments to this constitution may be made only after the changes are disclosed and explained to the congregation, allowing reasonable notice before a congregational vote is held. The proposed revisions, additions, or amendments shall take effect only after approval by congregational vote with an 80% majority.