

Constitution & Bylaws of Graceland Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. Ensure freedom as an autonomous Baptist church in cooperation with others.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

I. Name

The name of this church shall be Graceland Baptist Church. It shall be affiliated with the Middle District Baptist Association (MDBA), the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

II. Business Location

The address of the principal office of this church shall be: 975 Dorset Road, Powhatan, VA 23139.

III. Purpose

The purpose of Graceland Baptist Church is to glorify God through **worship**, gather as family in **fellowship**, grow in our walk with Christ through **discipleship education**, give to meet the needs of others in **ministry**, and go out and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in **mission evangelism**.

1. **Worship - (Glorify)** "To love God with all your heart..." (Matt. 22: 36-40)
2. **Fellowship - (Gather)** "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..." (1 John 1:7)
3. **Discipleship Education- (Grow)** "Teach them to observe..."(Matt. 28:18-20)
4. **Ministry- (Give)** "Love your neighbor as yourself..."(Matt. 22: 36-40)
5. **Mission Evangelism- (Go)** "Go... and make disciples..." (Matt. 28:18-20)

IV. Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the only basis for our beliefs. Although it is not binding this Church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message," a 1963 affirmation of basic Christian

beliefs, as a general statement of our faith. We furthermore affirm the autonomy of the local church and the priesthood of all believers.

V. Government

The government of Graceland Baptist Church is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. It recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. This church will cooperate with and mutually work with the MDBA, BGA, and the SBC.

VI. Nonprofit Status and Liquidation

This church is not organized for profit. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be distributed as determined by the active members in attendance through majority vote at a business meeting.

VII. Amendment

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended provided the proposed amendment is presented in writing to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for consideration at a regular church business meeting. The committee will review and present the motion, along with their recommendation, in writing to the membership 30 days prior to a vote being taken. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be two-thirds vote of active members of the church who are present in the business meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter.

BYLAWS

I. Church Membership

A. Qualifications:

Membership of Graceland Baptist Church shall consist of people who have made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who, having been scripturally baptized by immersion, and are in agreement with the Articles of Faith, and Covenant of the church.

B. Reception:

Membership in the church may be attained by majority vote of the church and in one of the following manners:

- By scriptural baptism by immersion after profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- By transfer of church letter from another Baptist church.
- By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and baptism.
- By restoration to the church membership after having been dropped.

C. Termination:

Membership in this church shall be terminated when a member:

- Requests a letter of transfer to join another Baptist church.
- Is dropped from the roll of membership when he or she joins another kind of church. A letter of transfer is not necessary.
- Dies
- Is dismissed by a 2/3 vote of the church congregation acting in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. The pastor and deacons will do all they can to counsel the member for restoration prior to action of dismissal or a request of the member to be dismissed from the church membership.

D. Orientation of New Members:

Candidates for membership and new members are encouraged to attend the Church Membership Class to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of members to God and the church. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Articles of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws, and Covenant of the Church.

II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church in good standing.

A. The Pastor:

1. The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.
2. **Responsibilities:**
 - (a) There shall be a written covenant agreement made prior to a call to service.
3. **Call:**
 - (a) A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
 - (b) A Pastor's Selection Committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination.
 - (c) The Pastor's Selection Committee will recommend only one candidate at a time.
 - (d) The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week notice shall be given to the members.

(e) An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present is necessary for a choice.

4. **Terms of Service:**

- (a) The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the church. In either case, at least thirty (30) days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- (b) There shall be a written mutual contract/agreement made between the pastor and the church prior to a call to service.

B. Church Staff:

This church shall employ or call staff, as it shall need.

- 1. Staff members other than that of the pastor shall be recommended for employment by the Coordinating Council or a special committee.
- 2. A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

C. Deacons:

1. Number, term of office:

There shall be a sufficient number of deacons to minister affectively to the resident members and that number will be determined by the Deacon Body. Deacons shall be elected for a term of service of four years.

2. Qualifications:

- (a) A church deacon must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- (b) A deacon shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; supporter and promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.
- (c) A deacon will have been a mature member of the church congregation for at least one year.

3. Election:

- (a) When a deacon vacancy occurs, the chairman of the Deacons Committee shall announce that an election of a deacon will be held and nominations from the church membership may be made to the Deacon body.
- (b) The Deacon body will interview the nominees to assess availability and ensure that they meet the qualifications. The duties, qualifications, and importance of the office of a deacon will be

interpreted to the candidates and be reviewed to the church prior to the schedule election of deacons.

- (c) The Deacon body will recommend at a business meeting accepted nominees for a vote by the congregation.

4. Ordination:

- (a) Selection, election, and ordination of deacons is a privilege of the local church.
- (b) When ordination of deacons is planned by the church, the Deacon body may recommend nominees for ordination.

5. Duties:

- (a) Elected deacons shall elect the chairman of their committee.
- (b) Deacons serve as a committee of counsel to assist the pastor concerning the progress and welfare of the church.
- (c) Assist the pastor in ministering to the members by implementing the Deacon Family Ministry.
- (d) Seek to minister to the fellowship in the midst of challenges.
- (e) Assist the pastor in administering the church ordinances.
- (f) In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the Deacons shall serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and committees of the church.

D. Moderator:

1. The church moderator may be the pastor or a lay leader elected to this position.
2. The moderator shall preside at all regular and called business meetings of the church.
3. In the absence of the moderator, the assistant moderator shall preside at the meeting.
4. In the absence of the moderator and the assistant moderator, the pastor shall preside at the meeting.

E. Clerk:

1. The church clerk shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions of the church and preparing the annual report to the association.
2. He or she shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the church members, with dates of admission, dismissal, dedication of children, and deaths of members of the church family.

3. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and write letters of transfer of membership, and prepare written reports of the church.
4. An assistant church clerk may be elected or the clerk's responsibilities shall be delegated to a church secretary.

F. Treasurer:

1. The church treasurer shall be elected as the custodian of all monies of the church and shall disburse these monies by checks as authorized by the church.
2. He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.
3. He or she shall deposit in the church bank account all monies received.
3. The treasurer's report shall be audited as needed.

G. Financial Secretary:

1. The church financial secretary shall be elected and shall be responsible for crediting each contributor's record.
2. He or she shall be responsible for preparing an annual record of contribution to donors.

H. Trustees:

1. At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to hold in trust the property of the church.
2. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.
3. It shall be the function of the trustees to sign any, and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

I. Coordinating Council:

1. The Coordinating Council shall have as regular members the pastor and staff, clerk, treasurer, chairman of deacons, Sunday School director, Discipleship director, chairperson of each existing church committee, leaders of men's, women's, youth and outreach/ministry groups.
2. The Council shall be to recommend to the church objectives and goals; review the coordinated program plans recommended by the pastor, church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

3. All matters agreed on by the Council calling for action not already provided for shall be referred to the church to be voted upon.

K. Vacancies:

In case of vacancy in any office, except that of the pastor and staff members, the vacancy shall be filled by the Nominating Committee and recommended to the church for a vote.

III. Church Committees

All church committee members shall be elected by the church from nominations presented by the Nominating Committee, and nominations from the floor with the consent of the nominee. There shall be a minimum of three (3) committee members including a chairperson. Any committee member elected to fill any vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the position vacated. Each committee chairperson shall submit an annual budget request to the Budget and Finance Committee.

A. **Nominating Committee:**

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible throughout the year for nominating and presenting to the church people to serve in various positions of the church (unless provided for otherwise in these Bylaws) vacated by expiration of term of office, by death, by resignation, or by removal. Each person contacted shall be informed of his or her responsibilities.

B. **Budget and Finance Committee:**

This committee shall have the responsibility of assuring that the adopted budget is adhered to. It shall recommend financial policies to the church and shall foster and promote programs of stewardship. In consultation with the Coordinating Council for the new church year, it shall draw up and submit to the church an annual budget during the month of October for the next calendar year and recommend the chairperson of budget promotion annually. The taking of special offerings shall be approved by this committee. This committee shall be responsible for the annual audit of the treasurer's books.

C. **Buildings & Grounds Committee:**

This committee shall be responsible in matters to properties administration. Throughout the year, this committee shall give attention to and study the condition and state of repair and appearance of the building and grounds of the church and equipment therein, making arrangements for repairs and improvements authorized by the church and included in the church budget. All matters of major repairs, changes, improvements or items of equipment not included in the budget shall be referred to the Budget and Finance Committee for fiscal review. Purchase of equipment shall be through this committee unless another committee is directed specifically to make studies, report to the church, and make necessary arrangements as the church decides.

D. **Other Committees** may be formed as needed by the church.

V. Church Meetings

A. Worship Services:

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and on Wednesday, or another night, designated for prayer and Bible study. These meetings will be open to all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor, the associate pastor or designated person in the absence of the pastors.

B. Regular Business Meetings:

Regular business meetings shall be held on the first Wednesday of every other month beginning February of each calendar year. The agenda shall be circulated or made known to the church one week prior to the business meeting. Should there be any unusual meeting or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular meeting, notice shall be given to the membership one week prior to that meeting.

C. Special Business Meeting:

A special called business meeting may be called by the pastor, and with other church officers, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week written notice or announcement must be given for the especially called business meeting.

D. Quorum:

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. At least 15% of the active membership shall constitute a quorum.

E. Parliamentary Rules:

Robert's Rules of Order (revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings.

VI. Licensing and Ordaining

A. Licensing:

Any member of the church who has shown by their life and has felt the call to the gospel ministry may by vote of the membership at a regular meeting be licensed by the church to the Christian ministry. The person seeking said license should communicate their desire to the pastor and deacons prior to being brought before the church

B. Ordination:

When a member of this church has a sense of call to pastoral ministries and demonstrates they possess the scriptural qualifications needed through skills and training to do the work of the Gospel ministry, they shall request in writing that they be ordained. A special committee shall be elected to conduct the process of their ordination. This committee will consist of members of this church and ministers from the MDBA. Deacons of the church may be ordained as Deacons upon the commendation of the Deacon Body. The church shall consider such request at a regular or a called business meeting and by a majority vote to approve such request.

Ratified by action of the church in its business meeting on Wednesday, June 4, 2014. .

Moderator:

Church Clerk:

Graceland Baptist Church Membership Covenant

I Am a Church Member

I am a church member.

I like the metaphor of membership. It's not membership as in a civic organization or a country club. It's the kind of membership given to us in 1 Corinthians 12: "Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27). Because I am a member of the body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an "eye," an "ear," or a "hand." As a functioning member, I will give. I will serve. I will minister. I will evangelize. I will study. I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will remember that "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

I am a church member.

I will seek to be a source of unity in my church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity, for the sake of the gospel.

I am a church member.

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am a member in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that just aren't my preference or style.

I am a church member.

I will pray for my pastor, and other church leaders, every day. I understand that their work is never ending. Their days are filled with numerous demands that bring emotional highs and lows. They must deal with critics. They must be a good spouse and parent. Because these leaders cannot do all things in their own power, I will pray for their strength and wisdom daily.

I am a church member.

I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together in our church. We will serve together in our church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church because He gave His life for her.

I am a church member.

This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be a part of something so much greater than any one person or member.

I am a church member.

And I thank God that I am.